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The Diocese of Ogdensburg Volume 79 Number 8

# NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

MAY 22, 2024

## Two men to be ordained to the priesthood on May 25

Through the laying on of hands and the invocation of the Holy Spirit, the Bishop Terry R. LaValley will ordain to the Order of Priesthood Deacon Carter Gabriel Pierce and Deacon Douglas Alexander Schirmer at 11 a.m. on May at St. Mary's Cathedral.

In this edition of the *North Country Catholic*, Deacon Pierce and Deacon Schirmer reflect on their time serving as deacons, their upcoming ordination and their future ministries.

FULL STORY, PAGE 4

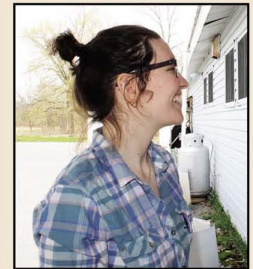
## GATHERING TO CELEBRATE



PHOTO BY DARCY FARGO/NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

**Priests from around the diocese joined Bishop Terry R. LaValley in the celebration of the Jubilee Mass, honoring priests with milestone years of service. Read Bishop LaValley's homily from the Mass on Page 3. The jubilarians will be featured further in the next edition of the MCC.**

## FROM METHODIST MINISTER TO CATHOLIC CONVERT



Hattie Taylor, formerly the Methodist Minister serving Massena, Hogansburg and Potsdam, converted to Catholicism in June of 2023 and is now pastoral associate at St. Mary's, Potsdam, and campus minister serving students at SUNY Potsdam, Clarkson University, St. Lawrence University and SUNY Canton.

FULL STORY, PAGE 7

# Pope at general audience: 'Love is charity'

By Matthew Santucci  
Catholic News Agency

During his general audience on Wednesday, Pope Francis reflected on charity — what he described as the “culmination” of the theological virtues — observing that it is the highest expression of Christian love, predicated on truth and underscored by forgiveness.

“Love is charity. We immediately realize that it is a difficult, indeed impossible love to practice if one does not live in God. Our human nature makes us love spontaneously what is good and beautiful,” Pope Francis said to the faithful gathered

in St. Peter's Square on a sunny morning in Rome.

Pointing to the Sermon on the Mount and repeating twice the Christian maxim “love your enemy,” the pope noted that this teaching represents the highest expression of Christian love, as it “embraces what is not lovable; it offers forgiveness.”

“It is a love so ardent that it seems almost impossible,” the pope continued, “and yet it is the only thing that will remain of us. Love is the ‘narrow gate’ through which we will pass in order to enter the kingdom of God.”

Looking at the various man-

ifestations of love, the pope noted that Christians “are capable of all the forms of love in the world” such as that expressed toward friends, civic love, and “the universal love for all humanity.”

But Francis stressed that it is the theological virtue of charity that enables Christians to love “those who are not lovable” and “those who do not care for us and are not grateful.”

“This comes from God, it is the work of the Holy Spirit in us,” he added.

Pope Francis also centered his catechesis on St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians, noting that the apostle was

speaking to a community divided and “anything but perfect in fraternal love.”

Francis observed that Paul is urging the Corinthians to embrace “not the love that rises but the one that descends.”

“Paul,” the pope added, “is concerned that in Corinth — as among us today too — there is confusion and that there is actually no trace of the theological virtue of love.”

The pope contrasted the theological notions of love and charity with contemporary notions such as the one “on the lips of many ‘influencers’” or heard “in the refrains of many songs.”

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# The reminder I didn't expect

I expected it, but it still upset me.

I've needed glasses since I was in second grade. If I take my glasses off, I can't see clearly just a few feet from my face.

A handful of months ago, I caught myself doing something I've picked on others for doing: I was putting my glasses on the top of my head so I could read text close to my face.

Even though I was expecting it when I scheduled a visit to the optometrist, it unexpectedly upset me when the doctor sent in a prescription for -

you probably guessed it - bifocals.

It was one of those moments in which I was reminded that I'm aging and my body doesn't function as well as it once did. At 43, I'm the not-so-proud owner of both a hip replacement and bifocals.



Darcy L.  
Fargo

When the package from the optical company arrived at my house, I not-so-happily opened the box, popped open the case it contained and tried on my new glasses.

While it took me a bit to adjust to the new prescription and the line on

the bottom part of the lens, it occurred to me relatively quickly that I could see better than I have in months. I could easily read small text that had been a struggle previously. While I hated the idea of the bifocals, I actually liked the bifocals.

I'm pretty sure God was laughing at me, but he was also reminding me of something I too easily forget: There are lots of things in life I can't change, and sometimes I need to accept them.

It made me think of a quote I first heard when doing a Lenten program based on the book "He Ledeth Me" by Father Walter Cizek, a Jesuit priest who

went on mission to Russia and ended up first in a Soviet prison and later in a labor camp. Father Cizek, discussing the propensity to look for God's will in situations, said, "the secret is I don't need to find God's will in this moment and these circumstances, because this moment and these circumstances are God's will for me."

I'm trying to accept "this moment and these circumstances" as God's will even when the moments and circumstances remind me that I'm aging and even when I don't necessarily love them.

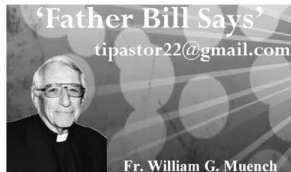
I just didn't expect God would remind me of that with a pair of bifocals.

# The end is the beginning

The Pentecost gift of the Holy Spirit to the apostles challenges them to go out into the streets and teach Jesus' message to all. Today this continues to be the Lord's challenge for us. We are sent just as the apostles were.

Each celebration of the Holy Mass closes with the simple, yet profound, challenge by the deacon. In the Latin liturgy, this conclusion to the Mass is simply, "Ite missa est." "Go, the Mass is ended." This is an important prayer. Do you understand the challenge? "Go." You are called, this is your vocation, it is time to get busy. You have prayed enough, and now we are being sent by the Lord to transform the world by living a good life, bringing Jesus' peace and love to others, bringing to them all that we have experienced as we celebrated the Mass.

Go; you have been blessed. Go; you have received the Body and Blood of our Savior, Jesus. Go; you have been empowered, and you can make the world a better place. Go and transform this world of yours.



Fr. William G. Muench

Go; everything you do this day is your Christian calling.

Those first apostles realized that they were sent. The Acts of the Apostles teaches us how those apostles were sent to be missionaries to many places in their world. They faced unique challenges, as well as persecutions. The Acts of the Apostles focuses on the life of St. Paul. St. Paul found conversion; he found faith in Jesus. Then he was sent on several missionary journeys throughout the Roman world, bringing Jesus to so many. These journeys finally led him to Rome, where he was martyred.

Today, our Catholic Church still sends out missionaries. Priests and religious sisters are sent to bring the love of God, the peace of Jesus, to other places, to other countries.

There are still missionaries leaving home to transform this world to Jesus. They dedicate years - some stay in the field for a lifetime - bringing the world the power of Jesus' message and teachings, the sacraments of the Catholic Church, and the happiness of being saved.

By the way, as you probably know, now, there are many missionaries from various countries coming here to our own diocese, our own country. We are in need of more priests, more sisters to carry on the work of the Catholic Church here. They are truly missionaries.

Now, I want to tell you, that many Catholic missionaries today are lay men and women, young and old. They volunteer - some for a year, some for more - to join in the ministry of the Catholic Church in other places, in other countries. They are truly witnesses to God's love and peace wherever they go. They dedicate themselves to spend time to demonstrate by their lives and teaching their faith in God, their love of

Jesus and their dedication to the Catholic Church.

Many of these lay missionaries are young, some college students, some recent graduates, who are willing to dedicate a year or two to be sent as missionaries. They put off developing a personal career to be missionaries, dedicating themselves to the Lord Jesus and to the Catholic Church. I have met so many of them, and I have always been totally impressed. They have so much life and so much faith. I always think of a woman I know, now married with a great family. When she graduated from college, she volunteered to be missionary. She dedicated two years to work with the Canoosian Sisters in the Sudan. She made a difference and continues to do so as a wife and mother.

Each time you attend Mass, listen carefully at the end of Mass. Pay attention to the deacon's closing prayer. Remember, he is speaking to you. "Go." Jesus has a plan for you today.

## FOLLOW ME

# 'Priestly business in this is-ness of God'

*Editor's note: The following is Bishop Terry R. LaValley's homily from the Jubilee Mass, celebrated on May 14 to honor priests reaching milestone years of service. The jubilarians will be featured in next week's edition.*

Pope Benedict XVI told us that at the foundation of everything, there are these wondrous words: **God is.** Brothers, we live at an hour where so much seems to be in crisis. Benedict's words invite us to take time out and turn our attention away from ourselves, so we might turn to God first. **God is** - and here we must underline that little word: **is.** In other words, God is at work, God is acting... He has not turned His creation over to a worldwide secular tsunami that seeks to gain ever increasing momentum and power.

God has not lost His own place in a world that desires to function autonomously without Him. No, the world is and remains **God's** world. Only God is God no matter how much technology grows. God can act, and God does act in a very real way now, in this world and in our lives. So, we have cause to be zealous, hope-filled, even excited in our priestly lives and ministry today. Emmanuel, God is with us.

Back on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception in 2005, Pope Benedict stated that "The closer a person is to the living, active God, the closer he or she is to people." Participation in the prophetic mission of Jesus, that is concern for the salvation for souls, brings with it a zeal and a fervor that will inform every part of our priestly vocations.

Concern for the salva-



tion for souls contains within it divine energy, such inspiration will get us up in the middle of the night to help the dying and their loved ones. It wants to make sure those in nursing homes and hospitals and the homebound are cared for and comforted. Our concern for the salvation of souls motivates us to be available for confession at convenient hours for our people. We recommit to fervent preaching and re-stoke our passion to ensure that the formation of our parishioners for the sacraments will facilitate the way that leads to their lifelong conversion. Because we care about their salvation, we can extend ourselves to reach out to the "lost," and be a witness of hope and Christian joy by the words we preach and the lives we live.

