

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Abuse prevention month: Boundaries abound | Page 5

Bishops reaffirm just war limits | Page 7

The Diocese of Ogdensburg Volume 80 Number 4

NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

APRIL 22, 2026

'An encounter with Christ'

On Sunday, April 26, the Church around the world will mark World Day of Prayer for Vocations. According to USCCB, the purpose of World Day of Prayer for Vocations is to publicly fulfill the Lord's instruction to, "Pray the Lord of the harvest to send laborers into his harvest" (Mt 9:38; Lk 10:2). While appreciating all vocations, the Church concentrates its attention this day on vocations to the ordained ministries (priesthood and diaconate), consecrated life in all its forms (male and female religious life, societies of apostolic life, consecrated virginity, secular institutes), and to the missionary life.

FULL STORY, PAGE 3

CELEBRATING ST. JOSEPH



Students from Immaculate Heart Central in Watertown receive prayer cards and information about St. Joseph as part of the school's St. Joseph Celebration in March. Additional photos and information are on Page 3.

PRAYING FOR PRIESTS

Seven Sisters Apostolate



Five teams of seven women, two in Canton/Potsdam and three in Plattsburgh, are ensuring one woman is praying a Holy Hour every day for a specific priest, the pastors and parochial vicars serving those communities. The teams are part of the Seven Sisters Apostolate, which began in our diocese in February 2025.

FULL STORY, PAGE 4

Pope Leo: True power comes from virtue

By Ishmael Adibuah
EWTN News

Pope Leo XIV emphasized that technological, economic, and military power must be directed toward the common good.

In an address to the plenary assembly of the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences, the pontiff discussed authority in the context of Catholic social teaching and described it as grounded not in strength but in moral virtue.

"Catholic social teaching regards power not as an end in itself but as a means ordered toward the common good,"

the pope wrote in his message. "This implies that the legitimacy of authority depends not on the accumulation of economic or technological strength but on the wisdom and virtue with which it is exercised."

Leo's message follows his remarks at a Vatican prayer vigil for peace on April 11, where he denounced the "delusion of omnipotence" among global leaders amid ongoing conflicts in the Middle East and Ukraine. In his letter, he criticized the imbalance of economic and military power among nations, calling it a threat to democracy.

"The concentration of tech-

nological, economic, and military power in a few hands threatens both democratic participation among peoples and international concord. Divine power does not dominate but rather heals and restores. It is precisely this logic of charity that must animate history, for human activity inspired by charity helps to shape the 'earthly city' in unity and peace," Leo wrote.

Referring to Centesimus Annus, St. John Paul II's encyclical on Catholic social teaching, Leo stated that legitimate power "finds one of its highest expressions in authentic democracy," a democracy that

recognizes human dignity and is not dominated by "economic and technological elites."

"Far from being a mere procedure, democracy recognizes the dignity of every person and calls each citizen to participate responsibly in the pursuit of the common good," Leo wrote. "Reflecting this conviction, St. John Paul II affirmed that the Church values democracy because it ensures participation in political choices and 'the possibility both of electing and holding accountable those who govern them, and of replacing them through peaceful means when appropriate.'"

NORTH
COUNTRY
CATHOLICPO Box 326
Ogdensburg, NY 13669
USPS 0039-3400**Bishop Terry****R. LaValley**
President**Rev. Joseph A. Morgan**

Vice President

James D. Crowley

Secretary-Treasurer

Darcy L. Fargo

Editor &

Communications Director

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

(315) 608-7556

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

Demolition day

"Nothing brings people together like a good demolition."

Those were the wise words of my son, Jake, as we discussed the ongoing demolition of a prominent building in Malone. Both of us had seen images of a community gathering on the first day of demolition, and both of us had been at least occasionally watching a livestream - live camera footage - of the demolition process, a livestream that regularly had several hundred viewers.

I think it's fair to say most of the community was happy about the demolition.

People had been advocating for its demolition since before I was a baby reporter in Malone in 2002.

**Darcy L. Fargo**

I was also glad to see it torn down, but it felt weird celebrating its demolition. While I'm glad the dangerous, ugly building will finally be gone, it feels kind of wrong to celebrate destruction and loss even when it's needed destruction and loss, destruction and loss that will bring better things.

Maybe it's cultural, or maybe it's just me, but when I think about celebrating change, I think far more about the joys of creating

beautiful and good things than I do about getting rid of bad things. Being with bad things just feels ugly.

Also, it's sometimes easy to think, "they should've torn down that building years ago" and diminish the celebration.

I find it easy to do the exact same thing in my spiritual life. God has worked hard in me, and I have worked hard with God to overcome (at least for now) some significant bad habits and sins. But instead of celebrating that progress and being grateful for those graces, I sometimes fall for the lies of the evil one, and I fall into feeling guilt and shame for sins long forgiven and bad decisions I haven't made in a long time.

I forget that progress sometimes looks like demolition, and sometimes God is leading the wrecking crew. It can be messy and ugly. It can be painful. But it makes room for that creation and beauty that I prefer to celebrate.

I recently had the opportunity to take a couple days to celebrate the destruction of the bad habits and sins in my life. It was two days of spending time doing activities that add happiness to my life and spending time with Jesus, friends and loved ones. I came out of those days feeling joyful, energized and connected to Jesus and the people I love.

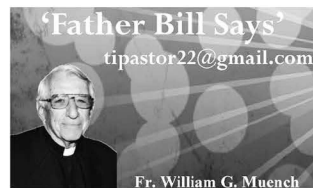
Because nothing brings people together like a good demolition.

The Easter Season readings

Recently, I did the baptism of an infant child. That was a big deal for me. As a retired priest, I do not celebrate many baptisms. It was a very special opportunity for me to join with this young family and baptize their infant daughter. Baptism is a very important moment for a family.

Now this is the Easter Season. Our Church celebrates new life as we celebrate the Lord's Resurrection. At Easter time, we also celebrate our own baptism. It was a time for us, it was a time of new life. Recently, at the Easter Sunday Mass, we all renewed our baptismal promises.

During the Easter Season, the Scripture readings, especially at the daily Masses, are organized by theme. Each week, there is a special theme to remind us of Jesus' message. Recently, during the Second Week of Easter, the Gospel readings at the daily Masses were all from St. John's Gospel, Chapter 3 - our way of becoming a part of the Kingdom of God. John 3 is the story of Nicodemus, a Pharisee who comes to Jesus seeking his message of salvation. Jesus tells him, "Amen, amen, I say to you, no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born again from above." Nicodemus is confused. He wonders how anyone can be born again. Jesus explains, "Amen, amen, I say to you, no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit."



Fr. William G. Muench

Jesus then teaches Nicodemus his importance as the Son of God. Jesus reminds Nicodemus of a Moses story. Moses has led the Hebrew people out of Egypt going to the Promised Land. In the desert the people are besieged by serpents. Moses turns to God, who instructs him to make a bronze serpent. When someone is attacked by a serpent, God tells

them they should look on the bronze serpent and they will be healed. Jesus goes on to tell him that the Son of Man must be lifted up also - we know he speaks of the cross - that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life. Jesus continues, "For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him."

In the same way, during the third week of the Easter Season, the Gospel readings at the daily Masses are from John 6. This is that very important Chapter of Jesus' Discourse on the Bread of Life. This chapter begins with Jesus feeding a crowd with a few loaves of bread - this was the Multiplication of the Loaves. The people come to Jesus wanting him to continue to give them food. Jesus teaches them that the bread that comes from God always gives new life to the world. Jesus goes on to speaking in this way to us all, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to

me will never hunger, and whoever believes in me will never thirst."

