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The Diocese of Ogdensburg Volume 78 Number 37

NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

JANUARY 31, 2024

MARCH FOR LIFE



PHOTO BY DESIREE KIRK/CAMPUS MINISTER

Representatives of the Plattsburgh Newman Center attended the March for Life in Washington, D.C. on Jan. 19.

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK



On January 23, students from St. Bernard's School in Saranac Lake met with Mercy Care for the Adirondacks Friendship Volunteers and Elder Friends for a multigenerational game day and refreshments. The participants played newly reimagined multigenerational versions of the classic board games Trivial Pursuit and Scrabble. St. Bernard's School will celebrate Catholic Schools Week from January 28 to Feb. 3. The celebration will include themed days, projects to benefit local charities, Mass, a sledding celebration, a dance party and more. While some diocesan Catholic schools will celebrate the week later in February or later in the year, St. Bernard's and Seton Catholic will celebrate this week.

FULL STORY, PAGE 3

Pope: Avarice is a 'sickness of the heart'

By Matthew Santucci
Catholic News Agency

(CNA) - During his general audience on Jan. 24, Pope Francis focused on the vice of avarice, or greed, noting that the preoccupation with the accumulation of material goods reflects a greater "compulsive hoarding and pathological accumulation."

"It is not a sin that regards only people with large assets but rather a transversal vice, which often has nothing to do with the bank balance. It is a sickness of the heart, not of the wallet," the pope said

to the faithful gathered in the Paul VI Audience Hall.

The pope cited the example of the Desert Fathers — some of the earliest Christian hermits — who renounced their "enormous inheritances" yet who still "in the solitude of their cells clung to objects of little value. Those objects became for them a sort of fetish from which they could not detach themselves."

The "attachment to small things" assumes a totalizing effect whereby it "takes away freedom," Francis continued.

While it can give a sense of security, however fragile it may

be, the pope noted the accumulation of these goods often becomes an inverted process. He observed that "we may be the masters of the goods we possess, but often the opposite happens: They eventually take possession of us."

"Some rich men are no longer free, they no longer even have the time to rest, they have to look over their shoulder because the accumulation of goods also demands their safekeeping. They are always anxious, because a patrimony is built with a great deal of sweat but can disappear in a moment," Francis added.

Highlighting the "drastic" monastic example of the "meditation on death" as a countermeasure to "heal from this disease," Francis observed that these meditations highlight the futility of a hyper-fixation on material goods while also revealing its root cause: "It is an attempt to exorcize the fear of death, it seeks securities that in reality crumble the very moment we hold them in our hand."

Death, the pope continued, is a stark reminder of the "senselessness of this vice" as it showcases that "we cannot carry the goods with us!"

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The start of the 'journey'

We had no idea what we were starting.

It was December of 2019, and my son, Jake, and I traveled to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, the home of our beloved Pittsburgh Steelers, to attend Jake's first professional football game, an early Christmas present.

It was 17 degrees, our team lost, and Jake cried. Somehow, we still enjoyed the overall experience and decided to try another game.

We decided, though, to check out another city. So, after losing a season to the pandemic, we bought tickets to a Steelers/Bengals

game in Cincinnati, Ohio. On the way, we stopped at the Pro-Football Hall of Fame.

**Darcy L.
Fargo**

On the way home from that second trip, Jake mentioned visiting the stadium in Cleveland just to hit the gift shop and see the facility. We have zero desire to attend a game there.

So, we took a little detour on our way home and visited the "factory of sadness."

I'm not sure how, but those two trips became "the journey to 30," an effort to hit all 30 NFL stadiums. Jake and I hit stadium number 10 a few

weeks ago when we attended a Giants/Eagles game at MetLife Stadium in New Jersey.

We've been frozen all but solid twice. We met Jerry Rice, a legendary former player. We met the governor of Maryland and a pig mascot just minutes apart. We've posed for countless photos for or with fans of other teams and the silly signs we bring to games. Jake and I have logged thousands of miles and thousands of smiles together. We've had hundreds of conversations with people wondering why Steelers fans are attending a game when the Steelers aren't playing. We spent time tailgating with complete strangers.

That first, frozen game turned into something I cherish. It's turned into so many amazing memories. And we never envisioned or intended any of it.

It's funny how God does that. He takes us on journeys that are outside our understanding, outside our wildest imaginations. He turns the little and the mundane into the significant and the extraordinary.

Not all unexpected journeys are happy ones, I know. I was spending time considering some tough stuff in my life when God directed my attention to unwittingly starting our journey to 30.

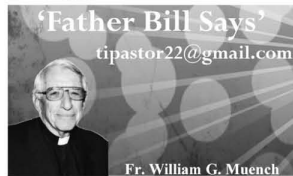
I have no idea what God's starting. I can still trust Him to get me there.

Repenting from what I didn't do

Recently, as I was preparing a Sunday homily, I came upon a different approach. Today, I want to share it with you.

This was a homily about the Sunday Gospel that spoke about the beginning of Jesus' public ministry as well as his call of the first apostles. The Gospels tell us that Jesus' first preaching was rather simple, yet very profound. Jesus began often, "Repent and believe in the good news."

We, Catholics, know what repent means. We have heard a lot about it. We know Jesus leads us to face our sinfulness. Jesus calls upon us to seek a real conversion - to make a change in our lives, to repent. We are to become a better person. We need a new plan of life. We must realize God never gives up on us. We must turn in gratitude to our God as we chose to change, ready to develop a new plan and ready to make our new life choices. Our readiness to



eliminate our tendency to sin.

Now a new insight to add to this repentance. Sinners are called to repent, yes, but Jesus makes it clear that all of us have some repenting to do. I was led recently to see that there may be much to repent for those who see themselves as free from committing sins. How often, as followers of Jesus, we miss the call to do something to transform this world or even our families to become more alive in the Lord.

I have come to recognize that as disciples of Jesus, each of us is challenged to do something: we're challenged to use well our many opportunities to bring peace, love and happiness to others.

This is the way we make ourselves better Christians, holier disciples, good people and in the process make our world even better. As Christians, we must bring Jesus to others, to those we meet each day.

Many of you may say to me, "I'm not one to go around preaching to others". And I say to you "good." We have far too many preachers in this world. What we don't have is enough people who know how to live a good, dedicated lives, witnessing to the Lord Jesus.

Personally I have noticed as I get older, I notice the unhappy thought of the many times that I have truly missed opportunities to do something good, to show others what life is meant to be as a follower of Jesus, to bring the patient love of the Lord to others. I have missed the opportunities to spend time with those who need me. I have missed opportunities to be a wit-

ness to God's healing love with a sick friend, a lonely friend, a needy friend.

So, truly I must repent. I need a conversion. Jesus expects so much from me, yet I continue to miss the opportunities. I need to pray more and discover a new life, a life filled with doing all that will make my family and my world so much more alive in the Lord. Yes, repentance means to turn away from and avoid sin, but there is a repentance for us who fail to miss the opportunity to do something. We are all called to do so much to transform our world and bring Jesus and his spirit to others.

I must admit to you that I continue to be disappointed at the many opportunities I have missed, the many wonderful times I could have made a difference. My prayer this day is that the Lord will constantly make me aware and give me the wisdom to never miss the way I can become a saint.

Plattsburgh's Seton plans Catholic Schools Week festivities

Seton Catholic in Plattsburgh has a full line-up of Catholic Schools Week Celebrations lined up the week of Jan. 29 to Feb. 2.

On Monday, Jan. 29, school students are invited to celebrate Pajama Day.