Participating in the prophetic zeal of Jesus will also keep us alive to the mission of the Church. We need to tell the truth with love, with fervor, with humility. The pulpit

is not a fence to straddle but a tower from which to proclaim what God has done for us, all of us, through His Son, Jesus Christ. We preach because we have something to say, not because we have to say something. (Bishop Sheen) and what we have to say is the joy of the Gospel. We are especially attentive to this Mystery of the Faith this Easter Season, re-claiming and proclaiming our heaven-bound, Resurrection heritage.

Today, the Church celebrates the faith life of Matthias, an individual who experienced God's "is-ness" both Christ's earthly and His resurrected active Presence. Today, this local presbyterate congratulates and expresses gratitude to our God for our brothers celebrating significant number of years of priestly business in this **is-ness** of God. **60 years:** Andrew Amyot, thank you, and Leeward Poissant, thank you, **50 years:** Raymond Diesbourg, thank you, Paul Kelly, thank you, **40**



(Left) Bishop Terry R. LaValley delivers his homily at the Jubilee Mass, held May 14 at Wadhams Hall as part of the annual presbyteral assembly. (Above) Jubilarians Father Scott R. Seymour (25 years) Father Howard J. Venette (40 years), Father Andrew J. Amyot (60 years) and Father Raymond F. Diesbourg, MSC, (50 years) join Bishop LaValley for consecration at the Jubilee Mass. Missing from the photo is Father Paul J. Kelly (50 years) who also attended the Mass, and Msgr. Leeward J. Poissant (60 years) and Father Donald F. Kramberg (50 years), who were unable to attend.

**years:** Howard Venette, thank you and **25 years:** Scott Seymour, thank you! For decades, these men have encountered the is-ness of the risen Christ in Word and Sacrament, leading them to give a shepherd's care to their people. The Church of the North Country and beyond have been and continue to be truly blessed because each of you care so much for the salvation of souls.

You remember in his Encyclical, *Deus caritas est* (2005), Benedict reminded us that "Being a Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction." Doesn't our world today, be it largely unknowingly, yearn for such a new horizon and decisive direction?

That's precisely where our priestly witness and ministry becomes vital. How does our ministry facilitate such an encounter? How does my

parish Christian Formation, Sacramental preparation, celebration of Holy Eucharist and social outreach pave the way for this activity, this "is-ness" of God?

As we approach the Jubilee Year, the Holy Father challenges us to make hope its central message. He writes, "May the Jubilee be a moment of grace, personal encounter with the Lord Jesus, the "Door" of our salvation, whom the Church is charged to proclaim always, everywhere and to all as "our hope." For sure, trials and tribulations mark the lives of those who preach the Gospel. Pope Francis reminds us that St. Paul often speaks of patience in the context of our need for perseverance and confident trust in God's promises.

In our priestly ministry, we must keep ever before us the mission of the Church: concern for the salvation of souls. We are hope-filled because we continue to be Christ-led and Christ-fed. **GOD IS! ALLELUIA! ALLELUIA!!**

# Ordination is scheduled for May 25

## Deacon Douglas Schirmer: 'I get to share what I've been given'

By Darcy Fargo  
Editor

Though he noted his schedule has been “a bit hellish over the last month or so” with wrapping up school, attending ordinations of classmates and preparing for ordination himself, Deacon Douglas Schirmer said he’s “invigorated” as he approaches his May 25 ordination.

“Being here (at the diocesan presbyteral assembly) has been a much-needed recharge,” he said. “And it’s awesome to be invited into this circle I’m about to be a part of. I’m excited, though maybe a little panicked. I’m going into the great unknown. I spent eight years getting ready, but then I still realize I have a lot of growing to do. But I’m more excited than anything. I’m ready to see what God wants to do with the rest of my life in the diocese. I haven’t really been here much in the eight years I’ve been in seminary. I’ve been sort of in and out of the diocese. But this is where the rubber meets the road.”

Deacon Schirmer, 34, a resident of Ogdensburg and member of St. Mary’s Cathedral Parish, noted his deacon year was “a bit challenging, trying to balance being in ministry and being a full-time student” at Mount St. Mary’s Seminary in Emmitsburg, Maryland, but he noted he spent the year working with “a wonderful pastor, who is also my spiritual director, and he knew how to challenge me in ministry.”

“I focused a lot on cat-

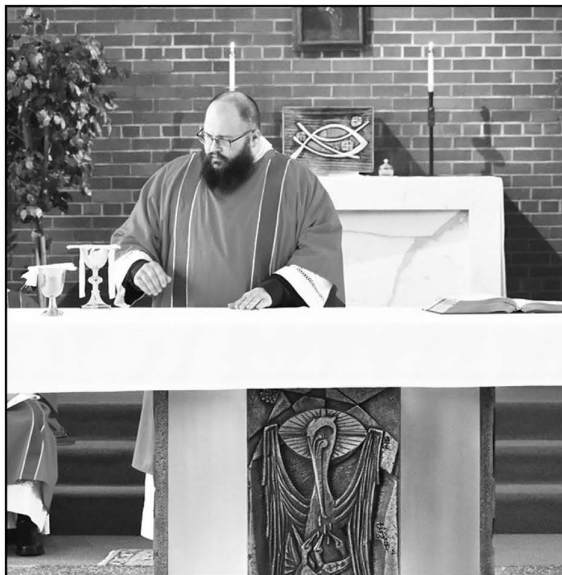


PHOTO BY DARCY FARGO/NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

**Deacon Douglas Schirmer, who is scheduled to be ordained to the priesthood at 11 a.m. on May 25, at St. Mary’s Cathedral, Ogdensburg, prepares the altar during the Jubilee Mass held May 14 at Wadhams Hall in Ogdensburg.**

echesis and preaching,” he said. “Participating in baptisms, prayer and healing ministry with that pastor and in that parish has been a huge grace. It was good prep work.”

Deacon Schirmer said he also found grace in experiencing his deacon year with his fellow seminarians at the Mount.

“It’s been fun and rewarding to see my brother deacons at the seminary grow,” he said. “These are guys I’ve been with for four years, some longer. I’ve been watching them become more themselves because they’re starting to act more like Christ has been really inspiring. The class of 2024 has 33 graduates, and I can confidently say they’re all excellent men, guys I look up to, to the man. It’s been exciting to watch what the church

is about to get, and to be a part of that is pretty amazing.”

Deacon Schirmer said he’s looking forward to ordination and the next part of his ministry, especially celebrating the sacraments and celebrating Mass.

“In confession, people aren’t there to talk to you, they’re there to talk to Jesus,” he said. “In our practice class, we got a little flavor of what it’s like to be in the box, how sacred that ministry is and how sacred the anonymity is.”

In addition to his excitement at being able to participate in God’s offering himself to us in the Eucharist, Deacon Schirmer said he’s looking forward to preaching and teaching.

“I get to share what I’ve been given in the seminary,” he said. “We’ve

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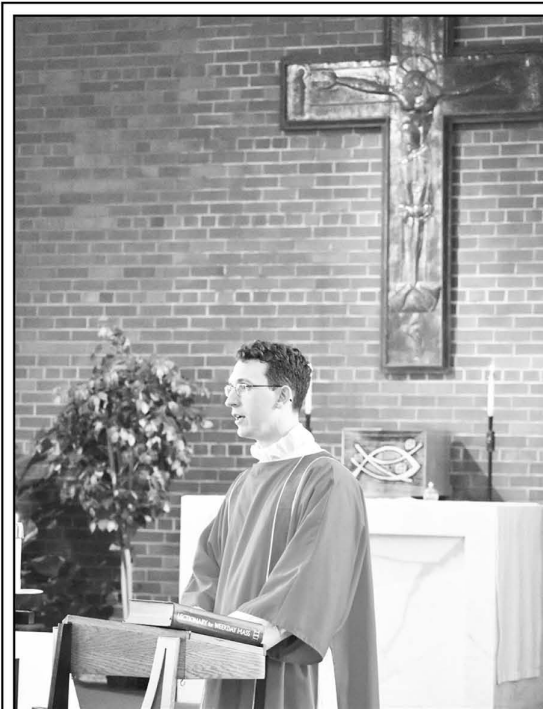


PHOTO BY DARCY FARGO/NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

**Deacon Carter Pierce, who is scheduled to be ordained to the priesthood at 11 a.m. on May 25 at St. Mary’s Cathedral, proclaims the Gospel during the Jubilee Mass on May 14.**

## Deacon Pierce: ‘I’m confident this is what God’s calling me to’

By Darcy Fargo  
Editor

As he prepares for his ordination to the priesthood, Deacon Carter Pierce says he’s at peace.

“Honestly, I feel great,” he said. “I feel peaceful, and I’m ready for this. I’ve had seven years of seminary and almost a decade of discernment. The peace and surety came a while ago. The details of the ordination and all the plans related to it are a bit tough to wrangle, but I’m confident this is what God is calling me to and that this is the time he’s calling me to it, and he’ll provide regardless. I’m living in that trust.”

Deacon Pierce, 26, a parishioner of St. Raphael’s in Heuvelton, noted that he’ll be renewing some of the vows he made when he was ordained to the diaconate last year, but he’ll also be receiving the graces that come with his priestly ordination.

“The diaconate is mostly about giving,” he

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

# Deacon Pierce: 'God's calling me'

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

said. "The priesthood is receiving. It's a big responsibility, obviously, making sure I can celebrate the sacraments rightly and have good answers for the questions people may have, but I feel like the priests in charge of my formation have prepared me well."

Deacon Pierce said his year as a deacon has been very fulfilling and further confirmed his vocation.

"Being a deacon has been amazing," he said. "I've loved it. If Bishop LaValley had decided to not call me to ordination as a priest, to be a deacon the rest of my life would not have been a bad thing. It's been a good gig."

The deacon said he especially enjoyed celebrating baptisms.

"To be able to celebrate the sacrament of baptism was pretty profound," he said. "It's the realization that I helped bring a soul to God."

Deacon Pierce said he also grew closer to God serving in both prayer and in the Mass.

"Being a deacon, I immediately felt God calling me closer to him," he said. "The conformity to God is real. He does, through ordination, draw you closer to himself. It was challenging in some of my weaker moments, but it's really, really beautiful what God has done with me as a deacon. He drew me closer to him in prayer, but also in the Mass, I was actually closer to him. I've been an altar server for a long time, so I've been in the sanctuary, but as a deacon, I was

right there at the altar preparing the bread and wine for consecration. It strikes me when right before the Great Amen, in the Doxology, the priest hands the chalice to the deacon. I think, 'I'm so unworthy to be so close to you, Lord, but how beautiful that you called me all the same and make me worthy.'"

