

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Mission of Hope  
accepting applications  
for trip | Page 5

Poking the  
hornet's nest  
of IVF | Page 14

The Diocese of Ogdensburg Volume 79 Number 2

# NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

APRIL 3, 2024

## No NCC next week

To allow our staff and contributors time to celebrate Easter, there will be no *North Country Catholic* published next week, April 10. We will resume our normal publication schedule on April 17.

## Learning about slavery, trafficking

On March 3, events were held simultaneously in Watertown and Plattsburgh to educate participants about modern slavery and human trafficking.

FULL STORY, PAGE 6

## AT THE CHRISM MASS



PHOTO BY JESSE SOVIE/NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

**Priests of the Diocese of Ogdensburg join Bishop Terry R. LaValley in celebrating the Chrism Mass on March 21 at St. Mary's Cathedral. See additional photos of the Chrism Mass on Page 16.**

## THE SAINTS AMONG US



While there's a new Netflix series focused on relics, Father Joseph Giroux explains that a love of the sacred objects isn't new to the North Country. Father Giroux is pictured looking over a reliquary that holds a piece of cloth that belonged to Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati.

FULL STORY, PAGE 4

# Pope asks priests to weep over their sins

By Courtney Mares  
Catholic News Agency

On Holy Thursday, Pope Francis presided over a chrism Mass at which more than 1,880 priests, bishops, and cardinals renewed the promises made at their ordinations.

Pope Francis encouraged the priests to turn their gaze upon the crucified Lord and to weep over their sins in repentance, saying that tears can "purify and heal the heart."

"Once we recognize our sin, our hearts can be opened to the working of the Holy Spirit, the source of living water that wells up within us and brings tears to our eyes," Francis said March 28.

"The Lord seeks, especially in those consecrated to him, men and women who weep for the sins of the Church and the world and become intercessors on behalf of all," he added.

Forty-two cardinals, 42 bishops, and 1,800 priests living in Rome concelebrated the Mass with the pope in St. Peter's Basilica.

Holy Thursday marks the institution of the Eucharist and institution of the sacrament of the priesthood at the Last Supper. Pope Francis will also preside over a Mass of the Lord's Supper on Thursday evening at a women's prison in Rome.

Pope Francis reflected in his homily on Peter's tears after de-

nying the Lord three times as recorded in the Gospel of Luke: "Peter remembered the word of the Lord ... and went out and wept bitterly."

"Dear brother priests, the healing of the heart of Peter, the healing of the apostle, the healing of the pastor, came about when, grief-stricken and repentant, he allowed himself to be forgiven by Jesus. That healing took place amid tears, bitter weeping, and the sorrow that leads to renewed love," he said.

Pope Francis said that he wanted to speak to the priests about the importance of compunction - an awareness of guilt due to sin - which the pope admitted is a "somewhat old-fashioned"

term and "an aspect of the spiritual life that has been somewhat neglected, yet remains essential."

The pope added that compunction "is not a sense of guilt that makes us discouraged or obsessed with our unworthiness, but a beneficial 'piercing' that purifies and heals the heart."

"Compunction demands effort but bestows peace. It is not a source of anxiety but of healing for the soul, since it acts as a balm upon the wounds of sin, preparing us to receive the caress of the heavenly physician, who transforms the 'broken, contrite heart,'" Pope Francis said.

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

Communications Director

Publish  
45 issues  
per year:Weekly except  
skipping every  
other week be-  
ginning July through August  
and skipping one week in  
December by theDiocese of Ogdensburg,  
622 Washington Street,  
Ogdensburg, N.Y. 13669.**Editorial Office:**622 Washington Street,  
Ogdensburg, N.Y. 13669.**Telephone:**

(315) 608-7556

**E-mail:**news@northcountry  
catholic.org**Entered at the****Post Office:**Ogdensburg, NY  
13669 and additional mailing  
offices as  
Periodical Postage.**Subscription:****For one year:**In-Diocese Rate: \$27  
Outside of Diocese Rate: \$30Matters for publication  
should be addressed to  
PO Box 326  
Ogdensburg, NY 13669  
and should be received by  
Wednesday prior to  
publication. Paper is  
printed each Friday;  
dateline is Wednesday.  
Member, Catholic  
Press Association.**POSTMASTER:**Send address changes to  
North Country Catholic,  
PO Box 326  
Ogdensburg, NY  
13669-0326

# As described

"If you had to describe him to someone who didn't know him, how would you describe his personality?"

Whether in secular or Catholic media, I've always asked that question when I interview an individual to write a story about their friend, family member or colleague who died.

I was chatting with a friend about that question.

"It's weird to think about how someone might de-

scribe my personality," I said.

After a brief pause, my friend said, "you're somehow simultaneously the kind of person every family wanted their kids to be friends with and the kind of person every family warned their kids to stay away from."

**Darcy L.  
Fargo**

I laughed when my friend described me that way. It was both funny and accurate.

It got me thinking about

how I would describe myself.

Until recently, I probably would've answered something like, "flawed, but fun, and kind of weird."

I've always thought I was a bit weird. I didn't think it was possible that other people had similar perspectives, struggles, habits...

You, the readers of this paper, changed that. I've been told what is likely hundreds of times some version of "your stories are so relatable."

If hundreds of people are relating to my life ex-

periences shared in this space, either I'm not as weird as I thought or there's a lot of us out there who are "flawed, but fun, and kind of weird."

Hearing that my stories are "relatable" has made me feel closer to the Body of Christ, the people of His Church. It makes me feel like I'm not alone in my struggles or in my moments of profound awe. It's given me the opportunity to hear some of your stories.

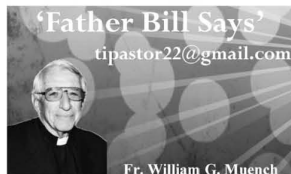
It's been a gift from God, and it's been beautiful beyond description.

## Celebrating the Resurrection

Each year, I find the celebration of Easter the most sacred time of the Church year. In faith, we, Catholics believe in the Resurrection of Our Lord, Jesus Christ. There is a former, traditional greeting between people at Easter time; it is still used among many. As you meet a friend, you would say, "He is Risen," and the other would respond, "He is truly risen."

The feast of Easter is prepared in an elegant, sacred way. We experience 40 days of Lenten prayer and self-denial. Then the wonderful liturgical remembrance of Jesus' Last Supper and his institution of the Holy Eucharist. Then we celebrate that terrible Good Friday, and we walk with Jesus each step of the way up Calvary and truly find support and peace of the Lord as we are nailed to the cross of Jesus each year.

So, each year we are well prepared to celebrate the Resurrection of Our Savior. We remember the joy and excitement of that event through our Easter



Masses. This is emphasized in a rather spectacular way by singing anew the "Alleluia." On Ash Wednesday we truly bury the "Alleluia," we will not pray it and we will not sing it until we get to Easter. "Alleluia" is such a magnificent word. I have often heard people use "Alleluia" in common parlance. I remember well ages ago, a youngster in little league who had made a great catch of a fly ball shouting "Alleluia."

Easter is always about baptism. The Church baptizes the catechumens seeking entrance into the Catholic Church at the Easter Vigil celebration. Each one of us are invited to renew our baptism every year at Easter, and we're invited renew our baptismal promises. For most of us who were baptized as infants, parents and godparents made

these promises for us. Now as adults, we are asked to again make these promises. I renounce Satan, so as to live in the freedom of the children of God. I believe in God, Creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, the Lord, who was born of the Virgin of Mary, suffered death and was buried, rose again from the dead and is seated at the right hand of the Father. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body and life everlasting.

Baptism is the most important sacrament we, Catholics, ever receive. It is a call to dedicate our lives to follow the Lord Jesus in our lives. When we live our baptism, we transform our world, we make this world of ours a better place. As the baptized, we truly follow our Savior.

This year, Easter was rather different for me. Two of my priest friends died in the weeks before

Easter. Easter time included two funerals. My ordination classmate, Father Joseph Sestito, died. We had studied together and often traveled together as priests. Father Joe served many years in the military as a Navy Chaplain and was always a great pastor of people.

Father Thomas McGrath, a priest of the Diocese of Syracuse, also died recently. He is my first cousin and a close friend. Father Tom was involved in schoolwork for a time and was also a caring and concerned pastor in many parishes, lastly at St. Mary's Church, Skaneateles, New York.

So, as you see the death of my two friends had a profound effect on the way I went through Holy Week and celebrated Easter. The Resurrection of Jesus touched my life in a deep and meaningful way. I truly believe that my friends shared in the Lord's Resurrection as they found new life with God and walked with the Lord in the glory of the Heavenly Resurrection.

## FOLLOW ME

# Christ's victory over sin and death

*"I am the resurrection and the life, the one who believes in me, though he or she die, yet shall they live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die."*

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

Yes, the Lord has risen! Satan did all he could to break down the love, courage, and fidelity of our Savior. Evil unleashed its arsenal of hatred, injustice, humiliation, and pain. Evil fought a bloody fight, but the Son of God rose victorious. That means absolutely everything for you and

me! The resurrection is the sacred stamp that validates everything Jesus did and said: His claim to be God's Son; His insistence of authority to forgive sin; His universal call to abandon self-centeredness for love of God and neighbor as the path to true happiness and everlasting peace; and His promise to send the Holy Spirit for guidance to His Mystical Body, our Church.

