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The Diocese of Ogdensburg Volume 80 Number 5

NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

APRIL 29, 2026

A DAY OF REFLECTION

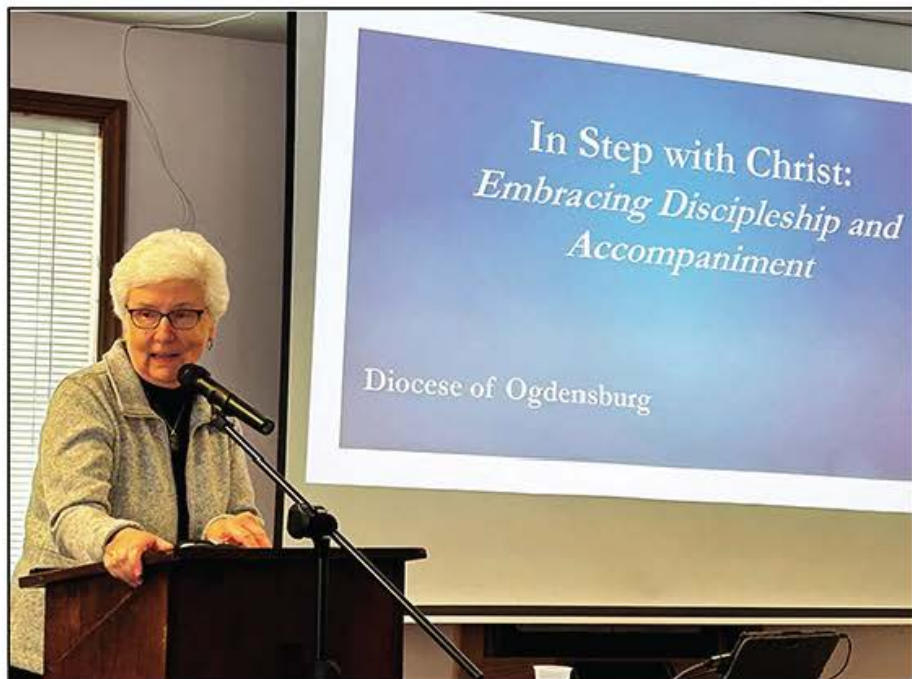


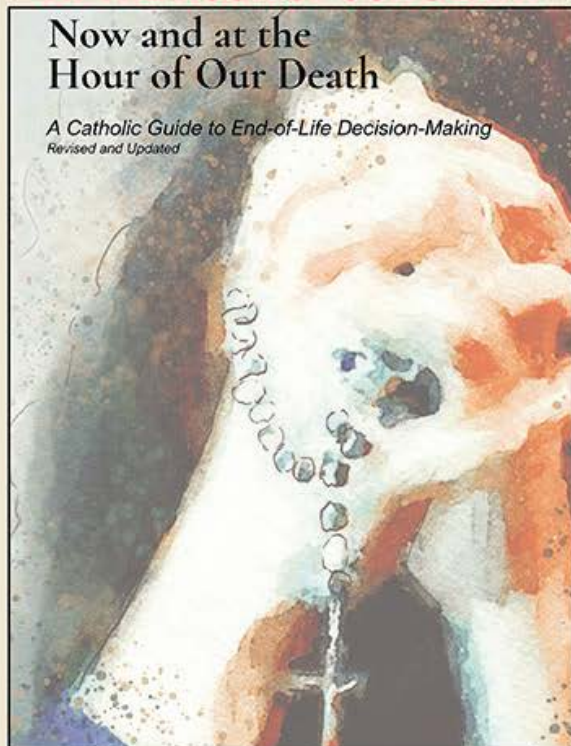
PHOTO BY CATHERINE RUSSELL FOR THE NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

Sister Janet Schaeffler, an Adrian Dominican, leads a Day of Reflection for catechists, catechetical leaders, commissioned lay ministers and others involved in parish ministry on March 21. Read the story on Page 3.

'AT THE HOUR OF OUR DEATH'

Now and at the Hour of Our Death

A Catholic Guide to End-of-Life Decision-Making
Revised and Updated



New York bishops update booklet on end-of-life issues.
FULL STORY, PAGE 3

Pope: 'No one is excluded from God's love'

By Victoria Cardiel
EWTN News

BATA, Equatorial Guinea — Pope Leo XIV visited a prison on April 21, telling inmates “no one is excluded from God’s love” and urging them to see that even behind bars, there remains the possibility of change, reconciliation, and hope.

The pope arrived in the coastal city of Bata after celebrating Mass earlier in the day in Mongomo.

Before going to the local prison — known for difficult conditions — Leo stopped at the Cathedral

of St. James and Our Lady of Pillar for a brief moment of prayer.

At the prison, Leo XIV was welcomed by Justice Minister Reginaldo Biyogo Mba Ndong Anguesomo, the prison director, and the chaplain, Father Pergentino Esono Mba, 58, who has worked at the Bata penitentiary for 24 years.

One of the more than 600 inmates thanked the pope for his visit and support.

“We wish to thank you for your visit and your support,” the prisoner said. “Your presence reminds us of the importance of faith and redemption. We ask

for your blessing to keep moving forward and to come out of this as better people. We are grateful for your compassion and for your message of hope.”

The chaplain, meanwhile, thanked the pope “for his message of mercy and forgiveness.”

“Your example inspires us to believe in the possibility of change and to trust that, even in darkness, God always opens a door of light and hope,” he said.

Pope Leo began by thanking the inmates for their witness.

“I have listened carefully to your words. Thank you for your sincerity and for showing us

that human dignity and hope are never lost, even in the midst of difficulties,” he said.

“Today, I am here to tell you something simple: no one is excluded from God’s love! Each of us, with our unique stories, mistakes, and sufferings, remains precious in the Lord’s eyes.”

He also stressed justice must be aimed not only at punishment but also at rebuilding lives.

“True justice seeks not so much to punish as to help rebuild the lives of victims, offenders, and communities wounded by evil. There is no justice without reconciliation.”

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They didn't learn it that way

"Watch how she puts on her cap."

The lifeguard/swim instructor said that to a small group of pre-teen girls as I started gearing up to swim laps.

In my youth, I was a competitive swimmer for five years. Though I hadn't done a lap since 1997, I decided to try adult lap swimming last week.

While I wouldn't call my first time back in the water a "swimming success," I didn't drown, and I was starting to get a rhythm just as it was time to get out of the

pool. So, I went back a couple more times.

The third time I went swimming, there was a small group of pre-teen girls taking a lesson in the lanes farthest from me. It was just after I set my glasses on the deck at the end of my lane that the instructor/lifeguard told the girls to watch me put on my cap.

I was very confused. I put on my swim cap in what I thought was "the normal way" - the way my teammates and I had done day after day through those five years of competi-

tive swimming in the late 1990s.