Deacon Pierce said his year in the diaconate also brought him closer to scripture.

"Growing up, I didn't read scripture much," he said. "Of course, I studied it in seminary, but as a deacon, part of the real grace of ordination was encountering scripture in a different way. I don't always communicate it as well as God communicates it to me, but it's really beautiful."

Deacon Pierce says he looks forward to the next part of his ministry, especially "the things only a priest can do - celebrating Mass, confession and the sacraments."

"I'm definitely excited, though even a bit daunted," he said. "In seminary, we practice celebrating the sacraments and make sure we can celebrate them well. I've been doing practice Masses several times a week, praying through it and trying to lift my heart to God. I'm excited to take that next step and be the one in the sanctuary who says, 'this is my body,' and it really becomes Jesus."

He also noted that he's especially excited to share what he's learned in the seminary.

"The thing that is in my daydreams, the part

I'm really looking forward to, is teaching, whether it be religious education classes, sacramental preparation or adult faith formation. Instead of being a student, I'll be a teacher. Helping out with RCIA in the parishes where I served (as a deacon) in Maryland, I found a real love of sharing the truth of the faith in that way."

Deacon Pierce is also looking forward to evangelizing and "just being present in the community where I'm serving, attending civic events, going to high school sports and just walking the streets and praying the rosary."

As he and his family prepares for the ordination weekend festivities, Deacon Pierce says he's extremely grateful to his family for their support.

"We're close as a family," he said. "We try our best to get together for birthdays and holidays. That will be harder going forward. The holidays are the days it would be hardest to be home. That's something that may be hard for me, learning to navigate that. They're excited to have a priest in the family. I'm excited to have them to lean on. If I get too wound up in something, they're able to bring me back to earth. They'll always be the people who know me best. I hope this brings us all closer together, even if we're apart on holidays."

After his ordination, he's looking forward to celebrating Mass with "a simple chalice" that came into his possession through a parish

connection.

"It's a fairly simple, but elegant gold chalice that - years and years ago - was in the possession of another parishioner at St. Raphael's in Heuvelton, Joseph Jelenek," he said. "I didn't really know him growing up. He studied architecture at Catholic University in Washington, DC, where I originally went to college before seminary. I guess that connection sort of forged our relationship. When I went to seminary, he was a continuous supporter."

Deacon Pierce said Jelenek was in possession of a chalice that originally had the name of a religious sister inscribed on it until he passed it on to another deacon.

"I don't know its full story," the deacon said. "But 15 or more years ago, it was given to Deacon Adam Crowe. I knew Adam just a little bit. He was in seminary when I was a young altar server. Shortly after I started serving, (Deacon Crowe) passed away. The chalice remained in the possession of his parents, Larry and Theresa Crowe, and a couple of years ago, they gave it to me. Adam died just before he was ordained to the priesthood. I'm the first seminarian from our parish since him."

Looking back on his preparation period, Deacon Carter said he's also extremely grateful for the support from fellow parishioners, DOVS and the people and organizations spread around the diocese.

"I received so much

support from people all over the diocese, some who I have met, often in summer parish assignments and others who have promised me their prayers simply because I am a seminarian, all of whom have adopted me, so to speak, throughout my years of preparation," he said. "It is a humbling gift to have the encouragement of so many."

Deacon Carter also invited diocesan residents to attend the ordination Mass.

"It's one of the most beautiful liturgies of the Church," he said. "It's such a gift to the Church. We can all celebrate together, whether we know the men involved or not. I'm becoming more and more convinced that God shows provincial care for places, especially here where so many people are leaving and so many others in the world don't know we exist. God knows us, and God is with us, and he's staying with us, and he'll continue to call people to share in his ministry and to care for his people. It's a celebration not so much of the priest to be ordained, but it's a celebration of what God is doing for us and in us."



*Support And Pray  
For Vocations*

**Environmental Stewardship****Bug season**

Much happens in nature during May in the North Country, yet for individuals who spend time outdoors, one event overshadows all others: As apple blossoms open and hummingbirds reappear, black flies can quickly overwhelm any visitor to their domain.

Black flies and mosquitoes are prime components of our environment. These ubiquitous bugs supply many birds, amphibians and bats with protein required for their reproductive needs. Because of their numbers and persistence for getting a meal of blood, these insects can provoke animosity, even among those that seek to care for all of God's creations. Because of their feeding frenzies, it is not uncommon for even the most die-hard environmentalist to empty a can of pesticide into the air to discourage their attacks.

If you are planning to spend time outside these next few weeks, you may want to try measures other than chemical agents to deal with bugs. Most people exude oils from their skin that discourages bugs from targeting them. Refraining from washing your face and neck can help. Also, avoid using of any type of soap that has a pleasant scent, as this can attract bugs. The residue of scented cosmetics can likewise be a clear invitation that you are available for them. Both black flies and mosquitoes are said to be able to detect a high sugar concentration in a person's blood. It is believed the diet of Native Americans, which was rich in protein, fats and some starches helped them deal with bugs.

We have lost nearly 50% of our bug population over the past half century. As a society, we have become obsessed with using chemical agents to remedy our problems. Don't be reluctant to spend time outside during this time of year and don't be too concerned about losing a few drops of blood. These will help far more forms of life than just those pesky flies.

**Bishop's Public Schedule**

May 22 – 9 a.m. – New York State Bishop's Provincial Meeting (Virtual)

May 23 – 11 a.m. – Priest Personnel Board Meeting at Bishop's Residence followed by Lunch

6:30 p.m. – Confirmation at St. Stephen's Church in Croghan with St. Francis Solanus Church in Harrisville, The Catholic Community of Constable, Westville and Trout River in Constable and the Catholic Community of St. Peter and St. Mary and St. Hedwig in Lowville

May 24 – noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

5 p.m. – Dinner with Deacon Carter Pierce and Deacon Douglas Schirmer and their Families at Bishop's Residence

May 25 – 11 a.m. – Ordination to the Priesthood of Deacon Carter G. Pierce and Deacon Douglas A. Schirmer at St. Mary's Cathedral

May 26 – 2 p.m. – Mass Celebrating the 43rd Anniversary of Ordination to the Priesthood for Reverend Garvin J. Demarais at St. Bernard's and St. Edmund's Church in Ellenburg (at St. Edmund's Church)

May 27 – 11 a.m. – Memorial Day Celebration at the VFW Post 125 in Plattsburgh

**Protecting God's Children****The Diocese of Ogdensburg**

is able to schedule sessions of the training, Protecting God's Children for Adults. This required training addresses child abuse, the methods and means by which abusers commit abuse, and the five steps to prevent abuse from occurring and stop it from continuing. To arrange for training, call 315-393-2920 or email [jgrizzuto@rcdony.org](mailto:jgrizzuto@rcdony.org)

**To Report Abuse**

**If you have a complaint** of suspected misconduct involving diocesan clergy, religious, employees or volunteers, contact Victims Assistance Coordinator, Terriane Yanulavich, Ph.D., LMHC, 5050 Route 374, Merrill, NY 12955; [terrianeyanulavich@yahoo.com](mailto:terrianeyanulavich@yahoo.com) Phone: 518-358-3145, Ext. 7179 days; 518-569-0612 evenings; or Father Christopher Carrara, the Episcopal Vicar for Clergy; [ccarrara@rcdony.org](mailto:ccarrara@rcdony.org) Phone: 315-393-2920 ext. 1340.

**If you have a complaint** of suspected sexual abuse or related misconduct by the bishops, contact the **Catholic Bishop Abuse Reporting Service** at 800-276-1562 or [www.ReportBishopAbuse.org](http://www.ReportBishopAbuse.org)

**Rest in Peace**

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

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

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

**May 24** – Rev. Francois X. Therien, O.M.I., 1902; Rev. Antoine A. Amyot, 1927; Rev. Julien Racette, O.M.I., 1937; Rev. Joseph O. Levesque, 1938; Msgr. George L. Murray, 1942

**May 25** – Rev. J. Hector Migneron, 1958; Deacon Derard Gilner, 2023

**May 26** – Rev. Thomas J. Kelleher, 1889; Rev. Steven H. Gratto, 2012

**May 27** – Rev. J. Rosario Jalbert, O.M.I., 1938; Msgr. Wilfred Allen Nugent, 1991; Rev. Andrew R. Mulvaney, 2013

# Deacon Schirmer: 'Share what I've been given'

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

been given the wealth of the Church's traditions, but we don't always do a great job of explaining them."

While he's had opportunities to practice celebrating the sacraments, it's the more personal part of the ministry in which Deacon Schirmer is excited to grow.

"Priests get to be with people in pivotal moments - baptisms, marriages, deaths," he said. "I got to see that as a seminarian, but being ordained, it'll be different. I'll be there as a spiritual father. That's something people can talk about, but they can't teach that. As you learn, you grow more into who you are as dad. And sometimes, like with a parent, it reveals stuff to you you may wish it didn't. Like if a kid misbehaves or does something well, how does dad react? If a parish is struggling with something or excelling at something, it's about how does the priest guide and handle and empower."

Deacon Schirmer said his chalice - a simple, gothic chalice - has a history that may have turned others away from it, but it drew him to the vessel.

"Father Chris (Carrara, vicar for clergy and director of seminarians) took me into the archives, and I found the chalice in the style I was looking for," he said. "The priest who owned it previously was removed from ministry before the Charter and all the stuff with the Boston Globe. As soon as I saw it and heard that, I wanted that particular piece. If I don't pray for that priest, who will? He's still a son of God, even if he did bad things. I felt like those are the people who need prayer most."

Deacon Schirmer noted that beyond choosing the chalice and completing other tasks required before ordination, his family has been busy making plans surrounding the ordination.

"We haven't had much opportunity to talk about (how they feel about his ordination to the priesthood), but there seems to be excitement," he said. "My brothers have said they're very proud, and that means a lot. I think it's something we really won't be able to process until we're on the back end. But they've been very supportive, and I'm very grateful."

Deacon Schirmer said he's also grateful to the people and organizations of the diocese who have also supported him as he discerned and prepared for his vocation.

