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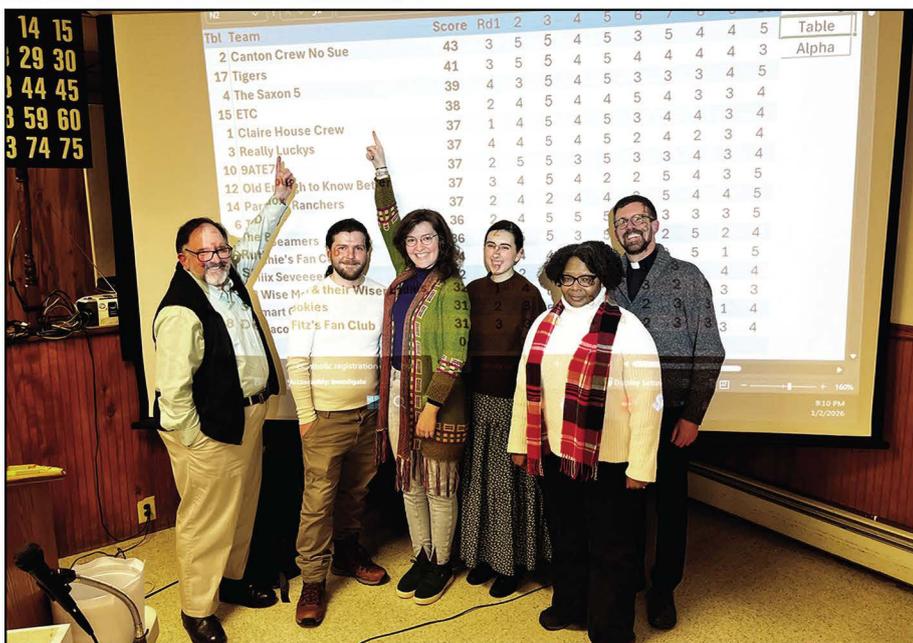
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The Diocese of Ogdensburg Volume 80 Number 38

# NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

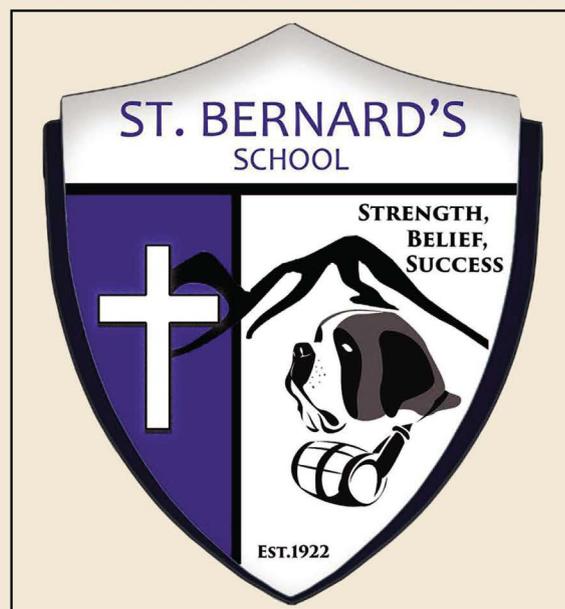
FEBRUARY 4, 2026

## AND THE WINNERS ARE...



'Canton Crew No Sue,' the team from St. Mary's Church in Canton, repeated as winners of the Trivia Night for Vocations sponsored by the Vocations Committee for the Catholic Churches of Ogdensburg, Heuvelton and Lisbon on Jan. 2. Pictured are, from left, team members Paul Schrem, Colin McNamara, Hattie Taylor, Sarah McIntosh, Mel Schrems and Father Bryan Stitt.

## LARGE DONATION AIDS SCHOOL



St. Bernard's School in Saranac Lake recently received a \$1.3 million donation to aid with facility upgrades, student life improvements and the creation of an endowment to aid the school for years to come.

FULL STORY, PAGE 3

# Pope Leo: Gospel 'calls us to dare to trust'

By Angela Ambrogetti  
EWTN News

Pope Leo XIV said Sunday that the Gospel "calls us to dare to trust," warning that fear and excessive caution can leave Christians "paralyzed by indecision" rather than ready to follow Christ.

In his reflection before the noon Angelus in St. Peter's Square, the pope returned to the day's Gospel (Matthew 4:12-22), asking two questions about Jesus' public ministry: When did it begin, and where did it begin?

Leo noted that Jesus began preaching "when he heard that

John had been arrested," a moment that might appear "inopportune." Yet, the pope said, "it was precisely in this dark situation that Jesus began to bring the light of the good news: 'The kingdom of heaven has come near.'"

"In our lives, both individually and as a Church," he said, "interior struggles or circumstances we deem unfavorable can lead us to believe that it is not the right time to proclaim the Gospel... In this way, however, we risk becoming paralyzed by indecision or imprisoned by excessive prudence, whereas the Gospel calls us to dare to trust."

Leo highlighted Galilee as "a predominantly pagan territory" and a "multicultural region," explaining that the Messiah "transcends the borders of his own land to proclaim a God who draws close to everyone."

"He is a God who excludes no one," the pope said, "and who comes not only for the 'pure,' but enters fully into the complexity of human situations and relationships." For that reason, Leo added, Christians "must overcome the temptation toward isolation," living the Gospel in every setting "as a haven of fraternity and peace among all individuals, cultures, reli-

gions, and peoples."

After the Angelus, the pope noted that the Third Sunday in Ordinary Time is the Sunday of the Word of God, established by Pope Francis "to promote throughout the Church knowledge of sacred Scripture and greater attention to the word of God."

Leo expressed concern for Ukraine, saying the country is being hit by "continuous attacks," leaving "entire populations exposed to the cold of winter."

"I invite everyone to intensify their efforts to end this war," he said.

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# 'I'm representing Jesus here'

I have a drawer full of graphic t-shirts.

One shirt features a graphic of a covered wagon and says, "Be patient with me. I'm from the 1900s." Another shirt shows a row of broken crayons and includes the text, "Broken crayons still color." Yet another features a cheshire cat and mad hatter with the text, "we're all mad here."

Though I own a pile of such shirts, one stands out as my favorite. I love it for several reasons:

It's soft and comfortable, it's purple (my favorite color), and I feel like it lets people know important information about me.

**Darcy L. Fargo**

It says, "Jesus loves you. And I'm trying."

To me, the "Jesus loves you" part of the shirt lets people know I'm a follower of Christ, and I believe he is loving and cares about his people.

The "And I'm trying" part lets people know that I sometimes stink at following that "love your neighbor" command.

It's a hard command to follow.

I'm great at loving my neighbor when he or she agrees with me, when he or she is nice to me or when it's someone I like.

I'm less great at it when it's someone who disagrees with me or believes differently than me, someone who has wronged me in some way or someone I don't like.

While I fail regularly at loving my neighbor, I really do try. I regularly remind myself, "God calls me to love my neighbor, he doesn't say I have to like him/her."

And a funny thing hap-

pens when I wear that shirt: I try harder to love others.

While wearing my beloved Jesus shirt to the gym recently, I found myself tempted to make a sarcastic remark to another gym goer who was violating a gym protocol, but I stopped myself.

"I'm representing Jesus here. I have his name on my shirt. I can't do that."

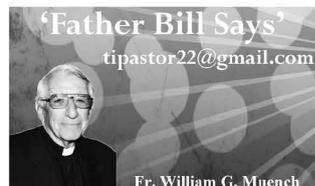
I briefly thought about putting my hoodie back on and making the sarcastic remark I had in my head, but I instead chose to just smile at that other gym goer and move on.

I acted like I had a heart full of Jesus' love.

## Spending time with the Psalms

Today, let us continue to talk about prayer. I would like to focus today on the Psalms. As you know, there is an Old Testament Book of Psalms. These Psalms are an important collection of prayers; they are prayerful songs. Many of them were written by King David many years before Jesus. These Psalms were used for liturgical worship in the Temple in Jerusalem. Now, in our time, these Psalms are wonderful personal prayers. They are used as Mass prayers, and they are part of the Liturgy of the Hours - the daily prayer of priests and deacons and by monks in their monasteries. Seven times each day they paused for a time of prayer. The Psalms make up much of these times of prayer.