After I put on the cap, one of the girls instantly squealed, "I want to try it!"

After they resumed swimming, I asked the lifeguard how they put on their caps. She explained that they help each other do it, one stretching it over the other's head.

"How did that skill not get handed down?" I thought. I just took it for granted that everyone knew how to put on a cap that way.

But those kids were never taught that way.

It can be the same way with our faith. Especially now that my son, Jake, is an older teen, it's easy to assume he knows what

I know about Jesus, the Bible, prayer, theology...

It's easy to assume someone else taught him, just like someone else taught me. It's easy to think that if I'm living my faith, he'll just absorb that faith and live it, too - like it'll pass to him solely through osmosis and the Holy Spirit.

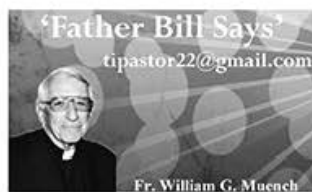
While the Holy Spirit does amazing things, the Spirit works most through others. Someone needs to teach my son. His father and I need to teach him with both our words and our actions. His parish needs to teach him. His community needs to teach him.

That's how he'll continue to put on Christ.

**Darcy L.
Fargo**

From The Ordo to my prayers

In every Church, there is a sacristy, a place where the priests and deacons prepare to celebrate Mass. There is a library of books there, books that are used during liturgy. One of the books is called the Ordo. This is a handy book with all sorts of useful material, especially for each day's liturgy. The Ordo indicates the day's feast, the day's color, the saint who is celebrated that day and also the various Breviary prayers assigned to that day. In addition, the Ordo has a necrology - a listing of the dates of the death of the bishops, the priests and the deacons of the diocese who have died. Each year they are remembered in a special way on the anniversary of their deaths. This necrology reminds me of many priests and deacons, who are my friends, many of whom I worked with and are now with the Lord. So, each day I look upon the necrology, and I know who I am praying for, and



- I must admit - I call to mind so many memories and stories from the past.

Today, I noticed that this day is the anniversary of the death of Monsignor Joseph Bailey. He died many years ago. Father Bailey had a profound influence on my priesthood. When I was still a seminarian studying at Wadhams Hall, Father Bailey taught a course in English and, more importantly for me, a class in public speaking. I know well that he developed in me the qualities to become a good preacher as a priest. Father Bailey gave me the love for preaching.

Those classes were many years ago, however I still remember that Father Bailey challenged us and developed us into good

speakers. I remember he could be a tough teacher; you could call him a bit nasty. But he made us confident to speak before others. You know, I have never feared speaking before a group after facing Father Bailey all those years ago.

I must also tell you that my very first assignment as a newly ordained priest, my pastor was that same Father Bailey. I remember well standing before the congregation now as a priest, and who would be standing at the back of the Church? You guessed it: Father Bailey. Just like those classes of old. He was a gift, continuing to push me to improve. He did make a few suggestions to me. I still remember.

One more memory: As time went by, I was asked to write for the North Country Catholic. I remember one day receiving a letter from Father Bailey. He wrote to tell me that my writing was good -

even, excellent. I was rather pleased. I still have that letter.

So, you see the necrology constantly reminds me of many priests - friends and confreres. Thinking of them, I remember so many memories from the past. I will never forget them. Last week, I noticed in the necrology the name of one of my classmates and friends. We were in the seminary together, and we were ordained priests on the same day - Father Larry Deno. He died several years ago. The necrology will continue to remind me of him when I come to that day each year, and I will again remember to pray for him on that day at Mass and remember our days together.

So, you may often see me in the sacristy thumbing through the little book, the Ordo, each day remembering priests that I knew and worked with - important friends from my past and now with God.

Parish leaders get 'In step with Christ'

By Catherine Russell
Formation for Ministry Program Coordinator

The department of Faith Formation's LEAD and the Office of Formation For Ministry recently co-sponsored a Day of Reflection led by Adrian Dominican, Sister Janet Schaeffler.

The day was made possible through the generosity of David Barosci at Bayard Publications. Catechists, catechetical leaders, commissioned lay ministers, others involved in parish ministry and candidates in the Formation For Ministry program were in attendance.

The day consisted of presentations

by Sister Janet, quiet time for reflection and discussion among the participants.

Judging from the energy in the room, attendees enjoyed it and felt a renewed appreciation for their role as disciples and companions and what that truly means.

"Sister Janet's presentation was spot on," said Anita Soltero, assistant director of Faith Formation. "The exercises and group discussions were a great opportunity to explore where we each are in that process of accompaniment and discipleship, what we need to work on, and how to bring that presence to those we catechize and minister to."



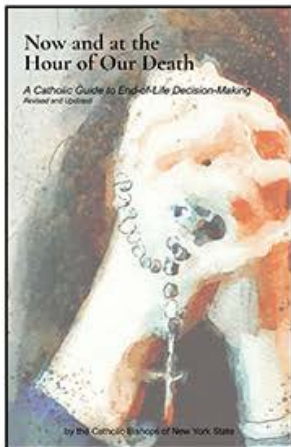
PHOTO BY CATHERINE RUSSELL FOR THE NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC
Participants in the Day of Reflection participate in small-group discussion.

NY bishops update booklet on end-of-life decisions

By New York State Catholic Conference

With physician-assisted suicide set to be legalized in New York State this summer, the Catholic Bishops of New York State have released a revised and updated edition of their teaching booklet *Now and at the Hour of Our Death: A Catholic Guide to End-of-Life Decision-Making*.

The first half of the eight-page booklet, published by the New York State Catholic Conference, summarizes Church teaching on various end-of-life issues, including assisted suicide and euthanasia, ordinary vs. extraordinary treatment, and what is required regarding artificial nutrition and hydration. The second half outlines legal options for advance planning available in New York State. It is intended as a guide to help Catholics navigate difficult issues and decisions that face every family eventually.



"The original edition of the booklet has been extremely popular for more than 15 years," said Dennis Poust, executive director of the New York State Catholic Conference. "Our hope is that many thousands more Catholics in the years to come will find *Now and at the Hour of Our Death* to be a useful guide in what is by nature a very stressful time. We urge Catholics to read the booklet and familiarize themselves with Catholic teaching on these issues and the options available in

New York now, before they or their loved ones are facing a health crisis."

In the revised booklet, the Bishops continue to recommend the health-care proxy as "the most morally appropriate advance care planning tool in New York State." A New York State Department of Health health-care proxy template can be downloaded at www.nyscatholic.org/health-care-proxy-form. The NYS Catholic Conference booklet suggests sample language Catholics may wish to use in their proxy forms.

