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The Diocese of Ogdensburg Volume 80 Number 45

# NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

MARCH 25, 2026

## JOURNEYING TOGETHER



PHOTO BY BRIDGET O'CONNOR

On March 14, the Altar and Rosary Societies of Immaculate Conception in Brownville and St. Andrew's in Sackets Harbor hosted a Women's Lenten Retreat for women of the involved parishes, including St. Cecilia's in Adams and Queen of Heaven in Henderson. See story on Page 4.

## LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION



Father Raymond J. de Souza of Kemptville, Ontario, shoots a video for EWTN in St. Mary's Cathedral, Ogdensburg. The broadcast, focused on the seven last words of Christ, will air on Good Friday.

FULL STORY, PAGE 3

# Pope calls for rediscovery of role of laity

By Victoria Cardiel  
EWTN News

VATICAN CITY — Pope Leo XIV on March 18 called for a rediscovery of the role of the laity in the Church.

“Let us rekindle in ourselves the awareness of and gratitude for having received the gift of being part of God’s people and also the responsibility that this entails,” Leo urged during the general audience in St. Peter’s Square.

In his catechesis, focused on chapter 2 of the constitution *Lumen Gentium*, one of the fundamental documents of the Second Vatican Council,

the pontiff explained that the Church, as “the communion of the faithful — which naturally includes the pastors — cannot err in matters of faith.”

Leo maintained that the Church possesses a particular capacity to safeguard revealed truth, since it is grounded in “the supernatural sense of faith of the entire people of God, which is manifested in the consensus” of all the members of the Church.

From this unity, which the Church’s magisterium safeguards, Leo XIV said: “It follows that each baptized person is an active agent of evangelization, called to bear

consistent witness to Christ in accordance with the prophetic gift which the Lord bestows upon his whole Church.”

The pontiff recalled that, according to the teaching of Vatican II, the people of God participate in Christ’s mission as priest, prophet, and king. “This common priesthood of the faithful,” the pope explained, arises from baptism and is strengthened through confirmation.

Through these sacraments, Christians “are more strictly obliged to spread and defend the faith, both by word and by deed, as true witnesses of Christ,” he said, quoting from

*Lumen Gentium*.

Leo also quoted Pope Francis, to recall that all members of the Church share the same fundamental dignity and “everyone forms the faithful holy people of God.”

One of the central points of Leo’s catechesis was the explanation of the so-called “*sensus fidei*,” that is, the “sense of the faith” and “consensus of the faithful.”

The pope noted that the council fathers who participated in the Second Vatican Council taught “that the holy people of God also participate in the prophetic mission of Christ.”

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# Taking the easy way

After three surgeries in the last 7 years, including hip replacements on both sides, my legs are not as strong or durable as I'd like them to be.

In a lot of ways, I'm strong for my gender, age and size. I grew up on and worked on a family dairy farm back when smaller, hand-carried hay bails were the norm, and I've pursued various sports and fitness activities off and on throughout my life, so I've been relatively strong most of my life if you take my hips out of the equation.

Because my lower body

is relatively weak and my upper body is relatively strong, I thoroughly enjoy upper body exercises, and I seriously detest lower body exercises.

**Darcy L. Fargo**

While there are a few factors that contribute to my loathing, one of them is that lower body exercises are just plain hard for me.

I think it's human nature to seek the path of least resistance, the easy way. I'm very, very human. I don't find upper body exercises to be as taxing as lower body exercises, so I prefer them.

When I'm choosing what

I want to do in the gym, like the one day each week I take to just have fun in the gym and not follow a program, any exercise with "squat" in the name is not making the list.

I avoid the thing that would probably benefit me the most - strengthening my problem spots - because it's hard and it hurts.

I was thinking about that one day when it occurred to me that I do it in my spiritual life, too. It's especially evident this Lent. What did I choose to focus on this Lent? A relatively insignificant bad habit. What did I not choose to focus on this Lent? My pride, my anger, my struggles to surrender my will and put God's will

in its place.

Like those upper body exercises, tackling a bad habit still takes work. It's not always easy. Tackling my pride, anger and struggles to surrender, though, is much, much harder. Again, I avoid the things that would probably benefit me most because earnestly and honestly asking God for the grace to tackle them would be hard and accepting that grace and dying to myself may hurt in some ways.

I think God is calling me to look more at the hard things for the remainder of this Lent and into Holy Week.

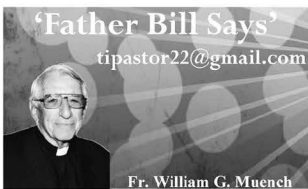
He's calling me - all of us, really - to be stronger and more durable in Him.

## Chrism Mass: 'A unique opportunity'

The Chrism Mass: each year, I like reminding you all about the Chrism Mass as we get closer to Holy Week. I really like the celebration of the Chrism Mass each year. So, let me remind you: All the priests of our diocese join with Bishop Terry R. LaValley for a Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral in Ogdensburg. This Chrism Mass is a unique opportunity for our bishop to speak to all the priests. There was a time when the Chrism Mass was celebrated as part of the Holy Thursday liturgies. Now the Chrism Mass is celebrated on day that is more convenient for the priests to travel to the cathedral.

The Chrism Mass includes a special blessing ceremony for the sacred oils that will be used for the sacramental ceremonies in each parish of the diocese.

For holy oils, there is the Oil of the Catechumens - this sacred oil is used

**Fr. William G. Muench**

during the conferral of Baptism - and the Oil of the Anointing of the Sick - oil for anointing for those who are near death and those suffering from serious illness or other such problems.

Then the Holy Chrism. This oil is consecrated for use at baptisms, for the ordination of a priest and for the ordination of a bishop.

Each priest at the Chrism Mass takes some of each sacramental oil back to their parish to be used in the celebration of the sacraments during the coming year. This is rather symbolic. Our bishop send out the blessed oils to each parish, and he is then connected with all the parishes and is a part

of the celebration of every sacrament there. Through these blessed oils, the bishop unites himself and demonstrates support with every parish.

Another important part of the Chrism Mass is that each priest renews his priestly promises in the presence of his bishop. This year I would like to share with you my renewal of these promises right here. This will be my personal opportunity for my own renewal with God and with you. These are the promises I and all priests make on the day of ordination as a priest. Here are the actual words of the ritual for renewal:

"I am resolved to be more united with the Lord Jesus and more conformed to him, denying myself, I confirm these promises about my sacred duties toward Christ's Church, which, prompted by love of him, I willingly and joyfully pledged on the day of my priestly or-

dination."

"I am resolved to be a faithful steward of the mysteries of God in the Holy Eucharist and the other liturgical rites and to discharge faithfully the sacred office of teaching, following Christ, the Head and Shepherd, not seeking any gain, but moved only by zeal for souls."

At the Chrism Mass, our bishop then turns to the people - present and at home in their parishes - asking them to pray for their priests. In addition, the bishop asks for prayers for himself so that he will exercise his office as Bishop, so he will live and be an image of the Lord Jesus, the Good Shepherd.

I want to take this opportunity to encourage you to pray for me and all priests, especially your pastors, the priests of our Diocese of Ogdensburg, and those priests you have come to know over the years.