Now, many lay men and women follow this Liturgy of the Hours for their personal prayer. So, Psalms become an important part of their prayer. Psalms are carefully crafted prayers



that help to focus our attention on our God and open our hearts to the life of the Holy Spirit. Each Psalm leads in a particular way to adoration of Our God, to thanksgiving of God, to seeking God's forgiveness of sin.

The most familiar Psalm for most of us is Psalm 23 - the Good Shepherd Psalm. Join me as we pray together the first part of this Psalm: "The Lord is my Shepherd, there is nothing I lack./ In green pastures he makes lie down, to still waters he leads me; he restores my soul./ He guides me along right paths for the sake of his name."

Psalm 23 has been developed into familiar religious hymns. A perfect prayer to praise God - a perfect prayer for peace.

The Psalms are often spoken of as a "School of Prayer." They not only provide us with models to follow, but they also inspire us to voice our own deepest feelings and aspirations. Consider Psalm 1. In this prayer, a good and dedicated disciple of the Lord is described as a tree - a flourishing tree planted near streams of water, a fruitful tree, so an image of a person who is good and prosperous. Then a wicked person is like a barren or stunted tree.

Consider Psalm 5. This prayer leads us to pray for divine help. We are challenged to trust our God completely. Many Psalms are prayers of praise of God - prayers of joy and peace honoring God. Like Psalm 150, which begins like this: "Hallelujah, praise God in his holy sanctuary; give praise to the mighty dome of Heaven./ Give praise for his mighty deeds, praise him of his great majesty."

These Psalms reflect each concern in a person's

life. Like Psalm 51; this Psalm leads us to repentance, acknowledging our sinfulness, seeking God's forgiveness. Here is the first part of this Psalm, "Have mercy on me, Go, in accord with your merciful love;/ in your abundant compassion blot out my transgressions./ Thoroughly, wash away my guilt; and from my sin cleanse me./ For I know my transgressions, my sin is always before me."

I love Psalms. When we were ordained deacons, we were required to follow the Liturgy of the Hours. Each time of prayer, there are Psalms included in the prayers. So, there are several Psalms that are included on a regular basis. They truly became old friends. I often turn back to them, like when I am preparing a prayer service for a retreat presentation or for a parish meeting, I include one of my favorite Psalms. I hope you will find the prayers of the Psalms to be old friends for your times of prayer.

# Large donation aids St. Bernard's School

St. Bernard's School is honored and deeply grateful to announce a historic \$1.3 million gift from alumnus, Daniel Kilpeck, St. Bernard's School Class of 1953, a contribution that will significantly impact the school's facilities, student experience, and long-term sustainability.

"This remarkable gift speaks to the enduring impact St. Bernard's School has on the lives of its students," said Andrea Kilbourne-Hill, Principal. "Mr. Kilpeck shared how meaningful his own experience at St. Bernard's was and how that foundation shaped him throughout his life. He was passionate about ensuring students could see and feel the impact of his generosity. Because of that, we are intentionally investing in what our students cherish most—their teachers and their time at recess—so this gift strengthens our school today while also ensuring future generations benefit from a vibrant, supportive learning environment."

The gift will be allocated across three key areas:

## IMMEDIATE NEEDS & FACILITY UPGRADES

A portion of the gift will address critical infrastructure improvements, including upgrades to the school boilers, plumbing systems, and the main office entranceway. These improvements will begin immediately and support long-term sustainability and create a more pleasant, welcoming environment for students, staff, and visitors.

## STUDENT LIFE IMPACT: PLAYGROUND IMPROVEMENTS

Improving the daily student experience was a top priority for Mr. Kilpeck. In response, funds will be dedicated to meaningful playground upgrades designed to enrich recess, promote physical activity, and foster joyful community-building among students. St. Bernard's School anticipates sharing preliminary playground improvement plans later this spring.

## ESTABLISH 1922 ENDOW-

## MENT FUND

Mr. Kilpeck's gift also serves as the founding contribution to the newly established St. Bernard's School 1922 Endowment Fund, named in honor of the school's founding year.

The fund will be professionally managed by the former Long Run Wealth team at Mercer Global Advisors, Inc. and structured to ensure both flexibility and long-term growth.

- A small portion will be maintained in an income fund to support emergency and immediate needs.

- The majority will be invested in a growth-focused endowment designed to strengthen the school's financial sustainability over time.

Annual income generated from the 1922 Endowment Fund will be used to:

- Improve staff compensation

- Support ongoing student life enhancements

These priorities directly reflect Mr. Kilpeck's vision and commitment to both the edu-

cators who serve students and the overall experience of children at St. Bernard's School.

An Invitation to Alumni and Friends

Inspired by this foundational gift, St. Bernard's School warmly invites other alumni, families, and community members to contribute to the 1922 Endowment Fund, helping to build a legacy of generosity and opportunity that will benefit students for decades to come.

"This is more than a donation," Dane DeGrace, St. Bernard's Education Council President added. "It is an investment in children, in educators, and in the future of St. Bernard's School. We hope this moment inspires our broader alumni community to join us in growing the 1922 Fund."

For more information about the 1922 Endowment Fund or to learn how to contribute, please contact Andrea Kilbourne-Hill, 518-891-2830, or visit [www.stbernardsschool.org](http://www.stbernardsschool.org).

## Men's discernment groups forming in two locations

Men's Discernment Groups are now forming in two locations within the Diocese of Ogdensburg.

Men ages 18 to 40 are invited to join others in discerning God's plan for your life. The groups will offer "a welcoming space for prayer, reflection and honest conversation with others exploring the call to priesthood or a deeper walk with Christ," according to the diocesan Vocations Office.

The first group began Jan. 31 at the St. John XXIII Newman Center in Plattsburgh. The facilitator is Father Carter Pierce. For more information about that group's future meetings and structure, contact Father Pierce at 51-651-5039 or [cpierce@rcdony.org](mailto:cpierce@rcdony.org).

The second group will begin Feb. 7 with a 10 a.m. gathering at St. Mary's Church, Canton. The facilitator for that group is Father Scott Belina. For more information, contact Father Belina at 315-386-2543.

## FREEZIN' FOR A REASON



The 2026 Pond Hockey Tournament to Benefit St. Bernards/St. Edmunds Parish will be held on Saturday February 14. Games begin at 8 a.m. and continue until finished. Hockey will be played on the Church Pond in front of St. Bernards in Lyon Mountain, located at the intersection of State Route 374 and Church Pond Road. Last year the event, hosted by the Lyon Mountain Knights of Columbus Council #7215, raised \$2,000 for the parish. The number of registered teams will determine how games are to be played, but all games are to be three-on-three with no goalies, and current Pond Hockey Rules and Regulations will be utilized.

# Walking with the humble

By Lisa Breitenbach

*The following are reflections offered by Lisa Breitenbach about her pilgrimage to France with Father Don Robinson.*

Pilgrimages rarely unfold the way we imagine. I arrived in France expecting sacred places, quiet chapels, and a deeper understanding of two beloved saints. What I didn't expect was to be disarmed by their humor — the kind that reveals not insecurity, but a startling clarity about who they were before God. Their humility, wrapped in wit, opened something in me that I didn't know needed opening.

## ST. BERNADETTE: GRACE FOUND IN FRAILTY

Before the apparitions at Lourdes, Bernadette Soubirous was a young woman marked by uncertainty. Her family lived in deep poverty. She was often sick, frequently dismissed, and painfully aware of her lack of education. By her own admission, she felt "good for nothing." Her future seemed like a narrow hallway with no doors.

And yet, it was into that very place of doubt that grace stepped.

When the "young lady" appeared to her in 1858, something shifted. The world still questioned her, but she no longer questioned herself in the same way. The apparition didn't erase her hardships, but

it gave her a sense of purpose she had never known. She understood — quietly, steadily — that God had seen her.

Even after the visions, Bernadette didn't seek attention or admiration. She longed for a life of service and hiddenness. That longing led her to the Sisters of Charity of Nevers, a community devoted to caring for the sick and the poor. When asked why she chose them, she answered with her characteristic blend of humility and humor:

"I came here because they take care of the sick and the poor. I was both."