Now and at the Hour of Our Death is available for free as a digital download at www.nyscatholic.org/now-and-at-the-hour-of-our-death. Individual hardcopy booklets are available free of charge. Bulk purchases are 50 cents per copy for up to 50 copies, and 34 cents per copy for amounts above 50 copies. Email info@nyscatholic.org or call 518.434.6195.

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THE MONTHLY PRAYER REQUEST FOR PRIESTS

WOULD YOU PRAY FOR A PRIEST EACH DAY?

— PRAYER SUGGESTION —

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

Mass
Rosary
Fasting
Day Offering
Eucharistic Adoration
Offering of Sufferings
Divine Mercy Chaplet

Or whatever the Lord inspires you to offer Him

May
Our Lady

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8 OUR PASTOR	9 REV. GUY F. EDWARDS	10 REV. ALFRED H. FISH	11 REV. FRANCIS J. FLYNN	12 REV. JAYA K. FRANCIS MSC	13 REV. J. MICHAEL GAFFNEY	14 REV. GARRY B. GIRoux
15 POPE LEO XIV	16 REV. JOSEPH W. GIRoux	17 REV. L. WILLIAM GORDON	18 REV. LUKAS H. GRUBER	19 REV. ALBERT J. HAUSER	20 REV. PETER G. HELFRICH	21 REV. MICHAEL J. JABLONSKI
22 DECEASED PRIESTS	23 REV. JOSE K. JOHN HGN	24 REV. JOSEPH J. KINNELA MSC	25 REV. PAUL J. KELLY	26 REV. THOMAS E. KORNMEYER	27 REV. STEVE KOVACEVICH	28 REV. DONALD F. KRAMBERG
29 REV. ARTHUR J. LABAFF	30 REV. ALAN J. LAMICA	31 REV. KRIS C. LADDON				

For more information visit us online at www.nyscatholic.com

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 Vicarates Society www.vicariates.net

Divine Mercy in Houseville

By Michelle Beagle
Contributing Writer

On Divine Mercy Sunday, St. Hedwig's Church in Houseville welcomed parishioners and visitors to a celebration dedicated to the devotion.

Father Sony Pulickal, Father John Ojuork, Father Daniel Chapin and seminarian Ladouceur Flarissant helped make the celebration full of reverence and love for the church community.

The afternoon started with exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, Sacrament of Reconciliation, a homily provided by Father Pulickal, the recitation of the Divine Mercy Chaplet, followed by Benediction and Blessing of Holy Cards/Petitions, and veneration of the Divine Mercy image.

Father Pulickal's homily focused on Jesus' mercy and love for humanity. He stated that there are three ABCs of the Divine Mercy message to remember:

A - Jesus' love and mercy are for all people.

B - We must bestow mercy and love on all we meet.

C - We must completely trust in Jesus.

Father also stated that when he was celebrating morning Mass, as he was breaking the Holy Eucharist and holding it up, he envisioned each side as the rays of mercy coming from our Lord.

Father Chapin mentioned he was pleased with the number of individuals going to reconciliation and the number of people in attendance.

Afterwards, a reception was held in the parish hall. Those in attendance remarked how beautiful and awe-inspiring the afternoon was.

APRIL IS CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH

Prevention all year long

By The VIRTUS® Programs

Every April, many organizations and communities observe Child Abuse Prevention Month, a time devoted to renewing our shared commitment to safeguarding children and youth. For churches, schools, sports programs, and other youth-serving environments, this month serves as a tangible reminder that keeping young people safe is not just about "checking off a box" for compliance or meeting minimum standards. Rather, it's about cultivating and maintaining cultures of safety within each program serving children and youth. Even if you're reading this outside of April, the message of Child Abuse Prevention Month remains just as important every single day—protecting children and youth from harm is an ongoing privilege for all adults, regardless of our individual roles.

Child Abuse Prevention Month matters because it highlights the reality that abuse is often hidden or overlooked. Awareness efforts during April (and beyond) bring needed attention to the behavioral indicators of abuse in children and youth, the warning signs of inappropriate behavior of adults (which may be part of a grooming process), and the responsibility adults share in recognizing and reporting concerns. While April shines a spotlight on these efforts, the need for vigilance extends far beyond a single month. Abuse does not follow a schedule, and children require safe, attentive adults throughout every day of the year.



BEING A SAFE ADULT

This month can also be an opportunity for all adults to pause and reflect on their own behavior, and whether it contributes to a safe environment for children, the vulnerable and anyone else we may serve in our ministries. Even if your role does not involve directly teaching, coaching, mentoring, or supervising children and youth, you still play a vital part in creating and maintaining a safe environment. Every adult within an organization—whether an employee or a volunteer—helps shape the culture that protects children.

Children are safer when all adults understand the importance of boundaries, recognize signs of concerning behavior and most importantly communicate when they have any concerns or when something seems amiss. All adults can also serve as role models for healthy and appropriate behavior. When adults act appropriately by maintaining appropriate boundaries, children and youth learn what safe behavior looks like, and how it feels to be around a safe person. Appropriate conduct not only protects young people, it also shows, through consistent behavior that follows the rules, that the adults around the children can be trusted.

If you are unsure of what types of behaviors are healthy and appropriate, refer to your organization's policies and procedures, or ask someone in leadership for guidance. It's not enough just to have policies and procedures in place, it's up to all adults to not only be aware of them, but to implement and follow them. Policies alone cannot keep children safe; people who follow the policies do.

RESOURCES

For additional information regarding what you can do to help protect children and youth during April and all year long, please visit:

- Prevent Child Abuse America - preventionchildabuse.org
- Child Welfare Information Gateway - childwelfare.gov/prevention-month
- Thorn - thorn.org
- National Children's Alliance - nationalchildrensalliance.org/national-initiatives
- The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children - missingkids.org

CONCLUSION

Ultimately, Child Abuse Prevention Month is far more than a once-a-year reminder. It is an invitation to strengthen a community-wide commitment to protecting children and youth. Whether it is April or any other month, every adult—whether directly involved with youth or not—has an essential role to play in fostering a culture of safety and accountability. By staying vigilant, maintaining boundaries, supporting one another, and speaking up, we contribute to an environment where children can grow, learn, and thrive without fear.

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A KNIGHT'S REFLECTION

The gift of God's timing

While imprisoned during World War II, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a German pastor and theologian executed for his part in the German resistance, wrote, "God does not give us everything we want, but He does fulfill His promises, leading us along the best and straightest paths." These words are a reminder to be patient and trust in God's timing for our lives.

For years, I chased security in money, status and my own timing, only to realize I was trying to fill an emptiness that only God's timing can truly satisfy. Reflecting on the past, I feel sadness - not regret - that God acted for me, though I missed the opportunity to trust Him sooner. These days, I do not ask Him for things that are rushed or trivial. I pray for my family's health, that more people hear the Good News, and for strength and wisdom to follow His will. In seeking that peace, I have recognized that my personal struggle with restlessness reflects a broader American character noted for centuries.

