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The Diocese of Ogdensburg Volume 80 Number 26

# NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

OCTOBER 29, 2025

## STANDING FOR LIFE



PHOTO BY PATRICK LOOBY/NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

Potsdam's Life Chain, a prayerful protest for life, drew a large crowd on Oct. 5. October is Respect Life, and Life Chain is an annual event. Life Chain witnesses were also held in Massena, Saranac Lake, Gouverneur, Watertown and Plattsburgh.

## LAY MINISTERS & PILGRIMS



On September 14, the Eastern Region Commissioned Lay Ministers hosted the 2025 Year of Hope Jubilee Pilgrimage to St. Peter's Church in Plattsburgh. Bishop Terry R. LaValley offered the welcome and a talk on plenary indulgences, led the Solemn Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, and offered a reflection on the Year of Hope and Lay Ministers' Role, concluding with the Jubilee Prayer and Benediction.

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# Pope: Sadness can be healed through Christ

By Kristina Millare  
Catholic News Agency

Pope Leo XIV at his general audience on Wednesday said sadness and disappointments can give rise to unexpected joys and hope when one discovers that Christ "walks with us and for us" in life.

Continuing his jubilee catechesis on "Jesus Christ Our Hope" in a rain-soaked St. Peter's Square, the Holy Father said the mystery of Christ's resurrection can "change one's outlook on the world," especially in times when one experiences a "paralysis of the soul."

"It is the Risen One who radically changes our perspective, instilling the hope that fills the

void of sadness," he said in his Oct. 22 catechesis.

"On the paths of the heart, the Risen One walks with us and for us. He bears witness to the defeat of death and affirms the victory of life, despite the darkness of Calvary," he continued.

In his reflection on the two disciples of Emmaus who had left "behind the hopes they held in Jesus" after his crucifixion and death, the Holy Father said the Gospel passage recorded by St. Luke can "be a gentle reminder to us when the going gets tough."

"History still has much goodness to hope for," he said.

Addressing thousands of pilgrims donning raincoats and

holding umbrellas in St. Peter's Square and the Via della Conciliazione, the pope said sadness, which he described as one of the "malaises of our time," can be healed when one is able to recognize the presence of the risen Christ in our lives.

"Intrusive and widespread, sadness accompanies the days of many people," he said. "It is a feeling of precariousness, at times profound desperation, which invades one's inner space and seems to prevail over any impetus to joy."

"Sadness robs life of meaning and vigor, turning it into a directionless and meaningless journey," he added.

Noting that Christians can at times have "sadness clouds

their gaze," Leo said Jesus can rekindle their hearts with the "warmth of hope," like what he had done through a gentle, humble, and hidden way for his two followers from Emmaus.

Toward the end of his Wednesday audience, the Holy Father urged Christians, particularly families, to be "missionaries of the Gospel" and to offer their support to those who dedicate their lives to the service of evangelization.

"Dear friends, the month of October invites us to renew our active cooperation in the Church's mission with the strength of prayer, with the potential of married life, and with the youthful energy that is yours," he said.



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# Three of a kind

It was not an uncommon experience to walk into our small family dairy farm to hear the two of them bickering.

My dad and grandfather co-owned that small dairy farm. Experience tells me they bickered mostly because they were so alike, both a bit stubborn, both convinced they're generally right and both very willing to tell you - at length - all the reasons why they're right. I say, "experience tells me," because I am the third-generation bickerer, also stubborn and convinced I'm generally right, and I'm

also happy to tell you all the reasons why I'm right.

I describe myself as, "a chip off the old block-head." The description applies to my father, too.

Darcy L.  
Fargo

I'm grateful God made me so similar to my father and grandfather. While I might pass on some of those attributes I inherited from my father if given a choice (like setting something down and forgetting where I put it minutes later), I generally consider it a compliment when someone says, "you're just like your father" or "you're just like your grandfather."

My grandfather served his community as a county legislator and school board member. He logged decades of public service. Similarly, my father serves his community as a town justice, a role he's held on and off since I was a young child. He's served as a town councilman in the past.

In the decades of service they both amassed, both live(d) according to their belief that individuals deserve to be treated with respect and kindness. Both live(d) according to their belief that it is incumbent upon us as a society to help those who cannot help themselves, regardless of the reason. Both live(d) according to their belief in justice and fair-

ness. No one is perfect, of course, and they both made (and make, in dad's case) mistakes. We all do. But both live(d) in a way that demonstrates they love their neighbors.

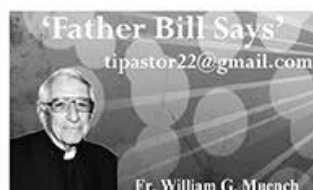
Normally, when I think of the pro-life movement, I think of my grandmother, a long-time volunteer in that area. This year, in this time when our society seems to think it's ok to vilify and dehumanize those with whom we disagree/have differences, this Respect Life month makes me think of my father and grandfather. Loving and serving our neighbors, all our neighbors, is respecting life.

It's hard to bicker with that.

# Some time with St. Luke

Recently, I celebrated Mass honoring the Feast of St. Luke. St. Luke is known as the author of two New Testament books - one of the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles. We know that St. Luke was not a part of the first generation of Christian disciples. He depended upon the traditions he received from those who were eyewitnesses, those who heard and remembered the words and activities of Jesus. It dawned on me that St. Luke had to use all the tactics and the careful work of a present day filmer of a documentary like Ken Burns.

Burns is a maker of films - documentaries - about all sorts of historical subjects, including one on baseball. He has to study the past to put together the stories of events like the Civil War; he must do interviews with historians. I mentioned baseball as the subject of one of his documentaries because each year near the end of a major league baseball



season, I have a personal tradition. I decide to watch from the beginning of all the episodes about this history of baseball. That is exactly what I have been doing this past week.

I do enjoy the stories and the memories of the great baseball players from the past. I love to remember them all. I can also remember where I was when some outstanding incident happened. I can only imagine the intense work Ken Burns must do investigating the material for these films. So, you see this got in wondering how St. Luke worked to accomplish the writing of those two Scriptural books, searching for those stories from the past that he wanted to present to us.

I can only imagine St. Luke asking questions and

listening carefully to all those who he met that had experienced Jesus, those who would remember Jesus teaching the people and his story telling - all those parables. St. Luke did write them all with such detail. He didn't miss a thing.

St. Luke's Gospel is simply magnificent literature. I know that many college literature courses include St. Luke's Gospel - like his version of the Parable of the Prodigal Son. It is such a magnificent story from Jesus put in words by St. Luke. And I am thinking of the many parables that St. Luke captures for us, like the Parable of the Good Samaritan. St. Luke gives us the Lord Jesus' message in a most magnificent way. St. Luke teaches us that God's promises to Israel and all that Jesus accomplished was extended to the Gentiles.

We do know that St. Luke was with St. Paul and was personally involved in the early Christian community that he describes for

us in the Acts of the Apostles. St. Luke was there, so he helps us understand the challenges that those first Christians faced, especially, St. Paul. He was with St. Paul on those long and difficult missionary journeys.

On that Feast of St. Luke, I realized that we really don't pay much attention to the Acts of the Apostles. So that day I suggested to the folks at Mass - and now to you all - that we should make it our homework for the present to read the Act of the Apostles. This was our foundation as a Church. Finally, I want to offer my gratitude to St. Luke for his research and hard work to write for us in such magnificent detail and outstanding literature, for bringing to us the message of Jesus and his story. I'm also grateful for his gift to us of the St. Paul's story and the details of his life and missionary activities. St. Luke laid such a great foundation for this Catholic Church of ours.



# Immaculate Heart Central: A school united

By Deacon Kevin Mastellon  
Contributing Writer

"It has become a cozier, homier atmosphere," according to Mary O'Brien, Advancement director for Immaculate Heart Central (IHC) in Watertown.

IHC Principal Amy Mitchell agrees.

"There is a sense of community, of family now that we are united," Mitchell said.

They are talking about a decision made last spring by the school board and a consolidation committee to bring all students, pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade, to one campus on Ives Street in Watertown.

A brief current history of how IHC got where it is today is in order.

Through most of the second half of the last century, Catholic elementary education, kindergarten through eighth grade, was provided at each of the four Watertown parish schools. In 2003, parishes relinquished control of the early childhood education to the Catholic school system and IHC added seventh and eighth grades with grades four, five and six at the former St. Patrick's School (called the Intermediate School) and kindergarten through third grade housed at the former Holy Family School (called the Elementary School.)

The Intermediate school was closed in 2020, and sixth graders joined seventh, eighth, and high school age children at the Ives



PHOTOS BY DEACON KEVIN MASTELLON/NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

(Above) Immaculate Heart Central's building on Ives Street, formerly the school's high school, now houses grades pre-kindergarten through grade 12. (Left) IHC Principal Amy Mitchell says the move has made the school feel more united.

Street campus.

That left pre-K and kindergarten through fifth grade on the elementary campuses on Winthrop Street with the remaining students on Ives Street.

"We tried to be one school but at two separate locations. It was challenging," Mitchell said. "I think being un-

der one roof was definitely a move in the right direction."