Jesus was not one more person who finished last, one

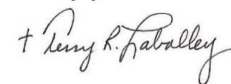
more dreamer whose dreams were squelched by the harsh reality of life on this earth. Jesus Christ has risen! Jesus' victory over evil and lies; over injustice and suffering is total and irreversible. In the face of over twenty centuries filled with a steady stream of saints, no reasonable person can deny it.

Let there be no mistake. Evil still wanders about. However, we remain ever vigilant and grateful for the gifts of the Spirit on our earthly journeys. We

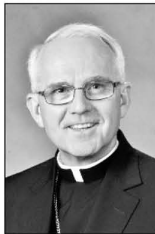
share this Good News and express our resurrection joy, even amid today's trials and tribulation. Christ's victory over sin and death causes us to always be hope-filled pilgrims of faith because we are Christ-led and Christ-fed.

Alleluia!! Blessed Easter to you and your loved ones! Alleluia!!

Faithfully yours in Christ,



Most Reverend  
Terry R. LaValley  
Bishop of Ogdensburg



Bishop Terry  
R. LaValley

## Mass of Christian Burial celebrated for Barbara Ruggeri

A Mass of Christian Burial for Barbara M. Ruggeri, 92, was held Wednesday March 27, 2024, at St. Mary's Cathedral with Rev. John Yonkovig and Rev. Joseph Morgan concelebrating.

Mrs. Ruggeri died on Wednesday, March 20, 2024 in Raleigh, North Carolina.

She is survived by three daughters, Mary (Thomas) Buono of Fredericksburg, Virginia, Valerie Ruggeri and Catherine Yanello of Raleigh, North Carolina; two sons, Frank Ruggeri III of Telluride, Colorado, and Andrew (Marji) Ruggeri of Medway, Massachusetts; eight grandchildren, Thomas (Erin) Buono, Emily (Kevin) Rusin, Patrick (Lindsey) Buono, Jessica (Kevin) Wood, Briana Yanello, Anthony, Sophia, and Ella Marie Ruggeri; seven great-grandchildren,



Barbara M. Ruggeri

Natalie, Madeline, and Reid Rusin, Caroline, Lucy, Cameron Buono and Marra Wood; also several nieces and nephews.

She was predeceased by her husband Frank; sisters, Norma LeClair and Connie Solomon; and one brother, Ralph Mitchell Jr.

Barbara Mitchell Ruggeri was born March 5, 1932 at Hepburn Hospital in Ogdensburg, the daughter of Ralph

and Agnes Mitchell. She graduated from St. Mary's Academy as salutatorian of the Class of 1949. She was married to Frank Ruggeri Jr. on July 31, 1954 at St. Mary's Cathedral by Rev. Francis White. They celebrated 60 years of marriage on July 31, 2014.

From 1949 to 1955, Mrs. Ruggeri was employed by the New York Telephone Company. In 1961, she was one of the first five lay students admitted to Mater Dei College in Ogdensburg. She earned her bachelor's degree from SUNY Potsdam in 1965 and her master's degree in Education from SUNY Potsdam in 1971. She was employed as a teacher in the Ogdensburg City School District from 1966 to 1987. After retirement, she worked in the Diocesan Department of Education from

1990 to 1994.

Mrs. Ruggeri was a life long parishioner of St. Mary's Cathedral. Her Catholic faith was firmly rooted in her heart and soul. She was active in multiple ministries over the years including Eucharistic minister, education, RCIA, lector, liturgy, music, and hospitality. She had served as a trustee under the rectorship of Rev. Philip Allen and was one of the Woman of the Year honorees in 2005. She enjoyed cooking, crosswords, the 3 R's (especially writing her annual Christmas letter), knitting, music and laughter, and, in general, the joy of living.

Memorial donations may be made to St. Mary's Cathedral or to the Bishop's Fund. Condolences and fond memories can be shared at [www.foxandmurrayfuneralhome.com](http://www.foxandmurrayfuneralhome.com).

### News Brief

#### Registration open for Camp Guggenheim

Saranac Lake – Registration is now open for Camp Guggenheim.

#### Schedule:

- Session 1: June 30 to July 3 (11-13 yrs old)
- Session 2: July 7 to July 12 (12-15 yrs old)
- Session 3: July 14 to July 19 (12-15 yrs old)
- Session 4: July 21 to July 26 (12-15 yrs old)
- Session 5: July 28 to Aug. 2 (12-15 yrs old)
- Session 6: Aug. 4 to Aug. 9 (16-18 yrs old)

**Cost:** Session 1, \$200 per Camper. Session 2-6, \$425 per camper

**Features:** Since 1972, young people have called Guggenheim "home away from home." Located on the shores of lower Saranac Lake, Summer Camp Guggenheim is a great place to make friends, draw closer to Christ and have a fun in a natural setting.

**Contact:** For more information or to register go to [www.rcdony.org/youth/camp](http://www.rcdony.org/youth/camp) by June 1

# Relics: Where heaven and earth touch

By Keith Benman  
Contributing Writer

They are about place, person and authenticity. They have worked their way into popular culture through numerous works of fantasy but are now getting a more serious look in the Netflix docuseries "Mysteries of the Faith."

They're called relics. And the Netflix series sheds light on both the history and healing powers of some of the world's most well-known.

Those include ancient ones like Jesus's crown of thorns, at Notre Dame, in Paris; a piece of the true cross in Brazil; and even the bloody shirt of the beatified Sicilian jurist Rosario Livatino, who was assassinated by the Mafia in 1990.

But all the attention on relics famous worldwide can obscure the fact that relics are everywhere, and that includes the diocese of Ogdensburg.

"It's a great reminder that the saints were real people when you're able to have physical contact with them or the things they possessed," said Father Joseph Giroux on a recent afternoon at the rectory at St. Patrick's Colton, where he's pastor.

His veneration for relics led him to buy new reliquaries, basically ornate containers, for two relics he found at St. Mary's Potsdam, where he is also the pastor.

## They have class

There are three classes of holy relics:

**First-class:** A part of a saint's body.

**Second-class:** A piece of a saint's clothing or something used by the saint.

**Third-class:** An object touched to a first-class relic.

**Note:** The body of a person beatified along with their possessions and objects that have touched their body are also treated as relics.

Both contain bone fragments, one reputedly from the body of St. Francis of Assisi and one from St. John Neumann, a 19th century archbishop of Philadelphia who was canonized in 1977. They are placed on the altar at St. Mary's on All Saints Day and the feast of each respective saint.

"We can't all go on pilgrimage, but we still want to be close to the saints," Father Giroux said.

He also has a small collection of relics of his own focused on modern-day saints. That includes a small piece of cloth that once belonged to St. Katherine Drexel, a Philadelphia heiress who founded an order ministering to the oppressed. And he has one from someone on his way to sainthood. It's a piece of cloth that once belonged to Pier Giorgio Frassati, who died in 1925, was beatified in 1990, and is considered as the global patron for youth.



Photo by Keith Benman/North Country Catholic

These reliquaries hold bone fragments from St. Francis of Assisi and St. John Neumann. They are placed on the altar at St. Mary's Potsdam on All Saints Day and the feast of each respective saint.

Father Giroux gave a short presentation on those relics last autumn at the Friday evening gathering of St. Mary's campus ministry at the Newman Club. Clarkson junior Lucas Roberts-Williams was among the students there.

Not long after that, Roberts-Williams was able to obtain a relic of his own when a friend gave him a scapular. The friend had made it a relic by touching it to the glass case containing a relic of St. Jude the Apostle, often called the patron of hopeless causes. The relic was a bone from the saint's arm encased in a carved wooden arm that made a stop in the diocese of Paterson, New Jersey, in December on its first tour ever outside of Italy.

"It helps remind you that you are in the presence of God and the company of the saints,"

Roberts-Williams said. "It's just a tangible reminder of that spiritual truth."

Roberts-Williams said he was first introduced to relics at a retreat he made as a college freshman and has been learning more about them ever since.

"The way we as Catholics value the body, it makes sense we'd venerate the saints in the body," he said.

Some of the most significant relics in the diocese of Ogdensburg are those of St. André Bessette, the brother of the Holy Cross who founded St. Joseph's Oratory in Montreal and is credited with numerous healings in his lifetime and after.

That's not surprising considering St. Joseph's Oratory is close by.

But it's also because Brother André often visited and attended Mass in the North Country, including in Malone,

where he had relatives.

He was made the patron saint of the merged Malone parishes in 2014, just four years after his canonization. At that time, St. Joseph's Oratory presented the parish with a first-class relic of brother André, a piece of cloth soaked in his blood.

There is also a table at which Brother André prayed with a local Malone family that was donated to St. John's church, in Plattsburgh.

In an age where narrative and image are so important, particularly in social media, there is a desire to be in the presence of something authentic, Father Giroux said.

Relics of the saints offer Catholics that chance.

"More than a photo or story or even a statue, it helps to get people in touch with them as a human being," he said.



Service Available

**D.L. CALARCO**  
Funeral Home, Inc.

135 Keyes Avenue  
Watertown • 782-4910

# MOH taking applications for mission trip

By Darcy Fargo  
Editor

Unable to travel to Nicaragua, where the organization has a facility, North Country Mission of Hope is still looking to help others in need, this time through a new type of mission trip.