Americans, whether we like it or not, are often seen as obsessed with wealth and status, though this drive may be framed as a quest for basic financial security. The reputation likely stems from the nation's early days, when survival in a challenging environment demanded extreme self-reliance. In his 1835 work, *Democracy in America*, Alexis de Tocqueville observed that the American "taste for physical gratification" led to a "mad impatience" for material success. He noted that since Americans believed they could change their social status through effort, they became perpetually hurried to secure wealth. Today, that "American Dream" has shifted. Whether the obstacle is systemic inequality or personal ambition, the result is a soul-deep anxiety. The "American Dream"

is now an endless cycle where financial stress and modern pressures take precedence over peace of mind.

The World Happiness Report, which is published each year by Oxford, Gallup, and the UN, shows only 59.2% of U.S. adults feel hopeful about their future - the lowest in almost 20 years. The U.S. ranked 24th in happiness in 2025 and 23rd in 2026, its lowest positions ever. Older Americans (over 60) rank 10th in happiness worldwide, while younger Americans

(under 30) rank 62nd. The statistics suggest that our current cultural approach doesn't work and opens the possibility of a spiritual path offering greater fulfillment. Is it unreasonable to consider trusting in God's timing - a fundamental aspect of Christian faith - which can serve as a remedy for our collective modern "mad impatience?" God's timing is a divine mystery beyond our mortal understanding, but we can ponder the question to our hearts' content. Perhaps the question should be, "What truly anchors our lives?" Often, we mistake the pursuit of wealth for fulfillment, or the desire for status for a sense of security. When we lose our purpose, we tend to fill the void with habits that drain the very energy we need to build a life worth living. For a Christian, trusting in God's timing enriches life by replacing the exhausting burden of control with a profound, supernatural peace. By acknowledging God's sovereignty, believers can transform their daily experience from anxious living into purposeful rest.

The Bible contains many examples of individuals who struggled to trust in God's divine timing - such as Peter, the "rock" of the Church. Peter frequently faltered due to his impatience and desire for immediate results, attempting to push

his own agenda ahead of God's plan. When Jesus revealed that He must suffer and die, Peter exclaimed, "God forbid, Lord! This shall never happen to You." Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Get behind me, Satan," in an effort to redirect Peter's focus to the fact that God's timing should take precedence over human desires (Matthew 16:22-24). In the Garden of Gethsemane, Peter again tried to take control by cutting off the ear of the high priest's servant, Malchus. Jesus corrected him, asking, "Shall I not drink the cup my Father has given me?" (John 18:10-12). At the end of his life, according to the Acts of Peter, an ancient text written in the late 2nd century, Peter was fleeing Rome when he encountered Jesus. Peter asked, "Lord, where are you going?" Jesus replied, "I am going to Rome to be crucified again." At that moment, Peter realized that it was God's timing for his own sacrifice.

Bonhoeffer, who was confronting the reality of death, was expressing his shift from hoping for earthly rescue to accepting God's spiritual purpose for him. While most of us will never face a prison cell or martyrdom, we must challenge the modern impulse to control our own timelines and outcomes. By trusting in divine timing, we can move away from anxiety and move toward a quiet strength to fulfill God's will for us.

Mike Langlois is the grand knight of St. Augustine Knights of Columbus Council 7273 in Peru, New York. He is also the Upstate Conference coordinator for evangelization and faith formation for the New York State Knights of Columbus, which encompasses the Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse and Ogdensburg dioceses. Local Knights of Columbus councils interested in fortifying the faith of their memberships, or offering column topic ideas, can contact him at mjlang67@gmail.com.



Mike Langlois

Encourage Gov. Hochul to opt in to scholarship tax credit

By New York State Catholic Conference

Starting in 2027, the new Federal Scholarship Tax Credit will let taxpayers redirect up to \$1,700 of their federal income taxes to nonprofit scholarship organizations that provide tuition assistance for students in Catholic schools.

For example, a taxpayer owing \$10,000 could direct \$1,700 to scholarships instead of sending it to the federal government - directly helping families afford a Catholic education, and even additional services at public schools.

But New York families will miss out unless the governor opts in.

Governor Hochul's participation would bring new scholarship dollars to Catholic schools, easing financial pressure on families and expanding access to faith-based education.

Catholics across the state are urged to encourage Governor Kathy Hochul to opt in and support Catholic school families.

For more information and a form to directly email the governor, visit the Catholic Action Network (CAN) at nycatholic.org/action-center.

CAN, an arm of the New York State Catholic Conference, gives Catholics in New York a larger voice in the halls of government. Through email and social media alerts, CAN reaches tens of thousands of Catholics to provide educational updates on important issues being debated and to provide you tools to simplify the process of contacting elected officials.

Environmental Stewardship

Rights and responsibilities

The third theme of Catholic Social Teachings focuses on Rights and Responsibilities, which encompasses a vast spectrum of personal and social issues. Throughout *Laudato Si*, Pope Francis emphasized basic human rights, such as access to fresh air, clean water, a safe living environment and adequate food. It was also stressed that we have the responsibility to work to ensure everyone has these rights.

Because everything is interconnected, we must work to ensure our lifestyles promote these goals. Do you shop at small, local stores rather than in large corporate outlets? Does your food come from regional farms or from distant agribusinesses that are more likely to restrict certain rights to workers, especially migrants? It is often challenging and time-consuming to use your purchasing power to promote ethical businesses over those that care only about profits and not their impact.

Striving for a clean, healthy environment is another issue often neglected. All too often we buy items that we rarely use. Precious natural resources are being exploited in many places to produce items people purchase to make them feel good or impress others.

Dealing with trash today is also a nightmare. There are fewer places to dispose of waste, and in numerous countries, unwanted items are simply thrown in rivers or alongside roads. Our oceans are polluted with plastics and organic compounds that foster the growth of seaweed and other unwanted aquatic vegetation.

Changing daily routines to better humanity is hard. Also, it may seem fruitless considering the scale of global problems; however, you need always trust in God and concentrate on the impact you are having on the people and organisms around you.

We have to look at everybody and everything the way God looks at them, and we need to work to afford all with the rights with which we are blessed.