MARCH 25, 2026

# EWTN shoots video in St. Mary's Cathedral

By **Mary Beth Bracy, consecrated virgin**  
Contributing Writer

The Seven Last Words of Christ and American history, as revealed in the beautiful stained-glass windows of St. Mary's Cathedral in Ogdensburg, were recently brought to life for an EWTN broadcast that will air on Good Friday.

On March 4, a television crew from EWTN came to the cathedral to film Father Raymond J. de Souza's reflections, which will air on Good Friday, April 3 at 1 p.m. on EWTN. The recording will also be broadcast on ewtn.com and on the EWTN+ app.

Father de Souza, pastor of Holy Cross Church in Kemptville, Ontario, located a half hour south of Ottawa, shared, "I've been preaching the Seven Last Words on Good Friday since 2004. I have done it in the Cathedral at Kingston for most of that time. During the pandemic I recorded them, like a very rough video, and EWTN put them on their YouTube channel. The video production wasn't enough quality to be on the network. It seems to have gotten a good response so, since then, they've sent a film crew to have me record them (annually) and that's what we did this year."

Father de Souza said he preaches the Seven Last Words, the final phrases spoken by Jesus, by relating each to a theme.

"You can focus on the words themselves with a focus on the passion, or you can choose a theme," he said. "And (Archbishop) Fulton Sheen, who made it famous in the United States, choose the Seven Last Words or the Seven Sorrows the Blessed Mother. That's how I've done it for 20 years or more."

A new theme is developed each year.

"I try to follow the Fulton Sheen pattern of choosing creative themes," he said. "The first year was the themes of St. Joseph; 2022 was the four hundredth anniversary of the

canonizations of St. Ignatius of Loyola, St. Francis Xavier, St. Teresa of Avila and St. Philip Neri; last year was the 1700th anniversary of the Nicene Creed, etc. This year is the two hundredth anniversary of the American Declaration of Independence."

Father de Souza is no stranger to the North Country. He attended seminary with Father Bryan D. Stitt and Father Joseph W. Giroux.

"I've been coming to Ogdensburg for many years because of friends, like Father Stitt and Father Giroux, so I've been in the cathedral very often, including for Father Stitt's ordination in 2003," Father de Souza said. "What makes the cathedral suitable is that they have scenes (in the windows) from American history, including a window of Charles Carroll signing the Declaration of Independence. So, it was a very suitable place, with the kind welcome of Father Joe Morgan, the rector there."

Father de Souza said his interest in the Seven Last Words has been with him for decades.

"When I was in the seminary, I became aware of the Seven Last Words," he said. "My first exposure was in 1997, and I spent holy week in New York City, and Father George Rutler was preaching the Seven Last Words on Good Friday. He was continuing the tradition of Fulton Sheen. That's how I became aware of it. Father Rutler would also preach of creative themes, one year on the Seven Last Words and Seven Wonders of the ancient world."

The priest continued to encounter reflections on Christ's last seven phrases, and he wanted to expose others to the tradition.

"I was aware of it (the Seven Last Words) and then I spent my other seminary years in Rome and in Italy," Father de Souza said. "They've kept up that tradition as well. They tend to call it 'the three hours' because they preach it from noon to 3 p.m. on Good Friday. When I came back after I was



Father Raymond J. de Souza

ordained, we didn't have the custom of preaching it; I was living in Kingston at the time, and I was chaplain of university students, so I thought it would be good to start it, and I did in 2004. It's a great Catholic tradition, and as a preacher I find it a very appealing challenge to preach on Good Friday and to use the Seven Last Words to engage with a creative theme. And it's gotten a good response. Twenty years later, I'm still doing it."

Father de Souza said this year's theme is unique.

"This year is an unusual one because the theme is history and the key event is a matter of political history and not religious history," he said. "Obviously, the Nicene Creed speaks directly of Christ's passion and his death. This one is devotional and informational. I think people will learn something about Church history. In 1597, Capuchins were martyred in the state of Georgia, almost 25 years before the Mayflower arrived. They are being beatified this year on October 31 (in Savannah), and it's because of that beatification that attention is being paid to them. So, it's interesting that in this year that is the semiquincentennial, there will be two beatifications in the United States, Fulton Sheen in September and the Georgia martyrs in October."

The reflections include references to other parts of Ameri-

can history, as well.

"At end of Civil War, in 1861, Lincoln sent Archbishop John J. Hughes (as an envoy) to Europe to gain support for the Union cause," he said. "That's astonishing that happened in 1861, when there was still a lot of anti-Catholic sentiment. The Ogdensburg windows' series are a good way to learn the history of the church in the United States."

Father de Souza said he enjoyed contemplating connections between historical events or periods and Christ's final words.

"It was a delight to prepare the research," he said. "For example (at) Christ's fourth words from the Cross, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me,' I discussed slavery and I quoted the words from Lincoln's second inaugural, which in my view is the greatest speech in the English language. So, it was a very compelling and interesting project."

Father de Souza has often served as a news commentator for current events, including beatifications, the funeral of Benedict XVI, the Synod, and the election of Pope Francis.

"In a way you see history unfolding instead of covering it in the past," he said.

The priest said he offered this year's reflections in honor of Cardinal Timothy Dolan.

"When Father Giroux and Father Stitt and I were in the seminary, Cardinal Dolan was the rector of the seminary, and he's just retired this year," Father de Souza said. "So it was a way of saying thank you to him for his service and his academic discipline in the United States."

Father de Souza encouraged those who are able to visit the cathedral and experience the windows and other beauty.

"You have a very beautiful cathedral, and I hope this encourages people to visit it," he said. "It's easier for people who live nearby, but even if they are further, to come would be a good thing."

# Altar & Rosary Society holds women's retreat

By Elizabeth LaFave

For the North Country Catholic

On March 14, the Altar and Rosary Societies of Immaculate Conception in Brownville and St. Andrew's in Sackets Harbor hosted a Women's Lenten Retreat for our parishes, including St. Cecilia's in Adams and Queen of Heaven in Henderson.

Retreat participants gathered in the church for hymns and recitation of the Sorrowful Mysteries of the Most

Holy Rosary for the intentions of all present.

The guest speaker was Sister Mary Catherine Pham, Sister Adorer of the Precious Blood in Watertown. She shared a very inspirational and moving witness of her family's escape from communist Vietnam when she was a child and her vocation story. She told participants about the founding of the Sister Adorers of the Precious Blood order by Mother Catherine Aurelia and

their primary mission: to adore the Precious Blood of Jesus, offer reparations for sins and pray for the sanctification of priests and the world. Her theme was "Suffering: The Inner Side of Love." During our Lenten journeys we must enter into the suffering of our Lord and his passion so we can also know and share in God's great love for us.

Sister Mary Catherine's talk was followed by adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and quiet prayer. During adoration, retreat participants recited the Divine Mercy Chaplet for world peace. Tina Corey provided the music, enhancing the experience for everyone.

The retreat ended with wonderful fellowship of all who gathered for a luncheon at the Parish Center.