It wasn't self-pity. It was truth spoken with disarming clarity.

In the convent, she faced chronic illness, physical suffering, and moments of being overlooked. But she embraced these trials with the same quiet strength that had carried her through the grotto. Her humor — like when she learned her photograph was being sold for a few pennies and remarked that perhaps that was all she was worth — revealed a soul free from the need to be admired.

Bernadette teaches us that holiness doesn't require perfection. It requires honesty — the courage to stand before God exactly as we are.

## ST. THERÈSE: A HEART CERTAIN OF ITS CALLING

Where Bernadette wrestled with doubts, St. Thérèse

of Lisieux carried a startling certainty. From childhood, she longed to give her entire life to God. While other girls dreamed of families or adventures, she dreamed of the cloister. She spoke of Jesus as her beloved, her purpose, her joy.

Her determination bordered on audacity. She tried to make herself appear older so she could enter the convent sooner. When that didn't work, she appealed to the bishop. And when that didn't work, she traveled to Rome and knelt before the Pope himself, asking permission to enter the Carmelite convent early.

It wasn't rebellion. It was love — fierce, focused, unwavering.

Inside the convent, Thérèse faced spiritual dryness, misunderstandings, and the daily grind of hidden sacrifice. But she embraced it all with her "little way" — the belief that holiness is found not in grand gestures, but in small acts of love offered with a pure heart.

Her humor revealed her humility. She joked that she always sat at the end of the table because that seat was always empty. It wasn't self-deprecation; it was her way of choosing the low place, the unnoticed place, the place where love could grow.

Thérèse teaches us that when our certainty is rooted in love, God strengthens it.

## WHAT THEIR HUMOR

## TAUGHT ME

Both women carried a profound love of God that shaped every breath of their lives. Their humor wasn't a mask. It was a window into their souls — souls that understood that holiness isn't loud or dramatic. Sometimes it's found in the quiet acceptance of being ordinary.

Their stories reminded me that God works through both the unsure and the certain, the frail and the bold, the hidden and the determined.

## HOW THEIR FAITH CHANGED MINE

As I walked through their towns, prayed in their chapels, and listened to their stories, I felt my own faith stretching, softening, deepening. Bernadette's humility made me feel seen in my own uncertainties. Thérèse's confidence made me feel invited to trust more boldly.

Their lives didn't make me feel small. They made me feel accompanied.

## A PILGRIMAGE THAT CONTINUES

I left France with more than memories. I left with companions — two women whose humor, humility, and unwavering faith continue to guide me. My pilgrimage didn't end when I boarded the plane home. It continues every day I choose the little way, embrace simplicity, and let God shape me with the same gentle patience He showed them.

# Mercy Care seeks volunteers to aid neighbors

Mercy Care for the Adirondacks, sponsored by the Sisters of Mercy, is recruiting new volunteers to help their elder neighbors enjoy happier and fuller lives. Mercy Care has scheduled a Friendship Volunteer Training Program on February 4, at The Holy Ghost Parish Center, 40 Marion St, Tupper Lake, NY. A complementary lunch will be provided. Volunteers of all faiths, or of no specific faith

community, are encouraged and invited to participate. Mercy Care welcomes new Friendship Volunteers in the Tri-Lakes region and surrounding communities to attend our training in Tupper Lake.

New Volunteers will join Mercy Care's more than 100 Friendship Volunteers from Lake Placid, Saranac Lake, Tupper Lake and surrounding communities who are helping their

elder neighbors stay connected to their communities, while helping them to age in place more successfully.

There is no cost for the training, but registration is required.

To register for the training, please visit Mercy Care's website at [www.adkmercy.org](http://www.adkmercy.org) or contact Lexi Bevilacqua, Mercy Care's Director of Programs and Mission Integration, at [abevilacqua@adkmercy.org](mailto:abevilacqua@adkmercy.org)

org or call Lexi for more information at 518-523-5446.

Volunteers will learn about offering friendship and assistance to elders in sessions on spirituality and aging, how to recognize scams aimed at older adults, and how to help elders stay connected to their communities through social and educational opportunities.

New Volunteers will hear from experienced

Mercy Care Friendship Volunteers who find purposeful service to their elder friends to be meaningful in their own lives. Mercy Care Friendship Volunteers provide informal, practical supports such as assistance with grocery shopping, transportation to medical appointments or social outings, visiting with an elder in their home, or carrying out other "errands of mercy."

## MAKING SENSE OF BIOETHICS

## Is it ethical to clone animals?

The global market for cloning cats, dogs, and other pets reached \$300 million in 2024, and has been projected to reach \$1.5 billion by 2035.

When it comes to the ethics of cloning animals, whether cattle, racehorses, dogs or cats, it is important to inquire if a “proportionately serious reason” exists for doing the procedure, since the process can cause physical and genetic defects of varying severity in cloned animals.

Cloned mice, for example, have aberrant patterns of gene expression in multiple genes, and cloned animals have elevated rates of unexplained gestational or postnatal deaths, as well as anomalies like enlarged hearts or abnormal lungs.

Because cloning involves the bringing together of two remnants of heavily damaged cells — an extracted nucleus from a body cell, plus an egg that has been deprived of its nucleus — it should come as no surprise that these two conjoined elements may have difficulty cooperating and communicating with each other to produce a presentable member of the species.

It is also conceivable that a cloned animal could give rise to a dangerous genetic variation, by making the individual animal, for example, more violent. Even in the absence of such outcomes, regularly described in science

fiction, it is still noteworthy that genetic variability and the long-term viability of animal populations, particularly small populations of endangered species, could be affected by extensive animal cloning. Decreasing diversity through cloning could make populations more susceptible to disease and environmental changes, impacting sensitive ecosystems and conservation efforts.

Even with the risks of cloning, we can envision situations where a “proportionately serious reason” would exist for attempting to clone animals. A German shepherd, for example, that is exceptionally skilled at sniffing out illegal drugs or other contraband, might be cloned to expand the availability of “super-olfactory canines” for police departments around the country.

If a famous Hollywood celebrity loses his or her beloved Fido to cancer, however, we can validly debate whether a strong attachment to the departed canine constitutes a sufficiently serious reason for embarking on a cloning project with a price tag of fifty or sixty thousand dollars. A generated dog clone will always be an imperfect copy of Fido, and will often have a very different personality from the original animal.

When actress Barbra Streisand lost her beloved 14-year-old Sa-

mantha, she cloned two replicas. She commented that they had “different personalities... I’m waiting for them to get older so I can see if they have her brown eyes and her seriousness.” Later, a somewhat disappointed Streisand remarked, “You can clone the look of a dog, but you can’t clone the soul.”

Given that canines hold a primary position in the animal world as “man’s best friend,” it should not be difficult to find another furry friend, perhaps one waiting to be rescued from a local shelter, who can serve as a new member of the family and once again pull at their owner’s heartstrings.

While animal cloning can sometimes be a reasonable choice, and ethically justifiable, the Catholic Church teaches definitively that the cloning of human beings is morally unacceptable. This conclusion arises from the recognition that human persons, unlike non-human animals, are created in God’s image and likeness, which implies an essential obligation that human procreation and the transmission of human life happen exclusively within marriage through the marital act of spouses.

As we consider animal cloning and other novel biomedical developments of recent years, we face important ethical questions about how best to exercise our limited dominion over the earth, including the animal kingdom. Our dominion is not an absolute right of domina-

tion over God’s creation. Instead, we are called to use reasonably, and avoid abusing, the powers we have received.

Exercising proper stewardship over animals ought to be a balanced part of a broader concern of avoiding exploitation of the vulnerable, as we try to be respectful of the given order of creation.

Cloning technology can have useful applications in animal husbandry, helping to generate stock animals that are more resistant to disease or that have a higher productivity rate. Researchers can engineer and clone dairy cows, for example, to produce an improved quantity of milk or better quality meat.