"It's been eight years of getting cards, promises of prayer and well wishes from the Chalice Program, Knights of Columbus, DOVS - all representations of people, most of whom I'm really bad at writing back to," he said. "These people have been a constant force of prayer, support and generosity. It's humbling and beautiful. I get to spend the rest of my life saying 'thank you' through my ministry, but I still want to acknowledge them before that starts."

MAY 22, 2024

# From Methodist minister to Catholic convert

By Keith Benman  
Contributing Writer

Hattie Taylor's best friend in high school took her to a few Catholic Masses. She heard about the effect Vatican II had on the Methodist church in classes at a Protestant seminary. Later, when she was a United Methodist pastor, a man others had apparently "shooed off" turned to her for answers about Catholicism. She answered as best she could. And when she expressed interest in converting to a Catholic priest, he dumped stacks of books on her doorstep.

In June of 2023 all those events and more in her life added up for Hattie Taylor. She converted to the Catholic faith.

Taylor, who grew up in North Bangor, admits her path to embracing the Catholic faith may have been unusual in some respects. Even her Catholic confirmation at St. Mary's, Potsdam, was not the standard. A procession of pastors from the Catholic, Episcopalian, Unitarian, and Methodist faiths preceded her confirmation Mass. Former college and Protestant seminary classmates were in the pews supporting her.

"It was a lively Mass," Taylor said on recent afternoon reflecting back on her conversion. The 28-year-old sat down recently with *North Country Catholic* to go over her conversion journey. It's a journey she said was driven in large part by a search for authenticity.

"It was sort of an unlikely calling," she said. "It was something that I heard very clearly, very distinctly: that I was going to be happier, more at home, more at peace in the Catholic church. And I really just kind of followed it."

Since, she has found what she calls "spiritual groundedness" to be the most rewarding part of her new-found faith.

"I've never been so - just willing and happy to pray at any point about almost anything," she said. "Spiritually, I'm so much more alive than I was."

Saying she is more spiritually alive than ever is saying a lot, considering Taylor's upbringing.



PHOTO BY KEITH BENMAN/NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC  
**Hattie Taylor, a former Methodist minister, converted to the Catholic Faith last year. Here she is pictured participating in a campus ministry cleanup project at the Kateri Tekakwitha Center, in Akwesasne, on April 27.**

She was raised in a Christian home where she was infused with a love of Christ. Her mother and father were both Methodist lay speakers, meaning they could perform almost all the functions of an ordained minister except presiding at Holy Communion. They were called to serve at Methodist churches all over the North Country, with Hattie and her brother Jake in tow. Later, her mother became an ordained Methodist minister and pastor, which she is to this day.

"I really liked the Church," Taylor said. "It's something I looked forward to every Sunday."

By age 15, Hattie herself was a lay speaker. That meant leading prayers, songs, reading scripture and even delivering sermons at Methodist services. At age 22, she completed a bachelor's degree in philosophy at Houghton College, a liberal arts college rooted in the Wesleyan faith in western New York. She then completed a Master of Divinity degree at the Pittsburgh Theological Seminary.

She was ordained a Methodist minister, and in 2020, she was appointed pastor at Grace United Methodist Church, in Massena. Subsequently she was appointed to additional pastorships in Hogsburg and Potsdam.

She was pastor of the three churches at a particularly chal-

lenging time for Methodists. The church worldwide was preparing for a 2024 vote on removing its bans on gay people, including the one on marriage. Taylor wanted to help see her congregations through what proved to be very difficult conversations. She felt she should be there for them, offering what guidance she could ahead of the big vote.

But as early as 2021, she was feeling the tug of some Catholic beliefs. It wasn't long before she started checking it all out by attending a Mass now and then at St. Mary's, Potsdam. As she considered the faith further, she said she did have trouble with the concept of women not being able to consecrate the Eucharist.

"I was mad at the Catholic Church for that," she said. "But the more I read on it, the more I realized men and woman are different. Even though people sometimes have trouble admitting that. We really are fundamentally different creatures."

It wasn't long before something felt inauthentic to her when she presided over Holy Communion as a Methodist minister.

She says a key to her eventual decision to convert was a presentation on Vatican II by Father Joseph Giroux, pastor at St. Mary's, Potsdam, which she attended in late 2022. She said she already had an understanding of the history-making ecumenical council called by John XXIII from her classes at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. But Father Giroux's presentation deepened and emboldened that understanding.

At some point, she told Father Giroux about her concern for her Methodist flock in the midst of their wrestling with LGBTQ issues. She was having a hard time with the thought of leaving them. She said the priest's advice was simple: "You should really do what you think is right."

As she consulted with friends, colleagues and family about her urge to convert. She said fellow ministers from Protestant denominations gave her their counsel. Eventually, some of-

fered their support for her final decision.

By early 2023, she was ready to tell her Methodist congregations she had been called elsewhere and would have to leave the ministry. Then she was ready for that big day in June at St. Mary's, Potsdam, where she would be confirmed in the Catholic Church. She remembers it was a Thursday night Mass with one other confirmation candidate there. She said seeing all the local pastors who supported her processing up in St. Mary's was quite a sight.

"I just remember being so nervous," she said.

Taylor hasn't looked back since. For one thing, she's been too busy.

She was appointed pastoral associate at St. Mary's, Potsdam, and campus minister serving students at SUNY Potsdam, Clarkson University, St. Lawrence University and SUNY Canton.

The campus ministry holds regular Friday dinners and discussions with students at the Newman Center across from St. Mary's. There are on-campus activities like Bible study and other activities off-campus such as Eucharistic Adoration and Mass at St. Mary's, Potsdam. Campus ministry also offers volunteer opportunities like a recent cleanup at the Kateri Tekakwitha Center in Hogsburg.

She finds her work with students rewarding.

"They're still growing in their maturity," she said. "But they are definitely more level-headed than the media gives them credit for."

She realizes the road to conversion is different for everyone. She realizes how difficult and at times puzzling that search can be. So, she has some simple advice to offer for those contemplating conversion to the Catholic Faith: "Go to Mass as much as you can."

She also noted Eucharistic Adoration is a wonderful way of discerning one's calling.

She said the hour or so of stillness allows those considering conversion to calmly reflect on the changes occurring in their outlook and faith.

# Music to lift the soul

## Seminarian seeks to solve a 'mysterium'

By Keith Benman  
Contributing Writer

Seminarian Michael Lennox has listened to a lot of music over the years. The list includes country, punk rock, hip-hop, alternative pop, and outlaw country. But when the St. Cecilia's, Adams, parishioner was in college, he began looking for something deeper.

"I wanted something that would lift up my soul," he says.

He found the music he was looking for in the instrumental works of a Nashville-based duo called "Hammock." The duo is composed of Marc Byrd and Andrew Thompson. Before teaming up as Hammock in 2005, they were both performers and songwriters on the Christian rock scene.

"You can enter into their music in a way that's more than just listening," Lennox said. "There is truth. There is beauty here. There is transcendence."

And none of their music has spoken to him as deeply as the title track of their 2017 album "Mysterium." Lennox first shared the song with friends and now he's shared his interpretation of it with others through a review he wrote for *The Brownson Record*. The magazine is an independent journal covering social, political and religious life from a Catholic perspective for the Mount St. Mary University community in Emmitsburg, Maryland. Lennox is a theology student preparing for the priesthood at the associated Mount St. Mary Seminary there.

Lennox's article, "Mysterium and the Paschal Mystery," appeared in the December 2023 issue of *The Brownson Record*. It

delves into how "Mysterium," which is largely an instrumental piece, deals with the relationship between human suffering and hope. The song is essentially a requiem, written in memory of Clark Kern, a nephew of Marc Byrd.

Kern died of an aggressive cancer at age 20.

"The depth of feeling present in this lyricless song is profound," Lennox writes in his article.

A stillness in the music quite far into the piece, leads the listener to begin the search for the answer to questions such as: "What's the point of such suffering?" and "How can we possibly move forward?"

In his article, Lennox says the answer lies in the Paschal Mystery; that is, Christ's Passion, death, Resurrection and glorious Ascension.

The glory of that Ascension is reflected in the sound of the brass section that re-enters the song, a crescendo joined by strings, and then the introduction of a choir, Lennox writes.

Discussing his article with *North Country Catholic*, Lennox says he realizes his interpretation could be seen as presumptuous. There are no words to the song to use as guideposts to what the musicians meant to say. But that is in fact a main point of Hammock's music.

Byrd and Thompson told the Somewhereold Records Web site in a 2005 interview that their creations as Hammock have allowed them to mine their faith more deeply. Both have been explicit that their works explore mysteries of both the Christian faith as well as Eastern religions like Buddhism.

### Meet Michael Lennox

Michael Lennox is a theology student at Mount St. Mary Seminary

**Age:** 25

**Previous education:** SUNY Potsdam, B.A. philosophy and history

**Home parish:** St. Cecilia's, Adams

**Family:** Margaret Briggs, stepfather Charles Briggs, and brothers Shawn, Matthew, and David. His father, Steven, is deceased.

**Hobbies:** Music, hiking, mountain biking and cycling

**Favorite scripture:** "Be not afraid, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name." (Isaiah 43:1)



Michael Lennox



## "Mysterium" and the Paschal Mystery

8 *The Brownson Record* | Fall 2023

**The Brownstone Review, an independent journal covering social, political and religious life from a Catholic perspective for the Mount St. Mary University community featured an article by Diocese of Ogdensburg seminarian Michael Lennox.**

Since the publication of his article, Lennox said students at Mount St. Mary tell him they were led to listen to "Mysterium" after reading it.

He said it's gratifying to know more people are listening to the musical piece which has done so much to broaden and deepen his own faith.

"They guided me in what I really wanted to say," he said.



# Church responds to mental health crisis

By **Kate Quiñones**  
Catholic News Agency

The percentage of U.S. adults diagnosed with depression has risen almost 10% since 2015, reaching 29% according to a 2023 Gallup poll, and data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention shows that almost half of U.S. teens report experiencing persistent sadness and hopelessness. The Catholic Church is responding.

Following a 2023 U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops initiative, Catholics across the country have been working in their local communities to address the mental health crisis.

In the Archdiocese of Washington, Auxiliary Bishop Evelio Menjívar offered a May 11 Mass for people with mental health challenges.