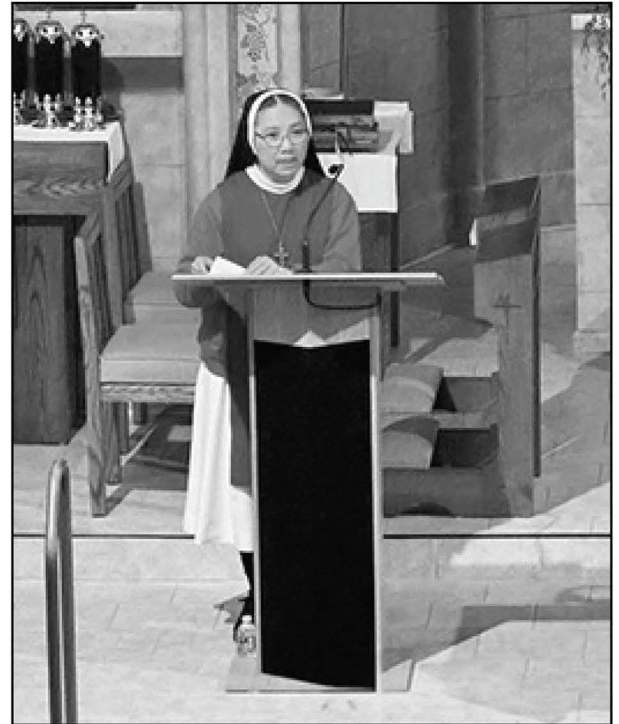


PHOTO BY BRIDGET O'CONNOR

**Sister Mary Catherine Pham, a Sister Adorer of the Precious Blood who resides in the Monastery in Watertown, served as the guest speaker for the women's retreat held March 14 by the Altar and Rosary Societies of Brownville and Sackets Harbor.**

## Eleanor A. Cassoni

February 9, 1938 - March 17, 2026



West Carthage – Eleanor A. Cassoni, 88, formerly of 63 Madison St., passed away peacefully on Tuesday, March 17, 2026, at her daughter Margaret and son-in-law Greg's home, under the care of her loving family and Jefferson County Hospice.

Born in Canton on February 9, 1938, she was one of 14 children of the late Charles and Katheryn (Burke) Ames. Eleanor was a 1956 graduate of Canton High School and she attended Canton ATI, where she met her late husband, Jim.

On July 26, 1958, she married James "Jim" P. Cassoni Jr. at St. Mary's Church in Canton. She was a member of St. James Catholic Church in Carthage, Ava Maria Circle, former secretary for the Carthage Women's Bowling League, former member of the St. Joseph Workers and Eucharistic Minister attending patients at Carthage Area Hospital. She worked for the St. Lawrence Plain Dealer before getting married. She became the office manager for Braman Manufacturing Co. where she worked from 1966 to 1987; before finally retiring from Griffith Energy, formerly Gormley Oil of Carthage, from 1987 to 1997.

Eleanor is survived by one son and his wife, James P. and Lucie Cassoni III of Carthage; and her two daughters and their husbands, Maria and Kenneth Quade of Alamoqordo, NM, and Margaret and Gregory Woods of Carthage; nine grandchildren; 17 great-grandchildren and two great-great grandchildren. She is also survived by her brother, Leo (Cheryl) Ames of Potsdam, NY, and her sisters, Janet Aldous of Colton, NY, Katheryn Fountain of Canton, NY and numerous nieces and nephews.

A Rosary Service will be held at 11:00am on Monday, March 23, 2026, followed by a Funeral Mass at 12pm at St. James Catholic Church, with the Rev. Todd Thibault, Pastor, officiating. Calling hours will take place at the Bezanilla-McGraw Funeral Home on Sunday, March 22, 2026, from 4:00 PM to 7:00 PM. A burial will be held on Monday, March 23, 2026, in the New St. James Cemetery after the funeral.

She is predeceased by her parents, her husband Jim Cassoni, her siblings, Charles, Arthur, Donald, Clarence, Joseph, her sisters, Elizabeth Acra, Ruth Robar, Sharon Simmons, Karel Mace and an infant sister, Margaret Ames.

In lieu of flowers, contributions in her memory may be made to the Carthage Augustinian Academy, St. James Church, 327 West St., Carthage, NY 13619 or Hospice of Jefferson County.

Arrangements are under the care of the Bezanilla-McGraw Funeral Home, 518 State Street, Carthage, NY 13619. To leave an online condolence, please visit [www.bezanillafh.com](http://www.bezanillafh.com).

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# Sr. Donna Franklin died March 11

Sister Donna (Donna Marie) Franklin, a Daughter of Charity, died on March 11, 2026, at St. Louise House in Albany.



Sister Donna Franklin, DC

Born on May 15, 1950, in Philadelphia, she was the eldest of three children born to Louis Franklin, Jr. and Catherine Veronica (Brady) Franklin. Following graduation from Archbishop Wood High School for Girls in Warminster, Pennsylvania, in 1968, Sister Donna spent a number of years in Kentucky with a religious community. She entered the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent De Paul on May 6, 1975. She obtained her bachelor's degree in Sociology in 1981 from Emmanuel College in Boston, and a Master of Social Work degree from Hunter School of Social Work, New York, in 1986. She was awarded a Certificate in Chemical Dependency Counseling from Villanova University, Villanova, Pennsylvania, in 1992.

Sister Donna began her ministry as a social worker at Nazareth Child Care Center, Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts, where she served from 1976 to 1981. She then served at St. John of God Assisted Living in Brighton, Massachusetts, for six months (1981), before stepping into a new area of ministry at St. Catherine's Center for Children in Albany, where she served from 1981 to 1983. After obtaining her master's degree in social work, Sister Donna served for six months at Nazareth Home in Boston; then, began ministering at the Astor Home for Children in Brooklyn, where she served from 1986 to 1989.

From 1989 to 1995, Sister Donna served at Immaculate Conception Parish, Ghebre Michael Inn, Philadelphia; then, in 1995, she began 23 years of ministry as director of Catholic Charities for the Diocese of Ogdensburg. In 2018, Sister Donna entered the Ministry of Prayer at St. Louise House in Albany, where she, in addition to her prayer ministry, ceaselessly performed kind acts for the sisters with whom she lived.

A wake service was held on Sunday, March 15, and the Mass of Christian Burial took place the following day, with both services held in the DePaul Residence Chapel. Burial followed at St. Agnes Cemetery.

Sister Donna is survived by one sister, Ann Cecilia Smith (Timothy Smith); one brother, Louis Joseph Franklin (Carol Landes); three nieces, Jessica Franklin Clark, Molly Smith and Leah Smith; one nephew, Michael Franklin; two great-nephews, Carter Clark and Frankie Clark; one great niece, Collette Clark; and numerous Brady and Franklin cousins.

In lieu of flowers please send donations to Catholic Charities, Diocese of Ogdensburg.

## News Briefs

### Scholarship for high school seniors

The Mater Dei College Foundation is pleased to offer a scholarship opportunity to active Catholics who reside in the diocese, are in their senior year of high school and plan to attend college/university in the fall. To request an application form, email Alexis Michael, Mater Dei Foundation Scholarship Chair at amichael@rcdony.org. Application deadline is June 1.