This fall, the planning was accomplished but not without some work.

"We had a busy summer. The work started on June 23, and we were in the new elementary section by the third week in August," Mitchell said. The work involved construction of new bathrooms to accommodate the "littles" and repurposing two rooms for use by the pre-K and kindergarten children.

"We also had some work to do with the staff," Amy Mitchell told us.

Some teachers now

had added responsibilities with elementary age children. IHC added Spanish to its curriculum at all levels, not just Junior and Senior High. A youth sports program was introduced to help elementary age kids learn the elements of soccer, basketball and lacrosse. The rationale is starting the kids at an early age is bound to positively affect those offerings in later years of school life.

"During a transition like this, you will lose families," according to Mitchell. "But we have been fortunate. Last June our enrollment in the system was 247

and now we are at 251." (the numbers were as of October 16 when the interview was conducted.) "We lost some families and gained some. Most of those we lost were due to military reassignments not to consolidation. That was huge. Our biggest fear was that we would lose some families. In total, we did not. It is wonderful."

Walking through the halls and classrooms of the elementary wing of the school building, the years of Amy Mitchell's experience with children that age became evident. Little ones ran up to her to give her a hug or show her their most recent artwork or craft. She greeted each child by first name and gave each child her complete attention.

Amy Mitchell taught in pre-K, kindergarten and first grade most of her career at Indian River, St. Anthony's and then at IHC. She became vice principal in 2009 and principal this year.

The consolidation has gone very well. The upper-class students are comfortable with the little ones around.

"They eat lunch at the same time. It is a bit noisy in the cafeteria, but it all goes well," Mitchell said.

"There is a sense of community, of family, that exists now. Perhaps that was absent before. And the enthusiasm and support of people in the community that still want to see Catholic education as a choice for people is magnificent. It gives us hope."



# Lay ministers host Year of Hope pilgrimage

By Mary Beth Bracy,  
consecrated virgin  
Contributing writer

On September 14, the Eastern Region Commissioned Lay Ministers hosted the 2025 Year of Hope Jubilee Pilgrimage to St. Peter's Church in Plattsburgh. Bishop Terry R. LaValley offered the welcome and a talk on plenary indulgences, led the Solemn Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, and offered a reflection on the Year of Hope and Lay Ministers' Role, concluding with the Jubilee Prayer and Benediction.

During the Holy Hour, there was also time for quiet adoration and confessions, as well as a rosary led by commissioned lay ministers Ceil Johnson, Letitia Taylor, David Hunt, Beth Carlin, Steven Taylor and Pat Gladd.

Cathy Witkowski, chair of the Board of the Eastern Region Commissioned Lay Ministers, remarked, "The rosary was very spiritual to me, it (the meditations) talked about all of the things we should be concerned about today."

Reflections included prayers for the poor, young people, the oppressed, and marginalized.

"Four of the newly commissioned lay ministers were ones that led the rosary which was special because they wanted to be involved," added Witkowski.

Witkowski said she is grateful to those who helped make the event possible.

"I'm very appreciative of my team because we started to organize (the event) in the spring,"



PHOTO BY MARY BETH BRACY/NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

**Commissioned Lay Minister Pat Gladd leads a decade of the rosary at St. Peter's Church in Plattsburgh on Sept. 14.**

she said. "Board members of the Eastern Region of Lay Ministers did an outstanding job of putting it all together and organizing it. I'm very appreciative of that effort. People needed it, they don't know what indulgences are."

Bishop LaValley began with the story of a boy named Tommy who broke a window playing baseball. Though his father forgave him, Tommy needed assistance, so his older brother Kevin helped him clean up the mess. Using this analogy, Bishop LaValley described the gift of plenary indulgences and our ability to help others who are in need of our prayers. "(We can) win indulgences. Our Church ... helps those who need help picking up the pieces."

The Catechism of the Catholic Church describes how an indulgence is obtained, Bishop LaValley continued.

"(There is a) treasury of merits ... due for our sins," he said. "The

Church does this to spur us on to works of devotion, penance, and charity. Kevin saw his kid brother hurting and sought to lend a hand to clean up."

Bishop LaValley also explained how indulgences are obtained.

"How might we obtain such assistance? Make a visit to a pilgrimage Church, receive Communion devoutly, pray prayers for the intentions of Our Holy Father, participate in Works of Mercy. My friends, God is the beginning and the end of life's pilgrimage," explained Bishop LaValley.

Bishop LaValley also encouraged those present to share hope.

"We are pilgrims of hope, trusting in the power of God and prayer," proclaimed Bishop LaValley. "These days we experience sadness, stress, and lack of hope. Where hope is scarce, be a messenger of hope."

Bishop LaValley spoke of the hope he's seen in this Jubilee year of

hope.

"I've traveled to nursing homes, our prisons, hospitals, place of rehabilitation," he said. "We still all need witnesses of hope. If we want to be a people of hope, we need to cultivate another virtue - gratitude. Everything, absolutely everything, is gift ... for those nourished by the very Body and Blood of Christ, for those who seek to be resurrected people."

He encouraged the lay ministers to reflect on their blessings as well as the areas where they fall short.

"On the highway to Heaven we will have potholes, but all will be well," encouraged Bishop LaValley. "For our lay ministers, thank you. How do we get ourselves in the mode where we have been blessed? At morning and bedtime, naming them (our blessings), thinking of where we screwed up and how we are blessed."

Bishop LaValley related the story of how he was appointed to be bishop and related it to the call of the apostles on the Sea of Galilee. He selected for his episcopal motto: "Follow Me."

"It's all about following Jesus," Bishop LaValley explained. "'Follow Me,' Jesus is really the Highway to Heaven."

"Eucharist is about 'eat My Body ... Blood,' Eucharist is about thanks or thanksgiving. Do I live my life as an attitude of gratitude?" Bishop LaValley asked.

"We all live under the sign of the Cross; grace encounters of worship are so important. Moms and Dads instilling the attitude of gratitude in youngsters. It's not

all about me, it's about Him. Whatever vocation, say thank you. Know you are about the business of proclaiming the Gospel."

Bishop LaValley encouraged the lay ministers to collaborate with others.

"Count on deacons, priests, the bishop, consecrated religious, we're all on the same team," he said. "Thank you for your ministry. May this year ... cultivate the joy of the Gospel."

Sister Sharon Dalton of Ticonderoga commented, "I've enjoyed all the things (during the Year of Hope) I've been able to attend. We had a bus trip to Old Forge and Tupper Lake. I like the way they planned (today's event) so it was after our Masses."

"In Old Forge we had a meal and Adoration, with a Holy Hour and Confession. Father Kornmeyer said it was great. We had midday prayer and lunch together. In Tupper Lake we prayed the Divine Mercy Chaplet and Mass with Father Severinus Torwoe, then the Jubilee Prayer. It was nice to see all of the lay ministers together (today)," added Father Medenel Angrand.

"I am a commissioned lay minister and used to be in the St. Lawrence Deanery. This is only the second time I've been to one (a gathering for lay ministers). I told Sally White, who invited me, 'We are in very good company,'" said Jane Boyea.

"(It was a) beautiful way to spend a Sunday afternoon in this Year of Jubilee. Great to see everyone come together like that," concurred Hunt.



## A KNIGHT'S REFLECTION

# A thousand times I fall

My wife is an eternal optimist. I am not. No matter if it's financial concerns, work-related stress, physical illness, or simply navigating major life changes, she seeks a positive path forward. When she senses I am growing discouraged, she will calmly remind me that, "it is in God's hands."

When we commit a sin - a disruption in one's relationship with God, oneself, and others - it can lead to discouragement in our spiritual life. It is the shame and guilt from sin that can separate us from God. We may fall into self-condemnation and mistakenly believe that we are unworthy to have a relationship with Him. We see this in the Old Testament Book of Genesis with Adam and Eve who felt shame and guilt discovering their nakedness (hiding from God) after eating from the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

St. Mark Ji Tianxiang is an example on how to "get back up" after stumbling in grave sin. In 1900, Mark Ji was murdered in his village during China's anti-foreigner and anti-Christian Boxer Rebellion. Pope John Paul II, in 2000, canonized Mark Ji for his martyrdom. What is extraordinary is this Catholic saint, due to his struggle with

an opium addiction, was denied the Catholic sacraments for the last 30 years of his life.

As a young man, Mark Ji was a respected physician and member of his community. He contracted a violent stomach ailment and began treating himself with opium for its pain-relieving properties. Once addicted, he was considered morally weak in the community and a disgrace to his family. The local parish priest - not understanding addiction as a chronic brain disease as we do today - denied him confession and communion until he resolved to give up the sin. We can imagine the spiritual battle as he surrendered to the smoke-filled opium den, shifted between waves of euphoria and crushing guilt, and pleaded with God to overcome his sin.

Mark Ji remained faithful to the Church and attended daily Mass during the decades of his addiction. He prayed to God for martyrdom and, when the time came, he begged to be the last killed among the imprisoned Christians (to spiritually support those about to face death). Mark Ji's story is a powerful

testament to the triumph of spirit over sin from our human weakness. His persistent devotion to God - and the Church - offers us hope in conquering our own sins.