"Those living with a mental illness should never bear these burdens alone, nor should their families who struggle heroically to assist their loved ones," the bishop said at the Mass in Landover Hills, Maryland, according to a report by the Catholic Standard.

"We Christians must encounter them, accompany them, comfort them, include them, and help bear their burdens in solidarity with them, offering our understanding, prayers, and tangible, ongoing support," he noted.

In Emmitsburg, Maryland, the National Shrine of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton hosted a Mental Wellness Retreat under the patronage of St. Dymphna, whose feast day is May 30. (Traditionally, the feast day of the young saint who is patron of the abused and mentally

ill was May 15.)

"We are hoping to reach people who live with their own mental health challenges and their loved ones," Melissa Freymann, a clinical mental health therapist who is organizing the retreat in her role as a mental health ministry consultant for the archdiocese, told CNA.

Out west, St. Patrick Catholic Community Parish in Scottsdale, Arizona, is hosting a mental health fair May 18-19 in honor of the feast of St. Dymphna.

The Diocese of Phoenix's Office of Mental Health Ministry will attend the fair, according to The Catholic Sun. At the fair, the St. Patrick community will bless a "Woman of the Well" painting by Glenda Stevens and display it in their "House of Mercy" building. The diocese hopes to use the biblical image of the well where Jesus met the Samaritan woman as a designated place of encounter to gather and grow together.

Parishes in 15 different deaneries each received a "Woman of the Well" painting for their mental health ministry space known as "The Well," according to a spokesperson for the Diocese of Phoenix.

"The Well is a designated space or room at a parish or school that is a safe space, a place of encounter for those experiencing challenges to gather and share their experiences and grow their relationship with God: a place for support groups, educational workshops, and opportunity for accompaniment," explained Brett Meister, director of communica-

tions for the diocese.

The Diocese of Phoenix also recently offered its second annual "Green Mass" on May 5 honoring and praying for professionals, caregivers, and clergy who serve people with mental health concerns. The Mass brought social workers, pastoral caregivers, and counselors together at Sts. Simon and Jude Cathedral, where volunteers handed out green ribbons to represent growth and new beginnings, as well as St. Dymphna prayer cards, according to The Catholic Sun.

Ministering to people who suffer with mental illness and those who live and care for them spans not just the U.S. but also places like the Vatican, South Africa, and India.

The India chapter of the Catholic Association of Mental Health Ministers (CMHM) organized its first ever National Mental Health conference at Nirjhari Conference Center, Carmelaram in Bengaluru, Karnataka, from April 5-6.

The CMHM India worked with the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India's health care commission to host the retreat, which highlighted the state of mental health in India, the role of the Church in mental health ministry, and the difference between spiritual and mental health.

More than 250 attendees, including priests, religious sisters, and medical professionals gathered for the event, and speakers included Archbishop Peter Machado of Bangalore; Bishop Thomas Tharayil, the ecclesiastical adviser of CMHM India; and Deacon Ed Shoener, co-founder and president of CMHM.

# CATHOLIC WORLD AT A GLANCE

## Court denies pregnancy center's bid to keep donor info private

The Supreme Court has denied a New Jersey pro-life pregnancy center's appeal to keep its donor list and other correspondence private. This comes after New Jersey Attorney General Matthew Platkin, a Democrat, subpoenaed First Choice Women's Resource Centers in November 2023 for "possible violations" against the New Jersey Consumer Fraud Act relating to the group's handling of patient data and statements about abortion pill reversal. Through the subpoena, Platkin ordered First Choice to turn over much of its internal communications as well as communications with patients and donors, some of which would reveal donors' private information. Shortly before issuing the subpoena, Platkin signed onto a letter in which he and 15 other attorneys general accused pro-life pregnancy centers of spreading "harmful" misinformation about reproductive health care. The letter also accused pregnancy centers of using "deceptive tactics to lure in patients." First Choice is a Christian ministry that operates five pregnancy resource centers in New Jersey that offer pregnancy testing, ultrasounds, venereal disease screenings and treatment, and counseling.

## Chicago priest apologizes for same-sex blessing

A priest in Chicago has apologized for the controversial way in which he blessed a same-sex couple in April, calling it a "very poor decision" that violated Catholic Church's new guidelines. In a statement dated May 8, Father Joseph Williams, pastor of St. Vincent de Paul Parish near downtown Chicago, offered an apology in which the priest said he "regrets the language of the blessing and the use of vestments and the church itself, which he now recognizes were a violation of the norms approved by the Church." The priest blessed a same-sex couple in the city parish in April. In a video of the event posted to social media, Williams — wearing vestments — can be seen asking the couple if they "freely recommit yourselves to love each other as holy spouses and to live in peace and harmony together forever." The two women respond, "I do." The priest initially suggested the Vatican's December 2023 document *Fiducia Supplicans* allows the type of blessing he administered. That document said that Catholic priests can bless same-sex couples as an expression of pastoral closeness without condoning their sexual relations and without making the blessing seem like a wedding.

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# Bishops warn of polarization in Church

By Tyler Arnd  
Catholic News Agency

Three Catholic bishops warned of a growing ideological polarization within the Church and the need for civil dialogue among those with disagreements during a livestreamed panel discussion on Tuesday afternoon.

"Politics is almost a religion and sometimes it's a sport, [but] it's not supposed to be either," Bishop Daniel Flores of the Diocese of Brownsville, Texas, said during the discussion.

"It's supposed to be a civil conversation ... to seek what is good and make the priority how to achieve it and how to avoid what is evil," Flores said. "And I think if we could stay focused on that, we can kind of tone down the caricature and the rhetoric that seeks to dehumanize people."

The panel discussion included Flores, Cardinal Robert McElroy of the Diocese of San Diego, and Bishop Robert Bar-

ron of the Diocese of Winona-Rochester, Minnesota. It was moderated by Gloria Purvis, the host of "The Gloria Purvis Podcast" at America Magazine, and co-sponsored by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), Catholic Charities USA, Glenmary Home Missions, and the Jesuit Conference.

The panel discussion was part of the USCCB's "Civilize It" initiative, which is meant to foster civility in important ideological debates. As part of the initiative, the bishops ask Catholics to sign a pledge to affirm the dignity of every human person - including those with different ideological beliefs - and to work with others in pursuit of the common good.

According to the panelists, American society and the Church have grown more polarized when it comes to ideological differences - and debates about those differences have become less civil.

Barron, who founded the Catholic media organization

Word on Fire, said disagreements within the Church are nothing new, but the way people approach those disagreements has changed: "What's broken down is the love that makes real dialogue possible."

"It's a tribalism that's lost the sense of love in dialogue," Barron said.

The bishop warned that people are more focused on winning arguments and being loyal to an ideological identity than on love. He said these problems are very noticeable in discussions on the internet and encouraged people to ask whether "this comment [is] an act of love" before saying anything.

"Is it born of love?" Barron said people should ask themselves. "Is it born of a desire to will the good of the other? If it's not, there's like a thousand better things to be doing than sending that statement."

McElroy said too much dialogue today "is meant to be confrontational" to the point at which people "can't enter into a genuine dialogue."

"People are coming toward each other in the life of the Church looking first at that label: What are you? Where do you stand in the war-like culture politics of our country?" the cardinal said.

People focus on this "rather than [on] what unites us: where do we stand in terms of our identity as Catholics and with a Christological outlook," he added.

McElroy also built on the concerns Barron highlighted regarding dialogue on the internet.

"When you're writing the Tweet, imagine Jesus is there with you and when you think through that question 'should I do this?'" McElroy said.

Similarly, Flores emphasized the need to remember what Christ would do.

"He would not be unkind, especially to the poor and especially to those who had no standing in the world," Flores said. "And also he would never commit an injustice in order to promote justice."

## Pope: Remain close to grandparents, elderly

By Daniel Payne  
Catholic News Agency

Pope Francis on May 14 urged families to remain close to grandparents and elderly family members, imploring loved ones to spend time with older relatives who may be facing "solitude and abandonment."

The Vatican released the message ahead of the fourth World Day of Grandparents and the Elderly, which takes place on July 28 this year. The pope first announced the annual observance in 2021.

Francis noted that the Bible contains numerous examples of the "fear of abandonment, particularly in old age and in times of pain." The theme for this year's ob-

servance is "Do Not Cast Me Off in My Old Age," a reference to Psalm 71.

"All too often, loneliness is the bleak companion of our lives as elderly persons and grandparents," the pope said.

He noted that when serving as archbishop of Buenos Aires he "would visit rest homes and realize how rarely those people received visits. Some had not seen their family members for many months."

War often leads to high rates of elderly abandonment, the pope said. "How many of the elderly are left alone because men - youths and adults - have been called to battle, and women, above all women with small children, have left the coun-

try in order to ensure safety for their children."

Another prejudice against the old, the Holy Father argued, is the claim that they "rob the young of their future."

"There is now a widespread conviction that the elderly are burdening the young with the high cost of the social services that they require, and in this way are diverting resources from the development of the community and thus from the young," the pope wrote.

"This is a distorted perception of reality. It assumes that the survival of the elderly puts that of the young at risk, that to favor the young, it is necessary to neglect or even suppress the elderly."

Citing the biblical ex-

ample of Ruth remaining by Naomi's side in the latter's old age, the Holy Father urged families: "Let us show our tender love for the grandparents and the elderly members of our families."

"Let us spend time with those who are disheartened and no longer hope in the possibility of a different future," he wrote.

"In place of the self-centered attitude that leads to loneliness and abandonment, let us instead show the open heart and the joyful face of men and women who have the courage to say 'I will not abandon you' and to set out on a different path."

In announcing the observance in 2021, Pope Francis said that grandparents and elderly fam-

ily members "remind us that old age is a gift and that grandparents are the link between generations, to transmit to young people an experience of life and faith."

"Grandparents are often forgotten, and we forget this wealth of preserving and passing on the roots," the pope said at the time.

In 2023 the pope marked the day's third observance by holding an intergenerational Mass in St. Peter's Basilica.

"How much we need a new bond between young and old," Pope Francis said at the time, "so that the sap of those who have a long experience of life behind them will nourish the shoots of hope of those who are growing."

## VIRTUAL EVENTS

## PLANTING CREATION CARE TEAMS

Join us for two virtual gatherings of presentations, reflection time, and opportunities to share ideas to start and maintain a creation care team in your parish organized by the Laudato Si' Committees of the Diocese of Ogdensburg and Syracuse.