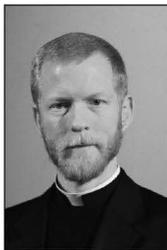
But if animal cloning becomes widespread, as seems likely, it may have the subtle effect of shifting our attitudes and perceptions towards the animal kingdom.

By routinely cloning animals, they may come to be seen as little more than “manipulable quantities” or “raw material” for our domination — less as animals, and more as artifacts or

objects. We need to be attentive to the prospect of reducing animals, including cloned animals, to market-driven technological commodities, cobbled together under the impetus of unrestrained profit-seeking.

So while the cloning of non-human animals is generally permissible when proportionately serious reasons exist, we must also remain attentive to the broader social and environmental implications. The responsible use of the technology requires us to weigh carefully its scientific potential against the duty to avoid causing unnecessary suffering to animals or risks to their populations.

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



Father Tad Pacholczyk, Ph.D.



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## Environmental Stewardship

## The worst time of year

The height of winter, January and February, is often viewed by North Country residents as the worst time of year. It may seem especially challenging for wildlife as the bitter cold, unrelenting wind and increasing depth of snow contribute to a critical lack of food. This may occasionally cause good people to question how a loving and compassionate God could inflict hardships and seemingly unsurvivable conditions on His creations.

However, the natural world is composed of organisms that tolerate the divinely formed environment in which they were placed. While many perish in winter, these tend to be the old, sick, deformed or immature individuals that were not hardy enough to thrive.

Over the past 150 years, the changing climate has altered conditions that might seem more favorable to life but has actually upset the natural harmony. This has resulted in many negative impacts on our native ecology. Additionally, human activity has altered the landscape in many places so microclimates have developed that can produce conditions not normal for that area. For example, clearing large tracts of forestlands has allowed the wind to strengthen in these disturbed areas. This allows more drifting of snow and reduces the snowpack in that location. This impacts the bugs that overwinter in the soil, small mammals, like voles and shrews that inhabit the ground, and the fallen seeds of plants.

It is helpful to our environment to plant native species of trees wherever possible. While this is not the time of year for planting, it is a good time to see how a treeless area can have a different ecological profile than one that is densely wooded.

God fashioned a well-operating system of life that was home to many hardy species that thrived even during the height of winter. As stewards of creation, we should try to restore areas that have been impacted by our presence.

An indulgence is akin to a Monopoly get-out-of-jail free card. That's what I thought. That is not, incidentally, what sister taught.

My twisted mind believed my "days" in purgatory preliminary to seeing God face-to-face would be reduced if I followed the directions given by the Church or a pope or somebody.

It is not that simple.

The English definition of an indulgence has to do with self-gratification.

I have a cookie indulgence at Christmas time, for instance. The scale in our bedroom will testify to that.

The Catechism defines indulgence differently. An indulgence is "the remission before God of the temporal punishment due to sins whose guilt has already been forgiven. It is a spiritual benefit that removes or reduces the needed, earthly, or purgatorial purification remaining after confession."

A while ago, we are talking 16th century now, one could buy indulgences. It wasn't like I could give you

ten bucks, and you would forgive a certain amount of my time in purgatory. You, in this case, had to be someone in the church hierarchy and the ten bucks, or whatever the going currency was then, had to be for a worthwhile cause. Like building St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, for instance.

Martin Luther raised that issue and others in his 95 Theses. Writing about the clerics who preached indulgences for sale, Luther wrote, "They preach only human doctrines who say that as soon as the money clinks into the money chest, the soul flies out of purgatory."

The Council of Trent dealt with the issue and condemned selling indulgences. The Council did affirm indulgence though. It issued reforms to ensure proper practice, stressing spiritual acts over financial transactions.

Pope Leo, in announcing the Jubilee Year marking the death of St. Francis of Assisi eight hundred years ago, accompanied the observance with a Plenary Indulgence "under the usual conditions (sac-

ramental confession, Eucharistic communion and prayer according to the intentions of the Holy Father.)

Plenary indulgence removes all temporal punishment. The other kind is a partial indulgence which removes some of the temporal punishment.

The real purpose of an indulgence is, as one commentator put it, "an encounter with God, not a spiritual shortcut." It is a means toward renewing a commitment to God and community through our time and effort.

In God's mercy each of us will spend time preparing to meet God. It is time on earth, time in purgatory, or both. An indulgence focuses our attention and will help us along that path.

For more information: <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/vatican-city/news/2026-01/year-saint-francis-indulgence-assisii.html>

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

## CALLED TO SERVE

## Earning a plenary indulgence



Deacon  
Kevin Mastellon

## 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:

**Feb. 13** – 1 p.m. – Holy Cross Parish, Plattsburgh

## To Report Abuse

**If you have a complaint** of suspected misconduct involving diocesan clergy, religious, employees or volunteers, contact Victim Assistance Coordinator, Terrianna Yanulavich, Ph.D., LMHC, 5050 Route 374, Merrill, NY 12955; [terriannayanulavich@yahoo.com](mailto:terriannayanulavich@yahoo.com); Phone: 518-569-0612; 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)

## Bishop's Public Schedule

**Jan. 30-Feb. 6** – Catholic Leadership Institute Program in Ponte Vedra Beach in Florida

## Rest in Peace

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

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

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

**Feb. 6** – Msgr. Gerard Gefell, 2009

**Feb. 8** – Msgr. Patrick Bernard Riley, 1981; Rev. Normand C. Coté, 2024

**Feb. 9** – Rev. Claude M.F. Sallaz, O.M.I., 1873; Rev. Joseph Weldon Barry, 1945; Rev. Howard James Kennedy, 1971

**Feb. 10** – Rev. Zephirin Pelouquin, M.S.C., 1944; Msgr. William J. Argy, 2005

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# Trump tries to pause abortion pill lawsuit

By Tyler Arnold  
ESPN News

President Donald Trump's Department of Justice (DOJ) is seeking to pause a lawsuit filed by the state of Louisiana that challenges the federal policy of allowing mail-order abortion pills, which has prompted strong criticism from the state's attorney general and pro-life advocates.

"[This] is an affront to our sovereignty and the dignity of women and the unborn," Louisiana Attorney General Liz Murrill said in a post on X one day after the DOJ filed a motion with a federal district court to pause the lawsuit.

Murrill filed a lawsuit in late 2025 to challenge the 2023 deregulation of mifepristone, which is used in chemical abortions. The 2023 rule changes, initiated during former President Joe Biden's administration, allowed the drugs to be delivered through the mail and prescribed without any visits to a doctor.

The state filed the lawsuit after residents — including Rosalie Markezich, who is named in the lawsuit — said they were coerced into taking abortion pills that were obtained through the mail. In Markezich's case, she said her boyfriend forced her to take it.

Louisiana prohibits most surgical and chemical abortions beginning at the point of conception, and some residents have received the drugs from out-of-state suppliers. Some states, including New York and California, adopted laws to prohibit their state courts from complying with court orders from states that try to bring charges or civil action against those suppliers.

Murrill, a Republican, said in her post that Trump's Food and Drug Administration "should stand with us for life" and not with California Gov. Gavin Newsom and New York Gov. Kathy Hochul, both Democrats.

The DOJ justified its request by noting that the FDA is conducting a review of the 2023 rule changes. The FDA started its review in September 2025 and in that same month approved a generic form of mifepristone, which offered cheaper access to chemical abortion, without changing the regulations that concerned pro-life advocates.

In the court filing, the DOJ argued that Louisiana's lawsuit, which asks the court to immediately halt the mail delivery of abortion drugs. "threaten[s]

to short circuit the agency's orderly review and study of the safety risks of mifepristone."

Although the 2023 rules remain intact, the DOJ noted the FDA is "already reconsidering the matter in its review" and Louisiana's request "may prove as unnecessary as it is disruptive" if the FDA decides to end the mail delivery of abortion drugs following its review.

Even though the DOJ is seeking to dismiss the lawsuit, the court filing acknowledges concerns about the safety of the abortion pill and notes that the official review is "informed by the lack of adequate consideration" underlying previous FDA risk assessments of the drug.

Murrill noted in her post on X that the FDA admits the prior risk assessments were flawed "but claims that Louisiana can't sue to stop the 1,000 dangerous abortions a month in Louisiana."