On Tuesday, the students can dress "country bumpkin or country club."

Wednesday, the students will celebrate "color day," and each grade level will wear a different color.

Thursday, elementary students will mark jersey day, while older students "rhyme without reason."

Friday will be school spirit day.

Throughout the week, the students will participate in "The Hunger Games," and classes will compete to collect the most food donations. The winning class will receive a dress-down day, and all food collected will go to St. Joseph's Outreach Center.

St. James, Augustinian prepare for galas

Two Catholic Schools in the diocese are preparing for their annual Gala celebrations.

On Saturday, Feb. 10, Augustinian Academy in Carthage will host "Hula in the Snow," a luau featuring tropical music by The Patti Stanford Band from 5 to 10 p.m. at the Elks Club.

The evening will include cocktails, appetizers, buffet dinner, dancing, prizes for best-dressed guests, live music, silent auction, raffles and surprises.

Cost is \$35 per ticket and should be ordered by Feb. 5.

For more information or to order a ticket, contact Talitha Workman at 315-493-1301.

That same day, adventure awaits at St. James Gala, "Embrace the Journey."

The gala in Gouverneur will be held at 5:45 p.m. at the school.

Tickets include appetizers, adult beverages, full course meal of Bermuda Triangle, gorgeous dessert bar, dancing to DJ Nick, raffles, auctions, prizes and more! \$75 each person. Must be 21 to "travel" at this event! Tickets available in our school and parish offices.

The school is also hosting an online auction from Feb. 7 to 16 at <https://www.32auctions.com/SJS24>.

St. Bernard's Celebrates

St. Bernard's School in Saranac Lake has a full Catholic Schools Week celebration planned the week of Jan. 28 to Feb. 3.

The week kicked off with an opening Mass at 10 a.m. at St. Bernard's Church on Sunday, followed by refreshments.

Each day of the school week at St. Bernard's will be centered around a celebratory theme.

Monday, it's *Celebrate Your Community*, and the students will have crazy hat/hair day. In the afternoon, the students will create a giant Domino course using new, unopened cereal boxes before donating the food to the Interfaith Food Pantry.

Tuesday, the school *Celebrate Your Students*, and students will mark the occasion with pajama day. That morning, students will enjoy a hot breakfast served by the school's teachers.

On Wednesday, St. Bernard's will *Celebrate Your Nation*, and students will wear red, white and blue. In the afternoon, the school plans a patriotic sing-along.

On Thursday, St. Bernard's will *Celebrate Vocations*, and the students are encouraged to "dress as a grown up." The afternoon will include the school's first-ever Spelling Bee.

On Friday, it's *Celebrate Faculty, Staff and Volunteers*, and students will have a dress-down day. In the afternoon, the school will host a dance party.

On Saturday, the school community will gather again to *Celebrate Families* with a sledding party, snacks and hot chocolate at North Country Community College.

Throughout the week, the students will also participate in "Penny Wars," a competitive fundraiser to benefit Catholic Relief Services.

Celebrate Catholic Schools Week 2024
 January 28 - February 3 #CSW2024

a dozen reasons

to choose Catholic Schools

1. We offer an education that combines Catholic faith and teachings with academic excellence
2. We partner with parents in the faith formation of their children.
3. We set high standards for student achievement and help them succeed.
4. We provide a balanced academic curriculum that integrates faith, culture and life.
5. We use technology effectively to enhance education.
6. We instill in students the value of service to others.
7. We teach children respect of self and others.
8. We emphasize moral development and self-discipline.
9. We prepare students to be productive citizens and future leaders.
10. We have a 99 percent high school graduation rate. 85 percent of our graduates go to college.
11. We cultivate a faculty and staff of people who are dedicated, caring and effective.
12. We provide a safe and welcoming environment for all.

THE NATIONAL CATHOLIC EDUCATION ASSOCIATION
[NCEA.org/csw](https://www.ncea.org/csw)

MAKING SENSE OF BIOETHICS

Surrogacy and child trafficking

At the start of 2024, Pope Francis offered strong public criticism of surrogate motherhood. His willingness to speak out on this important topic has helped to pull surrogacy out of the shadows, where it has often been relegated, and shine some much-needed light on the children at the center of the process and their rights.

Surrogacy is often framed as a generous act, since the surrogate mother seeks to offer her own body to help another woman unable carry a pregnancy. Judith Hoechst, who hired a surrogate to have a son, was quoted in a National Catholic Register article as declaring: "There's nothing more selfless and more loving than a woman who says, 'Let me share my uterus with you. Let me do for you what you cannot do.'"

When you examine it more deeply, however, surrogacy offers only the veneer of a selfless act. It relies on evil means to achieve a good end. It tends to be driven by the selfish slant of "entitlement think-

ing." It often involves a coercive financial angle, as wealthy individuals offer significant remuneration to secure poor women as "volunteers."

Pope Francis cut through much of the duplicity around this issue when he provocatively observed that surrogacy involves a form of "trafficking" of children, implying that children are being bought and sold, treated as property and often transported across international borders, which, all in all, sums up many contemporary aspects of surrogacy.

The whole process of surrogacy typically begins with the creation of children for implantation through in vitro fertilization (IVF), a practice that itself raises numerous moral objections.

Most fundamentally, IVF misappropriates the generative powers we have received from God that are ordered to procreating new life.

The powers we have are not meant to be used

any way we wish. For example, we have the power to use our hands to pick things up, to write, and to reach out to help others. But that same power in our hands can be used in reckless and improper ways to hit people, to choke them, or to otherwise harm them.

Just because we have the power to do something — or the fact that science may open up a new power to us — does not automatically mean we should utilize it.

Our power to procreate is a very special gift, meant to be shared in collaboration with God and our spouse in an exclusive manner. That we have the technical prowess to take hold of our sex cells and manipulate them to manufacture a new life constitutes a misuse of our God-given powers. We fail to respect our children's dignity when we turn them into "projects" to be engendered in laboratory glassware and implanted into third party carriers. By such

an approach, we end up twisting the designs of human sexuality and turning what is meant to be an act of love into an act of production.

Yet many people today have accepted the notion that children are a kind of "entitlement" or even a "right" to be claimed for themselves. This flawed thinking enables a facile movement into the twin evils of IVF and surrogacy, and ultimately encourages the trafficking of unborn children. Clearly, a child — or any person — is never a "right," or a possession, or a piece of property to whom we are entitled.

The only "entitlement" or "right" operative here would be the right of the child to be conceived uniquely through the marital act. Rather than being summoned into being in glassware and implanted into surrogates by fertility clinic employees in exchange for valuable consideration, children have the inalienable right to be conceived through the one flesh, body-to-body spousal communion of their parents' marital embrace.

Having a sense of "entitlement" about children and imagining that I "deserve" a child corrupts the delicate order of our receptivity towards the mysterious gift of new life in marital sexuality.

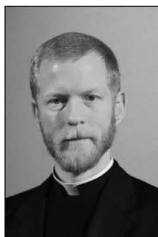
Whenever we turn to IVF and surrogacy to satisfy the desire of adults for offspring, we override that delicate order of receptivity and arrogate to

ourselves the right to control and even dominate our children. We

pay to have them implanted into strangers who act as "gestational carriers." We impose on them a multitude of "parental-role figures," ranging from the surrogate mother who becomes pregnant, to the woman who receives the baby afterwards, to the third-party egg donor. We multiply father-role figures, depending upon the source of the sperm. We trap our left over embryonic children, potentially for decades, in the wasteland of frozen orphanages connected to fertility clinics. We carry out genetic testing and discard less-than-perfect embryos. We selectively reduce children when multiplet pregnancies arise.