As Catholics, we are on a life-long spiritual journey to sanctify our souls in hopes of achieving perfect union with God in heaven. It is inevitable that, as believers, we will stumble - and even at times fall hard - as we work to understand God's plan for us. Fortunately, we are offered a remarkable grace by Jesus in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. We know from St. Faustina Kowalska, who experienced apparitions and received messages from Jesus between 1931 and 1938, that He yearns to show mercy to souls. "When you approach the confessional, know this, that I Myself am waiting there for you. I am only hidden by the priest, but I myself act in your soul," Jesus said. "If their trust is great, there is no limit to My generosity." - Diary 1602

When we go to confession, we may emerge with a feeling of peace, relief, and joy. The serenity can quickly pass for

those who are stuck in habitual sin. For them, the real work starts after they profess, "I firmly intend, with your help, to do penance, to sin no more, and to avoid whatever leads me to sin," in the Act of Contrition prayer. Note the phrase, "with your help," which is exactly what Jesus told St. Faustina is required to conquer sin.

We know that past emotional wounds - personal to each individual soul - can lead to sinful actions. When, with the grace of God, we come to acknowledge a past wound, we have an obligation to investigate the root causes in pursuit of healing. Like a surgeon who slowly and carefully probes a patient for a debilitating affliction, we too must find a way to expose the physical, emotional, and psychological wounds that lead us to sin.

It is impossible to overcome sin without the help of Jesus. We are called to carry our own personal cross, but that doesn't mean that we have to carry it alone. Mark Ji knew that the Lord wanted his soul sanctified, even though he couldn't achieve it during his lifetime. He couldn't stay sober, but he could "get back up." That is all that Jesus is asking for us to do.



Mike  
Langlois

## OBITUARIES

**Canton** - Debra Ames, 67; Mass of Christian Burial Oct. 23, 2025 at St. Mary's Church.

**Canton** - Helen O'Leary McDonald, 89; Mass of Christian Burial Oct. 22, 2025 at St. Mary's Church; burial in St. Mary's Cemetery.

**Carthage** - Margaret A. (Archer) Garris, 92; Mass of Christian Burial Nov. 1, 2025 at St. James Church; burial in St. James Cemetery.

**Carthage** - Sonja E. Lea (Cryderman) Higman, 84; Memorial Mass Nov. 15, 2025 at St. James Church; burial in New St. James Cemetery.

**Chateaugay** - Colonel James Hyland Ryan, 89; Mass of Christian Burial Nov. 7, 2025 at St. Patrick's Church; burial in St. Patrick's Cemetery.

**Clayton** - John F. Pecor, 80; Mass of Christian Burial Oct. 20, 2025 at St. Mary's Church; burial in St. Mary's Cemetery.

**Fine** - Dennis J. Peabody, 63; Graveside Services Oct. 30, 2025 at St. Michael's Cemetery.

**Glenfield** - Peter John Natale, 85; Mass of Christian Burial Oct. 25, 2025 at St. Mary's Church; burial in Old Glendale Cemetery.

**Houseville** - Christina (Nolan) Collins, 85; Mass of Christian Burial Oct. 24, 2025 at St. Hedwig's Church; burial in Martinsburg Cemetery.

**Indian Lake** - Richard Kliniski, 85; Memorial Mass Oct. 21, 2025 at St. Mary's Church.

**Malone** - David L. Tavernia, 72; Mass of Christian Burial Oct. 23, 2025 at Notre Dame Church; burial in St. John Bosco Cemetery.

**Massena** - Elizabeth (Barber) Robinson, 95; Mass of Christian Burial Oct. 24, 2025 at St. Mary's Church; burial in Calvary Cemetery.

**Morrisonville** - Harold L. Geno, 94; Mass of Christian Burial Oct. 24, 2025 at St. Alexander's Church; burial in St. Peter's Cemetery, Plattsburgh.

**Norfolk** - Michael E. Moulton, 75; Mass of Christian Burial Oct. 23, 2025 at Church of the Visitation; burial in St. Mary's Cemetery, Potsdam.

**Plattsburgh** - James C. Goddeau, 83; Funeral Services Oct. 25, 2025 at Brown Funeral Home; burial in St. Joseph's Cemetery, Dannemora.

**Plattsburgh** - Randall Robinson Larkin, 78; Memorial Services Oct.

24, 2025 at the Newman Center.

**Port Henry** - Pauline Mary (Koczur) Kudlakic, 94; Mass of Christian Burial Oct. 27, 2025 at St. Patrick's Church; burial in St. Patrick's Cemetery.

**Saranac Lake** - Richard P. Burgasser, 65; Mass of Christian Burial Oct. 24, 2025 at St. Bernard's Church.

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## Environmental Stewardship

## Change is everywhere

Changes are always occurring in nature, yet in autumn, changes seem to be more evident than at any other time. Temperatures drop, daylight wanes, wind becomes more evident, skies become more overcast and, except for honking geese and squawking blue jays, there are few wild sounds to be heard.

The organisms that populate the natural world are genetically programmed to deal with seasonal changes. Some enter a period of dormancy, others migrate to more favorable settings, and others adapt physically and behaviorally to the coming changes.

As climate change impacts the schedule and intensity of weather events, it is believed by some naturalists that organisms of our region are becoming stressed. Trees can be used as an indicator of stress, especially at this time of year, as some deciduous trees fail to produce the vibrant colors for which they have become famous.

It has been noted that this season's color is somewhat dull. While it is impossible to state the cause for certain, it does indicate the trees are experiencing abnormal conditions.

Mental health professionals indicate weather can impact emotional well-being. Prolonged heat, unprecedented rain events, frequent cloudy, smoke-filled skies take a toll on mental health.

There are subtle signs in nature that organisms are becoming stressed by changing weather patterns. While we must do everything we can to slow the rate at which these changes are occurring, we must also acknowledge that we are not even close to being in control of this process. We must learn to trust in God, who has only our best interests at heart. There are normal, seasonal changes progressing, and planetary climatic shifts that are underway. Being a shining beacon of Christian hope will be most helpful to both society and nature as we experience these periods of change.

The reason we travelled to Toronto recently (last week's column) was for the National Association of Diocesan Directors (NADD) regional meeting.

It was not to see the Blue Jay's squeak by the Mariner's in route to a World Series appearance. I will root for Toronto, incidentally, despite the fact they defeated the New York Yankees.

NADD is the international organization that represents diocesan deacon directors and deacon formation directors from the United States and Canada. "It exists to support diocesan directors, formation directors, associate directors and their staffs in its mission to enable deacons, candidates, aspirants, their wives and families to utilize their

gifts in the service of the Church following the model of Jesus Christ."

The region the Diocese of Ogdensburg is part of includes all the dioceses in Ontario Province, New York State, and a couple of other Canadian provinces. The current leader of the region is Deacon Steve Pitre from Toronto. The next chair will be Deacon Tim Chriswell of Buffalo. The term is six years.

Deacon Lee Trudeau, the Ogdensburg director of Deacon Formation, and I are the official members for this diocese. Deacon Lee was unable to join us on this occasion.

At these semi-annual gatherings, we hear about issues that are of interest to deacons, candidates and spouses in the US and Canada, but the real meat and potatoes comes when the men and women around the tables share what is

## CALLED TO SERVE

## Learning from others

going on in their diocese. That's when we learn best practices and what did not work. That's when we find out the directors from across the state and the province have similar issues and how they dealt with the problems.

Of particular interest for me was the formation of candidates in charity work. The deacon is best known for his participation in the liturgical setting.

We see him assisting the celebrant at Mass or presiding at a Holy Hour for instance. That is not all he does.

The deacon also visits the sick and homebound, cooks and/or serves meals at soup kitchens, distributes food from pantries, conducts services in nursing homes, and visits those who are residents of those homes for instance.

In one diocese each of the candidates spends

time each year during formation focused on a particular activity. In year one they identify and volunteer in an activity that addresses the poor.

The next year finds them in the parish volunteering in a Christian Education setting. It might be with kids; it might be with adults. The next year is homebound visitation, hospital, and nursing home ministries, and in their final year, candidates face palliative care and end of life issues in their volunteer hours.

Added to their academic pursuits, it is a lot to ask of a candidate. However, the man heard the call of Jesus to become a deacon. That ministry, as Pope Francis reminded us, is found among the sheep, not just in the sanctuary.