"In 2018, when we took our last trip to Nicaragua in February, we had no idea it would be our last trip for this many years," said Deacon James Carlin, executive director of North Country Mission of Hope. "Between the political situation, the pandemic and other issues, it hasn't been a viable option to go back to our facility in Nicaragua. When I took over as executive director in January 2023, one of the mandates given to me by the board was to revitalize the mission portion of what we do."

Deacon Carlin said Mission of Hope supporters introduced the organization to Christian Appalachian Project (CAP), a charity founded by Father Ralph Beiting over 60 years ago to serve in the Appalachian region of southeastern Kentucky.

"I went down in August of last year to meet with them, and from that, a small mission group went down at the end of October and beginning of November 2023," he said. "We served a week there to get a feel for them and to let them get a feel for us to ensure we have the same values and could work together. We found it very enriching. It's dif-



North Country Mission of Hope Board Members, from left, David Curry, Ron Charette, David Fuller, Deacon James Carlin, Karen O'Brien, Kathy Fuller and Sally Kokes pose for a photo after completing a ramp project during a 2023 mission experience with Christian Appalachian Project, a non-denominational organization serving southeastern Kentucky. North Country Mission of Hope is currently accepting applications for a second mission trip with the organization.

ferent from Nicaragua, but it's a valuable and wonderful experience of camaraderie and fellowship while serving."

North Country Mission of Hope is now preparing for a return trip to work with CAP from July 27 to August 1 and is accepting applications from individuals interested in participating.

The experience is open to anyone age 14 and older.

While the mission focuses on renovating homes and building access ramps for the elderly or those in need,

no experience in that kind of work is necessary.

"For every five students under the age of 18, we have to have two adults," Deacon Carlin said. "We like to have a mix of students and adults, people who have been on mission and people who have never been on mission."

Deacon Carlin noted that the need is great for services CAP provides.

"It's different from Nicaragua, but both are rural pockets of need. Rural need and poverty have very distinct chal-

lenges, including lack of services and lack of opportunities," he said. "Poverty and a lack of jobs come from that."

A domestic trip may also appeal to some who aren't interested in international travel, the deacon said.

"It takes away that barrier of going abroad, different cultures and different languages," he said. "Mission experiences, whether abroad or here in the U.S. serve to help us be more of who God calls

## Opportunity for mission

The North Country Mission of Hope is offering a domestic mission experience with Christian Appalachian Program in the Appalachian Region of southeastern Kentucky. This trip will be Mission of Hope's second to this area

**Dates:** July 27 to August 1, 2024.

**Features:** The mission focuses on renovating homes and building home access ramps for the elderly or those in need. No experience necessary.

**For whom:** Anyone 14 years of age or older can apply.

**Contact:** Executive Director Deacon James Carlin via email at [jpcarlin1963@gmail.com](mailto:jpcarlin1963@gmail.com).

us to be, who Christ calls us to be. It gives us an opportunity to get out and serve others in ways we may not be able to help in our own communities. It's a chance to go out and reach out to others in a way that feeds who we are as Christians and as followers of Christ. It's a life-changing experience."

To learn more about the mission experience or to apply to participate, contact Deacon Carlin at [jpcarlin1963@gmail.com](mailto:jpcarlin1963@gmail.com).

Space on the trip is limited, and applying does not guarantee participation.

Visit our website  
[www.northcountrycatholic.org](http://www.northcountrycatholic.org)

- Read local stories and commentaries
- Search archived papers
- View diocesan events and much more

Find us on Facebook!



**MONASTERY CARD SHOP**  
Cards for All Occasions  
*Mass Enrollments for your living & deceased loved ones.*

**Precious Blood Monastery**  
OPEN: 9 AM - 5 PM  
SATURDAY 9 AM - 12 PM  
400 PRATT ST., WATERTOWN  
315-788-1669  
[www.sisterspreciousblood.org](http://www.sisterspreciousblood.org)

# Learning about trafficking, slavery

Before the Emancipation Proclamation to free the slaves in 1863, it was people of faith who were among those most responsible for raising awareness of the tragedies of slavery and who helped to rescue those held in bondage. Today, there are more slaves than ever before in human history. It is the second largest organized crime in the world.

On Sunday, March 3, two events were offered, one by Sisters of St. Joseph Social Justice Committee with other faith communities in Jefferson County and another by the Interfaith Council of Plattsburgh and Clinton County to educate about modern slavery and trafficking.

In Watertown, nearly 40 people attended the event. After viewing the video "Chosen," four speakers shared their work on human trafficking in our area and offered suggestions for action.

Below is a summary of their messages:

**Anita Seefried-Brown, Alliance for Better Communities**

"Just because we reside in a rural area, it does not mean that our children and adolescents are immune to the dangers of sex and human trafficking.

There are several vulnerabilities that can potentially lead to youth becoming victims of sex and human trafficking. Mental health challenges, excessive social media usage, and feelings of loneliness are some of the factors that make them susceptible to exploitation.

Disturbingly, according to the 2023 Prevention Needs Assessment Report administered to Jefferson County students in grades seven



Parent Victoria Recor, left and Sheriff Carrie Mangino, right, were among the speakers at a March 3 event in Watertown to educate about modern slavery and trafficking. A similar event was held that day in Plattsburgh.



through 12, 333 students, which is one in 12, reported attempting suicide between one and six or more times.

Furthermore, 1,467 students, 42.3% of the respondents, admitted to spending five to six or more hours daily on social media for non-school-related activities.

Even more concerning, one in 7.8 students reported feeling lonely all the time.

It is crucial for us to address these issues and take proactive measures to protect our youth. High consumption of social media provides an opportunity for sex traffickers to connect with, groom, and recruit vulnerable children and adolescents."

**Sheriff Carrie Mangino, Jefferson County Sheriff**

"I am passionate about keeping kids safe, not only physically, but emotionally and mentally. That means facing many challenges is our current digital world. My presentation is a raw discussion on the importance of keeping

children safe online and warning signs of online grooming which can lead to human trafficking.

Our online world with social media is a playground for child predators and we need to be diligent with our kids safety. No one can protect kids like their parents can, and we have to educate ourselves to do a better job."

**Miguel A Alamo, Child Advocacy Center of NNY, Victims Assistance Center of Jefferson County**

"Safe Harbour is a program created not only as a case management tool for our Human Trafficking population but also to help identify at risk youth and providing them alternatives to these dangerous activities. By providing education, shelter, financial assistance, nourishment, and emotional support just to name a few we hope to combat Human Trafficking and give independence to the survivors. Through understanding, compassion, and empathy we can create a brighter future filled with hope

and substantial accomplishments. Trafficking is in our backyard, and it doesn't have to be personal to be made personal. Act before it touches one closest to your heart. Together the difference is made!"

**Victoria Recor, Victim's Parent**

"As a community it's very important to be in unity and work together to combat this horrific crime that is happening here. We need to teach our children about self esteem and self-worth, teach them self-confidence and teach our children what love really is. It's also very important to get educated on the facts of human trafficking and stop turning our heads to the truth. Traffickers know our community and if we do nothing then lives won't be saved. Please free to contact me with any questions or need help getting educated." Viccirecor77@gmail.com

**Plattsburgh event**

The Plattsburgh event was held at the Temple Beth Israel in Plattsburgh and attended by around 30 individuals.

This was the third event on human trafficking to be held on the eastern side of the diocese. The film "Chosen" was presented followed by a presentation by Pastor Jonathan Phillips of the North Argyle Community Church. Pastor Phillips was featured in the film "Finding Faith" with Erik Estrada and spoke on groomers and the grooming process. Colleen Brown, Safe Harbour ambassador, addressed clues that could indicate that someone is being trafficked and programs that offer opportunities for survivors of human trafficking to move on with their lives.

The hope is that these two events will be replicated in other parishes and other faith-based organizations within the diocese. All of these speakers are very willing to help in any way they can to help eradicate human trafficking and slavery. For further info. regarding resources, contact Mary Skillan at mskillan30@gmail.com or Sister Bethany Fitzgearld at srbethsj@gmail.com.

APRIL 3, 2024

## OBITUARIES

**Brushton** – Mark E. “Mickey” Manson, 82; Mass of Christian Burial March 27, 2024 at St. Mary’s Church.

**Canton** – Richard Nestor Cassara, 82; Mass of Christian Burial March 26, 2024 at St. Mary’s Church.

**Carthage** – Louise Grace Ventiquattro, 61; Private Funeral Services at Bezanilla-McGraw Funeral Home; burial in St. James Cemetery.

**Colton** – Joseph A. Howe, 57; Funeral Services April 5, 2024 at the Buck Funeral Home.

**Croghan** – Marie F. (Scott) Nortz, 93; Mass of Christian Burial March 25, 2024 at St. Stephen’s Church.

**Dannemora** – Judy Ann (Coryer) Sorrell, 78; Mass of Christian Burial

March 26, 2024 at St. Joseph’s Church.

**Hogansburg** – Louise “Katsientha” (David) Cook, 90; Mass of Christian Burial March 27, 2024 at St. Regis Church; burial in St. Joseph’s Cemetery.