The use of the term "deplorable" by the Pope is not excessive, but spot-on when it comes to describing these offensive aspects of surrogacy. His observations help refocus our attention on the runaway train that IVF and surrogacy have become, and invite us to push back against the problematic-but-widely-endorsed approach that seeks to satisfy adult desires for children while largely ignoring the consequences to the kids.

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 Senior Ethicist at The National Catholic Bioethics Center in Philadelphia. See www.ncbcenter.org and www.fathertad.com.



Father Tad Pacholczyk, Ph.D.



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OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADORATION

Editor's Note: The following is a list of opportunities to spend time with Jesus in Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. It has been compiled as a collaborative offering of the Vocations Department and North Country Catholic. To add an Adoration opportunity to this list, please email dfargo@rcdony.org.

Holy Angels Church, Altona
After 8 a.m. Mass
Dedicated to Vocations and the church

St. Patrick's Church, Brasher Falls
Wed. & Fri. 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

St. Mary's Church, Canton
Tues. 4:10 p.m. to 5:10

St. Vincent of Paul, Cape Vincent
First Friday of the month

St. James Church, Carthage
Wed., 3 p.m. to 6
Thurs., 10 a.m. to 11
First Friday, 10:15 a.m. to 7 a.m.
Saturday morning

St. Patrick's Church, Chateaugay
Wed. 5 p.m. to 6, Adoration
First Friday 8:30 a.m., Communion
Service followed by Adoration for
Vocations

All Saints Church, Chaumont
First Thursday of the month 3 p.m.

Sacred Heart Church, Chazy
At various times as needed, please
contact parish 518-846-7650 for
more information

St. Mary's Church, Clayton
First Fridays after 9 a.m. Mass

St. Stephen's Church, Croghan
First Friday, 6:30 p.m. to 7:30
including prayer for Vocations

St. Joseph's Church, Dannemora
Wed. & Fri. 11 a.m. before noon
Mass

St. Elizabeth's Church, Elizabethtown
Summer 9 a.m. to 10

Winter 11 a.m. to 12 p.m.

St. Edmund's Church, Ellenburg
Monday after 5:30 p.m. Mass

St. Mary's of the Fort, Fort Covington
Tues. 5 p.m. to 6, Sat. 9 a.m. to 10 a.m.
except when it's a First Saturday

St. Hedwig's Church, Houseville
First Sunday following 11 a.m.
Mass

St. Agnes Church, Lake Placid
Tues 1 p.m. to 5:30,
Vocations Emphasized

St. Peter's Church, Lowville
First Friday of the month with
intention to Vocations

St. Bernard's Church, Lyon Mountain
First Friday of the month after 9
a.m. Mass

St. Peter's Parish, Massena
Held at Sacred Heart Church
12:45 p.m. to 1:45

St. Ann's Church, Mooers Forks
After 8 a.m. Mass
Dedicated to Vocations and the
church

St. Augustine Church, North Bangor
Thurs. 10 a.m. to 11

St. Andrew's Church, Norwood
Fri after 8:30 a.m. Mass until noon

St. Mary's Cathedral Parish, Ogdensburg
Entryway for the Deacon Winter
Chapel
Thurs. before First Friday from 7
p.m. to 8
Adoration each Monday 3 p.m. to 6

St. John's Church, Plattsburgh
Holy Family Basement
Wed., Thurs., Fri., 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.

St. Martin's Church, Port Leyden
Rectory Chapel
Wed. Mornings after Mass for 30

minutes

St. Mary's Church, Potsdam
Tues. 12:45 p.m. to 4:30
First Friday 8:30 a.m. to 9:30

Church of the Assumption, Redford
Tues. & Thurs. 11 a.m. before noon
Mass

St. Ann's Church, St. Regis Falls
First Saturday, following 4:30
anticipated Mass

St. Andrews Church, Sackets Harbor
Fri. 4 p.m. to 5

St. Alphonsus-Holy Name of Jesus Parish, Tupper Lake
Monday 7 p.m. to 8

Holy Family Church, Watertown
Monday's following noon Mass

Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Church, Watertown
1 hour prior to Mass, First Friday of
the Month

St. Anthony's Church, Watertown
First Sunday of the Month 2 p.m.
to 3 p.m.

St. Philip Neri Church, Westport
Half Hour every other Fri. (before
Mass Winter/after Mass Summer)

St. Philip of Jesus, Willsboro
Full Holy Hour on First Fridays
(before Mass Winter/after Mass
Summer)

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

Bishop's Public Schedule

Feb. 2 — 7 p.m. — Deacon Candidates Class on Canon Law at Wadhams Hall in Ogdensburg

Rest in Peace

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

Jan. 31 — Rev. James McGowan, 1910; Rev. B. J. O'Connell, O.S.A., 1925; Rev. Timothy M. Ladden, 2003

Feb. 1 — Rev. John B. Doonan, 1949; Msgr. George T. Donnelly, 1968; Rev. Edward M. Delaney, 1977; Rev. Robert L. Cotter, 2015

Feb. 2 — Rev. William Bennett, O.M.I., 1887; Rev. Amadeus Viger, O.S.A., 1915; Rev. George E. Racette, 1961; Rev. Gilbert O. Boisvert, 2017

Feb. 3 — Rev. John McDonald, 1879

Feb. 4 — Rev. Joseph Redington, 1892; Rev. Edmund Walsh, 1925; Msgr. Michael R. Burns, 1932; Rev. Henry McArdle, O.S.A., 1969; Rev. Francis Maurus Kearns, 1990

Feb. 5 — Msgr. Thomas E. Walsh, 1901; Msgr. F. Gordon Coseo, 1997; John J. Fallon, 2005

Feb. 6 — Msgr. Gerard Gefell, 2009

To Report Abuse

If you have a complaint of suspected misconduct involving diocesan clergy, religious, employees or volunteers, contact Victims Assistance Coordinator, Terrianne Yanulavich, Ph.D., LMHC, 5050 Route 374, Merrill, NY 12955; terrianneyanulavich@yahoo.com Phone: 518-358-3145, Ext. 7179 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

Environmental Stewardship

Living without plastic

Once you commit to omitting as many single-use plastics from daily life as possible, you must accept the anxiety that comes with this change. There is no way to escape the struggle you will have, moment to moment, as you confront the hold plastics have on our lives.

I miss my paper napkins and my plastic wrap to seal my fresh cheese. The newer recyclable plastic free products are expensive, and many do not work well. I have bought recyclable trash bags only to have them tear apart as I am placing items in them. When I put the bags in my trash can for trash removal, I ask myself how will anyone disposing of these bags know they are recyclable? Shopping for fresh produce without plastic wrapping or containers is a constant fight with my conscience, but I refuse to give into convenience over my pledge to no longer contribute to the destruction of our planet!

Mind you, I am committed to Pope Francis and his arduous work to awaken we stubborn and self-centered human beings. But I was not prepared for the negative feelings as I live day to day, removing disposable plastic from my world.

I also feel lonely in my quest. Most people in my life don't want to hear me point out where we can eliminate disposable plastics. Talk about being unpopular!

What to do? I take many moments in my days to weep quietly when alone, to beg our Heavenly Father and my cadre of saints to keep me moving forward, to strengthen my resolve, and keep me out of my own way.