**Date:** May 23

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

**Place:** Zoom (link will be sent a few days before event)

**Features:** Creation Care Teams raise awareness of Catholic Social Teaching on the care for our common home, discover ways to promote ecologically sound practices, and foster a sustainable community within your parish.

**Contact:** To register: [www.rcdony.org/laudatosi](http://www.rcdony.org/laudatosi)

## ADIRONDACK MOUNTAIN

## WOMEN'S MINISTRY

Ticonderoga – Join for a Women's Ministry, a place of fellowship, faith and friendship.

**Date:** Beginning May 17 and then every third Friday of the month.

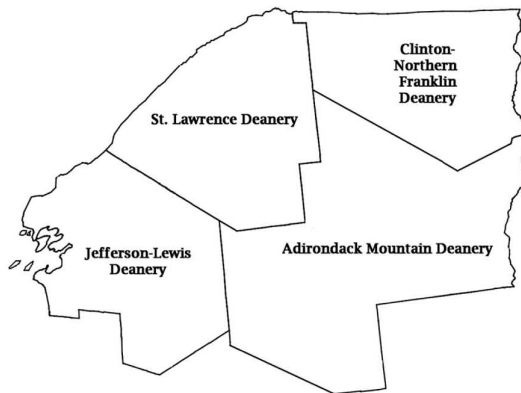
**Time:** Immediately following the 9 a.m. Mass

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

**Features:** Light breakfast will be served. In addition to weekly fellowship, there will be a summer Book Club beginning in June. Details and book selection will be announced at the May 17 meeting. Beth Tiger is a Catholic speaker, author and facilitator. She is also the founder & executive director of 'Her Hands,' an anti-trafficking organization originally known as Durga Tree International. A new resident of Ticonderoga, she is looking forward to meeting like-minded women and creating a ministry where all can deepen their faith, form friendships and be of service to the community.

## BLACK FLY 5K RUN, WALK, ROLL OR STROLL

Saranac Lake – St. Bernard's school invites you to help support



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.

their school as they gather funds with an enjoyable event of running, walking, strolling, or rolling.

**Date:** June 1

**Place:** Adirondack Park at Dewey Mountain

**Time:** Registration begins at 10 a.m., Race begins at 11 a.m.

**Cost:** Adult, \$25; Student, \$20; Families of 4 or more will receive a \$10 discount. All participants will receive a custom shirt while supplies last.

**Features:** From laid-back to competitive, from earnest to lighthearted, our goal is to engage everyone in this healthy endeavor, contributing to our school's mission of delivering quality Catholic education at an affordable cost. The event will be followed by delicious food and drink. Prizes will be awarded by age category. Prizes will also be awarded to most enthusiastic, largest family in attendance, and other fun categories.

**Contact:** To register or to learn more - <https://runsignup.com/Race/NY/SaranacLake/StBsBlack-Fly5K>

## EUCHARISTIC PROCESSION &amp; ROSARY

Saranac Lake - Join us on Corpus Christi as we pray for our nation and Church.

**Date:** June 2

**Time:** After 10 a.m. Mass

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

**Features:** The event will include Eucharistic exposition, a short talk, a Eucharistic procession with rosary recitation, silent adoration, and benediction. A rosary will be led inside the church for those who cannot walk in the procession.

**Contact:** For more info, contact Deacon John Fehlner: 518-312-5636 or [fehlnjohn@gmail.com](mailto:fehlnjohn@gmail.com).

## CLINTON NORTHERN FRANKLIN

## BELATED 40TH ANNIVERSARY MASS

Ellenburg - Father Garvin J. Demarais, who was ordained May 2, 1981, will celebrate a belated 40th anniversary Mass.

**Date:** May 26

**Time:** 2 p.m.

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

**Features:** Bishop LaValley, along with priests, religious, deacons and lay people from around the diocese will be in attendance. Reception to follow.

**Contact:** Send notes to PO Box 1741, Plattsburgh, NY 12901

## CAR SHOW

Altona - St. Ann's to have their 6th Annual Car Show.

**Date:** June 2

**Time:** 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

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

**Cost:** Vehicle Pre-Register \$15 or the day of the show, \$20

**Features:** Craft Fair, Theme Baskets, Food & Entertainment. Kids Power Wheels Show entry fee of \$10. There will be How Wheel Races for kids and adults (Kids, \$5, Adults, \$10 and includes car). Top 40 picks and special awards at 3 p.m.

**Contact:** For more information or to pre-register call 518-236-5632, 518-236-7200 or 518-565-6754

## BAZAAR

Fort Covington - St. Mary's of the Fort to have their Annual Bazaar.

**Schedule:** June 7, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. and June 8, 7 a.m. to 3 p.m.

**Features:** Gift Raffle, Yard Sale, Flea Market Vendors, 50/50 Raffle, Food Concession, Thrift Store Bargains. The event will be going on at the same time as the town-wide garage sales weekend.

**Contact:** For more information please contact the parish office at 518-358-2500.

## CONCERT

Peru - Benefit concert to be held for the North Country Mission of Hope.

**Date:** June 9

**Time:** 7 p.m.

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

**Cost:** Donation with all proceeds used to support ongoing projects of the North Country Mission of Hope.

**Features:** The band, Towne Meeting, known for powerful harmonies and engaging performances, will be performing. Oriented in folk, their music branches out into many other genres, from Americana to acoustic rock, country and bluegrass. Come, relax and enjoy an evening of music while helping our neighbors here and around the globe.

## GOLF TOURNAMENT

Peru - The 36th Annual Peru Knights of Columbus Council 7273 William J. "Bill" McBride Jr. Memorial Golf Tournament will be held.

**Date:** June 14

**Time:** Shotgun start at 10 a.m.

**Place:** Adirondack Golf and Country Club

**Cost:** 4 Person Scramble, \$300. Includes, Green fees, cart, awards & beverage

**Features:** Awards for 1st, 2nd and 3rd place teams. Prizes for the longest drive and closest to the pin. Chance to win a New vehicle with a Hole in One sponsored by Bailey Ford.

**Contact:** Register by June 1 by contacting Greg Lombard at 518-593-2652, email [gnetlombard@charter.net](mailto:gnetlombard@charter.net) or Scarlett McBride 518-572-8790 or email [scar6064@charter.net](mailto:scar6064@charter.net)

## JEFFERSON-LEWIS

## SPAGHETTI DINNER

Watertown - The St. Anthony Altar Rosary Society will be having a spaghetti dinner.

**Date:** May 23

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

**Place:** Msgr. Sechi Hall, St.

Anthony's Church

**Cost:** Adults \$10, Children \$7

**Features:** For take-outs please bring your own containers.

**Contact:** Any questions call Penny Clark at 315-783-2780

## HOLY HOUR AND DIVINE MERCY

Houseville - Exposition of the Most Blessed Sacrament and the Divine Mercy Chaplet will be observed the first Sunday of the month.

**Date:** June 2, July 7, Aug. 4

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

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

**Contact:** 315-348-6260

## HEALING MASS

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

**Date:** June 8

**Time:** 11 a.m.

**Features:** Father Arthur LaBaff and Father Frank Natale will be the presiders. The Sacrament of the Sick will be offered during the Mass. Prayer teams will be available after the Mass for individual prayer needs. Refreshments will follow in the Parish Center.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

**Contact:** For more information, contact the parish office at 315-686-3398 or claytonsec@rcdony.org.

**OPEN HOUSE AND PICNIC**

Highmarket – The St. Patrick's Restoration Society will have an Open House and Picnic.

**Date:** June 9

**Time:** Noon Mass with Father Marullo

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

**Cost:** Donation \$10

**Features:** Hamburgers and Hot Dogs, Bake sale and 50/50, Basket Raffles and door prizes.

**ST. JAMES FAIR**

Carthage – St. James to have their 50th Annual Fair.

**Date:** June 20 and 21, 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. and June 22, 1 p.m. to 9 p.m.

**Features:** Raffles, Amusement rides, food and entertainment to be held each day.

**Contact:** For more information call the rectory at 315-493-3224

**ST. LAWRENCE****MEMORIAL DAY MASS**

Canton – St. Mary's Church will hold its annual Memorial Day Mass at the cemetery.

**Date:** May 27

**Time:** 9 a.m.

**Place:** Cemetery on Riverside Drive.

**Features:** There will also be a Prayer Service at St. Henry's Cemetery in DeKalb Junction at 8 a.m. that same day. In case of rain, there will be Mass only in St. Mary's Church at 9 a.m.

**ST. JAMES RAFFLE**

Gouverneur – St. James School to have summer raffle with a chance to win \$10,000. Only 350 tickets will be sold.

**Cost:** Donation price of \$100 each

**Features:** Grand Prize, \$10,000; 2nd Prize, \$5000; 3rd Prize, \$2500; 4th Prize, \$1500, 5th Prize, \$500. Plus, there will be 5 early bird drawings for \$100 each on June 30th. Grand Prize

drawing will be held Sept. 8 at the chicken bar-b-que being held at the school. All tickets remain in the drum and are eligible for every prize drawing.

**Contact:** Tickets are available by calling the church office at 315-287-0114.

**CHICKEN BBQ**

Canton – St. May's to have their annual Chicken BBQ.

**Date:** June 9

**Time:** 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

**Cost:** Full Meal, \$15; Half a Chicken only, \$10

**Menu:** 1/2 BBQ Chicken, Potato Salad, Macaroni Salad, Coleslaw, Dinner Roll, Brownies

**Features:** Drive-Thru at 2 Powers Street with picnic seating available on lawn.

**Contact:** Questions? Contact the Parish Office at 315-386-2543.

**ROSARY WITH DEVOTIONS**

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

**Date:** June 1

**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:** June 1

**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:** June 1

**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:** June 9 (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 Gonthier 315-212-5166.

**MEAL DELIVERY DRIVERS NEEDED**

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

**Features:** These drivers deliver hot, nutritious meals to older adults. Many are homebound and receive a lunchtime meal Monday through Friday. Drivers receive a mileage reimbursement. Deliveries take place between 9:30 and 11:30 a.m. Routes can be between one and two hours. Volunteer for one day a week or several.

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

**DIOCESAN EVENTS****DOVS RAFFLE**

The Diocese of Ogdensburg Vacation 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.