**Hogansburg** – Sheila M. (White) Marshall, 68; Funeral Services April 2, 2024 at Donaldson Funeral Home.

**Norfolk** – Barbara (Adams) Ferguson, 87; Graveside services in spring at Visitation Cemetery.

**Norwood** – Joseph P. McKenna, 85; Mass of Christian Burial March 27, 2024 at St. Andrew’s Church; burial in Calvary Cemetery.

**Ogdensburg** – Michael Ralph King, 75; Mass of Christian

Burial April 6, 2024 at St. Mary’s Cathedral.

**Peru** – Donald LeClair, 79; Funeral Services April 3, 2024 at the Hamilton Funeral Home; burial in Immaculate Conception Cemetery.

**Ticonderoga** – Betty L. Shook Herbst, 88; Mass of Christian Burial April 2, 2024 at St. Mary’s Church; burial in Yellow Mountain Baptist Church Cemetery, Spear, NC.

**Tupper Lake** – Elizabeth Ann (Bradley) Edwards, 88; Mass of Christian Burial March 27, 2024 at St. Alphonsus Church

**Watertown** – Dorothy (Clinch) Cahill, 92; Funeral Services March 29, 2024 at Cummings Funeral Service, Inc.; burial in Glenwood Cemetery.

## Bishop’s Public Schedule

**April 5** – 7 p.m. – Deacon Candidates Class on Canon Law at Wadhams Hall in Ogdensburg

**April 7** – 2:30 p.m. – Healing Mass for Those Who Suffered Abuse by Church Leadership and Others at St. Mary’s Church in Potsdam

**April 9** – Noon – Diocesan Staff Easter Day of Reflection at Wadhams Hall in Ogdensburg

**April 11** – 6 p.m. – Confirmation at The Roman Catholic Community of Cape Vincent, Rosiere and Chaumont (at All Saints Church in Chaumont)

**April 12** – 9:30 a.m. – Diocesan Department Head Meeting at Wadhams Hall in Ogdensburg

**April 14** – 2 p.m. – Confirmation at Holy Cross Parish (at St. John the Baptist Church) in Plattsburgh

**April 15-16** – Seminarian Visit at Mount St. Mary’s in Emmitsburg, Maryland

## Environmental Stewardship

## Total solar eclipse

Next week, our region will experience a once in a lifetime natural event – a total solar eclipse. Whether the skies are clear or overcast, the effects on humans and natural inhabitants should be similar. Complete darkness will engulf the area briefly in mid-afternoon. This will have a brief, yet definite, cooling effect on the atmosphere that helps to reduce the speed of the wind and form a nighttime stillness. Such a calming of the air tends to create confusion in birds, squirrels and other types of wildlife.

The eerie calm that typically settles over the region, along with the visual sensation of having the stars appear if the sky is clear, can inspire a profound sense of awe. Although lasting only a few minutes, this rare occurrence usually lures tens of thousands of people to experience its sensory features.

Welcoming visitors with a warm smile and kind gesture is one way to extend hospitality, an important part of being a follower of Jesus. And after everyone has gone home, it is also necessary to do your share in picking up any trash left behind. No one likes to clean up after a party, but removing litter from a sidewalk, trail, shore or summit is part of being a good steward of the natural world.

Right now, pray for clear skies on the afternoon of April 8, and trust in the fact that the Divine always answers our prayers in a way that provides us with whatever is necessary for our best life experience. Be sure to have protective eyewear and a bag for any trash you may encounter. Finally, enjoy the eclipse, not only by staring at the sky but also by noting the subtle changes that overcome the landscape. Listen, feel the changes in the movement of air on your skin, and note any differences in smells. Your other senses will enhance sight. Give thanks to God for this rare experience.

## 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:  
**April 11** – 6 p.m. – St. James Minor Church, Carthage  
**April 16** – 1 p.m. – Diocesan offices, Ogdensburg

## To Report Abuse

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

## Rest in Peace

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

**April 3** – Msgr. Philias Garand, 1942

**April 4** – Rev. Ronald Brabant, 1963; Rev. Francis J. Beyette, 1984

**April 5** – Rev. Florence McCarthy, 1901; Rev. Amedee Lacasse, M.S.C., 1941; Msgr. Francis P. Devan, 1992

**April 6** – Rev. Joseph E. Berard, 1942; Msgr. Arthur M. Gilbert, 1965

**April 7** – Rev. Fabien Barnabe, 1883; Rev. Francois Cing-mars, 1902; Rev. James E. Duffy, 1934

**April 8** – Rev. Benjamin Grom, M.S.C., 1893; Rev. Patrick Carr, O.S.A., 1901

**April 9** – Msgr. Lawrence M. Deno, 2023

The Diocese of Ogdensburg

NORTH COUNTRY  
CATHOLIC

## Subscription Campaign

Please Check Appropriate Box(es):

 New  Renew  Check Enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Parish \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

 Please e-mail me my copy of the NCC in place of a paper copy

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Annual Subscription Cost/Level

- Regular Subscription, \$27  
 Outside of the Diocese, \$30  
 Patron Subscription, \$35  
 Special Patron Subscription, \$50  
 Sustaining Patron Subscription, \$100  
 Extraordinary Patron Subscription, \$250

Mail Payment to:

PO Box 106

Canajoharie, NY 13317

If you would like to subscribe by credit card please visit our website: [www.northcountrycatholic.org](http://www.northcountrycatholic.org)

# PROMISE TO PROTECT

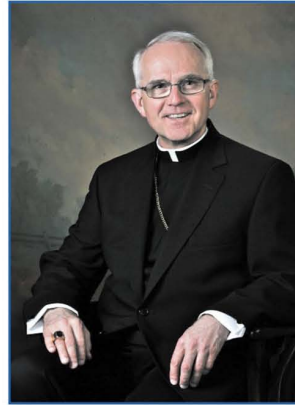


# PLEDGE TO HEAL

Dear Friends in Christ,

April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month. This is a time to recognize the importance of collaboration and community efforts to prevent child abuse and neglect, the most common form of abuse. It is also a time to educate yourself on how to recognize and report abuse so minors and others who are vulnerable are better protected. Everyone has a role to play in helping to prevent child abuse and promoting healthy, safe communities.

Our diocese places the utmost importance on its mission to bring about reconciliation and healing for victims/survivors of sexual abuse at the hands of clergy and other Church personnel. We have put policies and procedures in place to prevent any recurrence of this plague in the future. We remain fully committed and dedicated to creating an enduring culture of safety and trust in all parishes, Catholic Schools, and other diocesan entities.



Those who have been harmed by Church leaders deserve pastoral care to help guide their healing journey. The first step in that process is to contact our Victim Assistance Coordinator, Terriane Yanulavich, Ph.D., LMHC, at (518) 358-3145 Ext. 7179 (days) or (518) 569-0612 (evenings). Dr. Yanulavich will assist with the intake and healing process. All allegations are automatically reported by Church personnel to local authorities, including law enforcement. Victim/survivors are also encouraged to contact local authorities regarding the allegation.

Mr. John Morrison heads our diocesan Safe Environment Office. He oversees the implementation of national and diocesan policies aimed at maintaining safe environments for all minors and vulnerable adults in our diocese. Mr. Morrison works cooperatively with leaders in our parishes, Catholic schools, and other entities to fulfill the mandates of the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*. We are grateful for his tireless efforts.

This year the diocese will have an independent, on-site audit to determine compliance with national policies outlined in the *Charter*. While our diocese has established an exemplary track record of compliance during past audits, we will not rest on these laurels.

The success of our efforts to date speak to the energy and dedication of everyone involved - clergy, employees, and volunteers. It also establishes a strong foundation for safeguarding efforts to build upon, both in terms of the information gathered as well as the collaborative culture of safety we are building. Our promise to protect and our pledge to heal is the guiding principle leading our actions now and in the future. Please review the information on the opposite page carefully and contact our Safe Environment Office at (315) 393-2920 with any questions or comments you may have.

With a Shepherd's care and concern,

Most Reverend Terry R. LaValley  
Bishop of Ogdensburg



## Child Abuse Prevention Blessing

Dear Lord,

We ask You to bless us "Your holy people" who have gathered to learn new ways to help stop child sexual abuse. Open our hearts to Your call to be the "eyes, ears and voice of children and young people everywhere." Give us the vision and grace we need to fulfill the special "commitments" that each of us has made to "Protecting All God's Children" in our homes, churches, schools, and communities.

~Amen.



**DIOCESAN STATISTICS  
2022 to 2023**



Roman Catholic  
Diocese of Ogdensburg

- **3393** Students received Safe Environment Training in Catholic Schools and Faith Formation programs
- **549** Background checks completed on clergy, employees and volunteers
- **765** Clergy, employees and volunteers completed the VIRTUS (Safe Environment) monthly training bulletins
- **314** New employees and volunteers completed initial Safe Environment training in 40 live
- **196** Existing employees and volunteers completed Safe Environment refresher training online.
- **0** New allegations of sexual misconduct against clergy

“Part of being a safe adult involves establishing and maintaining healthy and appropriate boundaries.”

