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The Diocese of Ogdensburg Volume 81 Number 7

NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

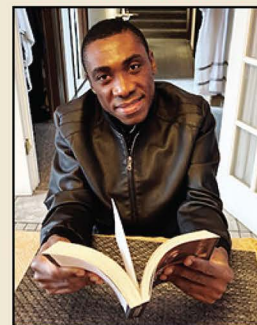
MAY 13, 2026

DEACONS GATHER FOR ANNUAL ASSEMBLY



Deacons and their wives from around the diocese gathered in Lake Placid May 4-6 for the annual Deacon Assembly. In addition to workshops and meetings, the deacons and their wives enjoyed time for fellowship and fun, as well as prayer and Mass. (Left) Deacon Peter Woolschlager (Croghan & Harrisville) provided music for the Mass. (Right) Deacons Thomas Yousey (Lowville), Deacon Garry Stevens (Carthage, Copenhagen), Deacon Frank Sczerzenie (Lake Pleasant) and Deacon Roderic Roca (Ogdensburg) sing the opening hymn at the Mass.

NEARING ORDINATION



Deacon Michelet Boncoeur is one of the three men scheduled to be ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Terry R. LaValley on May 30 in St. Mary's Cathedral, Ogdensburg. Originally from Haiti, Deacon Boncoeur says he looks forward to serving Christ and his Church here in the North Country.

FULL STORY, PAGE 4

Pope Leo XIV: Church is 'pilgrim in history'

By Veronica Giacometti
EWTN News

Pope Leo XIV continued his catechesis on the documents of the Second Vatican Council at his May 6 general audience, reflecting on the dogmatic constitution *Lumen Gentium* and the Church as "pilgrim in history towards the heavenly homeland."

Speaking in St. Peter's Square, the pope said that "the Church, in fact, journeys through this earthly history always looking towards her final destination, which is the heavenly homeland."

"This is an essential dimension which, however, we often overlook or downplay, because

we are too focused on what is immediately visible and on the more concrete dynamics of the life of the Christian community," he said.

The pope explained that "the Church lives in history in the service of the coming of the kingdom of God in the world."

"She proclaims the words of this promise to all and always; she receives a pledge of it in the celebration of the sacraments, particularly the Eucharist; she puts its logic into practice and experiences it in relationships of love and service," he said.

Leo said *Lumen Gentium* makes an important affirmation about the nature and mission of the Church.

"The Church is the 'universal sacrament of salvation' (LG, 48); that is, the sign and instrument of that fullness of life and peace promoted by God," he said.

"This means that she does not identify perfectly with the kingdom of God but is its seed and beginning, for its fulfillment will be granted to humanity and the cosmos only at the end," the pope continued.

Because of this, he said, Christians journey through history "without being either deluded or despairing," guided by the promise of the One who will "make all things new."

The Church, Leo said, carries out her mission between the "already" of the kingdom's begin-

ning in Jesus and the "not yet" of its promised fulfillment.

"As the guardian of a hope that enlightens the path, she is also invested with the mission of speaking clearly to reject everything that mortifies life and prevents its development, and to take a position in favor of the poor, the exploited, the victims of violence and war, and all those who suffer in body and in spirit," he said.

The pope emphasized that the Church must always point beyond herself to Christ.

"The Church, therefore, does not proclaim herself; on the contrary, everything within her must point to salvation in Christ," he said.

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In good company

"I'm not sure I know anyone else who would say giving an hour-long presentation to a room full of people made for an awesome day at work," my friend said.

"I had a better audience - a better room full of people - than anyone else," I responded.

This week, I had the privilege of spending a day with the deacons and their wives at the annual Deacon Assembly in Lake Placid (see photos on page 6).

Though I wasn't pre-

senting to the assembly until the afternoon, I arrived just before 9:30 to attend Mass and take pictures. After Mass, it was a blessing to join the deacons and their wives for lunch and for social time before my presentation.

There's nothing like spending time with a person who has the peace and joy of Christ. This was like doing that

times eleven billion. This was a room full of people who were vibrantly alive and joyful but also peaceful - people

who are rooted in and reflect the love of Christ.

"Getting to do stuff like that is life giving," I told my friend.

Being around so much joy and peace, I walked out feeling more joyful and peaceful. Being around those wonderful men and women makes me want more of that peace and joy. It makes me want to be closer to Christ so I can grow in his joy and peace.

That experience also reminded me how important it is for me to reflect Christ's joy and peace and how doing so can help Christ draw others

to himself the way it drew me to him.

I'm not always the best at doing that.

It was also a good reminder of how amazing our deacons and their wives really are. Looking around that room, I saw men and women who serve our parishes, youth/children, the elderly, the sick, the dying, the poor, the unborn, the imprisoned, the dead... I saw people who love Christ, his Church and each other and who serve Christ, his Church and each other.