Oh, I almost forgot: this week I realized my soft tubs of vegetable cream cheese could stay on grocery cheese aisle as I spotted French cheese wrapped in paper and contained in a cardboard box. I think I will wear a French beret when I grocery shop this week!

By Maureen O'Connor
Faith & Ecology

Feb. 2 is World Day for Consecrated Life

By Sister Mary Eamon Lyng, SSJ
Diocesan Vocations Coordinator

In the Opening Prayer for the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord, the Almighty ever-living God is called upon. As the Only Begotten Son was presented on this day in the Temple in the substance of our flesh, so, by God's grace, we, too, may be presented to Him with minds made pure.

As the Son of God, Jesus is already "consecrated to the Lord." It is in the Temple that Mary and Joseph present Jesus in accordance with the law so that Israel could encounter its long-awaited consolation and redemption. It is here in the Temple that Mary offers herself and us into the saving mission of Jesus.

The journey of faith for Mary was not always an easy one! There were days of consolation and desolation. She continu-

Religious Congregations in the Diocese of Ogdensburg

- Sisters of the Cross of Chavanod, Cadyville, Sackets Harbor, Watertown
- Sisters of St. Joseph, Carthage, Ogdensburg, Ticonderoga, Watertown
- Sisters of Mercy, Lake Placid, Plattsburgh, Watertown
- Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Massena
- Daughters of Charity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Plattsburgh
- Dominican Sisters of Hope, Plattsburgh
- Sisters of Charity of St. Louis, Plattsburgh
- Consecrated Virgins for the World, Plattsburgh and St. Albans, Vermont
- Sisters of the Precious Blood, Watertown
- Heralds of the Good News, Elizabethtown, Lyon Mountain, Tupper Lake
- Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, Watertown
- Third Order Penitents of St. Francis, Inlet, NY

ally pondered the words of the Angel Gabriel, Simeon, and Jesus as she walked by faith, trusting in her "Fiat" that God's plan of salvation would be fulfilled.

Mary is a model for all of us who, as our mother, desires her children be like her Son. As a woman, a faithful disciple, and as Mother of the

Church, Mary witnesses her consecrated life for women and men who have consecrated their lives in a specific manner by professing vows of chastity, poverty and obedience within a specific community with a specific charism - grace, to witness God's love to the world. There are consecrated men and women who also dedicate their lives specifically vowing their lives to a life of chastity who witness God's love for the sake of the world. As Pope Francis said, we are "Brothers

and sisters for the mission." This means that each one as a consecrated person is a mission with a particular grace of their own for the strengthening of the Church and for her mission.

We especially pray to Mary, the Mother of the Church, for more vocations to the consecrated life and ask her to guide young people to listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit as she did. There are many young people who have so much potential, but often there are so many voices trying to squander their potential. They are often allured into trying different ways of living to feel accepted and to fit in. The voices can be so strong that it can be so difficult to say "no." It is a special grace to encounter a deeper love for Christ and for His people. A simple prayer to Mary, the Hail Mary, a decade of the rosary, a visit to the Church where there is a Holy Hour, a conversation with a sister or parish priest are some of the ways to hear the voice of the Holy Spirit.

In every vocation, there is sacrifice, just as Mary encountered. With every sacrifice, there is a grace beyond understanding. With every grace, there is only gratitude and joy beyond explanation. As consecrated men and women of the Church, we invoke Mary to be the bearers of His light, to bring His light to others, not our own; to bring Christ to others, not ourselves; and to bring Christ's way of life to the world, not the world's way.

It is the religious women and men consecrated to God in their specific religious communities in the Diocese of Ogdensburg who continue to bring the message faith, hope and love founded in Jesus Christ to the world. There are men and women from the diocese who have consecrated their lives to God as a priest, brother and sister. For their gift of their presence and gifts to the Church, let us give thanks and praise to our God who is and always will be forever our hope and salvation.

THE MONTHLY PRAYER REQUEST FOR PRIESTS

WOULD YOU PRAY FOR A PRIEST EACH DAY?

— PRAYER SUGGESTION —

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

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



FEBRUARY

2024

The Passion of our Lord

DIOCESE OF OGDENSBURG, NY		DIOCESE OF OGDENSBURG, NY		DIOCESE OF OGDENSBURG, NY		DIOCESE OF OGDENSBURG, NY		DIOCESE OF OGDENSBURG, NY		DIOCESE OF OGDENSBURG, NY	
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	FRIDAY	FRIDAY	FRIDAY	FRIDAY	FRIDAY	FRIDAY
For more copies contact: Diocese of Ogdensburg, PO Box 369, Ogdensburg, NY 13669											
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
BISHOP TERRY R. LAVALLEY	REV. WILLIAM G. MUENCH	MSGR. JOHN R. MURPHY	REV. STEVEN M. MURRAY	REV. FRANK NAJALE MSC	REV. JUDE C. SNADEBUIGH	REV. KEVIN J. O'BRIEN	OUR PASTOR	REV. JOHN KENNEDY OJOUK	REV. AMRUTA KUMAR PASALA	REV. JEROME PASTORES	REV. TERRANCE PATTERSON
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
MSGR. LEEWARD J. POISSANT	REV. SONY G. PULICKAL	POPE FRANCIS	REV. PATRICK A. RATIGAN	REV. WILLIAM G. REAMER	REV. MARK R. REILLY VF	REV. NICHOLAS J. REVILLA	MSGR. CLEMENT RIMONDS, HGN	REV. DONALD A. ROBINSON	DECEASED PRIESTS	REV. STEPHEN ROCKER	REV. JOSEPH N. SESTITO
25	26	27	28	29							
REV. JAMES W. SEYMOUR	REV. SCOTT R. SHNOB	ALAN D. SHNOB	REV. F. JAMES SHURTLEFF	REV. FERNANDO SOLOMON							

A donation to help support THE MONTHLY PRAYER REQUEST FOR PRIESTS will be appreciated. The Monthly Prayer Request for Priests is graciously underwritten by:  Diocese of Ogdensburg, Vocations Society, www.mvocation.net

WORLD DAY FOR CONSECRATED LIFE ~ FEBRUARY 2





Image credited to Metmuseum.org

Thank You!

Brothers and Sisters,

Thank you for your presence and gifts to the Church of Ogdensburg

Vocations Office



Diocese of Ogdensburg

Sisters of the Cross of Chavanod, Cadyville, Sackets Harbor, Watertown

Sisters of St. Joseph, Carthage, Copenhagen, Ogdensburg, Ticonderoga, Watertown

Sisters of Mercy, Lake Placid, Plattsburgh, Watertown

Daughters of Charity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Plattsburgh

Dominican Sisters of Hope, Plattsburgh

Sisters of Charity of St. Louis, Plattsburgh

Sisters Adorers of the Precious Blood, Watertown


Heralds of the Good News, Elizabethtown, Lyon Mountain, Tupper Lake

Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, Watertown

Consecrated Virginity Lived in the World, Plattsburgh, NY and St. Albans, VT

Third Order Penitents of St. Francis, Inlet, NY

Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Massena



Report: 'Nones' now largest religious category in U.S.

By Peter Pinedo
Catholic News Agency

Religiously unaffiliated people, often referred to as "nones," now make up the largest religious category in the U.S., according to a new report by the Pew Research Center.

Pew's new report, released Jan. 24, shows that nones now account for 28% of the total U.S. population, outstripping the next largest group, Catholics, who make up 20%.

The recent data is consistent with a long-term trend of Americans rejecting religious affiliation in growing numbers, with the percentage nearly doubling from 16% in 2007.