**Be a Safe Adult!**

VIRTUS<sup>®</sup>  
Excellence  
Builds  
Trust



- Do...**
- Support, believe, and reassure the child
  - Understand your limits, you are not an investigator
  - Provide a quiet, safe environment
  - When you are done talking to the child, write down the child's exact words
  - Ask limited, open-ended questions.
  - Respect the child's right to privacy
  - Seek help and advice
  - Report any suspicions of abuse/neglect

- Don't...**
- Make assumptions or promises
  - Show shock or other emotions
  - Interrogate or investigate
  - Put words in the child's mouth
  - Be judgmental about the abuser; *it is often someone the child loves/trusts*
  - Assume someone else will report the abuse

**IF YOU SUSPECT A CHILD HAS BEEN HARMED OR IS AT RISK:**

**Mandated Reporters**      **Non-Mandated Reporters**  
**1-800-635-1522**                      **1-800-342-3720**

**IF YOU BELIEVE A CHILD IS IN IMMEDIATE DANGER OF ABUSE, PLEASE CALL 911**

**EMERGENCY  
DIAL 911**

**How can we prevent sexual abuse?**

By working together, we can identify potential risks, prevent harm and help to reduce the circumstances of sexual abuse. It is up to us as caring adults and parents, all of us - regardless of our role within the community - to guide and protect the most vulnerable.

**For more information, or to register for an upcoming VIRTUS Protecting God's Children training session, please contact the Safe Environment Office at:**  
 (315)393-2920  
[www.rcdony.org/safe-environment.html](http://www.rcdony.org/safe-environment.html)

**Human Trafficking**

The recruitment, transportation, harboring or receipt of persons by means of force, fraud, or coercion... for the purpose of exploitation.  
 For more information, visit:  
<http://www.usccb.org/about/anti-trafficking-program/human-trafficking.cfm>

**NATIONAL TRAFFICING RESOURCE HOTLINE:**  
 1-888-373-7888

**REPORT ABUSE OF VULNERABLE ADULTS**  
 Local: 518-402-6513  
 NYS Only  
 (Adult Protection Services):  
 844-697-3505

This centerspread is provided by:  
**Diocese of Ogdensburg Safe Environment Office**

# CATHOLIC WORLD AT A GLANCE

## Cuban archbishop prays for electricity, food and freedom

The archbishop of Santiago de Cuba, Dionisio Guillermo García, offered a lengthy prayer before the nation's patroness, the Virgin of Charity of Cobre, on Palm Sunday, imploring the Virgin for the needs of the people, hoping that they find freedom and the light of faith amid adversity. "Our people have said and repeat what we all know: electricity and food. Is that unattainable? Is that asking too much? No no no. Our people also ask for freedom, so that everyone can reach their goals in life and ensure that their children benefit the most." In an atmosphere of silence, the archbishop offered his prayer in the emblematic National Shrine of Our Lady of Charity of Cobre Basilica. This took place a week after crowds in several cities in Cuba took to the streets to demand a change in the system, due to the continuous power outages and food shortages on the island, where people have been living under a dictatorship for more than 60 years. Continuing his prayer, García referred to the role of the Virgin Mary as the mediator of the supplications and longings of the Cuban people: "I want to ask you what the pilgrims come before you to pray for... We want to live with less pressing needs, we want to try to live a normal life in which everyone can make their plan and life project." "We want to use the hours of our time in reading and in service, but many times we use them in the daily struggle to obtain the essentials of life, which are almost always in short supply. The nights become long, without power. We ask, Lord, that you give us inner power," he continued.

## Catholic Med School seeks accreditation, eyes 2027 opening

A new Catholic, osteopathic medical school that will be housed on the campus of Benedictine College hopes to open in the fall of 2027, the project's founding president told CNA this week. Dr. George Mychaskiw, an osteopath and a pediatric cardiac anesthesiologist, told CNA that the school in February completed its application to the Commission on Osteopathic College Accreditation, the body designated by the U.S. Department of Education to accredit programs that grant the doctor of osteopathic medicine (DO) degree. The planned school, first announced last September and dubbed the St. Padre Pio Institute for the Relief of Suffering, will adhere to Ex Corde Ecclesiae, St. John Paul II's 1990 apostolic constitution on the mission of Catholic colleges and universities. It will be housed on the campus of Benedictine College in Atchison, Kansas, but as a separate institution. The school aims for "candidate status" by December 2025, with classes beginning during fall 2027. (Legally, because of the accreditation process, the school cannot yet advertise for or accept prospective students, Mychaskiw noted.) The Catholic medical school will aim to "emphasize that all life is equal and equally worthy and equally precious from the moment of conception to the moment of natural death," the DO said. The school aims to train new doctors – who will, upon graduation, practice in a world replete with moral challenges – in Catholic bioethics, morality, and theology.

# Pew: Restrictions on religion reach 'peak levels' globally

By Daniel Payne  
Catholic News Agency

Government restrictions on religion reached their highest levels ever in a key global survey this month, one that has been monitoring those trends for nearly two decades.

Pew Research said this month that its religious restriction and hostilities survey showed that in 2021, government restrictions on religion reached "a new peak globally," registering "the highest global median score" in the nearly 20 years that they have been analyzing the global data.

Overall China, Russia, Afghanistan, Iran, and Algeria topped the report's list of countries with "very high" government restrictions. Nigeria and India were the worst-ranked countries for social hostilities.

Pew in its report noted several changes to both lists. Between 2020 and 2021, Pakistan and Turkmenistan moved from the list of countries with "high" government restrictions to those with "very high" restrictions. The Eastern African country of Eritrea and the Southeast Asian country of Brunei both moved from the "very high" category to "high."

Roughly equal numbers of countries between 2020 and 2021 had increases and decreases in their government restriction scores, Pew said, while 55 countries had no changes at all.

No countries moved up into the "very high" category of social hostilities, meanwhile, though several – including Iraq and Libya – moved from "very high" to "high."

The survey showed religious groups facing government harassment in 183 countries, which Pew said was the highest on record; the governments of just over 160 countries, meanwhile – a near-record number – interfered with religious worship.

"Harassment" in Pew's survey includes the "use of physical force targeting religious groups" and "derogatory comments by government officials" as well as "laws and policies that single out groups or make religious practice more difficult."

"Interference" in religious worship, meanwhile, was defined as "laws, policies, and actions that disrupt re-

ligious activities, the withholding of permits for such activities, or denying access to places of worship" as well as rules that interfere with burial rights and other components of religious belief.

The total number of countries with "high" or "very high" levels of government restrictions declined slightly from the prior year, though the "median index score for all countries" still rose overall.

Just over one-fifth of countries had high levels of "social hostilities" involving "violence and harassment by private individuals, organizations, or groups," a decline from its peak of about one-third of countries in 2012.

Among the cited restrictions and hostilities in the report are Nicaragua's persecution of the Catholic Church in that country and the kidnapping of multiple Catholic clergy in Haiti.

The survey also cited incidents such as what the U.S. State Department called a campaign for the "de-Islamization of the Netherlands," led by politician Geert Wilders, as well as reports of antisemitism in Finland coupled with an insufficient police response to those incidents.

Christians were targeted in 160 of the surveyed countries, while Muslims were harassed and restricted in just over 140 and Jews in 91.

The survey argued that the frequency of harassment "should not be interpreted" to indicate that those groups are the "most persecuted" in the world. Jews, for instance, were the third-most harassed religious group in the survey, though they make up just 0.2% of the world's population.

Globally, across regions, countries in Eastern Europe and Asia posted the highest rates of government restrictions on religion, while countries in Western Europe and much of Africa reported high to moderate levels of those restrictions. Restrictions in the United States were listed as "moderate."

Overall, the survey's global government restriction index was the highest on record, reaching 3.0 on a 10-point scale and up from 1.8 in 2007.

The 10-point social hostilities index, meanwhile, stood at 1.6, up from 1.0 in 2007.

## 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:** Apr. 14, Apr. 28

**Time:** 4 to 5 p.m.

**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 to attend, please go to [www.rcdony.org/priesthooddiscernment](http://www.rcdony.org/priesthooddiscernment)

## ADIRONDACK MOUNTAIN

## LENENT PROGRAM

Lake Pleasant – St. James Church to host Bishop Barron's 4-week presentation on the Eucharist.

**Date:** April 3

**Time:** 5 p.m.

**Features:** The Seder meal will be celebrated on March 27. The four presentations will follow a simple shared Lenten meal of soup and bread. Please join fellow parishioners and friends to enjoy a time together developing a deeper understanding of love for the Eucharist.

## CLINTON NORTHERN FRANKLIN

## SURVIVING DIVORCE

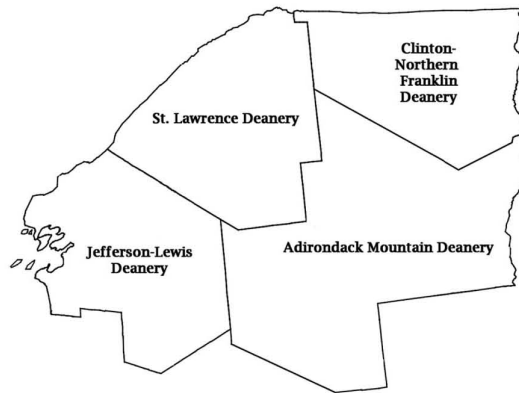
Plattsburgh – The Family Life Office will be offering the Surviving Divorce program.

**Date:** April 4 to June 20, Thursday evenings

**Place:** Newman Center

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

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



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.

For more information, contact Steve Tartaglia at 315-393-2920.

## BREAKFAST

Brushton – St. Mary's Church will sponsor a breakfast.