CALLED TO SERVE

Bishop, priest, deacon: The third order

Author's note: This column is reprinted from 2023 because, frankly, is said everything I was

When I was in formation for the diaconate,

Bishop's Public Schedule

April 29 – 8:15 a.m. – Feast Day Mass of St. Catherine de Siena at St. Mary's Church in Canton

April 30 – Noon – Mass with the Consecrated Religious Leaders at St. Mary's Cathedral followed by Lunch at Bishop's Residence

May 1 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

May 2 – 4 p.m. – Confirmation at the Church of the Assumption in Redford along with St. Joseph's Church in Dannemora

May 3 – 10:30 a.m. – Confirmation at St. Bernard's and St. Edmund's Church (at St. Edmund's Church) in Ellenburg

May 4 – All day – Deacon Assembly at the Cambria Hotel Lake Placid in Lake Placid

Rest in Peace

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

April 29 – Rev. Arthur C. Kenny, 1945; Rev. Peter Mullen, M.M., 1999

April 30 – Rev. Michael W. Holland, 1906; Rev. Louis Grenier, M.S.C., 1958

May 1 – Rev. Joseph J. Halde, 1891; Rev. Edward P. Burns, 1985

May 2 – Rev. Jean Marie Royer, O.M.I., 1905; Rev. Joseph M. Blais, 1948; Rev. Leon LaPorte, 1954; Rev. Burchard Murray, O.S.A., 1966

May 3 – Rev. Cormac Walsh, O.F.M., 1977

May 4 – Rev. J. Napoleon Pelletier, O.M.I., 1935

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

To Report Abuse

If you have a complaint of suspected misconduct involving diocesan clergy, religious, employees or volunteers, contact Victim Assistance Coordinator, Terrianna Yanulavich, Ph.D., LMHC, 5050 Route 374, Merrill, NY 12955; terriannayanulavich@yahoo.com; 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

I volunteered at the House of the Good Samaritan Hospital (now Samaritan Medical Center) in Watertown. I was learning the ropes about hospital visitations from Brother John, a Missionary of the Sacred Heart.

Quite often on my trips to the hospital, I would visit the chapel and offer some prayers for the patients. Then I would go to the Bible that was on a stand in the chapel and flip the page to chapter six of the Acts of the Apostle. Then I would leave.

Acts 6 is the paragraph in the Bible that recounts the decision by the apostles to appoint assistants, subsequently called deacons, to help the apostles in their ministry.

The next chapter in Acts talks about Stephen, one of the original deacons, and how he became the first martyr of the new church.

I reset the Bible each time hoping people would read the chapters and become curious about our order.

The bishops of the Second Vatican Council restored the Order of Deacon. On June 18, 1967, Pope Paul VI issued the apostolic letter *Sacrum Diaconatus Ordinem*, a document that re-established the permanent diaconate for the Latin Church and the order has grown steadily since.

My intention today is not to take you on a historical journey about the diaconate but to ask you to pray for us and to pray that other men will consider our order as a way to serve Christ and his Church.



Deacon
Kevin Mastellon

We often pray at Mass and other times for vocations to the priesthood and religious life. We should. They are important vocations in the Church.

Deacon is an important choice too. Men, most of them married with families, are looking for a way to grow in knowledge of the faith, to grow spiritually and to help others within the Catholic Church.

Pope Paul in his letter of 1967 said "young men" interested in the diaconate need to show a willingness to serve the Christian community.

Please add "diaconate" to your prayers for vocations. It is a simple add. "We pray for vocations to the priesthood, diaconate and religious life." I'll bet you can even ad lib that addition if you are the leader of prayer.

And if you are interested in the order, contact your pastor or a deacon in your parish.

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

Southern Poverty Law Center indicted

By Tessa Gervasini
EWTN News

The U.S. Department of Justice has charged the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), a civil rights group that has classified certain Catholic organizations as hate groups, with multiple fraud charges for alleged use of paid informants to monitor racist organizations.

SPLC, an organization that reports it fights "white supremacy and various forms of injustice," faces charges including 11 counts of wire fraud, false statements to a federally insured bank, and conspiracy to commit concealment money laundering. SPLC did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

While there has been overlap with Catholic advocacy over the years on social and economic justice issues such as racial justice and advocacy concerning conditions in immigration detention centers, SPLC has also taken positions that many Catholic institutions strongly dispute. SPLC has labeled some Catholic organizations as "hate groups."

The U.S. attorney for the middle district of Alabama issued the April 21 indictment. The FBI and the Internal Revenue Service investigated.

"The SPLC allegedly engaged in a massive fraud operation to deceive their donors, enrich themselves, and hide their deceptive operations from the public," Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Director Kash Patel said.

While "vowing to dismantle violent extremist groups," SPLC "actually turned around and paid the leaders of these very extremist groups," Patel said.

According to the indictment, in the 1980s the SPLC began operating a network of individuals who were associated with, or who infiltrated, violent extremist groups at the SPLC's direction. Donors were unaware that donations were funding the organizers of the same racist and extremist groups that the SPLC reported it was denouncing.

Prosecutors said that between 2014 and 2023, the SPLC funneled more than \$3 million in donated funds to individuals associated with various extremist groups including the Ku Klux Klan, Aryan Nations, National Socialist Party of America (American Nazi Party), and United Klans of America. No Catholic groups were mentioned in the indictment.

According to the indictment, the scheme was intended to obtain money

via donations through materially false representations and omissions about what the funds would be used for.

In order to pay the individuals, the SPLC allegedly opened bank accounts connected to a series of fake entities such as "Fox Photography" and "Rare Books Warehouse" that were used to send money from donors to informants. The SPLC then made a series of false statements related to the operation of the accounts, the indictment alleges.

"The SPLC is manufacturing racism to justify its existence," said acting Attorney General Todd Blanche when announcing the indictment. "Using donor money to allegedly profit off Klansmen cannot go unchecked."

U.S. Attorney Kevin Davidson said this "kind of deception undermines public trust and social cohesion."

Patel added that it is an "ongoing investigation against all individuals involved." The DOJ reported a conviction will result in the forfeiture of financial gains from the alleged illegal activities.

In recent years, SPLC has been accused of unfairly labeling Christian organizations as "radical."

In July 2025, the House Judiciary Committee found documents that revealed the FBI "put more federal law-enforcement resources into surveilling Catholics than previously known."

The committee's report found several internal FBI documents used the term "Radical-Traditionalist Catholic" between 2009 and 2023. An FBI internal database contained at least 13 documents that used these terms that all cited the SPLC.

Also, in 2021, critics of SPLC said the organization had become extreme after it released its 2020 "census of hate groups," which included numerous pro-life and family organizations such as the Ruth Institute.

After being classified by SPLC as a hate group, a spokesperson for the Ruth Institute said, "our credit card processing company dropped us. Businesses refused to work with us. People scattered, thinking we were radioactive."

"What the Southern Poverty Law Center did to us was a mere inconvenience in comparison to the harm they have done to our country. The indiscriminate application of the 'hate' label, the ratcheting up of rhetoric — all this has contributed to the polarized and toxic atmosphere we now experience," according to Jennifer Roback Morse, Ruth Institute president.