Jesus then explains to the people, "I am the bread that comes down from God." We now realize that he explaining to them and us about the sacrament of the Blessed Eucharist. In faith, we realize that Jesus is present for us - in this powerful sacrament - to be united with us in Holy Communion. Jesus says this in John 6, "Amen, amen, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life in you.

The Gospel tells us that some disciples found this teaching of Jesus unacceptable; they refused to walk with Jesus. Peter and the other apostles, however, remained faithful with Jesus and believed him. They said to him, "Lord, where else shall we go, you have the words of eternal life." Each time you and I participate in the Holy Mass - in the Eucharist - is our faith in the presence of the Lord strong and alive?

CELEBRATING ST. JOSEPH



Students at Immaculate Heart Central in Watertown were treated to a St. Joseph's Day Feast for lunch provided by a few of the members of the Italian American Civic Association. Students and staff were able to enjoy a traditional pasta dish, slices of white pizza and a cupcake. We were so grateful for the collaboration. Mrs. Mitchell and Mrs. Bombard set a St. Joseph's Day table for the students, as well. After lunch, students were able to take prayer cards in order to say their prayers to St. Joseph.



WORLD DAY OF PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

'An encounter with Christ'

By Deacon Garry Stevens
Diocesan Vocations Coordinator

As the Church marks the World Day of Prayer for Vocations on April 26, the Diocese of Ogdensburg joins Catholics worldwide in praying for those discerning God's call to priesthood, diaconate, religious life, marriage and lay ministry. This annual observance reminds us that every vocation begins with an encounter with Christ.

In his message for this year's Vocations Day, Pope Leo XIV reflects on vocation as an inner awakening to God's love. He describes the day as "an occasion of grace... the interior discovery of God's free gift that blossoms in the depths of our hearts." Christ, he says, is the One who draws us close: "He is the Shepherd who reveals that life is truly beautiful when one follows Him."

The pope adds that this encounter is transformative: "His beauty transforms us."

Pope Leo XIV emphasizes the need for silence, prayer, and openness to the Lord's gaze, encouraging the faithful to trust that "life with Him can truly be beautiful."

He also calls families, parishes, and communi-

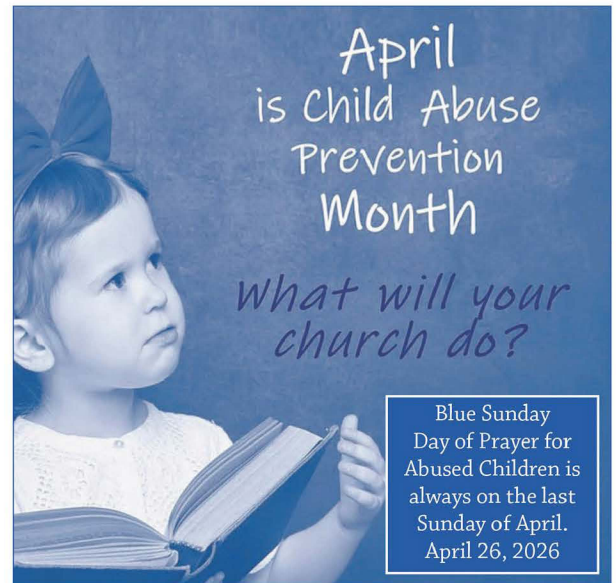
ties to nurture vocations, reminding us that "every vocation is an immeasurable gift for the Church."

Father Christopher C. Carrara, Vocations director for the Diocese of Ogdensburg, notes that the pope's message centers on receiving God's love before responding to it.

"When we pray for vo-

cations, we help others recognize the gift God has already planted in their hearts," Father Carrara said.

As we celebrate this year's World Day of Prayer for Vocations, may our prayers help many discover the beauty and joy of following the Good Shepherd.



Blue Sunday
Day of Prayer for
Abused Children is
always on the last
Sunday of April.
April 26, 2026

How to pray for abused children on Blue Sunday

1. Pray they will be rescued.
2. Pray they are placed with caring people.
3. Pray their minds and bodies can heal.
4. Pray they find hope.
5. Pray for those who rescue them.

The Diocese of Ogdensburg

NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

Subscription Campaign

Please Check Appropriate Box(es):

New Renew Check Enclosed \$ _____

Annual Subscription Cost/Level

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

Parish _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

Place in your parish collection or

Mail Payment to:

PO Box 106
Canajoharie, NY 13317

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

E-Mail: _____

If you would like to subscribe by credit card please visit our website: www.northcountrycatholic.org

Seven Sisters Apostolate prays for priests

Groups of women offer Holy Hours for their pastors, parochial vicars

By Darcy Fargo
Editor

It's seven women, each praying for one hour with Jesus in the Eucharist on one day of the week for her priest.

The Seven Sisters Apostolate started in 2011 in Minnesota and involves the creation of groups of at least seven women, each of whom commit to one Holy Hour for their priest each week. Coordinated by a member of the team known as an " anchoress," each woman is assigned a different day for her Holy Hour to ensure the priest has a team member praying for him every day of the week.

Seven Sisters groups are currently active in both Canton/Potsdam and Plattsburgh. The apostolate was first introduced in the Diocese of Ogdensburg by Alea Parker, a parishioner of St. Mary's Church in Canton who participated in a Seven Sisters group in Texas previously.

"I used to live in Texas, and we had (the Seven Sisters Apostolate) at the parish we went to there," Parker said. "I did it for a year there. I had never experienced doing Holy Hours before. It was definitely a learning experience, and it was really moving to dedicate an entire Holy Hour every week for someone else. When I came back here to my home parish, I knew I wanted to start that for our priests here."

In February 2025, Parker, with permission of her pastor, Father Bryan Stitt, began recruiting six other women to form a Seven Sisters Group

to pray for Father Stitt. When her parish was merged with St. Mary's in Potsdam and a parochial vicar, Father Scott Belina, was assigned there, a second group was formed to pray for him.

"It really wasn't difficult to get people involved," Parker said. "Everyone was really excited. Some have never done Holy Hours before. It's been really fun to be able to introduce them to how to do a Holy Hour. And our priests, Father Bryan (Stitt) and Father Scott (Belina) are so appreciative and humbled."

Parker said the prayerful experience is good for both the participating women and the priests.

"First and foremost, it's so important to pray for your priest," she said. "We're praying for his needs physically, spiritually, emotionally, mentally. It's all needed! It's also a blessing for you as you realize just how much our priests do for us and for our communities - just how much they're devoting to our faith and to us. Before this, it wasn't at the forefront of my mind to pray for my priest daily or weekly. My mind has shifted so much."

Participating also creates community among the Seven Sisters.

"We meet twice a year as a group of women," Parker said. "Every year, we have a recommitment ceremony, and we pray our commitment prayer again together. Later in the year, we get together just to touch base and see how everyone is doing."

Building on the effort in Canton and Potsdam, Seven Sisters groups are now operating in Plattsburgh.

"I am the anchoress for our pastor, Father Kevin D. McEwan's Seven Sisters group," said Mary Beth Bracy, consecrated virgin. "It was fairly easy (recruiting additional participants) because we have a lot of committed adorers in our parish, so I invited those who are committed to making a weekly Holy Hour with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament first. Then, I asked those who I often see praying in Church but aren't able to make it for the hours when exposition of the Holy Eucharist is currently offered. We also have people who have volunteered to be substitutes, if necessary. When the apostolate begins in a parish, the first group that is formed is for the pastor. Father Kevin's group began on January 1, 2026. Each group has a separate anchoress, or leader, and Cathy Witkowski began Father Douglas A. Schirmer's group on January 14. Then, Marie Nacht began Father Jose Kaniyankunnel John's group on February 14."

Bracy said the group has been a blessing for her and the other participants, as well as the priests for whom they're praying.