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



Deacon Kevin Mastellon

## Bishop's Public Schedule

**Oct. 29** – 10:30 a.m. – Diocesan Finance Council Meeting followed by Lunch at Bishop's Residence

**Oct. 30** – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

**Oct. 31** – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

**Nov. 1** – 4 p.m. – Confirmation at The Roman Catholic Community of Cape Vincent, Rosiere and Chaumont in Cape Vincent

**Nov. 2** – 8 a.m. – Installation Mass of Reverend James V. Teti as Pastor of St. James Major Church in Lake Pleasant and St. Ann's Church in Wells

**Nov. 3** – 11 a.m. – Catholic Charities Corporation Meeting at Bishop's Residence followed by Lunch

**Nov. 4** – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

**Nov. 5** – 9:30 a.m. – Mass with the Students at Augustinian Academy in Carthage followed by Classroom Visits

## Rest in Peace

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

**Oct. 29** – Rev. James R. Scanlon, 1880; Rev. Peter F. Cody, 1888; Rev. John Canning, 1998; Deacon Robert V. Ruddy, 2013

**Oct. 30** – Rev. Michael F. Burns, 1921; Rev. Thomas E. Owen, 1945; Rev. Peter N. Butler, 1973

**Oct. 31** – Rev. James Rooney, 1863; Rev. Lucien Jean, M.S.C., 1964; Rev. Ivan G. Boyea, 1996; Rev. Clyde A. Lewis, Jr., 2024

**Nov. 2** – Rev. Thomas Walsh, 1888; Rev. John Henry Lyons, 1931; Msgr. James J. Ruddy, 1987

**Nov. 3** – Rev. Thomas Plunkett, 1904

**Nov. 4** – Msgr. Benjamin Harrison Staie, 1970

## To Report Abuse

**If you have a complaint of suspected misconduct involving diocesan clergy, religious, employees or volunteers, contact Victim Assistance Coordinator, Terrianne Yanulavich, Ph.D., LMHC, 5050 Route 374, Merrill, NY 12955; terrianneyanulavich@yahoo.com; Phone: 518-569-0612; or Father Christopher Carrara, the Episcopal Vicar for Clergy; ccarrara@rcdony.org Phone: 315-393-2920 ext. 1340. If you have a complaint of suspected sexual abuse or related misconduct by the bishops, contact the Catholic Bishop Abuse Reporting Service at 800-276-1562 or [www.ReportBishopAbuse.org](http://www.ReportBishopAbuse.org)**

## Protecting God's Children

**The Diocese of Ogdensburg** has scheduled Protecting God's Children training sessions. 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. Pre-registration is encouraged at [www.virtus.org](http://www.virtus.org). Upcoming sessions:

**Oct. 30** – 9 a.m. – Catholic Community of Brownville and Dexter (Brownville)

**Nov. 7** – 6 p.m. – Immaculate Heart Central, Watertown



## SUNDAY'S SCRIPTURE

## What happens after we die?

Here's a statement that no one can deny: each one of us will die. That is a fact that cannot be disputed.

We celebrate on November 2 the Commemoration of all the Faithful Departed, commonly called All Souls Day. This year, November 2 falls on a Sunday.

Let's consider what happens to our bodies after we die. To be more precise, let's consider traditional practices following death. In the past 30 or 40 years, long-standing customs and even beliefs have radically changed. So, often we read in obituaries: no calling hours, no funeral, funeral at the convenience of the family.

There is also a com-

mon belief - everyone goes to heaven. We seem to have eliminated purgatory and hell. Some believe that there

is only one requirement to get into heaven - the requirement to die. We just have to go through the living and dying parts first. Then, we are fast tracked to heaven. Well, if this ez-pass approach to eternal life is true, then

why would we bother praying for the dead?

Should there be a funeral? Yes. Should there be a wake? Yes. Should there be a burial? Yes. Let me explain.

Some people will tell their children not to make a fuss over them when they die. First of all, it's not a fuss. We



Msgr. Robert H. Aucoin

## November 2

## Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed (All Souls)

## READINGS

Wisdom 3:1-9

Romans 5:5-11

John 6:37-40

have always greatly respected the dead. In cemeteries we memorialize the dead. We keep photographs of those who were dear to us. As a country, we enshrine those who have died to defend our country, and we celebrate that memorial in our cemeteries. We do keep the dead visible in cemeteries, memorial plaques, tombs even to the unknown. The dead form our heritage. We fuss over a newborn. Should we not also make a fuss over someone born into eternal life?

A funeral celebrates the Christian person's life, a life lived with Christ especially through baptism, through the Eucharist. In a funeral, we pray that the baptized will share fully in Christ's promise of resurrection from the dead. A funeral is our last act of

worship, our celebration here on earth of what we wish to have fulfilled in eternity.

I strongly encourage you to make funeral plans and to make known to your children that there should be a Catholic funeral. Don't assume that it will happen. If your children have become detached from the Church and religion, they should not impose their disposition on you who have been a faithful disciple of Christ.

Should there be a wake? Yes. Again, a wake is not making a fuss but provides the opportunity for your friends and relatives to relive the beauty of your life with them. People want the opportunity to say good-bye. Without a wake or funeral, you are not giving them the opportunity to be with you once again. We so often hear today that there will not be any funeral or calling hours, but rather a celebration of life at some club. A wake and a funeral celebrate life; the wake celebrates that life as people speak with one another; the funeral celebrates that person's

life as lived in Christ Jesus.

Should there be a burial? As a people, and especially as Catholics, we greatly respect the body. After all, do we not say and believe that we are temples of the Holy Spirit? So, we properly bury the dead in our cemeteries, and we mark the graves so that in some visible way we are still part of the world where we lived our human lives. Even if the person is cremated, the ashes should still be buried for the same reason that we bury a body, with the same respect that we bury a body. A current practice of keeping the ashes in one's home may seem more expedient and more respectful. But what happens to those ashes when the keeper dies, when the children die? After one or two generations will the ashes in the urn still find a place in someone's home? In cleaning attics, we sometimes find treasures. In the future cleaning of attics, will your ashes be among those so-called treasures? Is that respectful of the dead?

So, on Sunday, we commemorate all the faithful departed. May our prayers not be in vain. Likewise, may we properly prepare for our own deaths and funerals so that those famous words may be prayed over us: Eternal rest grant unto him/her, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon him/her. May his/her soul and the souls of all the faithful departed through the mercy of God rest in peace. Amen.

## THE MONTHLY PRAYER REQUEST FOR PRIESTS

## WOULD YOU PRAY FOR A PRIEST EACH DAY?

## PRAYER SUGGESTION

Eternal Father, we lift up to you these and all the priests of the world. Sanctify them. Heal and guide them. Mold them into the likeness and holiness of your Son, Jesus, the Eternal High Priest. May their lives be pleasing to you. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen

(With ecclesiastical approval)

Mass  
Rosary  
Fasting  
Day Offering  
Eucharistic Adoration  
Offering of Sufferings  
Divine Mercy Chaplet  
Or whatever the Lord inspires you to offer Him

November



Holy Souls

## NOVEMBER

2025

DIOCESE OF  
OGDENSBURG, NY

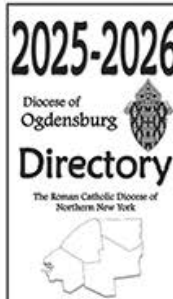
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9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
REV. JOHN L. LOOBY	REV. SHANE M. LYNCH	REV. JHON MADRID	REV. DONALD J. MANFRED	REV. LAWRENCE E. MARULIC	REV. MICHAEL H. MARZAN	POPE LEO XIV	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
MSGR. C. JOHN MCALOY	REV. KEVIN D. MCLEWIS	REV. RAYMOND J. MOREAU	REV. JOSEPH A. MORGAN	REV. WILLIAM G. MUENCH	MSGR. JOHN R. MURPHY	DECEASED PRIESTS	26
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A donation to help support THE MONTHLY PRAYER REQUEST FOR PRIESTS will be appreciated. The Monthly Prayer Request for Priests is graciously underwritten by: Diocese of Ogdensburg, Vocational Society, www.myvocation.net

## 2025-2026 Diocesan Directories now available!



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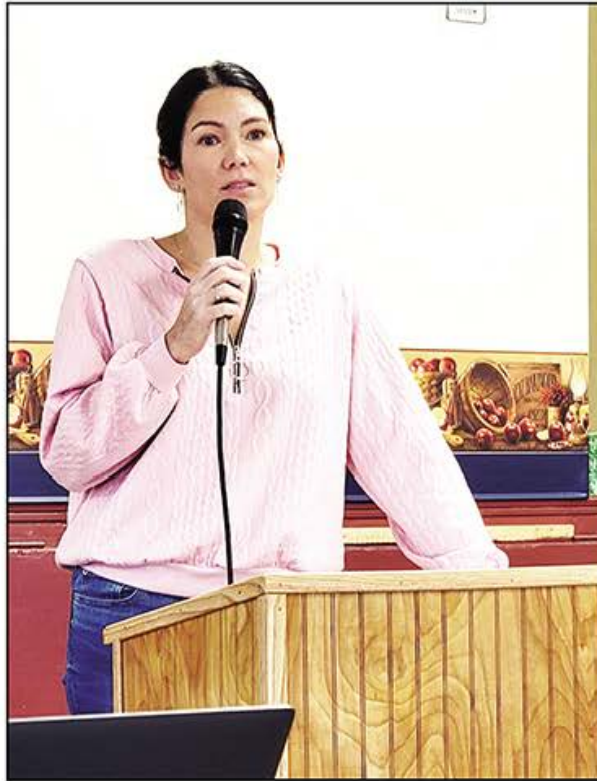
# Disaster hub to serve North Country

In times of crisis, a safe shelter can mean the difference between fear and hope. On October 3, that hope became reality as dozens of community partners, emergency response agencies, and volunteers gathered at St. Augustine's Parish Center in Peru to celebrate the official launch of the North Country Community Disaster Hub — a new collaborative effort designed to meet critical needs when disaster strikes.