### Grant application cycle is now open

The Sisters of St. Joseph Foundation supports initia-

tives that foster service to the "dear neighbor" by developing leadership and advancing initiatives related to the corporal and spiritual works of mercy in diocesan, parish and church related programs in the North Country. Applicants must be active in a leadership role in a parish or established program or be in training for such leadership and be sponsored by the director of the program. Applications will be accepted until May 8. Applications may be obtained by contacting Sister Ellen Rose Coughlin, SSJ at 315-778-9679 or by email at SSJFoundationChairperson@gmail.com

The Diocese of Ogdensburg

# NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

Weekly Newspaper for the Diocese of Ogdensburg

*Celebrating*

# 80

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## Environmental Stewardship

## Dust

Dust is everywhere. It exists in intergalactic space and throughout our atmosphere on earth. Dust is composed of an assortment of inorganic particles especially microscopic size fragments of sand and rocks. In places with lush vegetation and a healthy wildlife population, bits of organic matter, like pollen, mold, bacteria, pieces of fungus, slivers of hair, and flakes of dead leaves and decomposing tissues form a fair portion of dust.

The wind picks up this lightweight residue and transports it to other locations where it settles as the air becomes calm. Although each layer is exceptionally thin, it does have an impact. Soil is not a static substance. Items from past civilizations become engulfed by layers of dust and substances deposited on the soil's surface.

For tens of thousands of years, dust was just another component that added nutrients to the soil and kept the ground vibrant for the life it supported. However, over the past half century, dust has begun carrying substances less than favorable to life.

Plastics, when exposed to the forces of nature, break down physically but not chemically. Consequently, plastic bottles, toys, wrappers and other disposable items eventually fragment into billions of microscopic pieces for plant roots to absorb.

As spring takes hold and new growth begins to appear, many people will notice that their allergies are kicking-in. Respiratory issues become more common as the air gathers more complex particles, and one category rapidly increasing in abundance in dust are the microplastics.

While these compounds can be useful, they can also be problematic if not disposed of properly. As we become aware of how important dust is, we become proactive in eliminating harmful components. Being good stewards of God's Creation, we will need to work together to help rid single use plastic from our environment.

## Rest in Peace

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

**March 25** – Rev. Michael D. Charbonneau, 1909

**March 26** – Rev. Jean P. Bernard, O.M.I., 1885; Rev. Thomas J. Rodgers, O.S.A., 1971; Msgr. William E. LaVallee, 1976

**March 27** – Rev. Bernard Maron, 1927; Rev. Henry Cormerais, 1938; Rev. Lawrence J. Gerrity, O.S.A., 1981; Rev. John L. Gallagher, O.S.A., 1982

**March 28** – Rev. Francis McShane, O.S.A., 1932; Rev. Walter C. McMahon, 1978; Rev. Lawrence A. Mallette, 1989; Rev. Joseph P. Trombley, 2001

**March 29** – Rev. Joseph Taney, 1880; Rev. Hillary Hemmer O.M.C., 1934; Rev. J. Aime Troie, 1955; Rev. Ross A. Garnsey, 1986; Rev. Euclid Marier, 2003

**March 30** – Rev. Joseph Chartrand, O.M.I., 1960; Rev. Victor Lamore, 2017

**March 31** – Rev. Louis Lopic, 1873; Rev. Gabriel Volkert, 1873; Rev. Henri Langlais, O.M.I., 1980

## To Report Abuse

**If you have a complaint** of suspected misconduct involving diocesan clergy, religious, employees or volunteers, contact Victim Assistance Coordinator, Terriane Yanulavich, Ph.D., LMHC, 5050 Route 374, Merrill, NY 12955; terrianeyanulavich@yahoo.com; Phone: 518-569-0612; or Father Christopher Carrara, the Episcopal Vicar for Clergy; carrara@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

## Bishop's Public Schedule

**March 25** –9 a.m. – St. Joseph's Home Foundation Board of Directors Meeting at St. Joseph's Home in Ogdensburg

Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

**March 26** – 11 a.m. – Chrism Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

2 p.m. – Pastoral Advisor Committee Meeting at Wadhams Hall in Ogdensburg

**March 27** – 11 a.m. – Memorial Mass for Reverend Theodore A. Crosby at St. Joseph's Church in West Chazy

**March 28** – 4 p.m. – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

**March 29** – 8 a.m. – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

1 p.m. – Lenten Penance Service at St. Mary's Cathedral

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

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

## Protecting God's Children

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



*Support And Pray  
For Vocations*

## REQUEST FOR PRIESTS

WOULD YOU PRAY FOR A PRIEST EACH DAY?

## PRAYER SUGGESTION

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

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

April



The Holy Eucharist

## APRIL

2026

DIOCESE OF OGDENSBURG, NY		BISHOP TERRY R. LAVALLEY		REV. FERNANDO V. SOLOMON JR.		REV. BRYAN D. STITT		REV. JAMES V. TETI	
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	FRIDAY	FRIDAY	FRIDAY	FRIDAY
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30

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

## SAINT ANNE'S SHRINE

Center of Life, Light and Love

## Hospitality Manager Job Opening

Saint Anne's Shrine, a Catholic spiritual retreat center and historic attraction situated on thirty-two pristine park-like acres on the shores of Lake Champlain in Isle La Motte, VT seeks a Hospitality Manager to oversee all aspects of the guest experience for all who visit with us.

Established in 1893 and conducted by the Society of Saint Edmund since 1904, the mission of Saint Anne's Shrine is to "serve as a welcoming place of peace and hope ministering to all God's people through prayer, devotion, hospitality, and spiritual renewal."

The Shrine provides the ideal setting for people of all ages to grow in their faith through pilgrimages, various retreats, and days of reflection.

The Hospitality Manager will lead a group of four to six employees, varying by time of year and schedule. The primary focus of the position will be understanding and meeting the needs of our guests focusing on food service, space, cabin and resource set-up and readiness, including housekeeping and special events, and oversight of our gift shop, and welcome center.

We seek an enthusiastic, energetic, and engaging person who enjoys tending to the details and providing a meaningful experience for all who visit our beautiful Shrine. A high school diploma is required, with a college degree preferred, with a focus in a hospitality related field a plus. Customer/client/guest care experience is required, as is experience leading others in a similar role or field.

This position is full-time, year-round and some evening and weekend work is required. A competitive salary and generous benefits package supplement the beautiful surroundings and meaningful work.

Please send your resume and letter of interest to: Joe Gallagher, Shrine Administrator, via email: jgallagher@saintanneshrine.org.

Applications will be accepted until a Hospitality Manager is selected.

# Pope calls bishops to Rome to discuss families

By Hannah Brockhaus  
EWTN News

VATICAN CITY — Ten years after Pope Francis issued a controversial document on families, Pope Leo XIV will meet with bishops from around the world to discuss the text's application for today.

Amoris Laetitia, Francis' apostolic exhortation on marriage and the family, followed two contentious synods at the Vatican dominated by debate over divorce.

Pope Leo on Thursday announced that he is calling the presidents of the world's bishops' conferences to Rome in October for "synodal discernment" on how "to proclaim the Gospel to families today, in light of Amoris Laetitia."

The meeting is not part of the Synod on Synodality, which will conclude a three-year implementation phase with an assembly in October 2028.