"The apostolate has been a powerful and practical way to give our priests the greatest gift we can give anyone: prayer," she said. "When the Seven Sisters in our parish made their one year commitment, it was really awesome, we felt like we became sisters and received an outpouring of the Holy Spirit. We gathered in the church together and made the

offering for the priest who we are offering a Holy Hour of Eucharistic Adoration for weekly. Not only is it a gift for our priests but I think it helps us grow in holiness and is a blessing to the whole parish and diocese because it unleashes God's graces."

Witkowski and Parker noted the prayers do not need to be said at a formal Holy Hour.

"It doesn't have to be at Adoration," Witkowski said. "You can just go into a church with the Blessed Sacrament."

Witkowski's Seven Sisters group asks the priest they're praying for, Father Schirmer, for specific intentions.

"Since I see Father Doug (Schirmer) pretty regularly, I ask him, 'is there something special you need us to pray for? Whatever he tells me, I pass on to the other six ladies,'" Witkowski said. "I asked him at one point, 'do you think it's helping?' Father Doug said he had recently had a situation come up that he didn't think he'd normally be able to handle it, and he felt the support there, and was able to handle it better than he thought he could."

Parker noted, though, that the priest doesn't need to be involved in the group.

"When starting a Seven Sisters Group, you're encouraged to talk to the priest," she said. "Don't do it without his permission. The priest can decide how involved or not involved he wants to be. In Texas, our priest didn't attend our group gatherings, but he would let us know if he wanted prayers for a specific intention. Father Bryan (Stitt) attends our meetings."

Witkowski said she

feels more groups should be formed around the diocese.

"Our priests need prayers desperately, especially in these times with our shortage of priests and how much is expected of them," Witkowski said. "All priests in the diocese need to have Seven Sisters."

And the priests appreciate the prayers.

"I'm very grateful to the apostolate members," said Father Schirmer. "The idea that any given day someone is spending an hour in prayer on your behalf is pretty humbling! The group here in Plattsburgh will also ask if there are specific prayer intentions that I would like their prayers for. Sometimes I don't have anything particular, but it's so kind of them to ask! The apostolate is valuable because it offers a way for regular people to engage their prayer lives on behalf of the local church, something we could all probably do a better job at!"

While the group of seven is limited to women, groups are encouraged to have substitutes available, and men can serve as substitutes. There's also a group for men, Fasting Brothers, that can operate in conjunction with Seven Sisters.

Anyone interested in starting a Seven Sisters Apostolate group is urged to visit sevensistersapostolate.org for information and resources, including commitment prayers and guidance on how to carry out the ministry.

BARSTOW
AN AMERICAN REVOLUTION GMC SUBARU
Driven by What's Inside
For More Information, Visit Our Web Page at: www.barstowmotors.com
MARKET ST., POTSDAM, NY # (315) 265-8800
Your NNY Regional GM & Subaru Support Center

APRIL IS CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH

When boundaries abound, lives can flourish

By the VIRTUS Programs

Imagine a world without boundaries. The survival of all depends on healthy boundaries with land, water, animals, and one another. Without boundaries established clearly and firmly among humanity, everyone is left vulnerable, especially our children, with an “anything goes” type of thinking that is common in our society today.

Children, increasingly, are not aware of appropriate or healthy boundaries. We can empower children and youth in boundaries by first clearly defining and strengthening our own boundaries. Children watch our every move while absorbing some of our habits (the healthy and the unhealthy) like a sponge. Appropriate boundaries set the foundation for happier lives, which is why it is so important to be mindful of modeling healthy boundaries for the children and youth in our care.

As the VIRTUS® “Protecting God’s Children” Program states, boundaries are limits, or lines that separate our personal space, emotions, and behaviors from others. When we have a “let it begin with me” approach, intentional reflection upon our boundaries with ourselves (self-control) and others (human agency) can have a positive influence. Building a foundation for your boundaries begins with clarity around who you are amidst what God is calling you to do.

Teach the adults and children around you that “No.” is a complete sentence, and perfectly acceptable as part of setting a boundary. This natural process of individuality provides a pathway for becoming our authentic selves. It is completely acceptable for children and adults to say “No” when something makes them feel uncomfortable, scared, or unsafe.

We don’t just teach others that they are allowed to say, “No,” we also accept their responses when it comes to their boundaries. Learning to accept others’ “No” can create mutual respect for healthy interactions at all ages. For children,



we may say things like “listen to her words,” or “respect his no,” while they are playing together. Providing several age-appropriate choices within a situation can provide opportunities for them to practice saying “No” to one thing and “Yes” to another. Encouraging personal autonomy can safely happen by providing choices that fit within their developmental stage which can include saying “No” to unsafe touches, like hitting, or even safe touches, like hugs.

Providing clear and explicit direction regarding boundaries for children and youth may include guidance regarding behavior that could be dangerous, disrespectful, or dishonest. Even when using directives to create a safe environment for children, this approach also builds in choice by defining “out of bounds” behaviors to avoid confusion and frustration for all.

SAFE ENVIRONMENT TIPS

Clarifying expectations within an organization is key. Ensuring everyone is aware of the organization’s Code of Conduct, or expected behavior, can empower children, youth, parents, caregivers, employees, and volunteers to know what to expect. This may include these behaviors:

- Remain in public sight while avoiding any isolated one-on-one conversations and situations.
- Ensure there are always at least two adults supervising children.
- Appropriate physical interactions may include side hugs, handshakes, and high-fives.
- Interact with children through ministry or program

emails or group social media accounts (that are monitored), and not via private email or personal social media accounts.

- Ensure the safety procedures for drop off and pick up are followed.
- Be the type of bystander who follows the rules, and also communicates any concerns to leadership.
- Encourage random status checks by others, when you are ministering to youth.

It is also helpful to conduct walk-throughs of the ministry or program location while identifying isolated or vulnerable physical spaces that may cause risk for children and youth. Designing a physically safe space by roping off certain areas, such as a bathroom located too far away from the group, can lower the risk of a questionable encounter for everyone.

As leaders, taking a supportive approach while modeling healthy interactions can instill a safe foundation for all to adhere to. We all have various backgrounds, cultures, and family upbringings—what is “normal” among families can vary greatly. When everyone is working toward maintaining a clearly defined safe environment, team morale, teachable moments, and opportunities to thrive can abound!

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Begin prevention education early and often to help prevent child sexual abuse. Take the lead and set the stage for discussing, implementing, and modeling general day-to-day boundaries with the children and youth in your life, which includes body safety. Notice, highlight, and role-play real-life boundary scenarios throughout a young person’s life to sew a beautiful tapestry of healthy interaction within your family, organization, and community.

Here are a few tips to help model and implement appropriate boundaries:

- Build a bridge for positive communication with warmth by talking about healthy boundaries and behaviors with children and youth. Give clear examples of healthy and appropriate

boundaries, such as giving their teacher a high five instead of a hug.

· Use teachable moments! For example, if a child or youth asks to follow you on social media, let them know you cannot share your personal information or interact with them directly on social media, but that you can refer them to the school or parish social media accounts.

· Explain the difference between safe vs. unsafe behaviors such as secrets vs. surprises, and safe vs. unsafe games.

· Use age-appropriate body safety language pre-approved by your organization with a focus on security and self-protection by using positive statements rather than fear-based ones (positive statements include: “private parts stay private and have special rules,” “notice the uh-oh feeling,” “telling is not tattling,” etc.)

· Teach the difference between safe (respects boundaries) and unsafe (crosses or violates boundaries) behavior and people. Let children and youth know that if anyone—whether an adult or another child—has ever made them feel uncomfortable, or unsafe, or has violated their boundaries, they should immediately tell a safe adult. And keep telling, even to someone else, until it stops!