The rise of the nones has resulted in not only lessened religious participation but also a decrease in civic engagement with nones being less likely to vote, do volunteer work, or have strong friend groups or community, according to Pew.

What is a 'none'?

Although nones do not ascribe to a particular church are much less likely to attend church services, not all are atheists. Only 17% of nones identify as atheist, while 20% describe themselves as agnostic. The majority of nones, 63%, simply identify themselves as "nothing in particular."

Most nones, 69%, do still believe in God, though only 13% of them believe in God as described in the Bible. Additionally, 49% of nones say spirituality is very important to them.

Most nones, 67%, cite disbelief and skepticism as their reason for not ascribing to a religion, according to Pew.

Just over half, 55%, say they are not religious because they don't like religious organizations or have had bad experiences with religious people, while 44% say they don't need religion or don't have time for it.

What do they believe?

Nearly half of nones, 43%, believe that organized religion does more harm than good while over half, 56%, believe that science does more good than harm.

Even still, nones still show a great openness toward belief in the spiritual realm. Fifty-six percent of nones believe that there are limits to science and that there are some things science cannot explain. That is coupled with the fact that half of them say spirituality is very important to them and that many believe that animals and parts of

nature, such as mountains and trees, have "spirits or spiritual energies."

Most nones, 83%, say that the "desire to avoid hurting people" guides their morality, while 82% say that logic and reason also guide their moral compass.

Despite this, nones are significantly less likely to do volunteer work, with 17% saying they volunteered in the last year versus 27% of religious people saying they recently volunteered.

Nones are also significantly less likely to vote, with 39% of nones saying they participated in the 2022 election versus 51% of religious Americans.

Pew also says the nones are typically "less satisfied with their local communities and less satisfied with their social lives."

What does this mean?

Michael Pakaluk, a social research and business professor at the Catholic University of America, told CNA that Pew's report "just touched the surface" on the impact the nones' rise will have on society and that it "will not be good."

He pointed to the fact that nones are "less engaged in their communities and in the project of appropriating civilization and passing it on" as especially worrisome.

"The popes have taught throughout the last century, 'when we lose sight of the Creator we lose sight of the creature as well,'" he said.

Pakaluk said he believes the steady rise of people being religiously unaffiliated is a "direct consequence" of two things: "secularized education (including weak religious education at most religiously affiliated colleges and universities); and the trauma and poor example of divorce."

Despite the dangers, Pakaluk said this is a great time for evangelization.

"The fields are there and are ripe for the harvest," he asserted. "People recognize that atheism is its own form of religion. It's harsh and unattractive. Agnosticism was never widespread and has always been limited mainly to educated classes. If someone says, 'nothing in particular,' then in my view they are right back where the Church started, among pagan nations, and that is great for us, for evangelization."

"We must pray fervently, on a daily basis, with an apostolic yearning to reach souls," he went on. "Why? Because we want to share the joy that comes of knowing Christ, and we recognize that all of us need grace to live well."

CATHOLIC WORLD AT A GLANCE

Pope appoints new bishop in China, ending 70-year vacancy

Father Thaddeus Wang Yuesheng was consecrated bishop of Zhengzhou, China, on Jan. 25, bringing an end to a 70-year-long sede vacante. The Holy See Press Office announced on Thursday morning that Wang was appointed by Pope Francis as the bishop of Zhengzhou on Dec. 16, 2023. The report noted that the decision took place "in the framework of the Provisional Agreement between the Holy See and the People's Republic of China." The Vatican Fides News Agency, which is part of the Dicastery for Evangelization, added that his appointment "was also favored by the direct contribution of the various components of the local Church, according to the criterion of synodality." In a statement published on the official website of the Bishops' Conference of the Catholic Church in China (BCCC), "on March 22, 2022, he [Wang] was elected as the bishop-elect of the Diocese of Zhengzhou." The appointment of the 58-year-old Wang marks a change since the Diocese of Zhengzhou has been without a bishop since the 1950s.

Abducted Haitian sisters released by captors

The six Haitian religious sisters who were abducted on the morning of Jan. 19 in Haiti's capital city of Port-au-Prince were released Jan. 25. The release of the six nuns, along with their two drivers, was confirmed to Vatican News by Archbishop Max Leroy Mésidor, the president of Haiti's bishops' conference, on Thursday. The nuns belonged to the St. Anne Congregation. "We give thanks to God! Thank you for your support," the bishop said to Vatican News. The Haitian outlet Rezo Nodwes reported that those responsible for the kidnapping had initially demanded a sum of \$3 million in exchange for the release of the nuns and their driver. It is not yet clear on what conditions, if any, the hostages were released.

Ohio bans 'gender reassignment' for kids

Ohio lawmakers voted overwhelmingly to prohibit doctors from facilitating sex changes for children on Wednesday, Jan. 24, in a successful override of Gov. Mike DeWine's veto of the legislation. The bill, which will go into effect in 90 days, prohibits all "gender reassignment surgery" performed on minors and the prescription of puberty-blocking drugs and hormone treatments designed to facilitate a gender transition for minors. More than half of the country still makes these procedures and drugs available to children. During the floor debate, Republican Sen. Kristina Roegner said that performing sex change surgeries on minors is a form of "medical malpractice" that "needs to stop." "Teenagers, children — they're not capable of making life-altering decisions," Roegner said. Democratic lawmakers overwhelmingly opposed the legislation. Democratic Sen. Paula Hicks-Hudson said on the Senate floor that people should be allowed to choose their medical care for themselves. "What we are doing today is creating major harm for a small segment of the state of Ohio's population — our citizens."

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: Feb. 11, Feb. 25, Mar. 10

Time: 4 p.m. to 5

Place: Online

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.rcdony.org/priesthooddiscernment

FRIENDSHIP GROUP MEETING

Our next Friendship Group meeting will be held, Father Craig MacMahon, OMV will talk with us about the first half (introduction - Chapter 12) of "Struggles in the Spiritual Life," by Father Tim Gallagher, OMV and answer your questions.

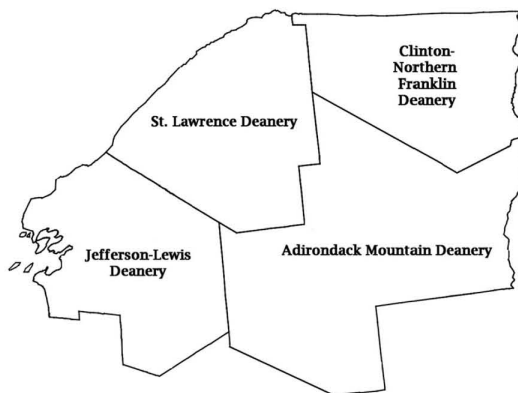
Date: Feb. 22

Time: 7 p.m.

Place: Zoom

Features: You'll gain confidence as you journey through desolation, and you'll learn to reject the enemy's ploys to infect you with a sense of hopelessness. You'll also learn: What to do when you are tired, burned out, or overwhelmed by life; How to respond when you feel burdened or confused in prayer; What it means when the enemy causes a disturbance in your soul; Spiritual tactics to employ when you are experiencing struggles; What to do when you experience disquiet from worldly agitations and temptations; How to push back when the enemy threatens your confidence in God and His work in your life

Contact: If you haven't signed up for the Friendship Groups, do so at <https://mailchi.mp/sophia-institute/friendship-groups> Once you have signed up, you will receive updates, including the Zoom link and discussion questions, prior to the meeting.



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.