Francis signed Amoris Laetitia on March 19, 2016 following separate synods on the family in 2014 and 2015. The two monthlong assemblies

prominently featured debates over divorce, and Francis' postsynodal document sparked controversy with a footnote that said "in certain cases," divorced and civilly remarried Catholics could receive Communion.

Previous popes had said such Catholics could not receive Communion unless they lived as brother and sister.

In his March 19 message, Pope Leo said societal changes make pastoral attention to families even more necessary than 10 years ago.

Amoris Laetitia is "a luminous message of hope regarding conjugal love and family life," and "we ask God for the courage to persevere on this path, always welcoming the Gospel anew in the joy of being able to proclaim it to all," he said.

Leo recalled the Second Vatican Council's teaching that the family is "the basis of society," a gift from God, and "a school for human enrichment."

Since Vatican II, he added, "the two apostolic exhortations, Familiaris Consortio — issued by

St. John Paul II in 1981 — and Amoris Laetitia (AL), have both strengthened the Church's doctrinal and pastoral commitment to the service of young people, married couples, and families."

The Lord has entrusted families with the task of participating in the Church's mission to proclaim the Gospel, including in places where the Church can witness only through the lay faithful, the pope said.

"For this reason, the Church's commitment in this area must be renewed and deepened, so that those whom the Lord calls to marriage and family life can, in Christ, fully live out their conjugal love, and that young people may feel attracted, within the Church, to the beauty of the vocation to marriage," he said.

The pontiff also pointed out "valuable teachings that we must continue to examine today" from Amoris Laetitia, including how to live through family crises, that love in marriage "always gives life," and the need for new pastoral methods.

# CATHOLIC WORLD AT A GLANCE

## 13 states investigated for conscience protection violations

Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is launching an investigation into 13 states for allegedly violating federal conscience protections for those who hold moral or religious objections to abortion. The HHS Office of Civil Rights (OCR) announced March 19 that its investigation relies on information that those states have allegedly coerced health care entities to provide coverage of or pay for abortions as a condition of offering health coverage in those states. States that either have laws or regulations that conflict with federal conscience protection mandates are: California, Colorado, Delaware, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, Vermont, and Washington. The states may be in violation of the Weldon Amendment, which is routinely added to health care spending bills annually. It prohibits state and local discrimination against health care entities that do not provide, pay for, provide coverage of, or refer for abortions. "OCR launches these investigations to address certain states' alleged disregard of, or confusion about, compliance with the Weldon Amendment," HHS OCR Director Paula M. Stannard said in a statement.

## Holy See calls on UN to eradicate surrogacy 'in all its forms'

The Holy See has reaffirmed its position against surrogacy in a statement to the United Nations, urging the complete eradication of the practice and calling for the protection of women and children from exploitation. Archbishop Gabriele Caccia, apostolic nuncio and permanent observer of the Holy See to the U.N., highlighted the urgency and sensitivity of the issue, lamenting that "technology and practice have run laps around the law and ethics." Although he acknowledged that many view surrogacy "as a compassionate solution for those wishing to be parents," he urged the adoption of measures that respect the dignity and rights of women and children. Caccia lamented that because of financial need, many women agree to carry a child in their womb and subsequently hand the child over to others for money. This situation could be remedied through the development of "social protection, education, and economic opportunities," he said.

## 'Catholic Connections' aims to unite Catholics on Capitol Hill

House Majority Whip Tom Emmer, R-Minnesota, wants Catholics on the Hill to be able to recognize one another by more than a cross they may wear or Ash Wednesday ashes on their foreheads. Emmer's office has spearheaded a new group called "Catholic Connections," dedicated to fostering a faith-based community among Catholics working on Capitol Hill. "This is a huge Catholic community around here," Emmer told EWTN News in an interview at the group's latest event on March 6, which centered on a Lenten reflection delivered by the pastor of St. Joseph's Parish on Capitol Hill. "They don't have anything like this," he said. The Friday morning event, hosted in the Members' Dining Room on the House side of the Capitol, drew roughly 50 participants, including several members of Congress.

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## VIRTUAL EVENTS

## GOSPEL JUSTICE

The Sisters of St. Joseph Justice Promoter/Faith and Ecology Committees are sponsoring an online series, "Putting on the Lens of Gospel Justice."

**Date:** Wed. beginning April 15 until May 27

**Time:** 7 p.m. to 8

**Place:** online via Zoom

**Features:** Seven-week series on Gospel Justice as a lens to view our current reality and to consider ways to act in light of them in our daily lives, based on the Beatitudes, Matthew 25:31-46 and the Catholic Social Teachings concluding with Laudato Si. Presenters include: Msgr. Robert Aucoin, Father John Yonkovic, Deacon JB Kavanagh, Sister Debbie Blow, Deacon Gary & Gayle Frank, John Ferry and Sister Bethany Fitzgerald.

**Contact:** Series is FREE; just need to register. To register **contact:** srbethssj@gmail.com or call 315-212-6592. ZOOM link will be provided prior to first session.

## CLINTON NORTHERN FRANKLIN

## CHICKEN AND BISCUIT DINNER

Malone – Knights of Columbus Council 308 will hold their Chicken and Biscuit Dinners.

**Dates:** March 25

**Time:** Beginning at 4 p.m.

**Place:** K of C Home, 41 Elm St.

**Cost:** \$13 for drive-thru, take-out, or dine in

**Features:** Proceeds benefit our charitable donations.

## PALM SUNDAY BREAKFAST

Altona – Holy Angles and St. Ann's parish to have a Palm Sunday Breakfast.

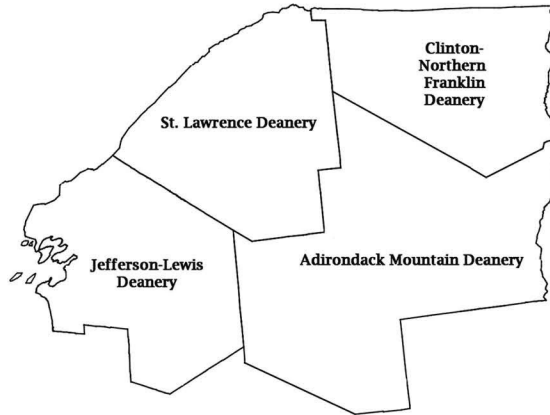
**Date:** March 29

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

**Place:** Holy Angels Hall

**Cost:** Adults, \$15; Children 6-12, \$8; 5 and under, Free

**Features:** Scrambled eggs, Egg Cups, Bacon, Sausage, French Toast, Pancakes, Biscuits with Sausage & Gravy, Golden-fried potatoes, Home-made sweet muffins, coffee, tea, juice, milk. Gift Basket Raffle, Bake Sale & Lottery Tree.



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

## FIRST FRIDAY

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

**Date:** April 3

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

## SOAKING PRAYERS SESSIONS

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

**Date:** April 6, May 4 and June 1

**Time:** 1:30 p.m. to 3:30

**Place:** Newman Center

**Features:** Soaking prayer is surrendering yourself to the Holy Spirit in a relaxed, spiritual atmosphere; being immersed in receiving an outpouring of the Holy Spirit. A short introduction is given, followed by a 30 minute music worship segment to invoke the Holy Spirit. Remainder of the time is spent, listening to the direction of the Holy Spirit via scripture, readings and being open to receive healing at any level: emotional, mental, psychological, physical, spiritual, or generational. This unique form of prayer allows you to call a "time out" or yourself to come into a spiritual environment, to receive an infilling of God's love, mercy, healing, forgiveness, compassion and peace. Facilitated by Eve McGill, Living Waters Healing Ministry. All are welcome!