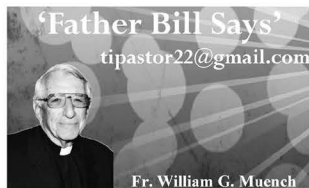
That really is an awesome day of work.

**Darcy L. Fargo**

'The Holy Spirit came to them'

Today - a little bit about the Pentecost. Time to talk about the Holy Spirit. I do realize that we are always aware of the actions of the Holy Spirit every day, but Pentecost is a festive celebration of the Holy Spirit in a special way. This year during the Easter Season, we thought of the Holy Spirit with the celebration of the sacrament of confirmation. The Bishop came to confer the sacrament on our young people. When I think of confirmation, I believe that this sacrament brings to each one of us the gifts of the Holy Spirit. These gifts support us throughout our spiritual life for a lifetime. At Pentecost, my first thought is to express my gratitude for the Lord's gifts - wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety and fear of the Lord.

At the Last Supper, Jesus promised his apostles that he would send the Holy Spirit, the Advocate, upon them. This Holy Spirit comes in power to



Fr. William G. Muench

help and guide the apostles in their ministry and continues to help today's disciples of Jesus to understand how to bring Jesus and his message to our world as we live as Jesus guides us. Personally, I know that each time I prepare to write or speak, I turn to the Holy Spirit seeking understanding and boldness.

Each time I read the story of the descent of the Holy Spirit upon those apostles in the Acts of the Apostles, I can only imagine how powerfully exciting and sacred that moment was. I know I would have loved to have been there on that first Pentecost. I am certain you remember the story: The apostles are gathered in the Upper Room anxious and worried. They know that

Jesus wants them to do something, but they don't know what. Then the miracle - that transforming miracle! The Holy Spirit came to them in wind and fire. The apostles found confidence - bravery in the Lord, boldness. They were no longer afraid and were ready to go into the streets and preach in the name of the Lord Jesus.

My own experience of the Holy Spirit was not as dramatic as that of the apostles. I know that the Holy Spirit found me as a young person and led me to choose the vocation of a Catholic priest. I know not how, but the Holy Spirit led me to the seminary. It was a transforming experience - that I know. I was ordained as a Catholic priest. This very week I will be celebrating the anniversary of that ordination day. Each year it is a day of memories and gratitude. I have had such wonderful experiences. I want you to know that my life as a priest has been filled with happiness. Je-

sus has guided me and constantly walked with me. The Holy Spirit has given me constant support, has shown me the way. I am grateful. I have been blessed - thank you, God.

I have been blessed constantly by so many wonderful people as a part of my life - bishops, priests, families, people - parishioners who were part of the various parishes where I served. They have given me support and friendship. I like to think that these folks have been gifts from the loving Holy Spirit. I am truly grateful to God for the gift of all those I have journeyed with.

Today and each day, I continue to remember in prayer the many people who have been part of my life and all that they have done to support me. Each Mass, I place them on the altar and remember them. They have helped me find my loving God, and they have helped me find happiness as a priest.

FOLLOW ME

Never left alone

Editor's Note: The following is Bishop Terry R. LaValley's homily for May 10, the Sixth Sunday of Easter and Mother's Day.

I'm sure many of you have seen the popular Christmastime movie "Home Alone." In the movie, a hurried, flighty family goes off on vacation, not noticing the absence of one of their darling children. Left behind with only his ingenuity, the 8-year-old boy fends off a pair of bungling burglars.

The movie basically consists of a series of humorous defeats that the child inflicts on the inept intruders. Because we are confident the story will have a happy ending, the movie probably does not raise for the viewer the serious question: How would I cope if I were left alone?

In the Gospel reading for this Sunday before the Ascension of our Lord into heaven, Jesus tells His disciples that He will be leaving them. In one sense, they will be alone. Although He promises to send them an Advocate, the Holy Spirit, they will have to fend for themselves; and the enemy or enemies they will face will not be clumsy burglars.

While Jesus was alive, the disciples trusted in Jesus' ability to hold opposition at bay. Where will they find the strength and direction they need when He is gone in the face of such opposition?

The stories in the Acts of the Apostles, like the one in our First Reading help to answer this question. They provide us with a sketch of the early Christian community.

In today's Reading

we hear of the effect of God's Spirit on the Apostle Philip and the powerful signs he was able to perform, through the Holy Spirit. We see that Jesus had been faithful

to His promise: the Holy Spirit was present and active in the life of the Church. The disciples would not and will not be left alone. Jesus' faithful followers will receive strength and direction from the Holy Spirit working through His Body, the Church.