CATHOLIC WORLD AT A GLANCE

Justice Department: Biden admin targeted pro-life activists

The Biden administration "weaponized" federal law against pro-lifers, according to a more than 800-page report issued by the U.S. Department of Justice. The April 14 report details how the Justice Department under Biden weaponized the Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances (FACE) Act, including collaboration with pro-abortion groups to target pro-life advocates. The report said the Justice Department "affirmatively asked pro-abortion groups about pro-life individuals' travel and constitutionally protected advocacy," the Justice Department's press release on the report indicated. "The Biden DOJ and career attorneys monitored pro-life activists for years before charging them," the press release stated. The Justice Department also said: "Prosecutors knowingly withheld evidence that defense counsel requested to prepare an affirmative defense, tried to screen out jurors based on religion, and authorized aggressive arrest tactics instead of allowing pro-life defendants to self-surrender."

Hundreds of men to be ordained in the U.S. in 2026

More than 400 men will be ordained to the priesthood in the U.S. this year, and on average they are 33 years old and are lifelong Catholics, according to an annual CARA survey. The Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) released its 2026 national survey of seminarians who are scheduled for ordination this year. The survey was administered between Feb. 12 and March 20. Out of 428 ordinands invited to participate, 334 ordinands responded to the survey for a response rate of 78%. The responding ordinands represent 110 U.S. dioceses and eparchies and 34 religious institutes. Four in 5 (81%) are preparing for ordination to a diocese or eparchy, and 19% are preparing for religious institutes. The report is created in collaboration with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Clergy, Consecrated Life, and Vocations and CARA about seminarians scheduled for ordination to the priesthood in 2026. On average, responding ordinands first considered priesthood when they were 16 years old and were scheduled for ordination at the age of 33.

Pope Leo XIV concludes 11-day visit to Africa

Pope Leo XIV celebrated the final Mass of his Africa trip on Thursday, urging the Church in Equatorial Guinea to continue proclaiming the Gospel "with passion" and to bear witness through lives shaped by faith, service, and solidarity. The Mass at Malabo's stadium, where about 30,000 faithful were expected, marked the pope's last major public event in Equatorial Guinea, the fourth and final African nation on his 11-day journey. After riding through the crowd in the popemobile, Leo began Mass amid flags, songs, and colorful hats, with music and dance accompanying the liturgy. Before delivering his homily, the pope greeted the Archdiocese of Malabo and offered condolences for the recent death of its vicar general, Father Fortunato Nsue Esono, who died unexpectedly April 17 at age 39.

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: Wednesdays 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. Remaining presenters include: Msgr. Robert Aucoin, Father John Yonkovic, Sister Debbie Blow, 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.

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.

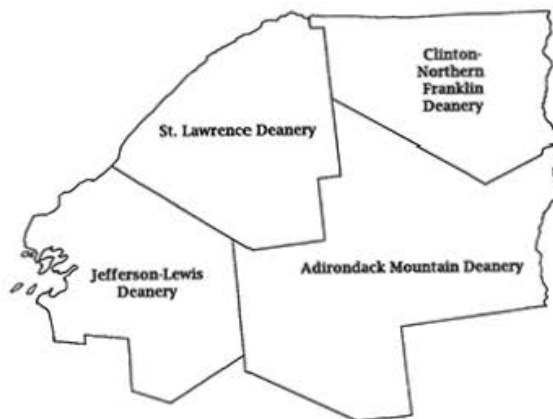
SOAKING PRAYERS SESSIONS

Come enjoy a relaxing prayer opportunity at two different locations.

Plattsburgh: Newman Center, 1:30 p.m. to 3:30; May 4, June 1, July 6 Aug. 3 Sept. 14, Oct. 5, Nov. 2 and Dec. 7

Ellenburg Center: Our Lady of the Adirondacks House of Prayer, 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. (please bring a bag lunch); May 14, June 11, July 9, Aug. 13, Sept. 10, Oct. 8; session includes recitation of the rosary.

Features: Soaking Prayer is done in a relaxed spiritual atmosphere wherein you surrender yourself to receive an outpouring and infilling of the Holy Spirit enabling you to be immersed in



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.

God's love, mercy, healing, compassion and peace. Each session begins with a short introduction followed by praise, worship and soaking prayer for an extended period of time as guided by the Holy Spirit. Remainder of time is spent listening to scripture readings and remaining receptive to receive healing at any level: emotional, psychological, mental, physical, spiritual or generational.

Contact: All sessions are facilitated by Eve McGill, Living Waters Healing Ministry 518-645-2648, 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

CAR SHOW

Mooers Forks – St. Ann's to have their 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

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 1st from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.; May 2nd from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.; May 3rd 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 – both physically and spiritually – 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 retreat 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 portley-denbk@rcdony.org.

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: May 10

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

SPAGHETTI AND 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 bhwjhdioogd@gmail.com 315-486-7967

Vatican halts sainthood cause of author priest

By Kate Quiñones
EWTN News

The Vatican has halted the cause for sainthood of Father Walter Cizek, a Pennsylvania-born Jesuit priest who ministered to fellow prisoners while enduring more than 20 years of imprisonment in Russia.

Cizek (1904-1984) is known for his spiritual writings "He Leadeth Me" and "With God in Russia," which he wrote after surviving torture by the Soviet secret police and hard labor during his imprisonment from 1941-1963.

The Vatican first approved the advancement of Cizek's cause in 2012. Over the several decades that the cause was in progress, the Jesuits had gathered witness testimonies, writings of Cizek, and more than 4,000 archival documents from the Jesuits and the Russian archives.

Monsignor Ronald Bocian

of the Walter Cizek Prayer League, the group advocating for Cizek's cause, said in an April 9 letter that "the formal canonization process has been stopped."

"The development comes after years of careful study and discernment at the level of the Holy See, which bears the responsibility of evaluating each cause with thoroughness, integrity, and fidelity to the Church's norms," Bocian continued.

"While this news may understandably bring disappointment to many who have been inspired by Father Cizek's example of heroic faith and have prayed for his cause, it does not diminish the enduring spiritual value of his life, witness, and legacy," Bocian said.

According to the letter from Bocian, the Prayer League advocating for Cizek's canonization will become the "Father Walter J. Cizek Society." Bocian said the society will

"remain committed to honoring his memory, sharing his message, and encouraging devotion to the profound spiritual insights he left to the Church."

"Even as the formal canonization process has been stopped, the grace flowing from his witness remains alive in the hearts of the faithful," Bocian said.

The Diocese of Allentown, Pennsylvania, confirmed the news in a statement to EWTN News, acknowledging the "disappointment" while encouraging the faithful to remember the grace of Cizek's life.

"This development comes as the Church evaluates each cause with thoroughness, integrity, and fidelity to its norms," read the statement from the Diocese of Allentown, which paralleled Bocian's letter.

WHO WAS FATHER CISZEK?