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

ADIRONDACK MOUNTAIN**ALPHA**

Lake Placid – All are invited to Alpha.

Date: Wednesdays, starting Feb. 28

Time: 6:15 p.m. to 8:15

Place: St. Agnes School

Features: Free to all, regardless of belief and includes dinner.

Contact: Go to <https://stag-nelslakeplacid.com/alpha> for more info and to register.

CLINTON NORTHERN FRANKLIN**WOMEN'S LENTEN STUDY**

Plattsburgh – Walking with Purpose to have a Women's Lenten Study.

Date: Thursdays, Feb. 15 to March 21

Time: 10 a.m. to 11:45 or 6:30 p.m. to 8:15

Place: St. John's Dwyer/McAvoy Parish Center

Cost: Suggested donation, \$20

Features: Discover God's plan for friendship, how to navigate toxic relationships, let God reshape how you see and experience relationships, and explore deep connections.

Contact: Janice Tobin C/T 518-569-5370

BREAKFAST

Altona – At. Ann's Church to have a breakfast prepared by the

Mooers Knights of Columbus.

Date: Feb. 25

Time: 8 a.m. to noon

Place: Holy Angels Hall

Cost: Adults, \$12; Children

5-12, \$7; 5 and under, Free

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

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

DEVOTION AND HOLY HOUR

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

Date: First Saturday of the Month

Time: Following the 4:30 anticpated Mass

Place: St. Ann's Church

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

FIRST SATURDAY DEVOTIONS

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

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

(Weather permitting. Please feel free to join us earlier, beginning at 8:30 a.m. for private prayers and recollection)

Features: What is First Saturday Devotion? First Saturday Devotions require a commitment to do the same requirements each time over five consecutive months as requested by our Blessed Mother at Fatima. The requirements for each of the First Saturdays selected are... To receive Holy Communion in a state of grace; To receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession) preferably on that Saturday, but at least within eight days prior or eight days following the First Saturday indicating that it is being done as part of First Saturday Devotions for Reparation; To recite five decades of the Holy Rosary and meditate beyond the recitation for 15 minutes on one or all of the mysteries.

Contact: For more information, contact Sarah at 518-534-9976.

JEFFERSON-LEWIS**CHICKEN AND BISCUIT DINNER**

Lyons Falls – There will be a drive-thru chicken and biscuit dinner.

Date: Jan. 30

Time: 4:30 p.m. to 6

Place: St. John's Church Hall

Cost: \$12

Menu: Menu consists of chicken and gravy with homemade biscuits, mashed potatoes, vegetable, applesauce and dessert.

Contact: Deliveries are available! To ensure your dinner, please call 315-348-8945 or 315-348-8577. The day of the dinner, please call 315-348-6599.

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: Feb. 4

Time: Following 11 a.m. Mass

Place: St. Hedwig's Church

Contact: 315-348-6260

SPAGHETTI & MEATBALL DINNER

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

Date: Feb. 10

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: Feb. 11

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

ST. LAWRENCE**ST. JAMES GALA**

Gouverneur – Adventure awaits at the St. James Gala.

Date: Feb. 10

Time: Doors open at 5:45 p.m., Treasure keys go sale at 6:30 p.m.

Place: St. James School

Cost: \$75 per person, Tickets

available at the parish and school offices or from a "gala gal," as well as online at stjamesk-6.org. Includes admission to our auctions and raffles, prizes, appetizers, cocktails, dinner, dessert bar and dancing.

Features: Join our online auction Feb. 7 to 16 at <https://www.32auctions.com/SJS24>.

ROSARY WITH DEVOTIONS

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

CALLED TO SERVE

Did he really say that?

We have heard some classic lector gaffes over the years. One of my favorites came when the lector at Mass substituted the word "contraception" for "conception." Fortunately, she did not hear herself say the wrong word, so she just kept going. She was oblivious to the snickers.

The rule is to just keep going as if nothing untoward was said.

I am reminded of the time I was in the press box at an away Clarkson men's hockey game many, many years ago. My job for the radio station was to engineer the broadcast and be the "color man." In case you

are unfamiliar with the role, it means I would say something profound every so often about a player or play and do the interviews between periods.

The play-by-play announcer seated to my left was a veteran broadcaster and a stellar play-by-play man. We were both concentrating on the game, which was fast and furious, and end to end hockey as the skaters say.

Suddenly the play-by-play guy said a bad word. He did not do it intentionally. His mouth ran ahead of his brain and that word, the one you did not say on the radio in the 1970s, was

out there.

I can not even write the word. It was that bad.

I had an instant vision of my Federal Communications Commission license recalled. I was sure the boss would fire us. My career was snuffed out before it really started because my partner and mentor let a bad word slip out.

As the lector later showed me, the show must go on. The play-by-play man and I stole a sideways glance at each other and kept going. We never spoke a word to each other about the slip of the tongue.

Back in Potsdam a friend made sure we knew he had heard the bad word, but no one else ever said a thing to

us about the incident.

I tried to learn from that faux pas to control my mouth.

At Mass and other liturgies, the lector is an important minister. The first lector was Jesus. Jesus was handed the scroll of the prophet Isaiah, Luke tells us, and He read "*The spirit of the Lord is on me, for he has anointed me to bring the good news to the afflicted.*" The word of God was proclaimed by the Word of God.

Pope Francis decreed in 2019 that the Third Sunday in Ordinary time be devoted to the celebration, study, and dissemination of the word of God. Many parishes used the occasion to pray for and over the lectors of that parish.

Lectors should take the role seriously. I found this great description in a United Kingdom publication: "A lector is someone of faith who has nurtured a relationship with God through their love of the sacred scriptures, they seek to develop that relationship through prayer and meditation on what they read. A lector is someone for whom the word of God is so important that they want to bring it alive for their brothers and sisters."

Thank you, lectors, for your ministry.

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



Deacon
Kevin Mastellon

Around the diocese

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

Date: Feb. 3

Time: 8 a.m.

Place: Notre Dame Church, Ogdensburg

Features: Rosary with devotions

FIRST SATURDAY ROSARY

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

Date: Feb. 3

Time: 3:15 p.m.

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

MEN'S PRAYER GROUP

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

Date: Feb. 3

Time: 9 a.m.

Place: Sacred Heart Church

MONTHLY BRUNCH

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

Date: Feb. 11 (Second Sunday of each month)

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 Gonther 315-212-5166.

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. Child care

can be provided. Event is free.

Contact: For more information contact Mike Neaton at 315-335-6302 or Liz Tarbox at formation-stp@gmail.com

DIOCESAN EVENTS

RITE OF ELECTION

Ogdensburg - All Catechumen and Candidates who are ready to be received into the Catholic Church this Easter, are invited to attend the Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion.

Date: Feb. 18

Time: 2:30 p.m.

Place: St. Mary's Cathedral

CREATING A CULTURE OF VOCATIONS

Norfolk - The Vocation Office in conjunction with LEAD will be presenting a conference "Creating A Culture of Vocations in the Parish."

Date: March 9

Time: 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Place: Fr. Andrew Amyot Parish

Center

Features: The speaker for the conference is Leticia Ramirez, from Vocation Ministry, Houston, Texas. Leticia Ramirez will share her experiences of supporting and promoting a culture of vocations in parishes and within families to the priests and parish representatives and to catechetical leaders and catechists.

Contact: To register: <https://www.rcdony.org/CreatingCulture>. Free book "The Harvest" to the first 30 registered.

CHRISM MASS

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

Date: March 21

Time: 11 a.m.