Marjorie Dannenfelser, president of Susan B. Anthony Pro-Life America, criticized the administration in a statement, saying the "denial of justice by the DOJ is completely unacceptable."

"It slams the door on women like Rosalie Markezich and their babies, who are suffering very real harm as the Trump-Vance administration refuses to reimplement basic guardrails on deadly mail-order abortion drugs," Dannenfelser said.

"Nearly a year ago, Secretary [Robert F.] Kennedy [Jr.] promised a comprehensive study of the real-world harms of abortion drugs, yet the FDA has slow-walked it out of political fear," she said.

"Now we are told it will be at least 2027 — well after midterms," she said. "That is unacceptable. But this study also should not substitute for plain common sense: Deadly abortion drugs do not belong in the mail with no in-person doctor visit, no ultrasound, no meaningful medical oversight, and no accountability."

Father Tadeusz Pacholczyk, senior ethicist at the National Catholic Bioethics Center, said at a minimum doctors "have a duty to provide careful medical supervision and oversight to patients who seek to obtain dangerous pharmaceuticals."

"This oversight calls for significant patient scrutiny, medical testing, interventions, and in-person exams to assure that any prescribed medications will be appropriate for the specific medical situation of the patient," he said.

# CATHOLIC WORLD AT A GLANCE

## Ministry to provide new Liturgy of the Hours to seminarians

On the feast of St. Thomas Aquinas, Jan. 28, Word on Fire announced that the ministry will provide a complete four-volume set of its new Liturgy of the Hours, Second Edition, to every Catholic seminarian in the United States — at no cost to the seminaries or seminarians. Thanks to a generous donation, Word on Fire estimates that roughly 4,000 volume-sets will be distributed across the United States. "One particular supporter, who asked to remain anonymous, stepped up in an extraordinary way with a desire to provide every U.S. seminarian with a free set," Brandon Vogt, executive publishing director at Word on Fire, told EWTN News. The Liturgy of the Hours — also known as the Divine Office — is a set of daily prayers that priests and religious are obliged to pray and that many lay Catholics also make part of their daily prayer practice. The prayers are set according to the Church calendar and are composed of psalms, hymns, and readings from Scripture.

## Pope taps veteran canon lawyer for key Vatican post

Pope Leo XIV's appointment earlier this month of Archbishop Carlo Roberto Maria Redaelli as secretary of the Dicastery for the Clergy places a seasoned canon lawyer and administrator as the No. 2 in a curial office that directly shapes priestly discipline, pastoral ministry, and formation. The choice suggests an emphasis on procedural clarity, canonical competence, and experienced leadership in an area where decisions often involve sensitive, high-stakes situations. Redaelli's track record also points to a governing temperament that favors structured pastoral discernment rather than reactive, polarizing moves — an approach that fits the dicastery's day-to-day reality and one illustrated by his handling of a controversial case during his tenure as archbishop of Gorizia. The choice of Redaelli, a canon lawyer, is the latest indication that Pope Leo XIV wants canon law at the center of his governing team, consistent with the appointments of Monsignor Filippo Iannone to lead the Dicastery for Bishops and of Don Marco Billeri as the pope's second personal secretary.

## Majority of institutes had no one professing perpetual vows

The large majority of religious institutions in the U.S. reported they had no one professing perpetual vows in 2025, a new report found. Georgetown University's Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) found in its report, "Women and Men Professing Perpetual Vows in Religious Life: The Profession Class of 2025," that 82% of religious institutions had no one professing perpetual vows in 2025. About 1 in 10 institutes said they had one perpetual profession, while 8% said they had anywhere from two to nine members professing perpetual vows in 2025, according to the report. Overall, responding religious institutes reported 179 total perpetual vows — 74 women and 105 men — in 2025. Out of those who made perpetual vows, 92% reported having been Catholic since birth, while the rest who experienced conversion did so at the average age of 20 years old.

## VIRTUAL EVENTS

## BROWN BAG

Join us for another online lunch-time discussion. We will discuss the book by Father Blake Britton titled RECLAIMING VATICAN II: What It (Really) Said, What It Means, and How IT Calls Us to Renew the Church.

**Date:** Start Thurs. Feb. 12 each Thurs. until March 26. Read/discuss one chapter each week.

**Place:** online via TEAMS

**Features:** You will have to purchase the book. The book is available via Amazon or Word on Fire and may also be available used from vendors such as Thriftbooks or Abe Books

**Contact:** Register at [www.rcdony.org/brownbag](http://www.rcdony.org/brownbag). A link will be sent to you before the start of the program. For more information contact Marika Donders, [mdonders@rcdony.org](mailto:mdonders@rcdony.org)

## ADIRONDACK MOUNTAIN

## ALPHA

Lake Placid – ALPHA to be held, all are invited no matter your background or beliefs.

**Date:** Starting Feb. 22 on Sundays for 11 weeks There are breaks for Spring vacation and Easter

**Time:** 11:15 a.m. to 1:15 p.m.

**Place:** St. Agnes School

**Features:** Meet new people and unpack the Christian faith together. Alpha is for anyone who's curious. No judgement, no pressure. Each session unpacks a big question of life, faith and purpose and is designed to spark conversation. This is a free event and includes a delicious lunch.

**Contact:** For more information contact Debra Lennon at [lennon-debra26@gmail.com](mailto:lennon-debra26@gmail.com), 518-524-4388

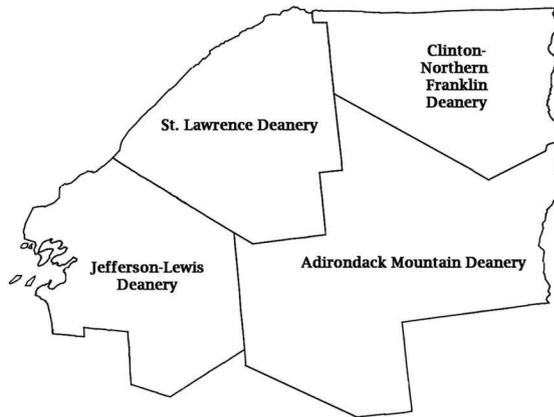
## CLINTON NORTHERN FRANKLIN

## FIRST FRIDAY

Champlain – St. Mary's to have Mass, Exposition and Benediction every first Friday of the month.

**Date:** Feb. 6

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



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.

the Blessed Sacrament.

## BREAKFAST

Peru – St. Augustine's Knights of Columbus will be serving a Pancake Breakfast.

**Date:** Feb. 8, March 8

**Time:** 8:30 a.m. to noon

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

**Cost:** Adults, \$10; Children 5 to 11, \$5; under 5, Free; Take-outs, \$10

**Menu:** Pancakes, Waffles, Strawberry Sauce, Scrambled Eggs, Bacon, Home Fries, Real Maple Syrup, and much more.

## POND HOCKEY TOURNAMENT

Lyon Mountain – St. Bernard's and St. Edmund's Parish to have their second annual Pond Hockey Tournament.

**Date:** Feb. 14

**Time:** 8 a.m. until finished

**Place:** Church pond in front of St. Bernard's

**Cost:** \$75 per team (4 team members allowing 1 sub per team)

**Features:** Last year we raised \$2,000 for the parish in which the Lyon Mountain Knights of Columbus Council #7215 hosted the event. Depending on the number teams that register, that will determine how many games will be played. All games are to be 3

on 3 with no goalies in which current Pond Hockey Rules and Regulations to be utilized. There will be all day food and drinks at the American Legion post 1623.

**Contact:** For more information and to register contact Mike Chase at 518-578-2638, Pete Siskavich at 518-578-5280 or Kyle Siskavich at 518-420-2474

## SOAKING PRAYERS SESSIONS

Plattsburgh – Come enjoy a relaxing prayer opportunity the first Monday of the month.

**Date:** March 2, April 6, May 4

**Time:** New time, 1:30 p.m. to 3:30, no more evening sessions.

**Place:** Newman Center

**Features:** Session includes a praise and worship segment followed by scripture readings, soaking prayer and healing prayers. Led by Eve McGill, Living Waters Ministry. All are welcome.