The Hub, located in the former St. Augustine's School building, is a joint initiative of St. Augustine's Parish, the American Red Cross Eastern New York Region, the Mental Health Association in Essex County, Inc., the United Way of the Adirondack Region, Inc., St. Joseph's Outreach Center, the Joint Council for Economic Opportunity of Clinton and Franklin Counties (JCEO), the Clinton County Office of Emergency Services, and the Adirondack Community Foundation.

The idea was born when Jackie Black, business manager for St. Augustine's Parish, and Kelly Donoghue of Clinton County EMS attended the Catholic Charities USA Applied Institute of Disaster Excellence (AIDE) conference. In discussions there, they recognized significant gaps in the region's disaster response capacity — particularly during smaller-scale crises that don't qualify for state or federal emergency declarations.

"Kelly and Jackie began asking a simple but powerful question: What happens when a neighborhood is without power for three days in the middle of winter? Where can people go for



warmth, food, and support?" explained Father Christopher Looby, pastor of St. Augustine's, St. Alexander's, and St. James parishes. "This Hub is our community's answer. It's about being ready — not just for the big disasters, but for the smaller emergencies that can leave families vulnerable and isolated."

The Hub's mission is both simple and flexible: to provide shelter, meals, resources, and coordinated support in the aftermath of disasters — whether natural, technological, or human-caused. It is also envisioned as a Multi-Agency Resource Center (MARC), where organizations such as the Red Cross, social services, FEMA, and others can offer assistance in one centralized location.

"Rather than having people travel from office to office after a disaster, the MARC model brings resources together un-

der one roof," said Starr Burke, director of St. Joseph's Outreach Center. "This creates a one-stop support system for people who may already be overwhelmed."

Friday's kick-off event included a full day of training and collaboration. Meaghan Bailey from the Mental Health Association of Essex County led a morning session on Trauma and Crisis Response, helping volunteers understand the psychological and emotional needs of those affected by disasters. Madeline Clark of the American Red Cross then conducted a Shelter Fundamentals workshop, certifying participants as Red Cross shelter volunteers. In the afternoon, attendees toured the new facility and participated in a discussion on establishing a local MARC.

The project also represents a new chapter for St. Augustine's for-



(Left) Meaghan Bailey from the Mental Health Association of Essex County led a morning session on Trauma and Crisis Response, helping volunteers understand the psychological and emotional needs of those affected by disasters. (Above) St. James Church, Cadyville, parishioners Roman & Taunyia Miner attended the event along with more than 60 community volunteers and agencies throughout Essex, Clinton and Franklin Counties.

mer parish school. Once a center of Catholic education, the building now serves a renewed and "enhanced purpose" — continuing the Church's mission of service by becoming a beacon of hope in moments of community need.

"This is a beautiful example of how the Church can respond creatively to the signs of the times," Father Looby said. "We are taking a building that formed hearts and minds for generations and giving it new life — one that will shelter, comfort, and support our neighbors when they need it most."

Behind the scenes, many hands made the Hub a reality. Volunteers including Tom Friend, Dave Sulia, and Steve DeLorme installed showers and critical infrastructure. Jackie Black coordinated grants and donations. And local agencies stepped forward to build a strong network of partners dedicated to the common good.

"This is what hope looks like when a community works together," said John Bernardi, president and CEO of United Way of the Adirondack Region. "It's neighbors helping neighbors, faith communities partnering with nonprofits, and agencies uniting for a shared mission."

The North Country Community Disaster Hub will now stand ready to respond — whether that means providing warm meals during a power outage, shelter during a flood, or coordinated recovery efforts after a major disaster. It's a testament to what can happen when compassion, collaboration, and faith come together to serve those most in need.

"As Catholics, we believe we meet Christ in the faces of those who suffer," Father Looby reflected. "This Hub is our way of being there — ready to welcome, ready to serve, and ready to bring hope."



# Pope appoints new bishop for Albany diocese

Diocese of Albany

On October 20, the Holy Father, Pope Leo XIV, announced that he has named Bishop Mark O'Connell, JCD, as the 11th Bishop of the Albany Diocese. Bishop O'Connell has been serving as an Auxiliary Bishop in the Archdiocese of Boston since June of 2016. He has most recently been serving as Vicar General and Moderator of the Curia for the Archdiocese of Boston.

Bishop O'Connell was born June 25, 1964, in Toronto, Canada to American parents. His family returned to Massachusetts when he was 12 years old. His father, Thomas, who passed away in 2013, was a University Librarian first at York University in Toronto and then at Boston College. His mother, Margaret passed away in 2018. Bishop O'Connell is the youngest of four children. He has two brothers and a sister. His late uncle was a Boston Priest, Rev. David Delaney '61 and his aunt, Sr. Jean Delaney, O.P. is a religious sister in the Dominican Order of Peace.

A graduate of Dover Sherborn Regional High School '82, he earned degrees from Boston College '86 and Saint John Seminary '90. Following his ordination to the priesthood in 1990, he served five years at Saint Barbara Parish in Woburn, MA and two years at Saint Mary of the Annunciation in Danvers, MA. He continued his studies in Rome in Canon Law



Bishop Mark O'Connell

in 1997 and received his doctorate in Canon Law (JCD) in 2002 from the Università della Santa Croce. From 2001 to 2007 he served as Assistant to the Moderator of the Curia for Canonical Affairs. Between 2007 and 2016 he served as Judicial Vicar and as a member of the faculty at both Saint John Seminary and Pope Saint John XXIII National Seminary.

After his ordination to the episcopacy on August 24, 2016, he served as pastor of Saint Theresa Parish in North Reading, MA and as the Regional Bishop of the North Region of the Archdiocese of Boston covering 60 parishes. He became the Vicar General and Moderator of the Curia of the Archdiocese in 2023.

"Bishop Mark," as he prefers to be called, stated: "I am delighted and deeply grateful to God and the Holy Fa-

ther, Pope Leo, for calling me to serve as the 11th Bishop of Albany. I am truly honored to be your bishop and embrace this role with great joy. Wherever this journey leads, I will walk with you, guided by the hope and peace of the Risen Lord. I ask for your prayers and goodwill, and I pledge the same to you."

Bishop O'Connell succeeds Bishop Edward B. Scharfenberger, who has served in the Albany Diocese since April of 2014. Bishop Scharfenberger submitted his resignation when he reached the mandatory retirement age of 75 in May 2023. He will serve as Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Albany until Bishop O'Connell's installation on December 5, 2025.

"Bishop O'Connell is a man with great depth and breadth of pastoral, canonical, and communications skills and experience.

## NY Catholic conference issues statement

Following is a statement by Dennis Poust, executive director of the New York State Catholic Conference, on the announcement that Pope Leo XIV has accepted the resignation of Bishop Edward B. Scharfenberger, 77, and appointed Auxiliary Bishop Mark W. O'Connell as the 11th Bishop of Albany:

"Today, we rejoice in the appointment of Bishop Mark O'Connell as the new Bishop of Albany. At the same time, we give thanks to God for the ministry of Bishop Edward Scharfenberger, who reached the mandatory retirement age of 75 more than two years ago.

"We look forward with joyful anticipation to Bishop O'Connell's arrival in our state's Capital City, and as the local Bishop to the New York State Catholic Conference staff. Bishop O'Connell's background as vicar general and moderator of the curia of one of the largest archdioceses in the country prepares him well for leading the faithful in the Diocese of Albany. His commitment to synodality is evidenced by his podcast "Listening to Catholic Women," which he recently launched. As a member of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee for the Protection of Children and Young People, Bishop O'Connell has demonstrated great pastoral concern for survivors of clergy sexual abuse.

"While we welcome Bishop O'Connell, we express our love and appreciation for Bishop Scharfenberger, whose ministry as Bishop of Albany was marked by being a bridge builder and walking with survivors of abuse while being one of the Church's leading voices for reform. He came to a diocese facing many challenges and has shied away from none of them, always imploring those under his pastoral care to not lose faith in Jesus Christ and to develop a personal relationship with Him. Bishop Scharfenberger's own personal faith and serenity have been inspirational to all of us. We wish him the best in his well-deserved retirement."

The Catholic Conference represents the Bishops of New York State in public policy matters.

We welcome him with open hearts and pray for many years of good health and joyful presence among us," said Bishop Scharfenberger in a letter to the people of the Diocese.