CONCLUSION

As you put on these new boundary glasses, what do you see through this new lens? Taking a fresh view of yourself and your role as an employee, volunteer, leader, and caregiver can help fortify strong boundaries and healthy relationships in your own life, which can overflow into your professional and spiritual relationships with others. Empowering yourself can set the stage for empowering everyone—it is never too late to begin today. With your overflow can spring forth health, healing, and hope while positively impacting a world full of trauma, addictions, and codependency with your inspiration and wholeness. Thank you for all you do to help model and implement appropriate boundaries.

Environmental Stewardship

Call to family, community

The social teachings of the Catholic Church are profound statements about living a good and fruitful life, and the second focal point is valuable for today's society. It is a "Call to Family, Community and Participation," because we were created to be social and regularly interact in a loving way with those around us.

In his encyclical, *Laudato Si*, Pope Francis emphasized how a family can promote healthy development for its members and others who interact with them. "In the family we first learn how to show love and respect for life; ...to ask without demanding, to say thank you ...to control our aggressions and greed and to ask forgiveness when we have caused harm," he writes.

Pope Francis stressed the need to interact lovingly with neighbors and the community, as we must share our gifts, talents and time. "Love for society and commitment to the common good are outstanding expressions of charity and...we should realize that this too is part of our spirituality, which...matures and sanctifies us."

Throughout the encyclical, the pope emphasizes that everything is connected, which explains why acts of kindness, generosity and compassion reverberate through their surroundings and impact other organisms. This is why the Church encourages positive participation as a fundamental.

Humans were created to live together, especially in face-to-face situations. While having virtual friends is good, it is not the same as connecting directly to others. Devices can help us stay in contact with those who no longer live in the area, but it's not the way to communicate with someone who may be sitting in the next room or at the same table.

As Christians, we have the responsibility to help others, especially those in need. Don't be afraid to talk to people and get your hands dirty with them. Participation in life can be messy, but it is what we are on earth to do and to enjoy.

Bishop's Public Schedule

April 22 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral
April 23 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral
April 24 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral
April 25 – 4 p.m. – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral
April 26 – 8 a.m. – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral
 5 p.m. – Confirmation at St. Mary's Church in Canton along with St. Mary's Church in Potsdam and St. Patrick's Church in Colton
April 27 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral
April 28 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral
April 29 – 8:15 a.m. – Feast Day Mass of St. Catherine de Siena at St. Mary's Church in Canton

Rest in Peace

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

April 22 – Rev. Daniel M. Sullivan, 1933
April 23 – Rev. L. Victor Petit, O.M.I., 1898; Most Rev. Henry Gabriels, 1921
April 24 – V. Rev. Alfred L. Pelletier, O.M.I., 1978; Rev. Thomas Egan, S.J., 1994
April 26 – Rev. Charles M. Mestre, O.M.I., 1870; Msgr. David Stinebrickner, 1998
April 27 – Rev. John J. Fedigan, O.S.A., 1908; Rev. Michael F. Ambrose, 1934
April 28 – Rev. J. A. Larose, 1967

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; 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

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. Upcoming sessions:

April 24 – 6:30 p.m. – St. Mary's Church, Canton

Visit our website

www.northcountrycatholic.org

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



Find us on Facebook!



OBITUARIES

Brushton – Brent Joseph Supernault, 50; Mass of Christian Burial April 14, 2026 at St. Mary's Church.

Cadyville – Theresa Louise (Duquette) Andre, 93; Mass of Christian Burial April 17, 2026 at St. James Church.

Champlain – Dale R. Cardin, 69; Mass of Christian Burial June 6, 2026 at St. Mary's Church.

Croghan – Isabell C. (Woodhouse) King, 90; Graveside services April 23, 2026 at St. Stephen's Cemetery.

Lake Placid – Austin D. "Chappy" Preston Jr., 87; Funeral Services April 17, 2026 at M.B. Clark, Inc. Funeral Home; burial in St. Agnes Cemetery.

Madrid – Mary E. (Cline) Thomas, 83; Mass of Christian Burial April 16, 2026 at St. John the Baptist Church; burial in St. John the Baptist Cemetery.

Malone – Kathy M. (Bettors) Mallette, 66; Funeral Services April 20, 2026 at Frary Funeral Home; burial in Notre Dame Cemetery.

Morrisonville – Bertha (Trombley) Barcomb, 86; Mass of Christian Burial April 11, 2026 at

St. Alexander's Church; burial in parish cemetery.

Norfolk – Dale "Butch" Lavigne, 84; Mass of Christian Burial April 11, 2026 at Church of the Visitation.

Ogdensburg – Patricia Ann (Duprey) Morley, 88; Mass of Christian Burial April 14, 2026 at St. Mary's Cathedral; burial in Oswegatchie Mausoleum.

Plattsburgh – George E. Fountain, 88; Mass of Christian Burial April 16, 2026 at St. Peter's Church.

Plattsburgh – Debra Jean Garrant, 70; Funeral Services April 17, 2026 at the Brown Funeral Home; burial in St. Peter's Cemetery.

Potsdam – Carol Sellers Bullard, 68; Mass of Christian Burial April 14, 2026 at St. Mary's Church; burial in St. Mary's Cemetery.

Saranac Lake – Mary R. (Pozzi) Koza, 87; Mass of Christian Burial April 14, 2026 at St. Bernard's Church; burial in St. Bernard's Cemetery.

Waddington – Debra A. (Salton) Finnegan, 71; Mass of Christian Burial April 28, 2026 at St. Mary's Church; burial in Madrid Cemetery.

Funds overdue for Catholic schools

The Catholic Action Network (CAN), an arm of the New York State Catholic Conference, urges Catholics to contact representatives about issues relevant to the faith. CAN provides tools, including letter templates, for such contacts at <https://www.nyscatholic.org/action-center>.

CAN is currently urging action to help secure overdue funds for Catholic Schools.

For more than 50 years, state lawmakers have been required to reimburse Catholic and other nonpublic schools for the full cost of complying with administrative mandates such as collecting and reporting student data on attendance, tests, and immunization records. The state, however, owes more than \$30 million in overdue reimbursement to our schools, including more than \$11 million for complying with the state's student immunization program (SSIP). As lawmakers negotiate a state budget, please add your voice to help secure these needed funds for our Catholic schools! CAN is urging Catholics to contact the governor and state representatives.

Bishops reaffirm just war limits amid Vance's pushback on peace stance

By EWTN News

The U.S. bishops' chair for doctrine issued a clarification on April 15 reaffirming that Catholic just war theory sets strict moral limits on the use of military force, emphasizing that it is not a political endorsement of war but a moral framework.

The statement came as President Donald Trump and Vice President JD Vance, the latter a Catholic, have taken issue with papal remarks claiming that "anyone who is a disciple of Christ" is "never on the side of those who once wielded the sword and today drop bombs."

Speaking at an April 14 event hosted by the conservative group Turning Point USA, Vance publicly criticized Pope Leo on his anti-war remarks, asking: "How can you say God is never on the side of those who wield the sword?"

Brooklyn Auxiliary Bishop James Massa's statement on the subject underscored that Christians are obliged to critically evaluate claims made in favor of armed conflict rather than assume moral legitimacy.

"For over a thousand years, the Catholic Church has taught just war theory and it is that long tradition the Holy Father carefully references in his comments on war," Massa said.

"A constant tenet of that thousand-year tradition is a nation can only legitimately take up the sword 'in self-defense, once all peace efforts have failed' (Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 2308)," Massa noted.

Massa continued: "That is, to be a just war it must be a defense against another who actively wages war, which is what the Holy Father actually said: 'He does not listen to the prayers of those who wage war.'"

"When Pope Leo XIV speaks as supreme pastor of the universal Church, he is not merely offering opinions on theology, he is preaching the Gospel and exercising his ministry as the vicar of Christ. The consistent teaching of the Church is insistent that all people of goodwill must pray and work toward lasting peace while avoiding the evils and

injustices that accompany all wars," the bishop concluded.