**Contact:** [evemcgill16@charter.net](mailto:evemcgill16@charter.net)

## JEFFERSON-LEWIS

## SPAGHETTI AND MEATBALL DINNER

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

**Date:** Feb. 7, March 14

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

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

**Cost:** Adults, \$12; Seniors, \$10; Children 12 and under, \$5; under 5, Free; Sauce or meatballs available for \$6 per quart

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

## PANCAKE BREAKFAST

Carthage – Pancake Breakfast to be held in support of Augustinian Academy, sponsored by the Carthage K of C Father John Cosmic #291 and Ave Maria Circle.

**Date:** Feb. 8, March 8

**Time:** 8 a.m. to noon

**Place:** St. James Community Room

**Cost:** Adults, \$10; Seniors, \$8; Children under 10, \$5; Family of 4, \$30

**Menu:** Scrambled Eggs, Pancakes, French Toast, Ham, Sausage, Baked Goods, Juice, and Coffee

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

## 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:** March 1

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

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

**Contact:** 315-348-6260

## ST. LAWRENCE

## VALENTINE CASINO NIGHT

Canton – St. Mary's is celebrating its 150th anniversary with a special casino night on Valentine's Day.

**Date:** Feb. 14

**Time:** 6 p.m. to 9

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

**Cost:** 18+ \$40 per person or \$75 per couple

**Features:** The evening will include gaming, grand prizes, adult beverages, music, and generous hors d'oeuvres — including a charcuterie table and desserts.

**Contact:** Tickets are available at the Canton Parish Office or by calling 315-386-2543.

## THE MASS EXPLAINED

Hammond - Have you ever wondered where the prayers of the

Mass came from? Or wondered why the stand, kneel, sit, stand again routine happens? Come learn why we do what we do and when.

**Date:** Five Saturdays beginning Feb. 21

**Time:** 8:45 a.m. coffee and donuts, programs begins at 9 a.m. and will last 45-60 mins.

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

**Features:** The program is FREE. Pre-registration is not required but suggested (need to have enough donuts!)

**Contact:** Please call Gene Kleinhans, 315-486-3813 or Chris McRoberts, 315-323-7784 to provide your name and a good phone number to call or text.

## MONTHLY BRUNCH

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

**Date:** Feb. 8

**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.

## DIOCESAN EVENTS

## MEN'S DISCERNMENT GROUPS

Men ages 18-40, are you searching for purpose and wondering about God's plan for your life? Come be part of our Men's Discernment Groups.

**Locations:** Canton/Potsdam area, St. Mary's Church, start date Feb. 7 at 10 a.m., facilitated by Father Scott Belina; Plattsburgh area, St. John XXIII Newman Center, start date Jan. 31 at 10 a.m., facilitated by Father Carter Pierce.

**Features:** A welcoming space for prayer, reflection, and honest conversation with others exploring the call to priesthood or a deeper walk with Christ. Refreshments and materials provided. Take the next step toward clarity and peace.

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# Report: Film, TV viewers want faith themes

By Tessa Gervasini  
EWTN News

Consumers of all ages and backgrounds said faith in entertainment is broadly appealing, according to research released this week.

The Jan. 28 report “2026 Faith & Entertainment Index: Faith, Storytelling, and Its Influence on Modern American Audiences” was conducted by HarrisX in partnership with the Faith and Media Initiative.

Film viewers “want better, more accurate, more complex depictions of faith and storytelling,” said Allison Brady, market research and operations leader at HarrisX.

“We wanted to understand from consumers themselves what are the ways that the film and television industry can do this better and why certain stories land better than others,” she said.

In order to find answers, researchers surveyed profes-

sionally recruited respondents of U.S. adult consumers who watch television or movies at least weekly. The survey was carried out in two waves, from Sept. 9-18 and Nov. 13-25, 2025.

Of adults surveyed, 78% identified as spiritual, religious, or a person of faith. Specifically, they identified their religion as Christian (5,579), Catholic (2,072), Protestant (2,266), Jewish (2,467), Muslim (2,652), eastern religions (90), other religion (265), or atheist/agnostic (1,538).

The group was asked questions regarding more than 100 TV and movie scenes depicting faith. Over 12,000 interviews were conducted asking viewers about what worked well in the clips and what did not, researchers said.

Researchers said they hope to create a road map for writers, directors, and producers to better portray faith on screen, making it appear more natural,

more accurate, and without stereotypes, following their first report in 2024 that found 69% of viewers said movies perpetuate religious stereotypes.

## KEY FINDINGS

Nearly all of the respondents (92%) said faith has a role to play in modern entertainment and the majority (77%) said they believe it can have broad appeal.

After watching the provided clips, 58% of respondents reported that content with faith themes is more appealing, including 15% who identify as atheist or agnostic. The research also found 61% said that content with faith themes is more relatable; among the group 13% are atheist or agnostic.

The report detailed that “authentic emotion” resonates well when portraying faith. Six out of the top 10 scenes shown that were found to portray faith the best were considered “emotional,” “reflective,” and

“thought-provoking.”

Stories grounded in familiar everyday situations were also found to portray faith well, with common themes including family, love, and respectful humor among the top scenes.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR FILM CREATORS

In order to best advise film writers, producers, and creators, the surveys asked people what to avoid. Based on reports, “staying away from stereotyping is a way that complex portrayals can really break through with audiences,” Brady said.

Stereotyping and scenes that “essentially just focused on making light of a faith ... should be avoided,” she said.

In regard to what films should portray, Brady said it comes down to “integrating faith naturally and subtly.” She added: “It shouldn’t feel forced. It shouldn’t feel like a message. It should feel organically part of the character’s life and the storyline.”

## Around the diocese

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

**Contact:** Deacon Garry Stevens, Vocations Coordinator at [gstevens@rcdony.org](mailto:gstevens@rcdony.org) or 315-854-6158

### THE RESCUE PROJECT

Ogdensburg - Come join us for a 9-week experience to hear how AWESOME the Good News of the Gospel really is!

**Date:** Starts Feb. 1 until Palm Sunday

**Time:** 12:30 p.m.

**Place:** Brzana Hall at St. Mary’s Cathedral

**Features:** Each session of this free program consists of a video presentation unpacking the story of the Gospel followed by small group discussion.

**Contact:** Register online at <https://www.rcdony.org/rescue> For more information: contact Marika Donders at [mdonders@rcdony.org](mailto:mdonders@rcdony.org)

### RITE OF ELECTION

Ogdensburg - The Rite of Election

and Call to Continuing Conversion to be held.

**Date:** Feb. 22

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

**Place:** St. Mary’s Cathedral

**Contact:** RSVP deadline: Feb 11 to [Asoltero@rcdony.org](mailto:Asoltero@rcdony.org)

### SURVIVING DIVORCE

Canton - The Family Life Office will be offering the Surviving Divorce program again starting in late February.

**Time:** Meeting dates and times will be determined by the needs of the participants.

**Cost:** The program is free but we happily accept \$25 donations to offset the cost of materials.

**Features:** Surviving Divorce features twelve video presentations that cover topics such as shock and grief, anger and forgiveness, money issues, dealing with children and a former spouse, and annulment and remarriage. This program is for the newly separated and divorced and those still struggling with

issues many years later. It will help them find answers to their questions, restore their hope, and begin authentic healing.

**Contact:** To register, go to <https://www.rcdony.org/survivingdivorce>. For more information, contact Steve Tartaglia at 315-393-2920.

### GUGGENHEIM REGISTRATION

Camp Guggenheim registration and new staff application season is now open.

**Dates:** July 5 - July 10 for 11-13 year olds; July 12 - July 17 for 12-15 year olds; July 19 - July 24 for 12-15 year olds; July 26 - July 31 for 12-15 year olds; Aug 2 - Aug 7 for 16-18 year olds

**Cost:** \$450 per week, but if you register by March 1 with a deposit or scholarship application it will be \$425.

**Contact:** Register for camp at <https://www.rcdony.org/youth/camp/registration> Register for a staff position at <https://www.rcdony.org/youth/camp/>

new-staff-application by Feb. 25

### DAY OF REFLECTION

Norfolk - All Catechists, Catechetical Leaders, Commissioned Lay Ministers, Youth Leaders and Candidates in Formation for Ministry are invited to a Day of Reflection.