**Date:** April 7

**Time:** 7:30 a.m. to 11

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

**Cost:** Adults, \$23; Children 6-12, \$6; Under 5, Free

**Menu:** Scrambled/fried eggs, home fries, homemade corned beef hash, sausage, bacon, pancakes, French toast, toast, OJ, tomato juice, coffee, tea.

**Contact:** Take out available, call 518 529 6580

## DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY

Mooers Forks – St. Ann's Church to have Divine Mercy Celebration.

**Date:** April 7

**Schedule:** 2 p.m. - Exposition and Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament; 2:15 p.m. to 2:45, Confessions; 3 p.m., Singing of the Chaplet of the Divine Mercy and Benediction.

**Contact:** For inquiries, please call 518-236-5632

## DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY

Malone – Divine Mercy Sunday to be held.

**Date:** April 7

**Place:** Notre Dame Church

**Schedule:** Mass at 11 a.m.; Ex-

position of the Blessed Sacrament 12 p.m. to 3 p.m.; Confessions 1 p.m. to 2:50 p.m.; Chaplet of the Divine Mercy and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament 3 p.m.

**Features:** All are welcome to join in any or all of the above times of prayer and praise as your schedule permits.

**Contact:** For additional information please call the St. André's Parish Office, 518-483-1300.

## COMPASSIONATE COMPANIONS VOLUNTEER TRAINING

Plattsburgh – Compassion Companions of Clinton County to have a volunteer training.

**Date:** April 19

**Time:** 8:45 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

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

**Features:** Compassionate Companion Trained Volunteers are generous and kind people carrying out errands of mercy to help their neighbors age in place more successfully by providing their gifts of companionship and friendship, easing isolation and loneliness by establishing and strengthening meaningful social relationships between older adults and their family, friends and volunteers.

**Contact:** For more information contact Starr at 518-825-0697 or [Starr@stalexanders.org](mailto:Starr@stalexanders.org)

## LENENT SERIES

Ellenburg – Join us for a series of Lenten Talks, Sharing and Prayer.

**Time:** 10:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.

**Place:** Adirondack House of Prayer

**Schedule:** April 20, Discipleship in Three Stories in Mark: come and discover the process of discipleship illustrated by three stories in the Gospel of Mark followed by a simple lunch and a Holy Hour based on the discipleship of the Woman at the Well; April 23, Eucharist and the Call to Discipleship: Come and join us for a presentation on the Eucharist and the Call to Discipleship followed by a simple lunch and a Holy Hour.

**Features:** These events are free and open to all. A donation to help cover lunch will be gratefully accepted.

**Contact:** For registration, contact Sarah at 518-534-9976 or Email: [olaplayerhouse@gmail.com](mailto:olaplayerhouse@gmail.com)

## JEFFERSON-LEWIS

## DIVINE MERCY CELEBRATION

Watertown – Divine Mercy Sunday will be celebrated along with the Divine Mercy Novena beginning on Good Friday.

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

**Date:** April 7

**Time:** 3 p.m.

April 7 at 3 p.m.,

**Features:** Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, singing of the Chaplet of Divine Mercy, confession, and a procession. You may bring your own Divine Mercy picture to be specially blessed. The Celebration will be approximately one hour with refreshments to follow.

**Contact:** For more information on Divine Mercy Sunday, call Judy Boulton at 315-783-7349 or Kim Tyler at 315-486-4542.

## DIVINE MERCY

Houseville – Divine Mercy to be celebrated.

**Date:** April 7

**Time:** 2 p.m.

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

**Features:** Celebrants will be

Father Douglas Decker and Father Severinus Torwoe as homilist. The Exposition of the Most Blessed Sacrament will take place at 2 p.m. followed by the Sacrament of Reconciliation until 3 p.m. At the same time, 2 p.m. to 3 p.m., the DVD "The Miracle Box" will be shown in the church hall. Adoration will continue at 3 p.m., followed by the homily, the Divine Mercy Chaplet, Benediction, the Blessing of Holy Cards and Petitions and the Veneration of the Divine Mercy Image. The program concludes with a reception in the church hall.

**Contact:** 315-348-6260 for more information.

## SPAGHETTI &amp; MEATBALL DINNER

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

**Date:** April 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 benefit Augustinian Academy.

**Date:** April 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:** Sponsored by Carthage K of C, Father John Cosmic #291 and Ave Maria Circle.

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

## CLM MASS AND PRESENTATION

Watertown – The Commissioned Lay Ministry Association of the Jefferson-Lewis Deanery Presents an evening of prayer and reflection with a celebration of Mass

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

and presentation.

**Date:** April 18**Time:** Mass at 5:30 p.m. with dinner and presentation following.**Place:** St. Anthony's Church  
**Cost:** \$20 if attending the dinner, no charge if only coming to the program.**Features:** Presentation entitled "The Eucharist and Reconciliation" by His Excellency, Bishop Terry LaValley.**Contact:** To register go to <https://www.rcdony.org/clm-event>

## ST. LAWRENCE

## ROSARY WITH DEVOTIONS

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

**Date:** April 6**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:** April 6**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:** April 6**Time:** 9 a.m.**Place:** Sacred Heart Church

## ALPHA

Ogdensburg – ALPHA to be held at St. Mary's Cathedral.

**Date:** Beginning April 9 during the Spring on Tuesdays**Time:** 5:30 p.m. to 8**Place:** Brzana Hall**Features:** Alpha is an opportunity to explore life and the Christian Faith in a friendly, open

and informal environment. No pressure. No follow up. No charge. Ask the big questions in life and share with others in an inviting and welcoming environment.

**Contact:** Registration is now open! For more information, please call the parish office at 315-393-3930 or e-mail [ogdensburgsec@rcdony.org](mailto:ogdensburgsec@rcdony.org)

## STEPPING STONES CRAFT &amp; VENDOR FAIR

Norfolk - Youth group sponsoring a craft and vendor fair.

**Date:** April 13**Time:** 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.**Place:** Fr. Amyot Parish Center**Cost:** \$2 per person/\$5 per family**Features:** Vendor, Craft, 50/50, Silent Auction and more. Tables and chairs will be provided for vendors. Each vendor will have a 10x10 space. Cost is \$25 a space, payment is due by April 5. Checks can be made out to: PVSRSA Stepping Stones and mailed to: Church of the Visitation, PO Box 637, Norfolk, NY 13667; [VENMO@michelle-garrow-1](mailto:VENMO@michelle-garrow-1)**Contact:** Any questions, please call 315-212-5004

## MONTHLY BRUNCH

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

**Date:** April 14 (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.

## ALPHA

Massena – You are invited to ALPHA.

**Date:** Tuesdays starting April 2**Time:** 6 p.m. to 8:30**Place:** St. Mary's Social Hall**Features:** Free to all and includes a free meal.**Contact:** Parish office at 315-769-2469 or go to [massenacatholics.com](http://massenacatholics.com) for info or to register.

## CATHOLIC PARENTING

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

**Date:** April 21**Time:** 12:30**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](mailto:formation-stp@gmail.com)

## DIOCESAN EVENTS

## DOVS RAFFLE

The Diocese of Ogdensburg Vocation Society (DOVS) is having a Raffle from Sunday, April 21-June 20, 2024 to support promoting the culture of vocations in the Diocese. On June 20, the DOVS will be making a Pilgrimage to St. Anne's Shrine, Isle la Motte, VT to pray for vocations.

**Cost:** The cost of the tickets is \$5.00 or 5 tickets for \$20.00.**Features:** 1st Prize, \$500.; 2nd Prize, Quilt and Rocking Chair; 3rd Prize, \$50 gift card, \$25. Visa Gift Card, \$25 Gift Card to Walmart.**Contact:** For any questions, contact Constance Randall, [coonierandall47@yahoo.com](mailto:coonierandall47@yahoo.com) (315) 783-0574.

## LEAD EVENTS

The following is a list of LEAD (Leaders for Evangelization and Discipleship) events that will be held across the diocese.

**Schedule:** April 7, Watertown, Hearthside, SSJ Motherhouse, 1 p.m. to 3, "Sacred Scripture the Big Picture"; No Cost

April 10, Virtual, 6p.m. to 8, "Vocation of the Catechist"; No Cost

April 11, Plattsburgh Regional Office, 1 p.m. to 3, "Child Methodologies and Learning Styles Part 1"; No Cost

April 14, Massena, St. Mary's Social Hall 1 p.m. to 3, "Catholic Social Teaching"; No Cost

April 27, Massena, St. Mary's Social Hall, 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m., "Using CHOSEN as a Tool for Catechesis"; <https://www.rcdony.org/Chosen1>, \$10**Features:** LEAD offers quality diocesan and regional events to support the varied work of parish ministries. These opportunities include spiritual, personal and professional development, networking and days of reflection. All involved in parish ministries are invited to attend LEAD events. If there is a cost associated with the event, parishes may receive a bill.**Contact:** To register go to: [www.rcdony.org/certworkshops](http://www.rcdony.org/certworkshops) unless otherwise noted.

## 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

## YOUTH RALLY

Massena – Diocesan Youth Rally to be held for grades 6-12.