Pope Leo XIV responded to Trump's public criticism by saying he has "no fear of the Trump administration" and will continue to proclaim the Gospel.

At the Turning Point USA event, Vance — who is publishing a book about his conversion to the Catholic faith — said if Pope Leo was "going to opine on matters of theology," his comments needed to be "anchored in the truth."

"In the same way that it's important for the vice president of the United States to be careful when I talk about matters of public policy, I think it's very, very important for the pope to be careful when he talks about matters of theology," Vance said.

Bishop Daniel Flores of Brownsville, Texas, who was elected vice president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in November 2025, said in a statement on X on April 15 that "public officials may opine about theology, as is their right."

But "the successor of Peter teaches. This is his office," Flores said. "If what he teaches doesn't sound like what we want to hear, we should admit the likelihood that the problem is in what we want to hear and not in what he teaches."

Vance: 'Stick to matters of morality'

On Monday, Vance defended Trump's decision to post on social media, and later delete, an AI-generated image that critics said depicted the president as Jesus Christ. Vance described it as a joke that people misunderstood.

"It would be best for the Vatican to stick to matters of morality, to stick to matters of what's going on in the Catholic Church and let the president of the United States stick to dictating American public policy," Vance said in an interview on Fox News.

At the Turning Point USA event, Vance said he likes it when the pope comments on public issues — including immigration, abortion, and war and peace — because it "invites a conversation," even when there is disagreement.

CATHOLIC WORLD AT A GLANCE

Boreder czar calls for Church leaders to 'stay out of politics'

Border czar Tom Homan said Roman Catholic Church leaders should "stay out of politics" when questioned about President Donald Trump criticizing Pope Leo XIV. "I love the Catholic Church. I just wish they'd stick to fixing the Church, because there's issues. I know because I'm a member. And stay out of politics, Homan said. Homan, a Catholic, commented after Trump initiated a direct, personal denunciation of Pope Leo, escalated it publicly, and doubled down in media appearances. Pope Leo responded briefly and calmly, declining to engage in debate and reframing his remarks as moral teaching rather than rebuttal. Trump had called the pontiff "weak on crime, and terrible for foreign policy." Homan said he wished Church leaders would sit down with him to understand his experiences as border czar. "Maybe they'd understand why a secure border saves lives. A secure border's the most humane thing this country can do," Homan said.

Pope urges Christians, Muslims to heal conflict in Cameroon

From Bamenda's Catholic cathedral on Thursday, Pope Leo XIV urged both Christians and Muslims to heal wounds of conflict in Cameroon. When Leo arrived at the Cathedral of St. Joseph, on the fourth day of his trip in Africa, he first visited the Blessed Sacrament Chapel for a moment of prayer together with Archbishop Andrew Nkea Fuanya of Bamenda. During the interreligious peace gathering, Nkea said the pope's presence was consoling for the people. The meeting included testimonies from local people, including Catholics, Protestants, and Muslims. "Holy Father, help us to have peace," Imam Mohammad Abubakar of the Central Mosque of Buea said after speaking about violent episodes that have taken place in recent years. Leo praised the witness of local Muslims and Christians in working for peace and said he wishes "this would happen in so many other places of the world." "Jesus told us: Blessed are the peacemakers! But woe to those who manipulate religion and the very name of God for their own military, economic, or political gain, dragging that which is sacred into darkness and filth," Leo said.

Poland prepares parishes for wartime role as fears grow

The Polish Bishops' Conference is working with national authorities to prepare an action plan for potential armed conflict, reflecting growing security concerns in the region. The initiative follows discussions held during the Plenary Assembly of the Polish Bishops' Conference. On March 17, Poland Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Defense Władysław Kosiniak-Kamysz and Minister of the Interior and Administration Marcin Kierwiński met with bishops at the conference's general secretariat in Warsaw. Archbishop Tadeusz Wojda, president of the Polish Bishops' Conference, said the preparations were driven by widespread concern over regional instability. "There are fears that the war will reach Poland, which is understandable," Wojda said. "Fortunately, we are not standing idly by, waiting for events to unfold."

CLINTON NORTHERN FRANKLIN

FIRST FRIDAY

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

Date: May 1

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: May 4 and June 1, July 6

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

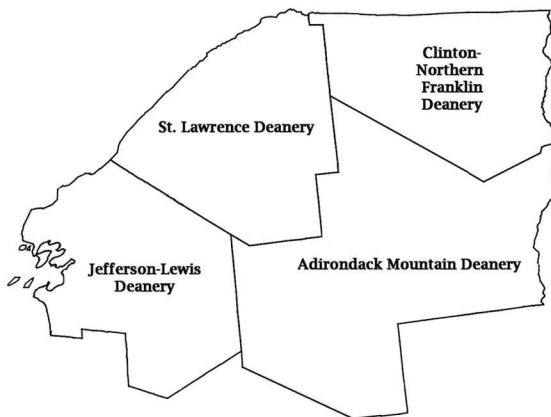
FIRE IT UP RETREAT

Malone – St. Andre Bessette Parish to host a retreat, "A Life in the Spirit Seminar", a personal encounter with Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit.

Schedule: May 8, Meet and greet at 5:30 p.m., program at 6:30 p.m.; May 9, 8 a.m. Continental Breakfast, program 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. followed by Mass.

Features: Retreat will be led by Dane and Caroline Dirkes from Ann Arbor, Michigan.

Contact: To register call 518-578-1453



The North Country Catholic welcomes contributions to "Around the Diocese".

Parishioners are invited to send information about activities to:

North Country Catholic, PO Box 326,
Ogdensburg, NY 13669

e-mail news@northcountrycatholic.org.

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

SOAKING PRAYERS SESSIONS

Ellenburg – Come enjoy a relaxing prayer opportunity the second Thursday of the month.

Date: May 14 and June 11, July 9, Aug. 13, Sept. 10 and Oct. 8

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

Place: Our Lady of the Adirondacks House of Prayer

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. Facilitated by Eve McGill, Living Waters Healing Ministry. All are welcome! Please bring a bag lunch.

Contact: evemcgill16@charter.net

CAR SHOW

Mooers Forks – St. Ann's to have its 8th annual Festival of Cars.

Date: May 31

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

Place: St. Ann's Grounds

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

11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Hot Wheels entry fee, Kids \$5, Adults, \$10 (includes car). Kids Power Wheels show entry fee, \$10

Features: There will be a craft fair, theme baskets, lottery tree, food and entertainment. In addition to the car show there will also be a Kids Power Wheels show and Hot Wheel races for kids and adults. Garden tractor pullers on display. The top 40 picks and special awards will be at 3 p.m.

Contact: For more information or to pre-register your vehicle please call 518-236-5632 or 518-236-7200 or 518-565-6754

JEFFERSON-LEWIS

SPAGHETTI DINNER

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

Date: April 23

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

RUMMAGE SALE

Constableville – A three-day community rummage sale will be held to raise funds to help heat the church during the harsh winter

months, ensuring that it remains a welcoming and comfortable space for all who gather there.

Place: St. Mary's Church

Schedule: May 1 from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.; May 2 from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.; May 3 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Features: Shoppers can browse a wide variety of items, including clothing, toys, household goods, and many other treasures. Whether you're searching for something practical or a unique find, there will be something for everyone. More than just a sale, this event is an opportunity for the community to come together in support of a meaningful cause. Every purchase helps ensure that the church can continue to serve as a place of warmth throughout the coldest months of the year.

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: May 3

Time: Following 11 a.m. Mass

Place: St. Hedwig's Church

Contact: 315-348-6260

YOUNG ADULT RETREAT

Constableville – Join us for a Confirmation/Young Adult Retreat, a meaningful day designed to strengthen faith and community bonds among current and past Confirmation candidates and their families.