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# CATHOLIC WORLD AT A GLANCE

## Cleveland Diocese gets permission to extend Latin Mass

The Diocese of Cleveland has confirmed that the Vatican granted permission for the celebration of the Traditional Latin Mass (TLM) at two diocesan churches for an additional two years. The extension applies to St. Mary's Church in Akron and St. Stephen's in Cleveland, both of which, according to the Catholic Herald, had previously been granted limited approval to continue celebrating the extraordinary form of the Roman rite. At both parishes, diocesan priests say the Masses, rather than priests from the Priestly Fraternity of St. Peter or the Institute of Christ the King Sovereign Priest, as sometimes occurs in other dioceses. In an email to CNA, Nancy Fishburn, executive director of communications for the Diocese of Cleveland, said: "The Holy See granted a two-year extension of permission for the two remaining diocesan celebrations of the Latin Mass within the Diocese of Cleveland." Pope Francis' 2021 *motu proprio Traditionis Custodes* has restricted the use of the pre-Vatican II Mass by requiring Vatican approval for its celebration in parish churches, placing oversight directly under the Holy See. Bishops must now obtain authorization from the Vatican to permit the older form of the Roman rite in their dioceses.

## Pope to make St. John Henry Newman patron of education

Pope Leo XIV will name St. John Henry Newman a patron saint of Catholic education in a document to be published on Oct. 28 for the 60th anniversary of *Gravissimum Educationis*, the Second Vatican Council's declaration on Christian education. The Holy Father will designate Newman as an official co-patron saint of education, together with St. Thomas Aquinas, during the Vatican's Jubilee of the World of Education from Oct. 27 to Nov. 1, which is expected to draw 20,000 pilgrims. The saint will also be declared the 38th doctor of the Church by Leo at the jubilee's closing Mass on Nov. 1, the solemnity of All Saints. Cardinal José Tolentino de Mendonça, the prefect of the Dicastery for Culture and Education, announced the upcoming designation during an Oct. 22 press conference. The pope will also publish a document on Oct. 28 to commemorate the 60th anniversary of *Gravissimum Educationis*.

## Pope Leo, King Charles make history with join prayer

History was made in the Sistine Chapel on Thursday as Pope Leo XIV and King Charles III prayed side by side, marking the first time since the Protestant Reformation that a reigning British monarch and a pope have prayed together during a royal state visit to the Vatican. Pope Leo XIV led the midday prayer of the Divine Office, standing beneath Michelangelo's fresco of "The Last Judgment" and flanked by Anglican Archbishop of York Stephen Cottrell, King Charles, and Queen Camilla. The ecumenical prayer service featured the Sistine Chapel Choir along with the choirs from St. George's Chapel at Windsor Castle and His Majesty's Chapel Royal. Queen Elizabeth II, Charles' mother, met five popes during her 70-year reign but never participated in a public prayer with any of them.

# Military archdiocese: Response to canceled contracts is 'inadequate'

By Tyler Arnold  
Catholic News Agency

The Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA, expressed concern that the U.S. Army is not adequately addressing its discontent with canceled religious contracts, which the archdiocese said is straining its ability to minister to Catholics in the armed forces.

This month, the Army canceled all contracts for three roles: coordinators of religious education (CRE), Catholic pastoral life coordinators (CPLC), and musicians. The contract terminations affected Catholics and those of other faiths.

CREs served as catechists trained by the archdiocese to assist the priests in religious education in the military chapels. The archdiocese also trained CPLCs who offered administrative support such as liturgy coordination, assistance with sacramental record documentation, and weekly bulletin preparation. Contracts also included musicians, usually pianists who played music during Mass.

Military Services Archbishop Timothy Broglio sent a letter to Congress on Oct. 17 saying Army officials assured him that religious affairs specialists (RAS) and directors of religious education (DREs) — federal employees — would accommodate the needs of the archdiocese amid the canceled contracts but that he believes this is not possible.

Neither an RAS nor a DRE is a trained catechist, he explained, and neither are properly trained or qualified to perform the roles of people who served in the canceled contracts. There is no requirement for a DRE to be Catholic or for an RAS to have any faith.

In response to the archdiocesan complaint, an Army spokesperson told CNA it would reexamine its contract support for RASs and DREs "to mitigate any potential impact during this period."

Elizabeth A. Tomlin, a lawyer for the archdiocese, told CNA that the Army's response is "wholly inadequate" and "demonstrates the spokesperson's total lack of understanding of the issue."

"Merely eight DREs across the entire Army are Catholics, so most DREs are not qualified to direct Catholic religious education," Tomlin said.

"[RASs] are soldiers, [usually] anywhere from private first class to staff sergeant in rank," she explained. "There

is no requirement whatsoever for RASs to be Catholic or have any training in catechesis or catechetical methodology that could possibly equip them to coordinate religious education."

Tomlin rejected the Army's assertion that people in these positions could fulfill the work of the CREs, CPLCs, or musicians.

"Without meeting the basic requirement of a catechist, namely, to be a confirmed Catholic, these people are not qualified to be involved in Catholic religious education programs whatsoever," she said.

Tomlin said the only way to have music during Mass is if someone volunteers.

"It is factually inaccurate that DREs or RASs are fulfilling the duties of CREs, CPLCs, or liturgical musicians," Tomlin said.

Jena Swanson — who worked as a Catholic CRE at Fort Drum from August 2024 until her contract was canceled on March 31, 2025 — told CNA she agrees with the archdiocese's assessment that those employees cannot fulfill the roles of those whose contracts were canceled.

She said she helped facilitate religious education classes, Bible studies, sacrament preparation classes, and retreats, and collected sacramental records, among a variety of other tasks. She said she mostly worked independently of the DRE because that employee did not have much knowledge about the Catholic faith.

"The DRE is not guaranteed to be Catholic depending on the installation military families are stationed at," Swanson said. "In our 13 years of military family life (my husband is active duty Army), we've experienced one Catholic DRE and only for two years."

She said in her experience, RASs "are as helpful as they can be" but often "have no knowledge of our faith."

Swanson said the Catholic community at Fort Drum "was thrown into a bit of chaos" once her contract ended. Some weeks there were no teachers for religious education, families did not know whom to direct questions to, and weekly Mass attendance dropped about 50%.

"Our families want answers and want to continue coming to our parish, but if these options are not open it will drastically affect attendance and faith formation," Swanson said.



# Providing cover for unethical actions

In recent decades, lawmakers have been pressured to provide legal cover in the form of "immunity from prosecution" for medical personnel who participate in various unethical practices.

One involves physician-assisted suicide. Politicians and lawmakers in many jurisdictions are drawn into the process of creating legal "carve outs" to insulate health care professionals from lawsuits and liability when they help patients commit suicide.

For example, Colorado in its 2016 "End of Life Options Act" puts the exception this way: "No person shall be subjected to civil or criminal liability or professional disciplinary action solely for participating in good faith in the death with dignity process or for any other action taken in good faith compliance with this article" (§25-48-119).

Writing a prescription for a toxic dose of a drug to help a person commit suicide, of course, involves a fundamental contradiction for a medical professional whose mission and work are directed to healing and saving lives. By supporting the suicide of his patient, the medical professional upends the delicate relationship of trust at the heart of the physician-patient relationship and abuses his position of authority. To exempt him on principle from such medical malpractice, and to provide professional and legal cover for patient abandonment, is

a morally indefensible course of action.

In his famous encyclical *Evangelium Vitae* (On the Gift of Life), Pope St. John Paul II recognizes this legislative trend as a particularly devastating form of cultural decline:

"The fact that legislation in many countries, perhaps even departing from basic principles of their Constitutions, has determined not to punish these practices against life, and even to make them altogether legal, is both a disturbing symptom and a significant cause of grave moral decline. Choices once

unanimously considered criminal and rejected by the common moral sense are gradually becoming socially acceptable. Even certain sectors of the medical profession, which by its calling is directed to the defense and care of human life, are increasingly willing to carry out these acts against the person. In this way the very nature of the medical profession is distorted and contradicted, and the dignity of those who practice it is degraded."

Another form of legal protection for unethical practices involves laws that encourage "anonymous abortion pill prescriptions."

California Governor Gavin Newsom recently signed a measure allowing doctors anonymously to prescribe abortion pills. This means that the prescribing doctor remains

anonymous — even to the patient receiving the abortion pill — and the physician's identity is accessible only via a subpoena within California. Pharmacists who dispense the abortion drug are also legally allowed to omit their names, as well as the names of the patient and prescriber, from the label on the medication bottle.

Such policies constitute another example of patient abandonment. Health care professionals have a responsibility to provide careful medical supervision and oversight to patients seeking dangerous pharmaceuticals.

This requires significant interaction with the patient in the form of medical testing, interviews, and in-person exams. That attentive oversight vanishes as lawmakers and politicians start promoting misguided laws to bolster anonymous prescriptions, undermining sound medical practice and depersonalizing both the medical professional and the vulnerable patient.

Politicians, the media, and many in the medical profession have decided that abortion deserves an entirely different and much lower

standard than the rest of medicine. We would never sanction such an undisciplined approach with other potent pharmaceuticals like opioids or cancer medications.

Rather than treating women and doctors as anonymous entities, pregnant women deserve the supportive medical care and focused attention of their health care team. Ideally, such personal care should help them feel strengthened and empowered to bring their pregnancies to term rather than defaulting to a fear-driven and desperate attempt to end their baby's life.