**Date:** April 20**Time:** 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.**Place:** Trinity Catholic School  
**Cost:** \$20 per student, \$10 per chaperone**Features:** Games, Music, Food, Fun, and Faith. Join us for a great day! Mass with Bishop LaValley at 4 p.m.**Contact:** To register go to <http://www.rcdony.org/newsevents/youth-rally.html> or contact [asoltero@rcdony.org](mailto:asoltero@rcdony.org)

## RACHELS VINEYARD

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

**Date:** May 24-26**Place:** Guggenheim Lodge**Features:** If you or a friend are suffering after abortion loss, find hope and healing at the spring Rachel's Vineyard Retreat.**Contact:** Register online: [www.rcdony.org/pro-life](http://www.rcdony.org/pro-life) or contact The Respect Life Office formore information: [cmner@rcdony.org](mailto:cmner@rcdony.org) or [www.rachelsvineyard.org](http://www.rachelsvineyard.org) for a list of locations.

## CAMP GUGGENHEIM

Saranac Lake – Registration is now open for Camp Guggenheim.

**Schedule:** Session 1: June 30 to July 3 (11-13 yrs old); Session 2: July 7 to July 12 (12-15 yrs old) \$425; Session 3: July 14 to July 19 (12-15 yrs old) \$425; Session 4: July 21 to July 26 (12-15 yrs old) \$425; Session 5: July 28 to Aug. 2 (12-15 yrs old) \$425; Session 6: Aug. 4 to Aug. 9 (16-18 yrs old) \$425**Cost:** Session 1, \$200 per Camper. Session 2-6, \$425 per camper**Features:** Since 1972, young people have called Guggenheim "home away from home." Located on the shores of lower Saranac Lake, Summer Camp Guggenheim is a great place to make friends, draw closer to Christ and have a whole bunch of fun in a natural setting.**Contact:** For more information or to register go to [www.rcdony.org/youth/camp](http://www.rcdony.org/youth/camp) by June 1

## FOSTER GRANDPARENT

FGP is a local program that shows you how you can apply the skills and wisdom you have acquired to make a difference in the lives of others. Get involved in the community and build relationships to last a lifetime. If you're 55 or older and want to share your experience and compassion, you have what it takes to be a Foster Grandparent. You'll also receive a small bi-weekly, non-taxable stipend that cannot be held against any current benefits you may already have as well as paid mileage for your travel. Additionally, you receive paid holidays, vacations, sick and personal leave. Opportunities available in Franklin, Essex, Clinton, St. Lawrence and Jefferson County.

**Contact:** Melissa Howard, Volunteer Coordinator at (518) 359-7688 or E-mail: [mhoward@cathcharities.org](mailto:mhoward@cathcharities.org)

## CALLED TO SERVE

# Work on it after Easter

Happy Easter! Happy Spring!

Permit me to take a tremendous leap of faith and say that winter is finished with us.

After all, the St. Lawrence Seaway is open. That must mean something.

I do recall a day in April back in the 1980s when some relatives from downstate were literally stuck in snow somewhere around Barneveld. Another careful made it to Lowville, but there they stayed until morning.

But that was "back in the day." Nothing like that could happen again. Could it?

Good weather means it is time to make repairs around the homestead. My to-do list is formidable. I recall a line my good friend John Camen delivered on the day we closed on our first, and so far, only house.

"You'll never stop working on it," John said from behind a studio camera during a commercial break in the TV7 Evening News.

John was right. We are in the same home many decades later and we are still "working on it."

Working on it is the best description of our ongoing spiritual development, too.

So many women and men think their days of learning about their faith ends when they receive confirmation. There are a few who believe ordination as a deacon or priest is like graduation. I recall a limerick that started "no more teachers, no more books..."

The reality is we should never stop learning. We should never stop trying to

grow spiritually.

Kathy has an endless supply of website articles on a myriad of human and spiritual topics that she shares with me. I read almost all of them. I find them all interesting. They expand my mind and heart. I do not agree with everything I read, but that is not as important as searching my mind and heart to discover why I do not agree.

That is the kind of honest soul searching that leads to growth and brings us closer to God.

Lent may be over, but Easter is not the closing chapter for Cath-

olic Christians. Easter should open the door for us. Jesus was resurrected from death to save us. His resurrection should prompt us to want to learn more about him and to grow closer to him.

St. John's words from the Gospel on Divine Mercy Sunday seem appropriate. Jesus said, "Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed."

*Deacon Kevin Mastellon ministers in Watertown.*

*He is the Director of Permanent Deacons for the Diocese of Ogdensburg.*



Deacon  
Kevin Mastellon

## New film highlights power of the Eucharist

By **Francesca Pollio Fenton**  
Catholic News Agency

A new film focusing on the transformative power of the Eucharist will be hitting the big screen this June.

"Jesus Thirsts: The Miracle of the Eucharist" will take viewers on a journey to rediscover and revive the importance of the Eucharist through dialogue with notable Catholic figures by exploring the biblical origins of the Eucharist and sharing personal stories from those whose lives have been impacted by the Blessed Sacrament.

The film will be shown in theaters nationwide June 4, 5, and 6 through Fathom Events. Each date will consist of two showings, a 4 p.m. and 7 p.m. showing in each given time zone.

Several well-known Catholics make an appearance in the film including Father Donald

Calloway, Scott Hahn, Jim Wahlberg, Curtis Martin, Chris Stefanick, Father Robert Spitzer, Bishop Andrew Cozzens, and Tim Gray, among others.

Deacon Steve Greco is the executive producer of the film. He spoke with CNA about the inspiration behind the film and what he hopes viewers will take away from it.

Greco explained that amid the ongoing Eucharistic Revival in the U.S., he felt it was "very critical that we have a movie focusing on the real presence of Jesus with top Catholic theologians and leaders across the country and across the world."

"The movie is going to change people's lives because the most important thing for us right now is to understand how much God loves us," he said. "And what the movie talks about is that Jesus is the person-

ification of love through the Mass and through the Eucharist."

"I believe the Holy Spirit has guided us in making this movie."

He added that the film has a special focus on young adults due so many leaving the Church and their lack of belief.

"Hopefully, and we believe, they will realize that this is real. This isn't just a symbol. This isn't just a tradition. This is real. This is Jesus," Greco emphasized.

Another important demographic highlighted in the movie is the Hispanic population. Greco pointed out the fact that the Catholic Hispanic population is one of the fastest-growing populations in the Church and "is on fire in many places."

Oscar Delgado, a former NBC journalist turned film producer, who is also bilingual, speaks in Spanish in

the film about an adoration chapel he helped build in Chicago, which is home to the largest monstrance in the world.

Greco added that they partnered with the Knights of Columbus to add an 13-minute adjunctive film, produced by the Knights of Columbus, titled "Our Lady of Guadalupe: Woman of the Eucharist."

The short film will air after "Jesus Thirsts" and explores the centrality of the Eucharist in that famous Marian apparition.

Greco shared that he has three hopes for what people will take away from watching this movie: that people know how much they are loved by Jesus, that they go to Mass more frequently, and that more people will feel called to go to adoration and, because of this, that there will be an increase in religious vocations.

"To have Eucharistic adoration changes you," Greco said. "We know for a fact that many vocations come from Eucharistic adoration."

He added: "So we hope there's an uptick, if not a dramatic uptick, in religious vocations that come out of this film. We hope that the attendance at church, the attendance at adoration, the prayer life is transformed and that people, again, are transformed by the love of Jesus."

"We really believe that every priest, every deacon, every bishop, every Catholic needs to see this."



## SUNDAY'S SCRIPTURE

## 'We could replace Thomas in the story'

Have you ever been called a "doubting Thomas?" Being called a doubting Thomas is not a compliment. We use that expression when a person has a hard time accepting the obvious. The doubting Thomas is hardheaded and won't believe when everyone else believes.

Sometimes doubt is necessary. For example, most of us probably would not believe in flying saucers unless we saw one land in our front lawns. Even then, we would probably want to make sure that our Kool-Aid had not been spiked.

Jesus appears to his disciples when Thomas was absent. His appearance strengthens their faith. But Jesus does much more than that. He gives them peace, a very fragile commodity in life. Jesus shows his hands and feet, in other words, the wounds that he had upon his death - a proof that he rose from the dead.

Then, he does something very strange. He

breathes on them. We don't usually breathe on someone. It's not considered polite. Breathing on someone could be offensive, especially if the aroma is that of alcohol. In fact, we spend lots of money on mouthwashes, gum, handheld sprays, and flavored sheets of paper to make sure that our breath is not offensive.

But the breath of Jesus is very special. Just as an EMT's breath can bring out life in a person about to die, so, too, this special breath of Jesus gives life, gives peace because this breath forgives sins. Sin hurts life; sin restricts life; sin is the opposite of life. So, Jesus breathes this Holy Spirit on the apostles and gives them the power and authority to forgive sins.

Effectively, Jesus did two things: he proved his resurrection from the dead and bestowed the fullness of his mercy on his Church to be passed on by his disciples. We have here two truths: the truth of the Resurrection

April 7

**Second Sunday of Easter  
Divine Mercy Sunday**

READINGS

Acts 4:32-35

1 John 5:1-6

John 20:19-31

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

and the truth of God's mercy.

All of this happens to the apostles, but Thomas was not with them. But why wouldn't Thomas accept the testimony of his friends, the other apostles? After all, in our own learning we accept the testimony of others. We accept the word of others who explain the sciences to us. We often believe gossip even if it is not always true.