Place: St. Mary's Cathedral

Features: This ritual symbolizes that we are one family in Christ. The Chrism Mass may be viewed at <https://www.rcdony.org/live-mass>. The Chrism Mass program will be available at the same link shortly before the Liturgy.

HEALING MASS

Potsdam - Bishop LaValley has scheduled a Healing Mass for those hurt by the Church on Divine Mercy Sunday.

Date: April 7

Time: 2:30 p.m.

Place: St. Mary's Church, Potsdam



SUNDAY'S SCRIPTURE

'Why not all the time? Why not for me?'

Based on TV commercials, if the products Balance of Nature or Relief Factor or the latest formulation of CBD could alleviate all our medical problems, there would be fewer commercials on TV, fewer medical personnel, fewer appointments to make in our lives and much smaller drug stores.

Physical, emotional, psychological misery exist, and no one of us looks for any of it. COVID 19 has heightened our awareness of what a deadly virus can do. When it occurs, we do our best to get rid of the sickness, always looking for the best means to cure or relieve the problem.

Rightfully so, we can get discouraged by our suffering, no matter the shape of the suffering. We might say things like "Why me?" "How do I deserve this suffering?" "I don't deserve to suffer this way." Be-

sides discouragement, some may despair, lose hope or even lose faith in God because of the suffering.

Faced with suffering, even in scripture we hear expressions like: "Is not man's life on earth a drudgery? ... I have been assigned months of misery, and troubled nights have been allotted to me. ... My days ... come to an end without hope ... I shall not see happiness again." These pained expressions come from Job as we hear in the first reading.

In the scriptures there are also many words of hope, expressions of encouragement, and even moments of cure. In the gospel, Jesus cures many people in the passage we heard in today's gospel.

So many have asked, perhaps even including ourselves, if Jesus can perform these cures, why not all the time? Why not for me? That's

February 4

**Fifth Sunday
in Ordinary Time**

READINGS

Job 7:1-4, 6-7

1 Corinthians 9:16-19, 22-23

Mark 1:29-39

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

a tough question that begs an answer but defies our abilities to comprehend. Even in today's gospel, Jesus is clear in saying that his mission is not to perform miracles, but rather to preach and teach. "Let us go on to the nearby villages that I may preach there also. For this purpose have I come."

So, from that do we infer that God just leaves us to suffer and chooses to cure just a few. Is God that capricious?

Well, first, no one of us can pretend to know the mind of God. But

we can make a comparison. Say there are two people, and each one is given the exact same gifts and talents. However, over time, one person squanders those gifts and talents while another flourishes, uses them well for himself and others. If God were simply a Mr. Fixit, a dispenser of the same talents to all, what would the outcome be?

In other words, even if we were cured of a particular illness, are we then assured of a rosy future? When we think that something is good for us, perhaps God does not think that same way.

Faced with suffering, though, God did something far greater than curing all sickness and suffering. God, in his Son Jesus, took on to himself human suffering and pain by becoming one of us and by enduring the suffering of the crucifixion. God became one of us in all things but sin, including suffering and pain and endured the suffering and sorrow even until death.

So, what do we do? Good times and bad visit everyone. Believers are wise not to succumb to despair during the bad times or allow the good times to make

them smug or selfish. Believers strive to bear all, knowing that the end of the story will be revealed in God's own time.

So, should we stop praying for cures? Should we cease asking God to relieve our pain? Absolutely not, we can keep praying for a cure, but to that prayer we need to add a prayer to endure the suffering as did Jesus, a prayer to appreciate how this suffering may ultimately help our human and spiritual growth. Remember what Jesus said in the garden: "Not my will, but thine be done."

None of us likes to suffer, none of us wants to see a loved one suffer. Suffering is part of the human condition so much so that God chose to share in the human condition and suffered for us, for our sins. We call that redemptive suffering.

We believe firmly that resurrection, new life, will emerge from the suffering. Today, we pray that as we endure our own sufferings and as we participate in the sufferings of others, we may understand that suffering, turmoil, and pain may be our pathway to ever greater glory.

WORLD DAY FOR CONSECRATED LIFE ~ FEBRUARY 2

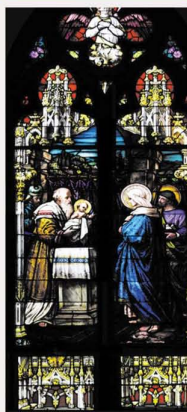


Image credited to The Blessed Sacrament
Parish, Watertown NY,
Church of the Holy Family.

Vocations Office



Diocese of Ogdensburg

Thank You!

Brothers and Sisters,

On this special day, and every day, I thank God for you and for the gifts you share with so many.

Wishing you all the blessings on this World Day for Consecrated Life.

Joyfully in Christ,

Father Chris Carrara
Director of Vocations

Father Matt Conger
Assistant Director of Vocations

Sister Mary Eamon Lyng, SSJ
Vocations Coordinator

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More civilians involved in war in Sudan

The war in Sudan has now transformed from a clash between the regular army (SAF) led by General Abdul Fattah al-Burhan, and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) under the command of Mohamed Hamdan Dajlo known as Hemei, into a conflict in which civilians are increasingly becoming involved.

Both military formations have launched campaigns to recruit and arm civilians, including children, escalating clashes on an ethnic basis.

A situation denounced by the UN expert on the human rights situation in Sudan, Radwan Nuweiser: "Despite numerous regional and international

mediation initiatives, there is no peaceful solution in sight and the people of Sudan continue to bear the brunt of an endless cycle of violence that affects everyone causing more human suffering, destruction and displacement every day."

Nuweiser expressed concern about reports of the recruitment of civilians, including children, to fight in the ranks of the armed forces and called on both parties to the conflict to urgently investigate any violations of international humanitarian law. The army distributes weapons to the population in the individual governorates. Marches are tak-



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

The Society for the Propagation of the Faith

Sister Mary Ellen Brett, SSJ, Director

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ing place on the streets in which hundreds of armed youth take part, accompanied by slogans calling on the population to arm themselves.

As for the Rapid Support Forces, Radwan Nuweiser pointed out that the RSF carries out attacks on an ethnic basis in Darfur, its stronghold in the western south: "In West Darfur, the Rapid Support Forces and their allied Arab militias have repeated-

ly attacked members of the African Masalit group."

On the other hand, the army and its affiliated militias are using violence against Darfur citizens because they are accused of spying for the RSF due to their ethnicity and tribal affiliation, which leads them to join the ranks of the RSF.

The conflict has now entered its tenth month of fighting and the humanitarian situation

is so serious that the director of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) stated that "the largest population movement in the world" is taking place in Sudan.

IOM estimates more than 7.7 million people have been forced to flee their homes since fighting began on April 15, 2023. Six million of them are internally displaced people in Sudan. Almost 2 million have fled to South Sudan, Chad, Ethiopia, Egypt, the Central African Republic and Libya.

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

OBITUARIES

Brownville – Mary Alice (Cannan) Genter, 85; Graveside services in spring at Glenwood Cemetery.

Canton – Bernard E. Baudette, 91; Funeral Services Jan. 27 at Maplewood Campus Chapel; burial in Visitation Cemetery, Norfolk.

Edwards – Lila R. "Sue" (Lutz) Hale, 81; Funeral Services Jan. 23, 2024 at French Funeral Home; burial in Fairview Cemetery.

Harrisville – Barbara J. (Cole) Ward, 84; Funeral Services Jan. 26, 2024 at the Scanlon Funeral Home; burial in Harrisville Community Cemetery.