**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, \$25.00 Gift Card to Walmart.

**Contact:** For any questions, contact Constance Randall, connierandall47@yahoo.com (315) 783-0574.

**ORDINATION TO THE ORDER OF THE PRIESTHOOD**

Ogdensburg – Through the laying

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

**Date:** May 25

**Time:** 11 a.m.

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

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

**LIFE-GIVING WOUNDS RETREAT**

Saranac Lake – A healing retreat for anyone 18 and over whose parents are no longer together to be held.

**Date:** June 14-16

**Place:** Guggenheim Center

**Cost:** \$125, Financial Assistance is available

**Features:** This retreat is designed for adults whose parents are separated or divorced. Topics discussed include anxiety, anger, and forgiveness. All presentations are given by trained speakers who are also adult children of divorced families.

**Contact:** To register online go to [www.rcdony.org/lifegw/](http://www.rcdony.org/lifegw/); To learn more about Life-Giving Wounds ministries go to [www.lifegivingwounds.org/](http://www.lifegivingwounds.org/); For more information about the retreat contact Steve Tartaglia at 315-393-2920 or [startaglia@rcdony.org](mailto:startaglia@rcdony.org)

**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:** Are you ready to have a week of summer camp like no other? Located on the shores of lower Saranac Lake, Summer Camp Guggenheim is a great place to make friends, draw closer to Christ and have fun.

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

**WOMEN'S HEALING RETREAT**

Ogdensburg – Our Lady of the Rosary Healing retreat to be held for women.

**Date:** Oct. 10 – 13

**Place:** Wadhams Hall

**Features:** The retreat is open to 45 women over the age of 18. Presenters from the John Paul II Healing Center. Priests in residence will be Father Joseph Giroux and Father Albert Hauser.

**Contact:** For more information and registration, please visit [www.rcdony.org/ourlady](http://www.rcdony.org/ourlady) If you would like to send a donation to help defray the cost of the retreat, please mail a check to Bill Seymour, Wadhams's Hall, 6866 State Highway 37 Ogdensburg, NY 13669.

**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)

# 'Jesus Thirsts' film to play in Watertown

A new film focusing on the transformative power of the Eucharist will hit the big screen in June, including showings in Watertown.

"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 at Regal Salmon Run Mall, Watertown, on June 4 and 5 through Fathom Events. Each date will consist of two showings, a 4 p.m. and 7 p.m.

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, Bish-

op 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 theo-

logians 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 personification of love through the Mass and through the Eucharist."

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

## MAKING SENSE OF BIOETHICS

# The most serious miscalculation of all

Physician-assisted suicide, according to its advocates, offers a good way to wrap up our life as we face extreme suffering. When we think we have reached the limit of what we can bear in terms of pain and discomfort, they assure us we can choose death on "our own terms." Given that our life belongs to us and no one else, we are told we should feel free to end it, supported by professionals from the medical community. Once our physician has prescribed us a toxic pharmaceutical, we are at liberty to ingest it whenever we are ready and "want out." This final act will putatively close out our time of suffering, resolving our situation for the better, and giving permanent testimony that we believe we are, quite literally, "better off dead."

But are we?

What if multiple mistaken ideas and flawed assumptions sustain this whole line of thinking? For example, what if we are mistaken in supposing that our life is exclusively our own? What if it also belongs, in important ways, to God and to others? And what if we are mistaken in supposing that suffering can no

longer befall those who pass through death to the other side?

Some might be tempted to reply, "There is no God and no 'other side.'" Beyond the portal of death, they argue, lies nothing - mere void and blackness. We vanish, and life does not continue on in any form.

Careful thinkers, however, would have to admit that, since we have not actually died yet, we lack the first-hand experience or positive knowledge to be certain about this conclusion. Given that many religious traditions teach strongly about our existence after death, careful thinkers face still greater uncertainty when it comes to the claim that there is no "other side." It could even be the case that they may be simply deceiving themselves about something that they wish were true.

Many people today take this same approach when speaking about others who have died. "She is with the angels," they may declare, or "He's in a better place now." Even though they lack any first-hand or real knowl-

edge that would support such claims about other people's post-mortem destinies, they simply want it to be so, and because they desire it to be that way, they jump to the conclusion that it actually is so.

This can have a practical impact whereby Catholics, for example, may not pray or have Masses offered for the repose of the soul of departed loved ones, even though both of these activities, objectively speaking, could be of potentially great assistance to those who have died. Instead, they play along in a kind of cultural fiction tempting us to believe that if we feel or want something to be true, then it must be so.

In considering our own death, then, we may similarly entertain a strong wish that there be no more sufferings on the other side, especially when it comes to justifying our decision to engage in physician-assisted suicide. Simply having such a wish, however, does not actually make it so. From our limited vantage point, we cannot safely rule out the possi-

bility that after we die, we could encounter purifications and afflictions similar to, or exceeding, those we left behind, especially if we had chosen to become the direct cause and agent of our own demise.

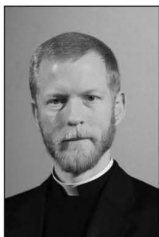
Careful thinkers, then, will acknowledge that, at a minimum, they lack certitude regarding the conclusion that suffering, purgation and punishment are impossible in the hereafter. They also need to consider scenarios in which the hereafter may be much longer than they might initially suppose, perhaps even eternal, as they ponder the ethical questions involved in death, dying and self-killing.

Given our lack of first-hand awareness of what awaits us after death, and the potential for serious consequences, we may indeed be foolishly gambling with our most valuable asset, our very selves, if we choose physician-assisted suicide. This could engender profound regret. In thinking through the worst-case scenario, we could even envision the prospect of catastrophic repercussions and the loss of everything through eternal perdition, if we had, with full awareness and inten-

tion, and in the absence of mental illness or other mitigating factors, freely pursued suicide.

Looking squarely at these logical possibilities and unpacking some of the flawed assumptions behind physician-assisted suicide can help us avoid the most serious miscalculation of all, whereby we end up, not in deliverance, but in straits potentially far worse than the limited, earthly travails we are seeking to escape. Instead of trusting in worldly slogans and leaning on human wishes, careful thinkers will seek to discern the deeper eschatological order governing human perishing and death.

*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.*



Father Tad Pacholczyk, Ph.D.



## SUNDAY'S SCRIPTURE

## Considering the Trinity

One plus one plus one equals one. Whoa, you might say: "That's not right or is this new math? Or is this fuzzy math? Or has monsignor just lost it." Well, today is "one plus one plus one equal one Sunday." Usually, we call it Trinity Sunday. In fact, we always call it Trinity Sunday - a day set aside to remind us that there is just one God, but three persons: the one, the Father, plus the one, the Son, plus the one the Holy Spirit all equal just one God.

How can we possibly explain that God is one God, but three persons? First of all, we find the Trinity in scripture. In fact, in today's gospel Jesus gives his disciples the mandate to go baptize in the name of the

Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Note carefully, he says in the "name," not "in the names." In the Old Testament, we

see God as Father referred to many times as father at work among the people. Then, in the New Testament, Jesus reveals himself as God, but as the Son who has received everything from the Father, that is, he is equal to the Father. This Jesus promises to continue God's presence in the world through the Holy Spirit that we celebrated just last Sunday on Pentecost, this Holy Spirit who comes into the world to keep in touch with God's creation.

Many have tried to explain the Trinity in human terms. St. Patrick

May 26

Solemnity of  
the Most Holy Trinity

## READINGS

Deuteronomy 4:32-34, 39-40

Romans 8:14-17

Matthew 28:16-20

used the three leaves of clover leaf and pointed to the unity of the clover found in the threeness of the leaves. St. Ignatius compared the Trinity to three notes being played in harmony to create one sound. Others have compared the Trinity to water. Waters exists in three forms: liquid, steam, and ice. Three different manifestations of the same reality of water.

But what does this Blessed Trinity mean for you in your life? Well, think about this. God the Father created you out of love; God the Son redeemed you out

of love; God the Holy Spirit sanctifies you in love. That's a lot of loving going around.

Some try to reduce God to their own feeble understanding of God. One day, St. Augustine was walking along a beach trying to fathom the Trinity. He asked himself over and over: "How can God be three and one at the same time?" As he walked, there was a young boy with a small bucket running back and forth between the sea and a hole he had dug on the shore. Augustine asked the boy: "What are you doing?" The child said, "I am emptying the ocean into this hole." Augustine stopped dead in his tracks and finally understood. He realized that he was doing the same thing as the small child. He was trying to pour the infinite God into his finite little

mind. He was trying to squeeze the immensity of God into his brilliant, but limited, brain.

This small prayer might help us understand better the Blessed Trinity:

*God almighty Father, thank you for the creation of the world that you have given us. Thank you for the gift of life that you share with each one of us. Jesus, God the Son, thank you for saving us from sin, from being condemned to our own weaknesses. Thank you for the love that we can share with one another. God the Holy Spirit, invade our lives so that we may spread your love and goodness with all those we meet. Give us your wisdom to face the struggles of each day. Holy Trinity, one God, bless all of us in your holy name: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.*

Msgr. Robert  
H. Aucoin

## CALLED TO SERVE

## Things are rarely like they were

A jar of Hellman's mayonnaise for \$6.99. That stopped me cold in a supermarket the other day. Adding to my disbelief was the positioning of the jars.

I do not pretend to be an expert at such matters, but I did stock some shelves in a supermarket in my younger days so that qualifies me.

The display in the front or rear of the store at the start or end of an aisle where certain goods are located is called the endcap in retail marketing. Locating products on the endcap is perceived to give a brand a competi-

itive advantage.

Mayonnaise for \$6.99 is a deal? Excuse me. This name brand buyer is moving to generic product for my favorite condiment.

Since I have a suspicious streak, I wondered how much of the increase in pricing is due to inflation, how much is due to the cost of producing mayonnaise, and how much rested on a desire to make a killing at the check-out.

It takes me back to the adage, "a penny for your thoughts." That thought will cost you a buck today.

Nothing is inexpen-

sive but compared to what? Sure, I remember 25-cents-a-gallon gasoline but that was a long time ago. Today we are used to speaking in terms of millions of dollars not thousands.