But Thomas can't believe. Who knows why? In fact, he says he won't believe until he places his hand in the wounds, the same wounds that Jesus showed to the other disciples.

What is the point of all this? We could replace Thomas in the story. We often have doubts; we question our faith; we want more proof; we want to be sure. Something shakes our faith, and we wonder where God is. Sometimes we wonder if God can truly be merciful towards us with our many sins.

Doubt and lack of faith are not the same. Honest doubt leads to honest questions. Honest questions lead to answers. This kind of doubt is healthy.

When doubt turns to stubbornness and stubbornness into a tunnel-vision lifestyle, we have manufactured a reason not to believe and a reason to reject God's mercy.

Yes, Thomas seemed stubborn, but Jesus, in his mercy, returns and visits Thomas and invites him to see and touch. He invites Thomas to get over his doubt, and his doubt turns into faith: "My Lord and my God."

Jesus ends his en-

counter with Thomas by praising those who will believe without seeing. In other words, Jesus praises us because we believe without seeing.

Remember that great action of Jesus. He breathed on them giving them the Holy Spirit, breathing out his mercy on the Church through the forgiveness of sins that we celebrate in the sacrament of reconciliation.

This is Divine Mercy Sunday. Perhaps the words of this hymn can capture for us what the apostles experienced.

*O breathe on me, O  
breath of God,  
fill me with life anew  
that I may love  
the things You love, and  
do what you would do.*

*O breathe on me, O  
breath of God,  
until my heart is pure;  
until my will is one  
with Yours,  
to do and to endure.*

*O breathe on me, O  
breath of God*

## MAKING SENSE OF BIOETHICS

## Poking the hornet's nest of IVF

A sweeping decision by the Alabama Supreme Court in February sent shock waves through the world of assisted reproduction. Justice Jay Mitchell, writing on behalf of the court's 7-2 majority, concluded that human embryos in IVF clinics "are 'children,' ... without exception based on developmental stage, physical location, or any other ancillary characteristics."

A firestorm followed. The decision uncomfortably reignited basic ethical questions that

those in the IVF business had hoped behind us. It had obvious financial implications, since it allowed parents to seek damages against IVF clinics when their embryonic children were lost or destroyed. It effectively upended the tacit assumption guiding the work of every IVF clinic, namely, that human embryos are nothing special, just a "means to an end" or

objects to be used in the quest to satisfy customers and improve profitability. As one commentator put it, the court's decision is "clearly extraordinary in its determination that in vitro, 8-cell, microscopic embryos are considered people."

But should it really be so extraordinary? What's extraordinary is the fact that so many people, for so long, could become so

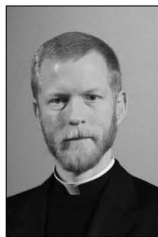
riveted to the falsehood that little human beings are not human beings, just because they are little.

IVF has become so engrained in lifestyle choices that it's now not only awkward, but positively impolite, to suggest that pre-born life has intrinsic value, whether in a petri dish, a freezer, or a womb. Yet scientific facts have a hard edge to them, and as O'Rahilly & Muller put it in "Human Embryology & Teratology," the 3rd edition of their famous textbook:

"Although life is a continuous process, fertilization is a critical landmark because, under ordinary circumstances, a new genetically distinct human organism is formed."

The awkward truth for the purveyors of IVF is the fact that we are all embryos who have grown up, and if all men are created equal, then all embryos are human beings, each of whom ought to be unconditionally safeguarded and never exploited.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 15



**Father Tad  
Pacholczyk, Ph.D.**

APRIL 3, 2024



## 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

# Preparing with faith, charity

Although Easter is not a national holiday in Bangladesh, a largely Islamic nation, Christians have a special dispensation and can celebrate the holiday without having to go to work. This year “thanks to favorable weather conditions and a more stable political situation after the elections, the situation seems calm. We are preparing to celebrate Easter with serenity and under the grace of God,” said Father Robert Hadima, priest of the diocese of Mymensingh.

“During the rites of Holy Week, the churches are full of faithful,” he adds. “People come to confess to receive God’s mercy and embrace new life in Christ. In addition, interreligious participation is observed, with Muslim believers who, out of courtesy and spiritual closeness, attend the liturgy to celebrate the holiday and share greetings.”

There are many initiatives of testimony and evangelization: “For example, in Mymensingh,” he reports, “after the Easter Vigil, young people walk the streets singing hymns and songs, along with the Easter hallelujah. Furthermore, in the villages, on Easter Day, families gather in large groups where they share the Easter meal and the joy of the resurrection.”

This occurs after a period of Lent marked by prayer and solidarity. Prodig Palma, a teacher, along with his wife and three children, participated in the Station of the Cross every Friday in the Catholic church of Tejgaon, inspiring his family to live fasting as a way of getting closer to Christ and his brothers. James Gomes, an NGO employee in the Diocese of Rajshahi, has been saving for more than a month to help a student in need. He says: “Every year during Lent, my wife and I give up eating meat and fish and donate the money we would have spent to a poor student so that he can pay his exam fees.”

Arpona Rozario, a 55-year-old seamstress and mother of three, offers discounts to her clients, even non-Christians, as a symbolic gesture “in honor of Jesus Christ.” Through her work, Arpona seeks to spread the message of love and sacrifice of Jesus.

These testimonies have emerged from a Lenten gathering of Bangladeshi faithful who, to prepare spiritually for Easter, gathered in recent days in Gazipur under the leadership of Archbishop Bejoy N. D’Cruze, OMI. The archbishop has exhorted the faithful to continue using the “weapons” of the Christian, that is, fasting, prayer and charity, “to love God and neighbor,” preparing their hearts “to welcome Jesus Christ who gives new life to each one through resurrection.”

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

# Bioethics: IVF

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14

The Alabama court ruling thrust the state into the national spotlight and sent panicked lawmakers on both sides of the aisle scrambling to come up with a quick legislative “fix.” Only a few weeks after the judicial decision, the powerful infertility industry succeeded in convincing both the Alabama House and the Senate to pass legislation guaranteeing fertility clinics and doctors immunity from prosecution for any “death or damage to an embryo” that might occur during the IVF process.

Rather than running scared and caving to pressure from IVF advocates, we should be facing the question of how we have become so complacent about something so glaringly wrong. Why have we stood by to allow the industrialized commodification and destruction of younger human beings?

IVF involves at least two major moral problems – the “collateral damage problem” and the “intrinsic problem.”

The collateral damage problem means that in order to achieve one IVF birth, clinic workers may create a dozen embryos, prescreen and transfer several of the “best” ones, discard or freeze the “leftovers”, and if more than one implants successfully, selectively abort the additional fetuses(es).

Those IVF-produced babies who manage to run this gauntlet and cross the threshold of birth still manifest elevated rates of birth defects when compared to normally-conceived babies, another instance of collateral damage.

This high tolerance for

collateral damage in IVF clinics and among IVF customers arises out of the intentional prioritization of the desires of older, more powerful and wealthy adults over the rights and needs of voiceless embryonic children. Parental wants are always assumed by the industry to trump their children’s best interests, allowing for grave human rights violations to become “standards of infertility care.”

When it comes to the “intrinsic problem,” meanwhile, IVF always involves actions contrary to the meaning of marriage and to the core designs of human marital sexuality.

Even if parts of society assert otherwise, sex remains fundamentally about bringing forth the next generation of human life within the stable bond of marriage. Children are not commodities and are entitled to be brought into the world through the loving embrace of the marital act, and within the protective and loving environment of the maternal womb, rather than being manufactured and handled under laboratory lights by hired hands in fertility clinics.

Through IVF, we create an “exploitable subclass” – those who, although they are just as human as the rest of us, are unjustly instrumen-

talized and dehumanized by being brought into the world in a manner distinct from the rest of us. This subclass is produced and subjugated through human craftiness and scheming, instead of arriving as free and undeserved gifts through the bodily self-surrender and fruitful spousal love of the marital embrace.

For those interested in understanding these issues more completely, I have recently produced two full-length, professionally-filmed videos on YouTube and Vimeo, entitled “The Struggle of Infertility” and “Why is IVF Wrong?” They are available at: <https://www.youtube.com/@FatherTad/videos> or <https://vimeo.com/bioethicsvideos>.

Let us hope that the Alabama court’s decision will provide the impetus for some serious soul-searching about the ongoing calamity of IVF in our society.

*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](http://www.ncbcenter.org) and [www.fathertad.com](http://www.fathertad.com).*

# BARSTOW

AN AMERICAN REVOLUTION BUICK PONTIAC GMC SUBARU

“Family owned dealership serving the North Country for over 56 years!”

For more information, visit our Website at: [www.barstowmotors.com](http://www.barstowmotors.com)

**MARKET ST., POTSDAM, NY • (315) 265-8800**

# AT THE CHRISM MASS

Priests from around the diocese gathered with Bishop Terry R. LaValley at St. Mary's Cathedral in Ogdensburg on March 21 to celebrate the Chrism Mass, at which the priests renew their priestly promises and Bishop LaValley consecrates the Sacred Chrism and blesses the Oil of the Sick and Oil of the Catechumens used throughout the diocese over the coming year.

*Photos by Jesse Sovie & Darcy Fargo*