Date: May 9

Time: 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Place: St. Mary's Hall

Features: We invite all current candidates and those recently Confirmed (since 2022), along with their parents, to reconnect and reflect together. Attendees can look forward to a day beginning at 9:30 a.m. filled with engaging activities, including talks from inspiring speakers and opportunities for spiritual growth through Adoration and Confession. The Youth Group will provide lunch, ensuring everyone is energized for the day's events. The re-

treat will culminate in a beautiful Mass celebrated by Father Marullo at 3:30 p.m., enriching the experience with a deep spiritual resonance.

Contact: To help us plan for lunch, please RSVP by calling 315-348-6104 or emailing portleydenbk@rcdony.org.

SPAGHETTI & MEATBALL DINNER

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

Date: May 16

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

HEALING WORKSHOP

Cape Vincent – Save the date for a breakthrough healing workshop.

Schedule: Aug. 6-7, 5:30 p.m. to 9; Aug. 8, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Place: St. Vincent of Paul

Features: Are you longing for deeper healing, freedom, and peace in your life? Join Patrick and Joy Campbell, Benedictine Oblates, from the Cross of St. Benedict Society and Joyful Hope. The Breakthrough Healing Workshop is a powerful time of testimony, teaching, and prayer ministry to help you overcome spiritual obstacles. Heals past wounds and encounter God's restoring love. Feel free to invite a friend and seek healing and hope.

Contact: For more information contact bhwhjdioogd@gmail.com 315-486-7967

DIOCESAN EVENTS

GUGGENHEIM REGISTRATION

Camp Guggenheim registration 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

Pope Benedict XVI centenary events planned

By **Walter Sánchez Silva**
EWTN News

A series of celebrations marking the centenary of the birth of Pope Benedict XVI will take place across four continents beginning on April 16, 2027.

An international committee for the centenary celebrations established by the Joseph Ratzinger-Benedict XVI Vatican Foundation is coordinating the initiatives, the foundation announced.

"The centenary of Ratzinger's birth is an opportunity to fully present his thought and his approach to reality as significant contributions to the current ecclesial and cultural debate," said Father Roberto Regoli, president of the foundation and of the centenary committee.

"His legacy concerns the inter-

pretation of the Second Vatican Council, the personal experience of Christ, which becomes the key to all branches of theology, and reasonableness as the criterion underlying human reflection on reality," the priest noted.

Events marking 100 years since the beloved German pontiff's birth on April 16, 1927, will take place in several countries in Europe as well as in the U.S., India, Colombia, and Kenya.

On the first day of the centenary celebrations next April, the fourth volume of selected texts by Joseph Ratzinger/Benedict XVI titled "The Faith of the Future: The Future of the Church" will be presented in Rome at Italy's embassy to the Holy See.

Two events will take place in the U.S. next year. On Nov. 3, at Saint Mary's University in Minneapolis, the presentation

of Volume 6 of the "Collected Works" of Joseph Ratzinger will take place; and on Nov. 4-6, in the Diocese of Winona-Rochester, Minnesota, a conference will be held on the theme "Joseph Ratzinger and His Sources."

On July 10-11 in Bangalore, the bishops of India will hold a colloquium on the theme "A Re-reading of the Theological Journey of Joseph Ratzinger."

On Sept. 10, Péter Pázmány Catholic University in Budapest, Hungary, will host a study day to mark the presentation of Volume 3 of Joseph Ratzinger's complete works in Hungarian: "The God of Faith and the God of Philosophers: Philosophical Reason, Culture, Europe, Society."

On Sept. 24-26, the international conference "For the Centenary of Joseph Ratzinger: Paths

of Faith, Hope, and Charity" will take place at the University of La Sabana in Bogotá, Colombia.

On Oct. 14 in Paris, the Collège des Bernardins, the Académie Catholique de France, the Institut de France, the journal "Communio," and the television channel KTO will host an international symposium provisionally titled "The Major Lectures of Joseph Ratzinger/Benedict XVI in France."

The international congress "The Beauty of the Liturgy" will be held in Almería, Spain, on Oct. 28-30, and a statue dedicated to Benedict XVI will be unveiled.

In Nairobi, Kenya, a symposium titled "Constellations of Hope: Africa and the Renewal of the Church in the Vision of Benedict XVI" will be held at Tangaza University on Nov. 18-21.

Around the diocese

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

for 16-18 year olds

Cost: \$450 per week

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

PUBLISHERS DAY

Plattsburgh/Brownville – All Catechetical Leaders and Catechists are invited to Publishers' Day. Attend in person or virtually.

Date: April 25

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

Contact: For more information Asoltero@rcdony.org for details. To register go to 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 Holy Mass, Confessions, Eucharistic Adoration, a Eucharistic Procession with Bishop LaValley, the Eucha-

ristic Miracles exhibit, films, vendors and more. There will be time for fellowship and service. It will be an awesome day for the whole family!

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

ORDINATION TO THE ORDER OF THE PRIESTHOOD

Ogdensburg - Through the laying on of hands and the invocation of the Holy Spirit, the Most Reverend Terry R. LaValley, Bishop of Ogdensburg, will Ordain to the Order of Priesthood Deacon Michelet Boncoeur, Deacon Tyler Martin Fitzgerald and Deacon Dennis Mamwacha Ombongi. You are cordially invited to join in the Ordination Liturgy.

Date: May 30

Place: St. Mary's Cathedral

Time: 11 a.m.

Features: A Reception will immediately follow the Liturgy downstairs in the Brzana Hall. The Ordination Mass may be viewed at

www.rcdony.org/ordination. The Ordination Mass program will be available at the same link shortly before the Liturgy.

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>

ORDINATION TO THE ORDER OF THE DIACONATE

Watertown - Through the laying on of hands and the invocation of the Holy Spirit, the Most Reverend Terry R. LaValley, Bishop of Ogdensburg, will Ordain to the Order

of Deacon Mr. Kevin Patrick McCullough. You are cordially invited to join in the Ordination Liturgy.

Date: June 6

Time: 11 a.m.

Place: Church of the Holy Family

Features: An outdoor reception will immediately follow the Liturgy behind the Greystone Building (across from Holy Family Church). If there is inclement weather, the reception will be held inside the Greystone Building. The Ordination Mass may be viewed at www.rcdony.org/ordination. The Ordination Mass program will be available at the same link shortly before the Liturgy.

MEN'S RETREAT

Saranac Lake – The Diocesan Catholic Men's Retreat to be held.

Date: June 12 to 14

Place: Guggenheim Dorm

Cost: \$125 and includes meals and lodging

Features: This year Father Leagon Carlin will speak about G. K. Chesterton. The retreat is open to men 18 years of age or older. Outdoor activities will include canoeing and hiking.

Contact: To register go to <https://www.rcdony.org/family-life.html> and then the bottom of the page. For more information, contact Stephen Tartaglia at startaglia@rcdony.org

LIFE GIVING WOUNDS RETREAT

Utica - The Life-Giving Wounds retreat, for adults whose parents separated or divorced to be held.

Date: June 26-28

Place: Good News Center

Cost: \$80-150 for commuter, shared room or single room. Retreat price includes overnight lodging, meals, and all retreat materials.

Contact: Register now at <https://solgw26.eventbrite.com/> If you have any questions, contact Steve Tartaglia at startaglia@rcdony.org or 315-393-2920.



SUNDAY'S SCRIPTURE

Abundance as his followers

Here is a quote. I will tell you who it is at the end. "The whole meaning of life is trying to find a place for our stuff. That's what your house is — a place to put all your stuff. Your house is really just a pile of stuff with a cover on it. It's a place to keep your stuff while you go out and get more stuff. You then have to buy a bigger house because you've run out of room for all your stuff, and you have to have more space for more stuff."