Cizek was born in 1904 in Shenandoah, Pennsylvania. He

entered the Jesuit novitiate in 1928 and was ordained in 1937 after being trained to say Mass in the Russian rite. After two years in Poland, he used the chaos of World War II as cover to enter the Soviet Union so that he could minister to Christians who lived under communist persecution.

Soviet authorities arrested him in 1941, believing him to be a spy. Over his decades in prison, he endured solitary confinement, torture, and years of hard labor near the Arctic Circle. Despite the dangers, he said Mass in secret and heard the confessions of other prisoners.

President John F. Kennedy negotiated the prisoner swap that led to his release in 1963. Cizek went on to write about his spiritual insights and experience in Russia. He died at Fordham University in New York on Dec. 8, 1984. In 1990, Cizek was declared a servant of God.

Around the diocese

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

ST. LAWRENCE

INDOOR SALE

Gouverneur – St. James Thrift Shop will hold a huge indoor sale.

Date: May 9

Time: 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Place: St. James School

Features: Items will include toys, books, yarn, jewelry, puzzles, games, dolls, craft items, art work, household items, knick knacks, frames, CDs, DVDs, movies, linens, glassware, some furniture, new clothing and so much more. Please bring your own bags.

ROSARY WITH DEVOTIONS

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

Date: May 2

Time: 8 a.m.

Place: Notre Dame Church, Ogdensburg

Features: Rosary with devotions

FIRST SATURDAY ROSARY

Massena – Sacred Heart Church to have first Saturday Rosary Devotion.

Date: May 2

Time: 3:15 p.m.

Features: First Saturday Rosary Devotion to OUR Lady of Fatima. Confessions will be available. Saturday Vigil Mass at 4 p.m.

MENS GROUP

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

Date: May 2

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

Place: Sacred Heart Church

MONTHLY BRUNCH

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

Brunch.

Date: May 10 (Second Sunday of each month)

Time: 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Place: Father Amyot Parish Center

Cost: Adults, \$10; under 12, \$5; under 5, Free; Omelets, add \$3; Take-outs available

Contact: For more information contact Grand Knight Gil Gonther 315-212-5166. MEAL DELIVERY

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 (waitlist only for week 5)

Cost: \$450 per week

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

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 Eucharistic 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

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12



SUNDAY'S SCRIPTURE

'The way and the truth and the life'

Do you have any idea where you are going? Back in the day, when we went on a Sunday drive realizing that we were obviously lost on some back road, my mother would finally ask my dad that question. You can imagine that it did not please him, but mother asked nonetheless.

You can't miss it. That is exactly what Jesus in saying to his disciples in today's Gospel passage. You have been with me all this time, and you just cannot miss it.

But, what is the "it?" Well, Jesus announces to his disciples that he will return to the Father, to heaven. The disciples panic, but Jesus assures them that they will get the answer.

Here's what one person wrote: "I was thinking about how people seem to read the Bible a whole lot more as they get older. Then it dawned on me... they're cramming for their final exam."

Jesus helped prepare the disciples for their "final exam." He reassured them, "Do not let your hearts be troubled. You have faith in God; have faith also in me. I will come back again and take you to myself, so that where I am you also may be. Where I am going you know the way."

But how do we describe this "heaven," this place where Jesus is going? Our doubting Thomas, probably on our behalf, says: "We do not know where you are going. How can we know the way." Jesus' famous response is simple and to the point: "I am the way and the truth and

the life." Jesus is the way. Does that mean that he is a road and that he plops us down on this road?

That's way too simple. We are so many different individuals, so many issues in our lives, so many different backgrounds, anxieties and hopes. How can there be just one way?

Jesus is unique, and he is committing himself to be the way, meaning one with each one of us as we journey. But this journey is a partnership. He is with us, but we also have to be with him. Even when we stray we know that Jesus is with us pushing us along and trying to redirect us to himself and to his way.

Besides being the way, there is a fringe benefit. Jesus is also the truth. What exactly is truth? Pilate asked Jesus that question, and Jesus never answered. Truth is more than just a series of facts, solid facts. If we are sincere about being on the way with Jesus, then we are going to see life and the world as does Jesus, not as we see them. Companionship with Christ means a vision change, from seeing the world as others do to seeing it with the eyes of Jesus.

There is another fringe benefit: Jesus is the life. Being a disciple of Jesus brings eternal life, but it also means life right here, right now. Jesus, the truth, reveals the fullness of life right now. If we are not experiencing that vision right now, perhaps we need to re-focus on Christ.

So, the question seems

to boil down to what life is all about. Remember the days of the pandemic. Perhaps, those days of confinement allowed us to reflect more on what is most important in life, what we really want in life. Scripture screams at us and tells us quite

clearly that the path for the real heaven and the real life is Jesus, the way, the truth, and the life. If we truly understand and experience that Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life, then we will realize that anything else is just make believe.



Msgr. Robert H. Aucoin

May 3

Fifth Sunday of Easter

READINGS

Acts 6:1-7

1 Peter 2:4-9

John 14:1-12

The Diocese of Ogdensburg

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

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

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

Continued war in Sudan

Three years have passed since the start of the war in Sudan, and there seems to be no end in sight. The conflict, which broke out on April 16, 2023, remains in a stalemate with constant changes in territorial control. The Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) have recaptured large parts of Khartoum (including Omdurman and Bahri) as well as areas in central and eastern Sudan and established their base in Port Sudan.

Their opponents, the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), have consolidated control over most of the western Darfur region after capturing El Fasher (the capital of northern Darfur) in October 2025 following a long siege. The RSF have captured some areas in Kordofan and other regions, although Sudanese forces have pushed back the militants in areas such as South Kordofan (e.g., Kadugli and Dilling).

The war has claimed at least 150,000 lives, most of them civilians. In total, the conflict has displaced approximately 14 million people: around 9 to 10 million internally displaced persons have been resettled in other regions of Sudan, while about 4.4 million refugees and asylum seekers are living in neighboring countries (Chad, Egypt, South Sudan, and others).

Many internally displaced persons live in precarious conditions, and those who have been able to return to devastated areas (such as Khartoum) are at risk due to unexploded bombs and a lack of basic services such as healthcare. Women and girls constitute a significant proportion of the displaced and are among the most vulnerable. Meanwhile, Bishop Paul Swarbrick of Lancaster, the delegate of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales for Africa, called on Catholics in England and Wales to pray for peace in a message commemorating the three-year war in Sudan and asked the [everyone] not to lose sight of this crisis. "I am aware, through my links with the Church in Sudan and with Catholic charities working in the region that there is a fear that the conflict risks being overlooked by the international community."

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

Please remember the Pontifical Mission Societies of the Diocese of Ogdensburg INC. when writing or changing your will.