A third example involves in-vitro fertilization. The State of Alabama in 2024 passed legislation that protects IVF providers and patients from civil and criminal liability for death and damage to human beings who are still embryos. It gives a pass to the infertility industry by granting near total indemnity with regard to a host of potential medical malpractices.

We have to wonder why such carve outs are tolerated at all, given that the legal establishment has long defended the rights of those who bear the brunt of serious malpractice by medical personnel. When it comes to the

most vulnerable classes of human beings at the beginning and end of life, we should be especially vigilant not to relax accountability.

As a society, we cannot overlook or grant a pass to those who systematically campaign for the legalization of corrosive medical practices like physician-assisted suicide, abortion and the production, freezing and destruction of embryonic human beings. Seeking to provide legal cover for medical personnel in the form of "immunity from prosecution" inflicts a serious wound on medicine, society and culture, especially when those efforts are spearheaded, as Pope St. John Paul II has noted, by political leaders, lawmakers and public policy experts "who ought to be society's promoters and defenders."

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




Father Tad Pacholczyk, Ph.D.

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## VIRTUAL EVENTS

## FRIENDSHIP GROUP MEETING

You are invited to our next Friendship Group Meeting. If you want PEACE in this life!

**Date:** Oct. 30

**Time:** 7 p.m.

**Place:** Zoom

**Features:** A common enemy in the spiritual life is discouragement, and Venerable Bruno Lanteri masterfully assisted his directees in overcoming it through his inspired, straightforward, practical counsels. By prayerfully reflecting on these gems — which Father Timothy Gallagher, O.M.V. deftly connects to the writings of other saints in his new book "If You Want Peace in This Life" — you will gain confidence in God and a greater patience with yourself. At this meeting Father Gallagher will lead us in discussing the second half of this book.

**Contact:** To order "If You Want Peace in This Life," please visit [sophiainstitute.com](http://sophiainstitute.com) and enter Friendship25 at the checkout to receive a 25% off discount. For more information or to sign up please contact Mary Beth Bracy at [mbracy@sophiainstitute.com](mailto:mbracy@sophiainstitute.com)

## CLINTON NORTHERN FRANKLIN

## HOLIDAY FAIR

Brushton — St. Mary's & St. Augustine's Altar Rosary Society to hold their fourth annual Holiday Craft Fair.

**Date:** Nov. 1

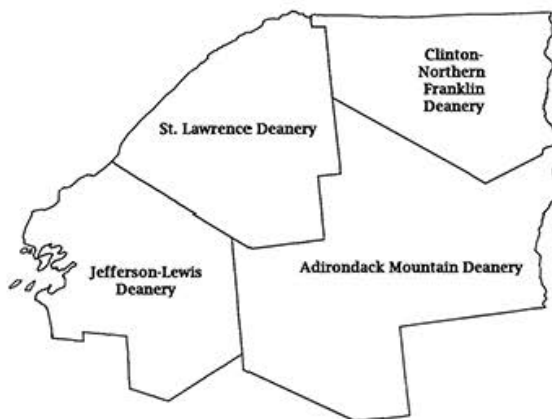
**Time:** 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

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

**Features:** Over 20 vendors will be offering jewelry, pottery/ceramics, crafts, floral arrangements, 3D printed items, maple products, baked goods, holiday items and more! Adirondack BBQ food truck will be offering food for purchase. There is no cost to attend.

## CRAFT FAIR

Rouses Point — St. Patrick's Church to have their Christmas Craft Show & Bake Sale.



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@northcountycatholic.org](mailto:news@northcountycatholic.org).

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

**Schedule:** Nov. 1, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.; Nov. 2, 9 a.m. to noon

**Place:** St. Patrick's Parish Hall

**Features:** There will be craft and non-craft vendors and bake sale (to benefit St. Patrick's Church).

## SOAKING PRAYERS SESSIONS

Plattsburgh — Soaking prayer Sessions to be held the first Monday of each month.

**Date:** Nov. 3 and Dec. 1

**Time:** 1 p.m. to 3 and 6 p.m. to 8

**Place:** Newman Center

**Features:** Praise and worship followed by soaking prayer. Led by Eve McGill, Living Waters Ministry. All are welcome.

**Contact:** [evemcgill@charter.net](mailto:evemcgill@charter.net) 518-645-2648

## HARVEST DINNER

Plattsburgh — Holy Cross Parish to have a Turkey Harvest Dinner with all the trimmings.

**Date:** Nov. 2

**Time:** 11:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

**Place:** Holy Cross Parish Center, Dine in or take out

**Cost:** \$Adults, \$16, Children 6 to 12, \$8; under 5, Free

## FIRST FRIDAY

Champlain — St. Mary's to have Mass, Exposition and Benediction

every first Friday of the month.

**Date:** Nov. 7

**Schedule:** 9 a.m. Mass followed by Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. 11 a.m. Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.

## HARVEST DINNER

Morrisonville — St. Alexander to have a Turkey Harvest Dinner.

**Date:** Nov. 9

**Time:** 11:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

**Place:** Take-out only. Pick up or Curb side deliver at St. Alexander Church

**Cost:** \$15

**Features:** Also available at the door will be Raffle tickets, Basket Raffle and Bake Shop

**Contact:** For Home delivery within 10 miles call 518-561-5039

## JEFFERSON-LEWIS

## HOLY HOUR &amp; DIVINE MERCY

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

**Date:** Nov. 2

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

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

**Contact:** 315-348-6260

## RAFFLE

Constableville — Raffle to be held

for youth and Faith Formation activities.

**Date:** Drawing Dec. 21

**Time:** 10 a.m.

**Place:** St. Mary's after Mass

**Cost:** Tickets are \$5 each or 5 for \$20

**Features:** First-place winner will receive a Virtual Reality Headset, the second-place winner will receive a 50" smart television and the third-place winner will receive a ten-inch tablet.

**Contact:** They can be purchased after the 10am Mass, from various St. Mary's parents, by calling the Parish office at 315-348-6104 or by going online to <https://catholicparishesofslc.weebly.com/church-offering--raffles.html>

## ST. LAWRENCE

## HARVEST DINNER

Gouverneur — St. James School to have a Harvest Dinner.

**Date:** Oct. 30

**Time:** 4:30 p.m. until gone

**Cost:** \$15

**Features:** Eat in or dine out

## HOLIDAY BAZAAR

Star Lake — St. Hubert's Church to have their Holiday Bazaar.

**Date:** Nov. 1

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

**Place:** St. Hubert's Parish Hall

**Features:** Bake sale - Silent auction, Wine Tasting Booth with Thousand Island Winery Wines, Raffles - Gift Baskets - Gingerbread Decorating, Accessible to people with disabilities, Lunch served by the Knights of Columbus Council 5718 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

## FALL BAZAAR

Massena — St. Peter's Parish to have their Annual Fall Bazaar.

**Date:** Nov. 8

**Time:** 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

**Place:** St. Mary's Social Hall

**Features:** Free admission, cost for food, raffles and fun.

**Contact:** For more information call 315-769-2469

## PATRIOTIC ROSARY

Ogdensburg — To commemorate

Veterans Day, the Legion of Mary will be praying the Patriotic Rosary.

**Date:** Nov. 9

**Time:** Noon

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

**Features:** We cordially invite all our parishioners AND fellow Catholics throughout the diocese to join us in praying for all our Veterans--- active, retired, and deceased--- as well as for the needs of our country.

## ROSARY WITH DEVOTIONS

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

**Date:** Nov. 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:** Nov. 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.

## MENS GROUP

Massena — Men's group to meet the first Saturday of every month.

**Date:** Nov. 1

**Time:** 9 a.m. Mass with meeting to follow

**Place:** Sacred Heart Church

## MONTHLY BRUNCH

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

**Date:** Nov. 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

CONTINUED ON PAGE 13



# Magis Center launches faith, science AI app

By Tessa Gervasini  
Catholic News Agency

Magis Center released this week an artificial intelligence (AI) app designed to provide instant, science-based answers to questions about the Church and Catholic moral teachings.

MagisAI was announced Oct. 20 by the Magis Center, an organization created by philosopher and author Father Robert Spitzer, SJ, to explore the relationship between science, philosophy, reason, and faith. The free app draws information from Spitzer's 20 books including "Christ, Science, and Reason" and "Science at the Doorstep to God."

The app provides spoken answers to users' questions accompanied by the text and reference. If the answer is too

technical or confusing, the app can provide simplifications as needed, the Magis Center reported.

"Whether you're a teacher helping students navigate secular questions, a parent guiding your family, or anyone seeking clarity on faith, magisAI equips you with instant, credible answers grounded in reason, science, and Church teaching," the organization wrote.

MagisAI covers a wide range of topics within the Church including Catholic doctrine, Christian life and morality, and Scripture and history. It provides evidence for God and Jesus with explanations rooted in science, philosophy, and history, the organization wrote. It also answers science-based questions from

quantum cosmology to evolution.

Through its question-and-answer format, magisAI says it addresses "the real challenges Catholics face in today's secular environment." It combats issues including cultural pressure, faith formation gaps, accessibility of knowledge, and language barriers by offering answers in 40 different languages.