**Contact:** evemcgill16@charter.net

## BREAKFAST

Peru – the St. Augustine's Knights of Columbus will have a Pancake Breakfast.

**Date:** April 12

**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.

## HOT DINNERS

Malone – St. André Bessette Parish to offer free community hot dinners.

**Date:** Every Wednesday

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

**Place:** St. André Outreach Center

**Features:** Food is prepared by the BOCES Culinary Arts Students. Eat in only.

## SACRED HEART FRATERNITY

Plattsburgh – Come join our Franciscan Secular order, the Sacred Heart Fraternity.

**Date:** Second Sunday of the

month

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

**Place:** St. John the Baptist basement

**Features:** All men and women, single or married, who want to live as St. Francis and live "Gospel to Life and Life to Gospel" can become part of the Secular Franciscan Order. Join us for prayer, fellowship, and formation.

**Contact:** For more information call David Garrant: 518-578-8377

## JEFFERSON-LEWIS

## DRIVE THRU DINNER

Lyons Falls – St. John's Church will have a drive-thru chicken and biscuit dinner.

**Date:** March 24

**Time:** 4:30 p.m. to 6

**Cost:** \$13

**Menu:** Chicken with homemade biscuits, mashed potatoes and gravy, vegetable and dessert.

**Contact:** To reserve your dinner, please call 315-348-8945 or 315-348-8577 today!

## SPAGHETTI DINNER

Watertown – St. Anthony's Altar and Rosary Society is sponsoring a spaghetti dinner.

**Date:** March 26

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

**Place:** Downstairs in St. Anthony's church in Msgr. Sechi Hall

**Cost:** Adult, \$12; Child, \$8

**Features:** Take-outs available, please bring your own container.

**Contact:** For more information contact the Parish Center at 315-782-1190

## DINNER

Constableville – Corned Beef and cabbage or Ham and potato dinner to support the Youth of Southern Lewis County.

**Date:** March 29

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

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

**Cost:** Adults, \$15; Children under 10, \$7.50

## SPAGHETTI &amp; MEATBALL DINNER

Evans Mills – The Indian River Council 7471 Knights of Columbus will be having a spaghetti & meat-

ball dinner.

**Date:** April 11

**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:** April 12

**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

## DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY

Watertown – Divine Mercy Sunday to be held.

**Date:** April 12

**Time:** 3 p.m.

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

**Features:** Be sure to start the novena to the Divine Mercy on Good Friday, April 3, at home, as there will not be a church service to begin the novena. Continue to say the novena every day until the feast of Divine Mercy Sunday. Join us for the celebration April 12.

## DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY

Houseville – The Feast of the Divine Mercy will be celebrated.

**Date:** April 12

**Place:** St. Hedwig's

**Schedule:** Exposition of the Most Blessed Sacrament will begin at 2 p.m. followed by the Sacrament of Reconciliation until 3 p.m. The program continues with a Reflection on the message of Divine Mercy, the Divine Mercy Chaplet (sung), Benediction, The Blessing of Holy Cards and Peti-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9

# Jurors in hymn lawsuit get music lessons

By Daniel Payne  
EWTN News

A years-old copyright lawsuit over Catholic hymns saw jurors in Oregon this week receive a crash course in music reading along with a live-streamed performance of the songs at the center of the dispute.

The suit, originally filed by American Catholic composer Vincent Ambrosetti in May 2020, accuses songwriter Bernadette Farrell and Oregon Catholic Press of copyright infringement against Ambrosetti's 1980 hymn "Emmanuel."

The suit alleges that Farrell's 1993 hymn "Christ Be Our Light" illegally copied elements of "Emmanuel," with

Ambrosetti arguing for a "striking similarity" between the two songs.

Part of Farrell's work contains "the same notes, the same key, and the same time signature," the suit alleges.

The suit was dismissed in March 2024, with U.S. District Judge Karin Immergut arguing that Ambrosetti had not shown that the defendants had had "access" to his song prior to writing their own song or that there was a "striking similarity" between the two works.

But the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit reversed that decision in August 2025, reviving the lawsuit and arguing that there were "genuine issues of material fact" regarding the similarity of the songs.

The appeals court noted that in 1985, Oregon Catholic Press then-publisher Owen Alstott allegedly met Ambrosetti at a convention, where Ambrosetti gave Alstott a copy of "Emmanuel." Alstott would go on to meet and eventually marry Farrell.

The trial began anew on March 16. The Oregonian reported that the panel of eight jurors were instructed on several basic principles of musical comprehension, including how to read music, "how to distinguish between a quarter note and a half note," and "how many beats each measure holds."

Lawrence Ferrara, a professor of music at New York University, also performed several

musical samples of the disputed works via video during the trial.

Ferrara has participated in court proceedings and copyright disputes for decades, including analysis and professional opinion. In a February preliminary report filed to the court he pointed to similarities in the two songs that he said provide "strong objective musical evidence of copying."

Ambrosetti in his 2020 lawsuit said he had sent an infringement notice to the plaintiffs alleging the copyright violation but that they continued to use their song, leading to his filing the suit. The trial was expected to last through the week last week.

## Around the diocese

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

tions, and the Veneration of the Divine Mercy Image.

**Features:** Celebrants Father Sony G. Pulickal and Father John Ojuok. A reception will follow in the church hall.

**Contact:** 315-348-6260 for any questions.

### ST. LAWRENCE

#### FISH FRY

Gouverneur – St. James School to have a fish fry every Friday during Lent.

**Date:** March 27

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

**Cost:** \$15

**Menu:** Dinner includes fried fish, choice of macaroni and cheese or french fries, cole slaw, dinner roll, beverage and your choice of dessert. Dine in or Take Out.

**Contact:** Local deliveries available 315-287-0130

### DIOCESAN EVENTS

#### 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

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

#### IHC MYSTERY PLAYERS

The IHC Mystery Players will present the Way of the Cross around the Diocese and beyond.

**Lent 2026 Prayer Schedule:** March 27, 7:30 p.m. at Pope John XXIII, Liverpool; March 29, 7:30 p.m. at St. James, Carthage; April 2, 8 p.m. at IHC, Watertown; April 3, 7:30 p.m. at St. Patrick's, Watertown

**Contact:** For mor information go to <https://www.ihschool.org/mystery-players>

#### 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>.

#### CLM WORKSHOP

Peru – Marika Donders will present a free hospitality workshop.

**Date:** April 11

**Time:** 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

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

**Theme:** Hospitality: More than Coffee and Donuts

**Features:** A workshop for anyone and everyone who wants to create a more hospitable and inviting environment where ALL can encounter the love of Christ in Word and Sacrament, in community, and in each other.