The author is not a famous philosopher, but is actually the comedi-

an George Carlin. Now compare the "stuff" that George Carlin speaks about to the closing words of today's Gospel passage: "I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly."

Our problem is that too often we think abundance refers only to garnering more stuff. Jesus is trying to help us understand in today's Gospel, and throughout his whole ministry, that true abundance comes not from what we possess, but from how deeply we love, how generously we

April 26

Fourth Sunday of Easter

READINGS

Acts 2:14a, 36-41

1 Peter 2:20b-25

John 10:1-10

share.

In today's Gospel, Jesus uses the image of a good shepherd always watching out for the sheep, always providing what is best, always making sure the sheep are in the right place.

The story presents Jesus in relation to us his

people, his sheep. He wants what is best for us. Sometimes we stray. Sometimes we listen to other voices. In fact, the voice of Jesus can sometimes be difficult to hear because there are so many competing voices in the public, voices pushing us in directions where we should not go.

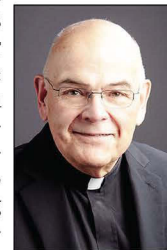
Just like a good shepherd does not give up on his sheep, so Jesus does not give up on us.

Jesus gives us an abun-

dance, his life, his message, his watchful care. Why would we even want to look elsewhere?

Jesus sends each of us an invitation: Spend less time acquiring more stuff and less time focusing on ourselves. Rather, look to him so that we can have an abundance of life, an abundance

of all that is good. Jesus is the Good Shepherd. We are not sheep, but we are hopefully his faithful followers.



Msgr. Robert H. Aucoin

CALLED TO SERVE Are there bad shepherds?

There are about five million sheep in Ireland. Sheep raising is a key agricultural job in that country.

Kathy and I were in a group on a pilgrimage to Ireland with Father Tim Cannan quite a few years ago. We thoroughly enjoyed the visit to Holy sites, churches and basilicas, and the usual tourist spots.

I came home fascinated by the number of sheep farms we saw on our trip. They were everywhere.

Sheep farms in Ireland are as plentiful as dairy farms are in our region.

What really amazed me was how each grazing area, called the sheepfold, was marked off by fence or stone wall and how the ewes and rams stayed within their assigned space until moved by the sheep herder.

Since I did not have any previous knowledge about raising or shep-

herding, watching the herds and their shepherds was an education.

It also helped me understand Jesus's teaching better.

Coming up is Good Shepherd Sunday. Jesus tells us the person who tries to enter the sheepfold by hopping a fence is a thief and a robber. That's what gates are for, you crooks.

The sheep ignore that felon anyway. Sheep only respond to the voice they know, a voice they recognize as being in charge. It is also the voice of the one who cares for them.

Jesus says, "I am the Good Shepherd." His sheep, us, follow his voice.

I expect there are bad shepherds - workers who have no interest in the job they are doing, men or women who lead with a viscous attitude and with screams, shepherds who could care less about

critters who prey on their flock or who by nature direct the followers to danger.

But Jesus tells us to follow him and be saved. "I am the gate," he tells us. Meaning we can find the beautiful pastures of the sheepfold of eternal life only through him, his love and his mercy.

Jesus chose apostles to continue his teaching. Peter was picked as

their leader. The apostles chose bishops to run the church when they were gone and priests and deacons to help the bishops.

Soon they were joined by folks who consecrated their lives to God in service and worship.

All these women and men, who have sacrificed to follow God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, are honored this weekend too. Sunday, not coinci-



Deacon Kevin Mastellon

**10 DAYS MAGIC OF CHRISTMAS ON A
RHINE RIVER CRUISE**

ON BOARD THE LUXURIOUS MS AMADEUS SILVER II

**Visting: Freiburg * Strasbourg * Speyer * Rudesheim
Koblenz * Cologne * Rothenburg * Nuremburg * Munich**

DECEMBER 3 - 12, 2026



HOSTED BY
FR. DONALD A. ROBINSON

STARTING AT
\$4599 FROM NEW YORK*

*Air/land tour is \$4049 plus \$550 gov't taxes/airline surcharges

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:
Fr. Donald Robinson
Tel: 315-408-0858
Email: donrob4@twcny.rr.com

DON'T MISS OUT! SIGN UP TODAY!



**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

357 baptized in Cambodia

“The new baptisms of young people and adults that we celebrated this year are a sign of great hope. They show that young Cambodians hear God’s call and want to follow it. For our Church, they are a true source of strength and life,” said Father Enrique Figaredo, SJ, Apostolic Prefect of Battambang. He said 92 people, mostly young people, were baptized in his Apostolic Prefecture on Easter Sunday. “The catechists are also very happy and enthusiastic. For us in Battambang, who suffer so much from the tense situation on the border with Thailand, with internally displaced persons, unemployment, and economic insecurity, these young people are a source of true joy and hope. The values and ideas they express – solidarity, peace, and hope for a better future – are extraordinary.”

Cambodia’s small Catholic community (0.15% of the predominantly Buddhist population) celebrates new baptisms on Easter Sunday – a day of great joy for the new “children of God.” In the capital, Phnom Penh, Bishop Olivier Schmitthaesler, Apostolic Vicar, baptized 152 catechumens during the Easter Vigil at the Church of Our Lady of the Smile in Chamkar, Takeo Province. The Apostolic Prefecture of Kampong Cham recorded 131 baptisms at Easter, bringing the total number of Cambodians baptized at Easter to 375.

In Takeo, Bishop Schmitthaesler emphasized the exhortation “Do not be afraid” as a cornerstone of modern life. In a world marked by conflict, violence, and uncertainty, “the resurrection of Christ represents a definitive victory over death and despair,” he said. “The Resurrection is not simply another piece of news among many, but the most significant event in history, an event that fundamentally changes our worldview.”

The bishop called on the Christian community to become messengers of peace, beginning with mutual forgiveness within families and society, as well as with neighboring countries.

Addressing the catechumens, he said: “Our life is short, so move forward with hope, for Jesus Christ is with us. He endured cruelty, violence and pain to give us life.”

Bishop Schmitthaesler connected the significance of Easter with the Khmer New Year (April 14-16, which marks the end of the dry season and the beginning of the rainy season). He encouraged the Catholic community to use the feast days to build with faith a “new world founded on peace, forgiveness, and the shared dignity of all people as children of God.”

*Article from FIDES missionary news service of the Pontifical Mission Societies.
Please remember the Pontifical Mission Societies of the Diocese of Ogdensburg when writing or changing your will.*

Exhibit tells how service transforms Catholic Charities workers

By Madalaine Elhabbal
EWTN News

The traveling “People of Hope Museum” by Catholic Charities USA is sharing the transformative power of Christian service in a sprawling tour across the country.

Catholic Charities announced the 2026-2027 tour in April 2025 after it received a \$5 million grant from the Lilly Endowment as part of its Christian Storytelling Initiative.

When considering what stories the charitable organization would like to tell, Catholic Charities USA Vice President for Communications Kevin Brennan told “EWTN News Nightly” on April 10: “Ultimately, it was the story of the people, the men and women of the Catholic Charities network, staff, and volunteers, and the profound and merciful service work that they perform day in and day out.”

The purpose, he said, is “to tell the story through their perspective, which is a bit of a change from how we would normally do it, and to show the rest of us around the country the profound impact this service has not only on the one being served but on the person doing the service.”