OBITUARIES

Brushton – Harold J. Dufrane, 74; Funeral Services April 28, 2026 at Flint Funeral Home; burial in Notre Dame Cemetery, Malone.

Brushton – Candice Marie Tower, 72; Mass of Christian Burial April 22, 2026 at St. Mary's Church; burial in parish cemetery.

Carthage – Terry Montgomery, 73; Funeral Services April 14, 2026 at Lundy Funeral Home & Cremation Service, Inc.

Chasm Falls – Marilyn A. (LaFlesh) Gadway, 74; Mass of Christian Burial April 23, 2026 at St. Helen's Church; burial in parish cemetery.

Colton – Theodore Anastasios Hintopoulos, 74; Mass of Christian Burial April 20, 2026 at St. Patrick's Church.

Croghan – Randall W. Aubel, 71;

Graveside services April 23, 2026 at St. Stephen's Cemetery.

Ellenburg – Patricia (LaClair) Rodriguez, 79; Mass of Christian Burial April 20, 2026 at St. Edmund's Church.

Keeseville – Marion M. (Blaise) Perrotte, 91; Mass of Christian Burial April 27, 2026 at St. John the Baptist Church; burial in parish cemetery.

Mooers Forks – Gerald A. Gadway, 94; Mass of Christian Burial April 25, 2026 at St. Ann's Church; burial in parish cemetery.

Morrisonville – Lisa Ann (Balko) Dumar, 64; Mass of Christian Burial April 24, 2026 at St. Alexander's Church; burial in Magdalena Solitude Cemetery.

Morrisonville – Florence A.

"Midge" Lecuyer, 89; Mass of Christian Burial April 24, 2026 at St. Alexander's Church; burial in St. Peter's Cemetery.

Ogdensburg – Sharone E. (Lalonde) Durham, 67; Funeral Services April 21, 2026 at Frary Funeral home; burial in Notre Dame Cemetery.

Potsdam – Margaret Mary (Shepherd) Hargerty, 95; Mass of Christian Burial April 22, 2026 at St. Mary's Church.

Saranac Lake – Sandy May (Paradis) Brown, 78; Mass of Christian Burial April 20, 2026 at St. Bernard's Church; burial in St. John's Cemetery, Lake Clear.

Watertown – Arthur H. Zaremba Sr., 93; Mass of Christian Burial April 23, 2026 at St. Anthony's Church.

More adults leave Church than enter in most countries

By Tessa Gervasini
EWTN News

A Pew Research Center study found that more adults leave the Catholic Church than enter it in most countries, but Catholics still make up the majority of the population in a number of countries analyzed.

The research released April 23 found that Christianity has experienced some of the largest losses of followers due to religious switching, when people identify with a different religion in adulthood than they were raised in as a child, compared with other faith groups around the world.

The U.S. data in the report, "Catholicism Has Lost People to Religious Switching in Many Countries, While Protestantism Has Gained in Some," comes from the Center's 2023-24 U.S. Religious Landscape Study (RLS). The international data comes from surveys conducted by Pew in spring 2024.

The global data that analyzed 24 countries was from Pew's international surveys conducted via telephone or face-to-face interviews. Pew has conducted more than 800,000 interviews in over 110 countries. The margin of

sampling error is based on individual countries' research.

Religious switching has affected Catholicism and Protestantism, two of the largest Christian subgroups, in differing ways. Catholicism has lost more people than it has gained in almost all the countries surveyed, whereas Protestantism has seen a net gain from religious switching.

Despite losses from religious switching, Catholics still make up the majority of the population in eight of the 24 nations Pew surveyed, including Poland (92%), the Philippines (80%), Italy (69%), Mexico (67%), Peru (67%), Hungary (63%), Colombia (60%), and Argentina (58%).

In 12 of the 24 surveyed countries, most of the population was raised Catholic and many adults still identify with the faith today. For example, 96% of Polish adults were raised Catholics. Of the group, 92% still identify with the religion, with 4% reporting they have left Catholicism.

Overall, more people left Catholicism than joined it in 21 of the countries. People who leave Catholicism tend to join Protestantism or disaffiliate from religion altogether, the report said.

Canadian cardinal calls on PM to limit MAID

By Canadian Catholic News

Toronto Cardinal Frank Leo has written to Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney and members of Parliament in the Toronto area, urging them to "choose life and not death" by supporting legislation that would block the planned expansion of assisted suicide for those with mental illness.

Bill C-218, the Right to Recover Act, introduced last year by Conservative member of Parliament Tamara Jansen, is a private member's bill that would prohibit the expansion of medical assistance in dying (MAID) to individuals whose sole underlying condition is mental illness.

Under current federal law, that expansion is scheduled to take effect March 17, 2027. Parliament was expected to debate the bill earlier this month, but its order of precedence in the House of Commons has been

pushed back, and no new date has been set.

In the April 20 letters, Leo reminded the prime minister and parliamentarians that a society "is rightly judged" by how it cares for its most vulnerable members and said many Canadians are "increasingly troubled" by the expansion of MAID since it was legalized in 2016.

Since then, nearly 100,000 lives have been ended by medically assisted death as eligibility criteria have broadened beyond the original framework that restricted MAID largely to those facing a reasonably foreseeable death.

"Our Catholic faith opposes the taking of any life, and it is with great disappointment and anguish that we have seen our country expand MAID at a rapid and alarming rate," Leo wrote.

Assisted suicide and euthanasia, he said, are "contrary to the dignity of the human per-

son."

Leo and the Archdiocese of Toronto are leading the nationwide Help Not Harm campaign, which is encouraging Canadians to write to their MPs in support of Bill C-218.

"We are encouraging parishes and the faithful to continue their efforts through the month of April and until a date for the vote is announced," Neil MacCarthy, director of public relations and communications for the archdiocese, told The Catholic Register earlier this month.

By mid-April, about 5,000 letters had been sent through the Help Not Harm online portal.

"There is growing anxiety that the normalization and expansion of assisted suicide risks undermining a culture of compassion, weakening investments in palliative support, and diminishing the collective commitment to accompany those suffering," Leo wrote.

He is also calling on Carney

to allow Liberal MPs a free vote when C-218 comes before Parliament.

"This legislation raises profound questions of conscience that transcend partisan alignment and touch on deeply held moral, ethical, and spiritual convictions," Leo wrote. "I ask you to choose life and not death; to help build a civilization that cares for those suffering and does not eliminate them, but instead surrounds them with dignity, compassion, and love."

He also asked the prime minister and Justice Minister Sean Fraser to "consider measures that restrict any further expansion of assisted suicide in Canada and instead prioritize investments in palliative care, mental health support, and resources for those who are increasingly marginalized and isolated, especially seniors and Canadians living with disabilities."

Around the diocese

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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.

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 canoe-

ing 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.

The Diocese of Ogdensburg

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