**Contact:** RSVP by April 1st at [www.rcdony.org/clm-event](http://www.rcdony.org/clm-event)

#### PUBLISHERS DAY

Plattsburgh/Brownville – All Catechetical Leaders and Catechists are invited to Publishers' Day. At-

tend in person or virtually.

**Date:** April 25

**Time:** 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.

**Contact:** For more information [Asoltero@rcdony.org](mailto:Asoltero@rcdony.org) for details. To register go to [www.rcdony.org/publisherday](http://www.rcdony.org/publisherday)

#### HIGHWAY TO HEAVEN

Massena – New location and save the date! Highway to Heaven

**Date:** May 16

**Place:** Sacred Heart Church

**Features:** Featuring the Shroud of Turin replica exhibit, Father Jonathan Meyer, national preacher of the Eucharistic Revival, award-winning musician Sarah Kroger. The event will include Mass, confessions, Adoration, a Eucharistic Procession with Bishop LaValley, the Eucharistic Miracles exhibit, films, vendors and more.

**Contact:** Space is limited and registration is required. To view the schedule and register, please visit: <https://www.rcdony.org/>

h2h For more information contact, Mary Beth Bracy at [marybethbracy@gmail.com](mailto:marybethbracy@gmail.com)

#### DYING WITH CHRIST, LIVING WITH HOPE

Plattsburgh - When we make a commitment to die with Christ, we can truly live with hope. Learn about NYS Assisted Suicide Legislation and Canada's MAID.

**Date:** May 30

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

**Place:** St. John Newman Center  
**Cost:** \$10 donation, includes lunch

**Features:** Discussions feature theologians and healthcare professionals giving perspectives on suffering, grief, dying and our Christian duty to care.

**Contact:** Registration online at: <https://www.rcdony.org.living-withhope>

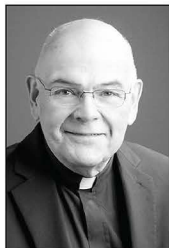


## SUNDAY'S SCRIPTURE

## Christ on the cross

Lent is a journey from where we are to where we want to be. Hopefully, your journey has some milestones that measure your progress. If not, there is still some time.

Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord, or simply put Palm Sunday, begins Holy Week, the most beautiful week in the Church's calendar. This Sunday's Scripture



Msgr. Robert H. Aucoin

readings capture the theme of the day as well as the whole week. At the blessing of palms, the Gospel of Matthew will describe the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, an entry worthy of a king, but for the humble Jesus who rode on a donkey.

Jesus' entry into Jerusalem points to the entirety of his teachings. He will prove the value of his love for us

by dying on the cross for humanity. The story of that love will be proclaimed in the reading of Passion according to Matthew. That reading speaks for itself. The moments of silence after the death of Christ provide us with the opportunity to reflect deeply on the reality of Christ's love for us.

Remember that love is willing the good of the other. Does our love of Christ and love of other reciprocate in some way what Christ has done for us? Paul says it best

March 29

## Palm Sunday

## READINGS

Matthew 21:1-11

Isaiah 50:4-7

Philippians 2:6-11

Matthew 26:14—27:66

in the second reading from his letter to the Philippians: "he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness; and found human in appearance, he humbled himself, becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."

On that cross we see not simply a violent display, but rather our own weaknesses. What brought Jesus to the cross? Stupidity, anger, mistrust, institutional injustice, betrayal of a friend, denial, unspeak-

able cruelty, scapegoating, fear, etc. In other words, our entire dysfunction is revealed on that cross.

The spiritual masters know that the only way up is down. When we live in self-imposed darkness, unaware of our sins, we will never make spiritual progress, nor can we fully appreciate what Christ has done for us. So, we need the light, however painful it is. With the light of Christ, we can overcome and begin to rise.

On the cross of Jesus, we meet our own sin. Fortunately, we also meet the divine mercy that has taken that sin upon himself in order to swallow it up. We have found, in that cross, the way up. We want to hold up this thing that was

considered too horrible to look at.

So, rather than focusing on the pettiness in our own lives, rather than focusing on our sins or the sins of others, focus on the cross of Christ. Just as eventually Christ rose from the dead, we, too, can rise from our weaknesses and sins through the power of the cross. Pray to move out of the "convenient darkness" and shed the light of Christ on your own life and the lives of others.

At some point during Holy Week, in church you may sing the hymn "Lift High the Cross." Let the tune and the lyrics fill your hearts with the reality of Christ's love for each and every one of us. For every cross there is a resurrection!

## CALLED TO SERVE

## It's quiz time!

Every once in a while, I ask the candidates for ordination as deacon to name the bishops of the Catholic diocese in New York State. It is a quiz I force the guys to take.

For this column, you can look them up, but I usually do not give the men that option.

I do not expect them to match bishop with diocese the first time, unless they are skilled, or lucky. There are eight Latin Rite bishops in NYS, 272 in the United States, and about 5,000 in the world. That's a lot to remember. New York hierarchy of the church is a good start.

A couple are easy. I expect we all know that Terry R. LaValley is

Bishop of Ogdensburg. Bishop LaValley was installed April 30, 2010, and now holds the distinction of being the senior serving bishop in New York State.

Most know that Douglas Lucia is Bishop of Syracuse. Lucia was named bishop while he was a priest of the diocese of Ogdensburg. He was installed in August 2019.

The others might be a challenge for all of us. I would not expect you can name the current Bishop of Rochester. John Bonnici was only installed on March 19, 2026. He was previously an Auxiliary Bishop in the Archdiocese of New York.

You may not know

the name of Cardinal Dolan's successor as chief shepherd of the archdiocese. Pope Leo XIV named Ronald Hicks to the position. Hicks is the archbishop of New York and Metropolitan Bishop. In that latter job, metropolitan bishop, Hicks oversees the ecclesiastical province of New York State which includes multiple dioceses and two eparchies.

I give the guys extra credit if they can name the bishops of the Eastern Rite Eparchy of St. Maron and the Eparchy of Syro-Malankara. Those eparchies are in New

York State. The bishops are Gregory Mansour and Philipos Mar Stephanos Thottathil, respectively.

The metropolitan reports to the Pope, to the Vatican and other authorities as a representative of the bishops in his province,

Albany, Brooklyn, Buffalo, and Rockville Center are the other four Catholic dioceses in New York State.

Bishop Mark O'Connell was installed in Albany in December 2025, Bishop Robert Brennan in Brooklyn December 2019, Bishop Michael Fisher in Buffalo Jan-

uary 2021, and Bishop John Barres January 2017 in Rockville Center.

A bishop carries on the tradition of the apostles. He has the fullness of the sacrament of Holy Order, is assisted by priests and deacons in his role as teacher of Catholic doctrine, is responsible for the souls in his care, and oversees the finances of his diocese.

How'd you do? It's OK. I had to look up a couple too.

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



Deacon Kevin Mastellon



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

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

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

# Working to end child marriages

The Society of the Divine Word (SVD) missionaries are committed to walking alongside tribal people and tackling child marriage in the Indian state of Maharashtra, in central-western India.

As Father John Singarayar, SVD, explains, the "Janseva Society" recently concluded a month-long door-to-door awareness campaign that reached deep into areas where government services rarely penetrate, and ancient customs often trump legal provisions.