**Date:** March 21

**Time:** 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Mass will be at 9 a.m.

**Place:** Norfolk Parish Center  
**Cost:** \$15 includes lunch (soup and sandwich)

**Features:** Presented by Sr. Janet Schaeffler, OP. The theme will be “In Step with Christ: Embracing Discipleship and Accompaniment”

**Contact:** Register by March 12 at [rcdony.org/dayofreflection](https://www.rcdony.org/dayofreflection)

### CHRISM MASS

Ogdensburg - All the faithful of the Diocese of Ogdensburg are invited to join Bishop LaValley in the annual Renewal of Priestly Commitment, the Blessing of the Holy Oils, and the consecration of

the Sacred Chrism for use in all the churches of our Diocese.

**Date:** March 26

**Time:** 11 a.m.

**Place:** St. Mary’s Cathedral

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

### HIGHWAY TO HEAVEN

Ogdensburg - Save the Date! Highway to Heaven: The Journey Continues! Featuring Father Jonathan Meyer, popular YouTube sensation and National Preacher

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12



## SUNDAY'S SCRIPTURE

## The 'salty' Christian

Some people reach for the salt even before tasting their food. Some turn on the lights in a room whether the light is needed or not. Salt enhances food, but too much can injure our health. Light is good, but oncoming high beam lights can blind us, perhaps causing road rage along with losing our ability to see where we are going.

So, in the Gospel, when Jesus tells his disciples to be salt and light, what kind of salt and light is he talking about?

This Gospel passage introduces the Sermon on the Mount, that great discourse of Jesus in which he outlines his followers' lifestyle. In other words, at the outset, Jesus warns his disciples that discipleship has prerequisites: be salt and be light.

Salt enhances food. Salt has many varieties: table salt, garlic salt, seasoned salt, sea salt, popcorn salt, rock salt, pickling salt and who knows what other kinds of salt.

Applied to the message of Jesus, we, as

salt, are supposed to add to the natural life that God has given us. So to speak, the "salty" Christian takes human life and raises it up beyond where the mere humanness can bring us.

We know how important light is especially when we are lacking light. Some want more lighting when reading, but less when watching television. Some prefer subdued lighting when dining but want more light when just eating.

Applied to the message of Jesus, we as light are supposed to seek the truth in all things, to light the way for our own lives, but also light the way for others. When Jesus compares the light to a city set on a hill, that house is not merely a showcase, but functions as a beacon guiding others, much like a lighthouse.

But Jesus throws in a few cautions. Salt that has gone flat has no purpose. Flat salt can no longer fulfill its function and purpose. A flickering light or a covered-up light is a waste of time and ener-

Feb. 8

Fifth Sunday  
in Ordinary TimeREADINGS  
Isaiah 58:7-10  
1 Corinthians 2:1-5  
Matthew 5:13-16

gy and might as well be turned off.

Apply that caution to the life and history of our faith and see what we get. If Christians truly lived as salt and light, if Christianity visibly championed its core beliefs would communism, totalitarianism, human trafficking, fascism, abortion, civil rights abuses, slavery, euthanasia, the denial of absolute truths, secularism, the lack of faith and so many other evils ever exist? Would they even stand a chance. Did these evils entered the world because Christians were not acting as salt and light.

Some maintain that these are political issues, and we should not engage religion into such issues. We cannot find in scripture

any place where Jesus says that we should maintain silence when our core beliefs are attacked or put to one side. Sometimes, Christians may decide something is purely political just so that they do not have to apply Christian principles in resolving the issue.

When Christians stand back and let evil or abuses creep into society, are we not flattening our salt and hiding our light? Christian principles must affect our interactions with one another, but they should also apply when government or certain groups want to change our thinking, want to make what is wrong into a political right or entitlement?

We just heard Isaiah say: "if you remove from your midst oppression, false accusation and malicious speech, ... then light shall rise in the darkness." And Paul reminds his listeners: "your faith might rest not on human wisdom but on the power of God."

Human wisdom has

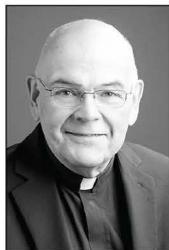
value when it finds its roots in the source of all wisdom, God himself. Human wisdom has value when it reflects divine wisdom. When we replace divine wisdom with human wisdom, we get only a human result. Visit history and see what human wisdom, devoid of God, has brought upon us.

Jesus calls us to act as salt and light for his message. How well have we done?

Pope Francis spoke this same message ever more eloquently: "The Church cannot be silent in public life and be faithful to Jesus Christ at the same time. She needs to be a mustard seed in the public square, transforming every fiber of a nation's political, economic and social life."

Father, creator of un-failing light, give that same light to those who call to you. May our lips praise you, our lives proclaim your goodness, our work

give you honor, and our voices celebrate you forever. AMEN.



Msgr. Robert  
H. Aucoin

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## 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  
info@rcdony.org

# Mental health ministry in India

The Catholic Church in India has launched a systematic campaign to address growing mental illness in groups including families and religious communities.

"We decided to take up mental health as a major concern and set up the structure in response to increased family conflicts, death by suicide among young adults, and even among religious," said Archbishop Thomas Tharayil, the chairman of the Mental Health Ministry of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India.

"Mental health issues are on the increase both in personal lives and in families and service fields. The Church has to reach out to those in trouble at different levels from diocese to parishes," Tharayil told EWTN News from Changanacherry in southern Kerala state.

...The ministry emerged at the national two-day convention jointly organized by the India chapter of the International Association of Catholic Mental Health Ministers and the Indian bishops' health care commission in April 2024 in Bangalore.

The two-day conference, which was attended by half a dozen bishops besides more than 250 religious, clergy, experts, and professionals, examined "the role of the Church as a healing community and the difference between mental health and spiritual well-being."

The conference called for "spiritually accompanying individuals suffering from mental illness at the grassroots level — the diocese, parish, and community level."

"The setting up of the Mental Health Ministry is the fruit of this conference," Medical Mission Sister Joan Chunkapura told EWTN News.

"Depression and anxiety and other personality disorders are also on the increase due to stress and uncertainty and work pressure. Increasing numbers of suicides challenge us to set up more systems to serve those in mental crisis," said the nun, who serves as the ministry secretary and who has done psychological counseling for four decades.

Dozens of priests and nuns have died by suicide in the past two decades due to depression, other mental health issues, or sexual exploitation, she said.

Conferences and seminars are being held in different parts of the country, Chunkapura said.

"We have been looking at setting up a national framework to address mental health effectively amid increasing challenges," Carmelite Father Shinto Thomas told CNA. The priest, based in Bangalore, has been appointed president of the mental health ministry...

"The Indian Bishops' Conference is setting an example to inspire other countries," Shoener told CNA.

*Article courtesy of the EWTN News*

## OBITUARIES

**Brownville** — Laurie Rose (Stoffel) Burnham, 70; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 30, 2026 at Immaculate Conception Church; burial in Glenwood Cemetery.

**Cadyville** — Doris B. (Brault) Drollette, 91; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 23, 2026 at St. James Minor Church; burial in St. Joseph's Cemetery, Dannemora.

**Champlain** — Mary E. (Hickey) Zurlo, 82; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 28, 2026 at St. Mary's Church.

**Constable** — Richard Sprague, 83; Prayer service held Feb. 14, 2026 at Constable Fire Department Hall.

**Croghan** — Norma A. (Boliver) Monnat, 93; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 28, 2026 at St. Stephen's Church; burial in St. Stephen's Cemetery.

**Ellenburg** — Betty A. (Trombley) Gregory, 78; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 30, 2026 at St. Edmund's Church; burial in Town of Ellenburg Mausoleum.

**Essex** — Ronald J. Barnaby, 85; Private services to be held.

**Hogansburg** — Edward R. Lazore, 82; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 29,

2026 at St. Regis Church; burial in St. Joseph's Cemetery.

**Lowville** — Loretta D. (Robertson) Spano; Mass of Christian Burial July 6, 2026 at St. Peter's Church; burial in Rural Cemetery.