The exhibit, housed in a retrofitted tractor-trailer, contains 42 stories from Catholic Charities staff serving around the country, each “telling the story of the one person or one family whom they have served through their work who had the most profound

See the exhibit

The People of Hope Museum will visit:

- Burlington, Vt. – April 28, St. Michael’s College
- Syracuse, NY – May 1, Holy Cross Church
- Horseheads, NY – May 4, St. Mary Our Mother Church
- Rochester, NY – May 7, St. Marianne Cope Parish
- Buffalo, NY – May 9, location TBD

For a complete schedule, visit <https://peopleofhope.us/tour-stops/>

impact on them,” Brennan said.

“The stories call the rest of us who experience the museum to act in kind, to find ways in ways big and small, to help our neighbors and to serve as the Gospel calls us to,” he said.

The museum also has a “poverty simulator,” according to Brennan, where participants take on the persona of someone “living on the margins” and “experience the types of decisions they make.”

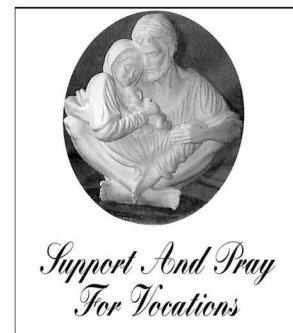
The experience, Brennan said, helps participants to grow in “understanding and empathy” for those living in poverty.

In addition, the museum has an interactive data wall on poverty and other challenges facing Americans across the country as well as a learning library and recording booth to re-

cord reactions to the museum “and talk about those who give you hope in your life.”

The museum will travel through 21 states, from Texas to Ohio and from Maine to Florida, mostly in the eastern half of the United States, by December.

“We’re going to be all over the country for the next two and a half years,” Brennan said, noting the schedule for 2026 is available to view while dates for 2027 will be announced soon.



North Country Catholic has Green option

Our E-paper is now easier to read online. You can receive your *North Country Catholic* in your e-mail rather than in the mail. Fill in your information and send this form to:

Please switch my current NCC subscription to E-mail

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

E-mail _____

PO Box 326

Ogdensburg,

NY 13669

OR Call

Christine at

315-608-7556

to make the

change

Pope calls June consistory of cardinals

By Victoria Cardiel
EWTN News

Pope Leo XIV has confirmed that he will hold a consistory with cardinals from around the world on June 26-27, saying their previous discussions produced contributions that are “a resource of lasting value” for the Church.

In a letter to the members of the College of Cardinals dated April 12 and made public Tuesday, the Holy Father looked back on the first consistory of his pontificate, held Jan. 7-8, and highlighted the importance of the cardinals’ exchanges there.

“I greatly appreciate the work carried out in the groups, which facilitated free, concrete, and spiritually fruitful exchanges as well as the notable quality of the interventions made during the plenary,” Pope Leo wrote.

At that January meeting, the cardinals chose two of four topics proposed by the pope to guide their work. Setting aside the liturgical question — specifically the rite used before the Second Vatican Council — and the issue of relations between the Holy See and episcopal conferences, they opted to focus on “the mission of the Church in

the world today” and on “synod and synodality as an instrument and style of collaboration.”

The pope also placed special emphasis on *Evangelii Gaudium*, Pope Francis’ first apostolic exhortation, published Nov. 24, 2013, and centered on proclaiming the kerygma — the Gospel with Christ at the center.

Referring to the cardinals’ contributions, Pope Leo said: “This exhortation continues to be a significant point of reference. In addition to introducing new content, it refocuses everything on the kerygma as the heart of our Christian and ecclesial identity.”

He added that it was recognized as “a ‘breath of fresh air,’ capable of initiating processes of pastoral and missionary conversion — rather than producing immediate structural reforms — and thus profoundly guiding the Church’s journey.”

The pope said this perspective challenges the Church at every level.

“On a personal level, it calls every baptized person to renew their encounter with Christ, moving from a faith merely received to a faith truly lived and experienced,” he wrote. “This journey affects the very quality of spiritual life, expressed in the

primacy of prayer, in the witness that precedes words, and in the coherence between faith and life.”

At the community level, he said, the Church must move “from a pastoral approach of maintenance to one of mission.”

“This requires communities to be living agents of the proclamation — welcoming communities that use accessible language, attentive to the quality of relationships, and capable of offering places for listening, accompaniment, and healing,” he wrote.

At the diocesan level, Pope Leo stressed the duty of bishops and priests to foster missionary zeal.

“The responsibility of pastors to resolutely support missionary boldness emerges clearly, ensuring that such boldness is not weighed down or stifled by organizational excesses but is guided by a discernment that helps us to recognize what is essential,” he said.

The pope also underlined a Christ-centered understanding of mission, one that spreads “through attraction rather than conquest.”

“It is an integral mission, holding in balance explicit proclamation, witness, commitment, and dialogue, and yielding neither to

the temptation of proselytism nor to a merely institutional mentality of preservation or expansion,” he wrote. “Even when the Church finds herself in a minority, she is called to live with confident courage, as a small flock bringing hope to all, mindful that the aim of mission is not its own survival but the communication of the love with which God loves the world.”

Among the proposals that emerged from the January consistory, the pope said several deserve further reflection. These include “the need to relaunch *Evangelii Gaudium* through an honest assessment of what has actually been embraced over the years and what, by contrast, remains unfamiliar or unimplemented,” with particular attention to “the necessary reforms of the processes of Christian initiation.”

He also pointed to “the importance of valuing apostolic and pastoral visits as authentic opportunities for kerygmatic proclamation and for a growth in the quality of relationships” and called for a reassessment of Church communications — including at the level of the Holy See — “from a more explicitly missionary perspective.”

Nearly 500 leaders, actors to read Bible aloud

By Tessa Gervasini
EWTN News

About 495 faith leaders and advocates are set to gather in Washington, D.C., to read the entire Bible aloud ahead of the nation’s 250th anniversary.

America Reads the Bible is a national Scripture-reading event and movement led by Christians Engaged, a non-profit organization committed “to discipling Americans on biblical worldview and their responsibilities as citizens to pray, vote, and engage for the well-being of our nation.”

From April 19-25, a diverse set of speakers including some Catholics will gather at the Muse-

um of the Bible and read the King James Version of the Bible from beginning to end “as a spiritual celebration of our nation’s founding ideals and a call to rediscover the truth that still anchors us today,” event organizers reported.

The event is inspired by the Hebrew book of Ezra, where the public reading of Scripture sparked national repentance and renewal, according to a press release.

The event will kick off with an opening celebration on April 18 as leaders from more than 100 national ministries will begin to gather for the weeklong celebration. The recitation will begin on April 19 at the mu-

seum and will continue with speakers reading each day from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. to complete the whole Bible in a week.

Those interested in attending can register to join in person or can watch live online.

A wide array of speakers including actors, lawmakers, and advocates will participate in the anniversary celebration.

Event sponsors and organizers will speak over the week including Bunni Pounds, America Reads the Bible organizer and president of Christians Engaged, and Steve Green, chair and co-founder of the Museum of the Bible.

Catholic companies, set to serve as partners with America Reads the Bible,

including Catholic Book Publishing, will also send speakers. Catholic author Allan Wright, whose books focus on discipleship, evangelization, and the Catholic faith, will read.

The event is also partnering with CatholicVote and will welcome its president, Kelsey Reinhardt, to read.

Catholic figures from the Trump administration will take the stage including Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Secretary of Transportation Sean Duffy. Among others, Christian administration members participating will also include Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth and Secretary of Agriculture Brooke Roll-

ins. A number of lawmakers and government representatives will speak, including Texas Gov. Greg Abbott, who is Catholic.

Pro-life leaders will also read, including Marjorie Dannenfelser, president of Susan B. Anthony Pro-Life America, and Kristie McCrary, adviser to the president.

Entertainers and actors from various Christian backgrounds will read Scripture including Catholic actress and author Patricia Heaton, and Christian actress Candace Cameron Bure, America Reads the Bible national spokesperson. Other entertainers will include actors Dean Cain and David Hunt.