Keeseville – Joanne (Dumont) Roach, 86; Mass of Christian Burial to be held at a later date.

Lake Placid – Mark Albert Bellos, 75; Mass of Christian Burial to be held at St. Agnes Church.

Malone – Candace (Taylor) Breen, 77; Mass of Christian Burial Feb. 2, 2024 at Notre Dame Church.

Malone – Diane Lynne (Clark) Towle, 70; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 22, 2024 at Notre Dame Church; burial in St. Joseph's Cemetery.

Massena – Ivan J. Major, 90; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 22, 2024 at Sacred Heart Church; burial in Calvary Cemetery.

Morrisonville – David Arthur Trombley, 74; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 26, 2024 at St. Alexander's Church.

Ogdensburg – Mary E. (Marshall) Kothrade, 83; Funeral Services Jan. 26, 2024 at Fox & Murray Funeral Home; burial in St. Mary's Cemetery.

Ogdensburg – Luella I. (Murdock) Robinson, 85; Funeral

Services Jan. 22, 2024 at Frary Funeral home; burial in Hillcrest Cemetery.

Plattsburgh – James S. Carr, 77; Mass of Christian Burial June 7, 2024 at St. Peter's Church; burial in parish cemetery.

Plattsburgh – Robert G. LaFontaine, 83; Funeral Services Jan. 26, 2024 at the Brown Funeral home; burial in St. Peter's Cemetery.

Port Henry – Eugene "Gene" Dupuis, 89; Funeral Services Jan. 26, 2024 at Harland's Funeral Home.

Port Henry – Gertrude L. (Demers) Supernault, 98; Mass of Christian Burial at St. Patrick's at a later date.

Rouses Point – Yvette Gebo, 84; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 27, 2024 at St. Patrick's Church.

Rouses Point – Jerrod Daniel

LaBombard, 52; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 26, 2024 at St. Patrick's Church; burial in St. Patrick's Cemetery.

Schroon Lake – Sarah "Sally" (Atkinson) Vinkus, 91; Memorial Mass Jan. 27, 2024 at Our Lady of Lourdes Church

Tupper Lake – Lenoard Indelliacati, 77; Mass of Christian Burial May 17, 2024 at St. Alphonsus Church; burial in Gale Cemetery, Pierceland.

Tupper Lake – Shirley (Auclair) Lavigne, 92; Mass of Christian Burial in spring at St. Alphonsus Church.

Tupper Lake – Sandra (Rice) Trudeau, 81; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 26, 2024 at St. Alphonsus Church; burial in St. Alphonsus Cemetery.

Watertown – Kathleen A. (Lynch) Branche, 81; Mass of

Christian Burial Jan. 27, 2024 at Our Lady of the Sacred Heart; burial in Glenwood Cemetery.

Watertown – Sally A. (Washburn) Cascanette, 90; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 26, 2024 at St. Patrick's Church; burial in Dexter Cemetery.

Watertown – David G. Constance, 77; Private services; burial in St. Vincent de Paul Cemetery, Rosiere.

Watertown – Celeste Ann (Pike) LaLonde, 64; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 31, 2024 at Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.

Watertown – Thomas J. Netto, 82; Private services to be held.

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Father John Cosmic Council #291 of the Knights of Columbus in Carthage recently held an Exemplification of Charity, Unity and Fraternity. (Left) Participants included, from left, brother James Cassoni, newly installed 3rd Degree Knights Donald Spence and Alan Trembley and brother Jim Gratch, back row, brothers Tom Wojcikowski, Brian Thompson, Grand Knight Garry Stevens, Father Todd Thibault, Joe Margrey and Mike Sligar. (Right) Knight John Foley, who is a past Grand Knight and is celebrating 65 years as a Knight of Columbus, was selected as the honoree of the Exemplification and is shown accepting his certificate from brother Gratch.

NY Catholics urged to oppose suicide

By Joe Bukuras
Catholic News Agency

Residents of New York and Massachusetts are being urged by pro-life leaders and Catholic bishops to raise their voices against upcoming legislation that would legalize assisted suicide.

In New York, the "Medical Aid in Dying Act" would allow a terminally ill patient to request medication that would put an end to his life.

"A written request for medication ... shall be signed and dated by the patient and witnessed by at least two adults who, in the presence of the patient, attest that to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, the patient has decision-making capacity, is acting voluntarily, is making the request for medication of

his or her own volition, and is not being coerced to sign the request," the bill says.

The New York State Catholic Conference, which opposed the bill the past two legislative sessions, put out a call to action following the start of the 2024 legislative session on Jan. 3.

"With the 2024 legislative session underway, advocates and the bill sponsors of physician-assisted suicide are pushing hard for a vote to legalize this deadly practice in New York state," the website says.

"Lawmakers need to hear from their constituents if we hope to avoid yet another assault on human life here. Assisted suicide is dangerous for patients, caregivers, and vulnerable populations such as the elderly and people with disabilities," the statement says.

"Suicide is not medical care. Please tell your state Senate and Assembly representatives that you oppose this dangerous and deadly practice. Contact your state legislators now!"

New Yorkers can write to their state legislators through the New York State Catholic Confer-

ence web page here.

The identical bills in the Assembly and the Senate, which were introduced in January of last year, are still under committee review and have not reached the floor for a vote yet.

In the Bay State, the Massachusetts "End of Life Options Act" says that "a terminally ill patient may voluntarily make an oral request for medical aid in dying and a prescription for medication" if the patient is a "mentally capable adult," a resident of Massachusetts, and has been determined by a physician to be terminally ill.

The act was brought before both the House and the Senate in identical bills in February 2023.

Massachusetts Citizens for Life (MCFL) in an email Wednesday urged supporters to voice their opinions against the bill by submitting testimony to state representatives and senators.

MCFL said in the email that the legislation raises "serious societal concerns" including ethical problems that "legalization may lead physicians to violate the Hippocratic Oath."

The bill also could be-

come a "slippery slope," MCFL said, adding that "it invites a broader acceptance of euthanasia, eroding moral and legal boundaries."

MCFL said the bill has "inadequate safeguards" that could lead to abuse and added that the legislation could impact "vulnerable populations" such as the disabled and those with limited health care access.

"The bill clashes with cultural, religious, and philosophical beliefs against intentionally ending human life," the email said.

The legislation was the subject of a bicameral legislative hearing in October 2023 but never reached the floor for a vote.

The bishops of Massachusetts, who have opposed the bill since it was first introduced in 2021, again raised their voices against the legislation ahead of the hearing last year.

"When it's a topic of discussion amongst legislators, the Church needs to make loud and clear that our voice is heard on the issue," Massachusetts Catholic Conference President Jim Driscoll told the Boston Pilot at

the time.

"The bishops are always going to be on the side of life, including in the precious times that life is ending," he added.

A statement put out by the conference called the bills "deeply troubling" and added that "the Catholic bishops of Massachusetts stand united in our strong opposition to physician assisted suicide."

"It is an affront to life and a dangerous precedent for determining end-of-life issues. Physicians are trained to care for the ill, not to hasten death," the statement said.

At the annual Cardinal O'Connor Conference on Life in Washington, D.C., on Saturday, archbishop of Boston Cardinal Sean O'Malley said: "A society that allows parents to kill their children will eventually allow children to kill their parents," according to OSV News.

"The situation in Canada is alarming. There are proposals to promote euthanasia for the mentally ill. Once human life is no longer sacred and the government can continuously move the goalposts, more and more people are in danger," he said.



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For Vocations*