**Lyons Falls** — Jeffrey M. Osont, 69; Funeral Services Jan. 31, 2026 at Trainor Funeral Home, Inc (Boonville); burial in Wildwood Cemetery.

**Massena** — Raymond J. O'Neill, 96; Private burial in Calvary Cemetery.

**Moors Forks** — Judy M. (Stone) Duffina, 80; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 26, 2026 at St. Ann's Church.

**Morrisonville** — Donald James Calkins, 67; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 31, 2026 at St. Alexander's Church.

**Morrisonville** — Carolyn A. (Ryan) Provost, 78; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 28, 2026 at St. Alexander's church; burial in St. Joseph's Cemetery, Dannemora.

**Ogdensburg** — Vincent Wake-man Catlin Jr., 82; Memorial Services Feb. 2, 2026 at Oswegatchie Mausoleum.

**Plattsburgh** — Victor G. Lambert, 95; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 24, 2026 at St. Peter's Church; burial in St. Peter's Cemetery.

**Plattsburgh** — Steven P. Mayhew, 87; Private services to be held.

**Plattsburgh** — Jacob Ryan Rivers, 41; Mass of Christian Burial Feb. 3, 2026 at St. Peter's Church; burial in St. Peter's Cemetery.

**Port Henry** — James William Boyea, 75; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 24, 2026 at St. Patrick's Church.

**Port Henry** — Tonya (Sherman) Karkoski, 41; Mass of Christian Burial Feb. 4, 2026 at St. Patrick's Church.

**Port Henry** — Edward A. King, 79; Spring burial at St. Patrick's Cemetery.

**Potsdam** — Eileen Francis (Lavine) Sellers, 102; Memorial Mass and burial in the sprint at St. Mary's Church.

**Waddington** — Kevin James Patnode, 72; Funeral Services Jan. 28, 2026 at Phillips Memorial Home; burial in St. Mary's Cemetery.

# Vatican denies restaurant plans

By Hannah Brockhaus  
EWTN News

The Vatican has said it is considering enlarging a small coffee and drinks bar already present on the terrace of St. Peter's Basilica and has denied reports it plans to open a restaurant atop the historic church, according to Vatican News.

Italian newspaper *Il Messaggero* claimed earlier this week that renovations are being carried out to open a "bistro" on the roof area of the Vatican basilica.

"To cope with the increased number of visitors, an extension of the terrace area accessible to pilgrims is being considered," the basilica communications office said, according to Vatican

News.

There is already a small café serving coffee, drinks, and gelato on the roof of St. Peter's Basilica. Above the church and below the dome, the bar is situated at a halfway point for pilgrims climbing the stairs to visit St. Peter's cupola.

"Some spaces would be made available to expand the small refreshment area already in place, with a sober style appropriate to the context, respectful of the sacredness of the place, and meeting the needs of pilgrims," the basilica said.

The basilica's statement claims such an expansion "would reduce the concentration of visitors in the basilica and promote a more contemplative atmosphere."

# Around the diocese

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

of the Eucharistic Revival. Join Bishop LaValley for Holy Mass, Eucharistic Adoration, sacred music, and more. Additional details coming soon!

**Date:** May 16

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

**Contact:** Mary Beth Bracy at marybethbracy@gmail.com for more information.

## 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

### COUPLES RETREAT

Canandaigua — Couples Valentine's Retreat to be held.

**Date:** Feb. 13, 7 p.m. to Feb. 15, Noon

**Place:** Notre Dame Retreat House

**Cost:** \$325 per couple

**Features:** Spend Valentine's weekend drawing closer to the one you love—deepening your faith, strengthening your bond, and celebrating God's gift of

love. The weekend will include a special Valentine's social and dinner on Saturday evening as part of this uplifting retreat. The retreat will be run by Father Jim Dahlinger, SJ, Deb & Keith Northridge and Jodie Scordo.

**Contact:** For more information email jscordo@notredameretreat.org

### CATHOLIC MEN'S CONFERENCE

Syracuse - The Diocese of Syracuse's 18th IGNITE Catholic Men's Conference to be held.

**Date:** March 28

**Time:** Registration at 8 a.m., event 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

**Place:** Bishop Ludden-Grimes Jr./Sr. High School

**Cost:** \$65 by March 9, \$70 after, \$75 at the door

**Features:** The theme will be "Trust in His Strength". A great lineup of speakers, Father Larry Richards and Brandon Powell. Bishop Lucia will start the day with Holy Mass.

**Contact:** For more information go to [www.ignitecatholicmen.org](http://www.ignitecatholicmen.org). or Ed Kirk: Email: lekirk3@gmail.com Phone Number: 315-560-9170



## Adoration in the Diocese of Ogdensburg

The following is a list of Adoration hours and sites across the Diocese of Ogdensburg. If your parish offers Eucharistic Adoration or if this information is incorrect email [news@rcdony.org](mailto:news@rcdony.org)

### Holy Angels Church, Altona

After 8 a.m. Mass Dedicated to Vocations and the church

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

**St. Mary's Church, Brushton**  
First Wed. 6 p.m. to 7

**St. Mary's Church, Canton**  
Tues. 4:10 p.m. to 5:10  
Fri. 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. ending with Divine Mercy Chaplet

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

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

**St. Mary's Church, Champlain**  
First Fri. 9 a.m. Mass followed by Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament  
11 a.m. Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament

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

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

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

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

**St. Francis of Assisi, Constable**  
Second Fri. of the Month, 5 p.m. to 6

**St. Mary's Church, Constableville**  
First Fridays 6 p.m.

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

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

**St. Elizabeth's Church, Elizabethtown**  
Fri. after Mass 8:30 a.m. to 9:30

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

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

**St. James Church, Gouverneur**  
9:45 a.m. to 10:45 every second  
Sunday

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

**Immaculate Conception, Keeseville**  
Sun, 1 p.m. to 4

**St. Agnes Church, Lake Placid**  
Tues 10 a.m. to 5:20 p.m.  
Vocations and Divine Renovation  
our of our parish are emphasized

**St. James Major, Lake Pleasant**  
7:30 a.m. before 8 a.m. Mass on  
the First Sunday.

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

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

**St. Peter's Parish, Massena**  
Held at Sacred Heart Church  
Thursday 12:45 p.m. to 1:45  
First Friday 2 p.m. to 6

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

**St. Alexander's Church, Morrisonville**  
Wed. at 8 a.m. before 9 a.m. Mass

**St. Augustine Church, North Bangor**  
Tues. after 9 a.m. Mass until 10 a.m.

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

**St. Mary's Cathedral Parish, Ogdensburg**  
*Entryway for the Deacon Winter Chapel*  
Thurs. before First Friday from  
7 p.m. to 8  
Adoration each Wed. 3 p.m. to 6  
(No Christmas Eve or New Years Eve)  
and Fri. 10:45 a.m. to 11:45 a.m.

**St. Augustine's Church, Peru**  
Every Friday following 8 a.m. Mass  
to 7 p.m.

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

**St. Patricks Church, Port Henry**  
Mon. after Mass 8:30 a.m. to 9:30

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

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

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

**St. Ann's Church, St. Regis Falls**  
Fridays after 8 a.m. Mass until 9 a.m.

**St. Andrews Church, Sackets Harbor**  
Fri. 3:30 p.m. to 4:30

**Our Lady of Lourdes, Schroon Lake**  
First Wed. after 9 a.m. Mass

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

**Holy Family Church, Watertown**  
Monday's following noon Mass

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

**St. Anthony's Church, Watertown**  
First Sun. of the Month 2 p.m. to 3  
Tues. 3 p.m. to 6

**St. Patrick's Church, Watertown**  
Every Thurs. after Noon Mass until  
7 p.m.

**St. Ann's Church, Wells**  
Half an hour after Sunday Mass  
every Third Sunday of the month.

**St. Joseph's Church, West Chazy**  
First Friday after 9 a.m. Mass until  
11 a.m.

**St. Philip Neri Church, Westport**  
(Memorial Day - Columbus Day)  
Weds. after Mass, 8:30 a.m. to 9:30

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