MagisAI follows a number of new Catholic AI tools created to provide prompt and accurate information to those hoping to further their understanding of Church teaching, including Longbeard, Magisterium AI, and Truthly.

While Catholic companies are working to use the technology for good, it is important that Catholics remain aware

of the harms of AI and potential threats to human dignity, the Vatican said. As AI has become a controversial topic, Pope Leo XIV has said that addressing the challenges of the technology will be a theme of his teaching.

In a September explanatory note on media, the Vatican wrote: "As Catholics we can and should give our contribution, so that people — especially youth — acquire the capacity of critical thinking and grow in the freedom of the spirit."

"The challenge is to ensure that humanity remains the guiding agent," the note said. "The future of communication must be one where machines serve as tools that connect and facilitate human lives rather than erode the human voice."

## Around the diocese

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12  
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. A critical component of this program is the daily wellness check that is provided by this service. Drivers receive a mileage reimbursement. Typical deliveries take place between 9:30 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. Routes can be between one hour and two hours. You can volunteer for one day a week or several. Any help is greatly appreciated.

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

### DIOCESAN EVENTS

#### FOSTER GRANDPARENT

Foster Grandparents are role models, mentors and friends to children with exceptional needs. The program provides a way for volunteers age 55 and over to stay active by serving children and youth in their communities. They are placed in a classroom serving with a child or children who are in need of emotional support, development of basic learning skills, friendship, companionship, encouragement, individual attention and unhurried help. The program currently has 40 volunteers and serves more than 100 kids per year. To volunteer in this program, you can live in one of the following counties.



Franklin, Essex County, Clinton County, St. Lawrence County or Jefferson County

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

### NEIGHBORING DIOCESES

#### ADVENT DAY RETREAT

Canandaigua - Advent Retreat: "Blessed are they that Hope it the

Lord: Advent Meditations on the Virtue of Hope" to be held.

**Date:** Dec. 13

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

**Place:** Notre Dame Retreat House

**Cost:** \$60

**Features:** Christ calls His disciples to be lights of the world and salt of the earth- to do so means that we live with hope in a world that so often seems hope-less

and full of despair. As we approach the conclusion of the Holy Year of Hope and prepare for the great Feast of the Nativity, spend a day meditating on this most important spiritual virtue — Hope.

**Contact:** For more information email Nancy Lynch at info@notredameretreat.org or visit www.notredameretreat.org



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# LIFE

*Our Sign  
of Hope*



This page has been graciously supported by the following parishes, organizations & individuals as supporters of human life.

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| • Augustinian Academy, Carthage                                   | • Kathleen Lauzon, RN, FNP-C  | • St. Andrew's Church, Sackets Harbor                        |
| • Norman and Kathleen Bechard                                     | • Deacon Jimmy and Robin Law  | • St. Anthony's Church, Inlet                                |
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| • Msgr. A.M. Gilbert Council 6136 Knights of Columbus             | • Elaine Sater  | • Mr. and Mrs. Allen Williams in honor of Stephanie Williams |
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|   | • Sisters of St. Joseph   |  |

We invite you to visit the  
**DIOCESAN RESPECT LIFE OFFICE**  
 website at: [www.rcdony.org/pro-life](http://www.rcdony.org/pro-life)

More information can be found at [respectlife.org](http://respectlife.org) and [usccb.org/prolife](http://usccb.org/prolife)

**RESPECT LIFE MONTH**  
 October 2025



## Many thanks

We at the Pontifical Mission Societies of the Diocese of Ogdensburg would like to thank everyone who donated and prayed for the success of the World Mission Sunday collection. It is thanks to your generosity with both your money and your time that The Pontifical Mission Societies can provide support to mission territories in Asia, Africa, the Pacific Islands, the Middle East,



### 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  
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and parts of Latin America and Europe.

Your donations and prayers allow us to provide food, water, medicine and general and religious education to those

in need. Access to these things can be life-changing, as men and women learn skills to support their families, children receive medicine for treatable illnesses from

which they may otherwise die and families find support during persecution. You will never truly know the extent to which your generosity changed the life of another.

While the Missionary COOP appeal allows us to support the mission organizations able to send a spokesperson into our parishes, the World Mission Sunday appeal allows us to support those that cannot. If

you were unable to make a donation this weekend but still feel called to donate, please contact us at the email below.

*To be added to our mailing list or to learn more please feel free to contact us at amichael@rcdony.org. As always, please remember "The Society for the Propagation of the Faith" when writing or changing your Will.*

## Status change could devastate faith sector

The B.C. Catholic

A new report from the Frontier Centre for Public Policy warns that removing the "advancement of religion" from Canada's list of recognized charitable purposes could have far-reaching social and financial consequences for churches and other faith-based organizations.

The 38-page report, "Revoking the Charitable Status for the Advancement of Religion: A Critical Assessment," by senior fellow Pierre Gilbert, responds to a December 2024 recommendation from the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance to amend the Income Tax Act and eliminate the long-standing charitable category.

If adopted, the recommendation in the committee's pre-budget report could strip churches, mosques, temples, and synagogues of charitable status — ending their ability to issue tax-deductible receipts and, in many cases, their income-tax exemptions.

Gilbert warns that the change could also trigger a one-time revocation tax equal to most of their assets, effectively "wiping out what they own."

"The committee's recommendation, driven by lobbying from the BC

Humanist Association, represents a direct threat to religious freedom and the vital role faith communities play in Canadian society," Gilbert said.

He cites research estimating that religious organizations contribute about \$16.5 billion annually to Canada through education, social services, community programs, and cultural activities. The report argues that revoking charitable status would be "fiscally shortsighted and socially destructive."

Gilbert traces charitable status for religion to English common law and the 1601 Statute of Charitable Uses, noting that Canada inherited this framework. He outlines how churches historically provided education, health care, and welfare long before the modern state assumed those roles, and says the decline of church influence has paralleled the rise of secularism in public life.

The report describes the finance committee's proposal as part of a broader movement among secular and humanist groups seeking to eliminate tax benefits for religious institutions.

It notes that the BC Humanist Association, which supports ending property tax exemptions

for places of worship, is itself a registered charity.

Gilbert estimates that eliminating charitable status for religion would yield between \$1.7 billion and \$3.2 billion annually in federal revenue but warns this "low-hanging fruit" would come at the cost of social cohesion and community support networks.

He argues that congregations' economic "halo effect" — the measurable community benefit of their programs and facilities — outweighs foregone tax revenue roughly tenfold.

Faith groups also risk a 100% revocation tax under existing Income Tax Act provisions unless their assets are transferred to another registered charity within a year.

Father Deacon Andrew Bennett, an ordained deacon in the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church in the Eparchy of Toronto and Eastern Canada and director of faith community engagement at Cardus, echoed those warnings in a Sept. 11 Financial Post commentary that begins: "When Finance Minister François-Philippe Champagne introduces his federal budget this fall, there's at least one item he should

leave out: eliminating the 'advancement of religion' as a charitable purpose."

Bennett noted that about 38% of Canadian charities are registered under the advancement-of-religion category and that removing it would have "significant sector-wide implications."

"Atheist activists have long sought to eliminate charities' ability to issue tax receipts to donors if their primary purpose is the advancement of religion," Bennett wrote. "Minister Champagne should reject the idea explicitly."

Faith communities, he said, clearly serve the common good — providing both spiritual and material support "from birth to death."

Research cited by Cardus links participation in religious communities with lower social isolation, reduced mortality, and improved quality of life.

"Faith-based charities have never been the initiative of the state but rather the initiative of religious people who sought to improve their and their neighbors' lives," Bennett wrote. "These Canadians do not undertake this work for the good of their own faith group but for the

good of all."

He added that Canada's intricate network of faith-based charities could never be replaced by government. "The state could not fill that void, given the breadth and depth of these charities' activities, nor could it do so as efficiently and effectively as these charities do," he said.

"For the good of all Canadians," he said, "the advancement of religion should remain a charitable purpose."

The Frontier Centre report is urging churches to prepare for potential legislative changes by educating members, engaging in advocacy, and reaffirming their public mission.

It recommends collaboration with organizations such as the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, the Canadian Centre for Christian Charities, and the Christian Legal Fellowship to defend the current legal framework.

Gilbert said churches must "reclaim their prophetic mission" and respond boldly to cultural and political challenges.

"Only by embracing such audacious action," he writes, "can the church restore its status as an important and relevant institution within Canadian society."



# Serving those who Serve

★ **Triennial National Collection** ★  
for the Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA

**D**ear brothers and sisters in Christ,  
On behalf of those entrusted to my care, thank you and your parish for participating in the National Collection for the Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA (AMS).

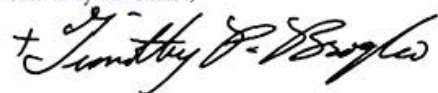
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(The Most Reverend) Timothy P. Broglio, J.C.D.  
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- In 2024, the number of sacraments celebrated for AMS faithful included 1,450 baptisms, 872 confirmations, 1,127 first Holy Communions, and 143 marriages.

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