The media in the Watertown area latched onto the first 100-million-dollar school budget. "It is a big number. Not necessarily a cause for celebration, but the realities of the current business of education. We broke the threshold of 103-million dollars,"

said Troy Decker, Indian River's superintendent.

Most government sponsored capital projects will cost numbers we could not even fathom a decade ago.

And then there is federal spending where the word "billion" rolls off the tongue of even the most frugal member of Congress like it is everyday language.

It is all dizzying. But so is where I was as a teenager trying to decide what to do with my life. Our grandsons are

making those decisions now.

Being a deacon in the Catholic Church was certainly not on my "to do" list. In fact, the order had just been restored and was not even in my church vocabulary. Kathy often asks deacon wives, "did you imagine you would be married to a deacon all those years ago."

Funny how things evolve. Like \$3.79 a gallon gasoline.

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

Deacon  
Kevin Mastellon



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

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

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

# Refreshed in spirit

This week we have a Pentecost reflection from Mark Poletunow, the VP of Regions for the United States' national office of the Pontifical Mission Societies. Please remember "The Society for the Propagation of the Faith" when writing or changing your Will.

After the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, everything was new for the believers. The only guidebook they had was the experience of walking with Jesus, listening to his words, and trying to imitate his ways. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, came to the rescue!

Even in the worst or circumstances, the Spirit made known the presence of God. They were not alone. They realized that there was something much greater than themselves alive and active in their midst. Instead of fear, they were fortified to persevere in making Jesus Christ known to the ends of the earth.

As we approach the great solemnity of Pentecost, we lean on the power of the Holy Spirit to guide us in mission. Sometimes we don't know the way. Sometimes we don't see clearly the next step. Keeping our eyes on the Cross and submitting to the direction of the Holy Spirit changes everything. We are merely instruments; disciples trusting that in loving Jesus and desiring the Holy Spirit, God will show us the way.

We pray for this gift for missionaries, for ourselves, [and] for all who engage in the process of evangelization. It was the Spirit of God that inspired Blessed Pauline Jaricot to gather young factory workers to pray for and to make a simple donation on behalf of the missions. Throughout her life, her cross was heavy, but she persevered. She had no idea that her modest efforts, in obedience to the Holy Spirit would create a movement that would be embraced by the Church universal.

As we also [follow] the annual celebration of Mother's Day, we give thanks to God for the love of our mothers living and deceased. It isn't an easy job. Love is sacrifice. At the same time, I stand in awe of how powerfully God's Holy Spirit leads and directs mothers, all women of good will, to cooperate with God's will in saying "yes" to life, in educating the young, in giving example of how to live as channels of God's love, grace, and mercy in the world. I thank God not only for my wonderful mother who is now with the Lord, but also for the many women who have helped to form me, who have been examples of discipleship, who have sacrificed so that others might have life to the full.

Your brother in mission,  
Mark J. Poletunow, VP of Regions

## OBITUARIES

**Canton** – Vickie Morse; Grave-side Services at Gook's Corner Cemetery, Pierrepont.

**Cape Vincent** – Harold L. Wiley, 95; Mass of Christian Burial May 17, 2024 at St. Vincent of Paul Church; burial in St. Vincent of Payl Cemetery.

**Carthage** – James L. Stenoski, 77; Graveside Services at St. James Cemetery.

**Champlain** – Theresa Rose (Arno) Rabideau, 94; Mass of Christian Burial May 29, 2024 at St. Mary's Church; burial in St. Mary's Cemetery.

**Chateaugay** – Shirley (Recore) Parent, 88; Mass of Christian Burial May 17, 2024 at St. Patrick's Church; burial in Immaculate Heart Cemetery, Churubusco.

**Chateaugay** – Dianne R. (Soucia) Scott, 76; Private Services to be held.

**Clayton** – Vivian (Christophel) Wills, 79; Memorial Mass May 18, 2024 at St. Mary's Church.

**Constable** – Timothy L. Burnell; Mass of Christian Burial May 18, 2024 at St. Francis of Assisi Church; burial in St. Mary's Cemetery, Brushton.

**Ellenburg** – Trevor Joseph Blondo, 36; Mass of Christian Burial May 17, 2024 at St. Edmund's Church; burial in Holy Angels Cemetery, Altona.

**Lowville** – David F. Proulx, 80; Funeral Services May 14, 2024 at Iseneker Funeral Home, Inc.; burial in St. Peter's Cemetery, New Bremen.

**Lyons Falls** – Thomas Robert Kelly, 78; Graveside Services at St. Joseph's Cemetery, Boonville.

**Massena** – Michael J. Carroll, 69; Mass of Christian Burial May 21, 2024 at Sacred Heart Church.

**Morrisonville** – Robert Seymour, 84; Mass of Christian Burial May 16, 2024 at St. Alexander's Church.

**North Bangor** – Stephen Brockway, 61; Mass of Christian Burial May 18, 2024 at St. Augustine's Church; burial in St. Augustine's Cemetery.

**Ogdensburg** – Sally Ann (Ross) Miller, 71; Funeral Services May 20, 2024 at Fray Funeral home; burial in Notre Dame Cemetery.

**Ogdensburg** – Joseph T. Seymour, 75; Mass of Christian Burial May 18, 2024 at Notre Dame Church; burial in St. Mary's

Cemetery, Ogdensburg.

**Plattsburgh** – Reginald E. Bulriss, 87; Mass of Christian Burial May 20, 2024 at St. John's Church; burial in St. Joseph's Cemetery, Mooers.

**Plattsburgh** – James J. Gerace, 88; Mass of Christian Burial May 15, 2024 at St. Peter's Church; burial in St. Peter's Cemetery.

**Redford** – Gale D. (Miner) Purick, 77; Mass of Christian Burial July 18, 2024 at Church of the Assumption; burial in parish cemetery.

**Redford** – Thomas A. Rasco, 82; Mass of Christian Burial May 24, 2024 at Church of the Assumption; burial in parish cemetery.

**Tupper Lake** – Jeannette Neves Premo, 90; Mass of Christian Burial May 16, 2024 at St. Alphonso-Holy Name Church.

**Watertown** – Catherine D. "Cafa" (Augliano) Moran, 92; Memorial Mass July 2024 at Our Lady of the Sacred Heart; burial in Glenwood Cemetery.



## Welcome Spring!

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# STRENGTHENING THE CHURCH AT HOME



SPECIAL COLLECTION TO BE HELD THE WEEKEND OF MAY 25 & 26, 2024

Jesus calls his followers to love others as he loves them. Inspired by this call, Christians have shown his love through works of mercy such as visiting the sick and imprisoned, educating young people, and praying endlessly for others. Not only are these works of mercy directed to meet material or spiritual needs, but they are ways in which Christ draws people closer to himself.

In the Diocese of Amarillo, the diocesan criminal justice ministry answers Christ's call to visit and serve prisoners and patients confined to hospitals. Since 2004, this ministry has

expanded to bring the Eucharist, Sacred Scripture, and prayer to inmates of the seven prisons and two large hospitals in the diocese. This ministry of mercy includes retreats during which inmates can encounter the love of Jesus, heal from past failures and wounds, and develop new hope for the future. Many inmates have experienced spiritual conversions that have inspired them to join formation programs and enter the Catholic Church.

The criminal justice ministry is one of many innovative outreach efforts made by dioceses supported by Catholic Home Missions. Home mission

dioceses have small or widely dispersed Catholic populations, large or rugged areas of land that make it difficult to minister to the needs of the people, or economic challenges caused by poverty, unemployment, or natural disasters. Your participation in the annual Catholic Home Missions Appeal supports dioceses throughout the United States and its territories that need financial help to sustain core pastoral services and missions of mercy to those they serve.

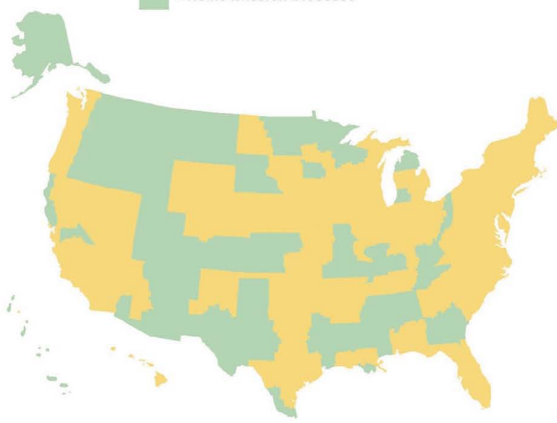
For more information about the Catholic home missions, visit [www.usccb.org/home-missions](http://www.usccb.org/home-missions).

### What Is a Home Mission Diocese?

Home mission dioceses are those Catholic dioceses in the United States, its territories, and former territories that cannot provide basic pastoral services without outside help. Basic pastoral services include Mass, the sacraments, religious education, and ministry training for priests, deacons, religious sisters, and laypeople. Nearly 40% of dioceses in the United States and its territories are considered home missions.

### WHERE DOES YOUR SUPPORT GO?

■ = Home Mission Dioceses



### CHMA FINANCIALS 2022



#### Totals by Program Area

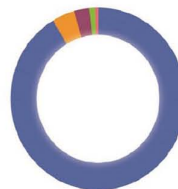
• Diocesan and Parish Assistance	\$2,715,000
• Priestly and Religious Vocations	\$2,085,000
• Special Grants*	\$1,832,200
• Faith Formation	\$1,695,000
• Cultural Ministries**	\$1,125,000
• Strengthening Marriage and Family Life	\$260,000
• Life and Dignity of the Human Person***	\$155,000

**Total: \$9,867,200**

\* Special Grants: Eucharistic Revival, \$680,000 | Natural Disaster Recovery Efforts, \$500,000 | World Youth Day, \$320,000 | Diocesan Professional Development Opportunities, \$174,200 | Installation Grants for New Bishops, \$108,000 | Staff Discretion & Agility Fund, \$50,000

\*\* including Hispanic and other ethnic and cultural ministries

\*\*\* including prison ministries and ministries for persons with disabilities



• Grants and Donations	\$9,761,689
• Program Costs	\$448,070
• Promotions and Fundraising Expenses	\$317,517
• Administrative Expenses	\$90,847
• Allocations - Internal Grants	\$47,935

**Total Expenses: \$10,666,058**



### CATHOLIC HOME MISSIONS APPEAL

OFFICE OF NATIONAL COLLECTIONS

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