The numbers are sobering. A recent study across 20 Katkari settlements found 111 boys and 81 girls married before the legal age among just 258 households... "By 12 or 13, most children have abandoned education entirely. That is when the real vulnerability begins," Father Singarayar explains.

What sets the SVD mission's approach apart is its commitment to accompaniment rather than judgement. Rooted in the Gospel vision of justice and compassion, the work seeks to make Christ present among the marginalized through genuine solidarity and systemic change.

"We do not come as outsiders telling people what to do," said Manisha Kapare, who is a Katkari herself and a campaign coordinator with Janseva Society. "We sit with families, listen to their struggles and help them see connections between early marriage and the suffering they already know - girls dying in childbirth, babies who do not survive, young couples trapped in impossible poverty."

"This is JPIC work in action," Father John Singarayar observes. "Justice means confronting structures that crush human dignity. Peace means creating conditions where families do not have to choose between survival and their children's welfare. And the integrity of creation includes protecting childhood itself as sacred."

The month-long campaign covered 18 hamlets, reaching over 100 families. Volunteers engaged elders, spoke separately with young people and addressed mothers who often hold quiet influence over family decisions. They explained that legal marriage ages are not arbitrary bureaucracy but safeguards built on medical evidence and human welfare.

The response exceeded expectations. Several village elders pledged to discourage child marriages within their communities. Three families postponed weddings they had been planning. Young girls who had never been asked about their own futures began voicing hopes to continue studying.

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

## OBITUARIES

**AuSable Forks** – Paul J. Benway, 88; Mass of Christian Burial March 19, 2026 at Holy Name Church; burial in Holy Name Cemetery.

**Canton** – Catherine (Deneshia) Peggs, 102; Mass of Christian Burial March 16, 2026 at St. Mary's Church; burial in St. Mary's Cemetery.

**Cape Vincent** – Loretta Yvonne Johnson Martin, 90; Mass of Christian Burial March 21.

**Carthage** – Joseph Frederick Brady, 90; Mass of Christian Burial March 19, 2026 at St. James Church; burial in St. James Cemetery.

**Chateaugay** – Dale Patterson, 82; Mass of Christian Burial March 27, 2026 at St. Patrick's Church; burial in North Burke Cemetery.

**Dannemora** – Richard David Harrica, 80; Mass of Christian Burial May 8, 2026 at St. Joseph's Church.

**Dannemora** – Emily Rose (McGrath) Medeiros, 95; Mass of Christian Burial March 20, 2026 at St. Joseph's Church; burial in Independence Cemetery.

**Evans Mills** – Marie (Call) Chisholm, 89; Memorial Mass April 19, 2026 at St. Mary's Church; burial in St. Mary's Cemetery.

**Hogansburg** – Delia T. (Lazore)

Terrance, 58; Mass of Christian Burial March 18, 2026 at St. Regis Church; burial in St. Lawrence Cemetery.

**Lake Placid** – Sanni Ann (Hasselton) Curtis, 84; Mass of Christian Burial March 21, 2026 at St. Agnes Church.

**Malone** – Marian Murtagh Leone, 92; Memorial Mass June 12, 2026 at Notre Dame Church.

**Massena** – Gwen C. (Sheldon) Charter, 89; Private Services.

**Morrisonville** – James W. Provost, 68; Mass of Christian Burial March 24, 2026 at St. Alexander's Church; burial in parish cemetery.

**North Bangor** – Anna (Barney) Avery, 73; Mass of Christian Burial March 28, 2026 at St. Augustine's Church.

**North Bangor** – David Philip Pickering, 70; Mass of Christian Burial March 21, 2026 at St. Augustine's Church; burial in St. Augustine's Cemetery.

**Old Forge** – Vincent dePaul T. Dolan, Jr. 86; Mass of Christian Burial March 20, 2026 at St. Bartholomew's Church; burial in Riverview Cemetery.

**Old Forge** – John Desmond Nahor, Sr., 100; Mass of Christian Burial March 21, 2026 at St. Bartholomew's Church; burial in Riv-

erview Cemetery.

**Plattsburgh** – John S. Mooney, 78; Funeral Services March 17, 2026 at Brown's Funeral Home.

**Port Henry** – Phillip Charles "Skip" Sleeper Jr., 67; Mass of Christian Burial March 18, 2026 at St. Patrick's Church.

**Rossie** – Angela L. (Besaw) Walsh, 56; Memorial Mass March 26, 2026 at St. Patrick's Church; burial Maple Grove Cemetery, Richville.

**Saranac Lake** – Marie T. (Dashnaw) Graham, 93; Funeral Services March 16, 2026 at Fortune-Keough Funeral Home.

**Saranac Lake** – Carolyn (Bombard) McCormick, 84; Mass of Christian Burial April 8, 2026 at St. Bernard's Church; burial in St. Paul's Cemetery, Bloomingdale.

**Watertown** – Anne Marie (Burgess) Nicol, 95; Funeral Services March 20, 2026 at Cummings Funeral Home; burial in Glenwood Cemetery.

**Watertown** – Eric Thomas Swartz, 59; Mass of Christian Burial March 19, 2026 at Holy Family Church.

**Winthrop** – Jerry W. Pelkey, 73; Funeral Services March 20, 2026 at Hammill Funeral Home.

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## Celebrating 'Faith, Knowledge, Service'

### Augustinian Academy marks Catholic Schools Week

**Sister Suanne Johnson, SSJ**  
Principal, Augustinian Academy

Augustinian Academy in Carthage recently celebrated Catholic Schools Week with a theme of "Faith, Knowledge, Service." Principal Sister Suanne Johnson, a Sister of St. Joseph, of-

fered the following reflections: "Catholic Schools Week is a week where our community of teachers, students and parents come together to celebrate all that makes Augustinian Academy unique amongst schools.

We celebrate together in a fun way and it is always a week that our students look forward to.

We celebrate our Faith - the

knowledge that our Creator God loves us to the point of sending his only Son to save us and help us to live our best lives so that we can be with him in Heaven forever!

It is also a time of Service for us. Our students learn that service is about seeing God in the faces of our friends and family. And it's about being Jesus' hands and feet here on earth

as we try to help them whenever we can.

Projects such as canned food drives, working at the Lenten Luncheon or praying for the sick and needy at Mass bring the corporal and spiritual works to life.

It also teaches our children from an early age to always try to put others ahead of themselves."

## THE TOWER OF FAITH



Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, Watertown, sixth through eighth grade Religious Education class recently reviewed class vocabulary words related to people and things that influence the growth of their faith as Christians by writing each on a wooden block to build a tower. Students included words such as faith, baptism, parents, teachers, priests, nuns and many more on their 48 blocks. The bottom blocks were reserved for their foundation like, baptism and parents. All other blocks with words they chose and added one by one until their tower was completed leaving the last few for confir-



mation and examples of how they would continue their growth as Christians. The students, led by catechist Jay St. Croix, then examined some of the blocks and removed individual ones for personal growth such as a teacher, relative or friend. The towers remained solid. Students then removed the word faith which they all had and discussed all the other blocks that relate to faith. One by one faith related blocks were removed, and soon the towers collapsed. The students realized how important faith is and how one's life teeters without it.