If we look at the Church today from a human perspective, all we see are limited women and men. We are people who, left to our own ingenuity, are often bunglers. Yes, we have even allowed evil to infiltrate our Church. But we have not been left alone. I was especially made aware of the fact that we are not alone when, 16 years ago, Archbishop Sambri called to tell me of my appointment as Bishop of Ogdensburg. In that phone conversation, many times he reiterated for me not to be afraid, to be serene, rely on Jesus and His Holy Spirit. I remember wondering why in the world he kept telling me to be serene. Had he heard from someone that I had a reputation for being "un-serene like"?

In retrospect, maybe this was meant to be a message for me to remember that the Lord has not left us orphans. Always remember that, armed with the gifts of God's Holy Spirit, we will meet the challenge of the day - any day - with a renewed faith in God and love for His Body, the Church. You know

that the Holy Spirit has guided our Church for the last 2,000 years. Our hearts can be serene and at peace because millions of people try to live the commandments just like we do and we find inspiration in them. We are not alone.

Today, we honor our moms. Growing up, a mom reminds us that we are never alone. Did any of us really appreciate how closely our mothers walked by us while we were growing up? When we were hurting, moms were always there to soothe and make things better.

I thank God for my mother whose bountiful and delicious food was always on the table or in the fridge. I thank her for the always present clean clothes, for an immaculately kept house, the pretty flowers on the lawn, the chocolate chip cookies. I thank her for being up through the night when I was sick and for forgetting to tell dad, when he got back from work, what

my brothers and sisters - ok and me - did wrong during the day. I thank mom for teaching us our prayers and making sure we went to Church every Sunday and participated in religious classes. Her faith reminded us that God never leaves us orphans.

As our mothers age, we appreciate more and more their love for us and what motherhood entails - sacrifice that knows no bounds, a sense of security assuring us that she is ever-present, we're never alone. The years creep up on them, on all of us. Often their bodies become fragile, sometimes tragically their minds diminish, their memories fade.

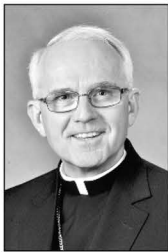
You know, our mothers need someone to walk with them, at their pace, particularly when their life partner is no longer with them. They must know that they are not alone. I'm thankful to God that I have siblings and their spouses who accompany my mother during these years in which she struggles with her health. If you are still gifted with her presence, ensure that your

mom understands that she is not alone.

In our efforts to honor and offer thanksgiving for all mothers, it is important to remember that Mother's Day can be a difficult holiday for many people, such as women who are struggling with infertility, those who have lost or are estranged from their mothers, and mothers who have lost one or more children through miscarriage, abortion or some other tragedy.

I can't imagine how difficult a day this must be for those who have never known the love of a mother, for someone whose mother abandoned them, physically or emotionally or those whose mother has died recently or when they were very young. This day doesn't go by without a big lump in the throats of many.

We thank you, heroic mothers, for your invincible love! We thank you for your intrepid trust in God and in His ever-present love. We thank you for the sacrifice of your life and for assuring us that we are never alone. Blessed Mother's Day to all our moms!



Bishop Terry R. LaValley



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Preparing to be 'Father Michelet Boncoeur'

By Darcy Fargo
Editor

"I'm looking forward to being a man of prayer," said Deacon Michelet Boncoeur. "Being a man of prayer will allow me to stay connected to God and to get to know God better through the people - His people - I serve. I look forward to going where the bishop asks me to go, getting to know the people of this diocese and serving them and God by administering the sacraments."

Deacon Boncoeur is scheduled to be ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Terry R. LaValley in a Mass to be celebrated at 11 a.m. on May 30 in St. Mary's Cathedral. Deacon Boncoeur will be ordained with Deacon Tyler Fitzgerald and Deacon Dennis Ombongi (stories to be featured in future editions).

"I feel very excited about the ordination," he said. "It's been a long journey for me. Since I first began my studies in Haiti, it's been a long time."

After completing philosophy studies in Haiti, the now-deacon continued his education in the United States at Divine Word College, earning an associate degree, and later pursued graduate studies at Catholic Theological Union toward master's degrees in divinity and in liturgy. His vocational journey included time with the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart and later the Society of the Divine Word, where he professed first vows in 2021 before discern-

JOIN THE CELEBRATION

Through the laying on of hands and the invocation of the Holy Spirit, Bishop Terry R. LaValley 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.

Stream online: 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.

ing a deeper call to diocesan priesthood.

He was then introduced to the Diocese of Ogdensburg by Father Medenel Angrand, pastor in Crown Point, Schroon Lake and Ticonderoga.

While Deacon Boncoeur says he's excited to complete his studies, his learning will continue.

"I need to be ready to learn from the pastor (where he is later assigned) and make myself ready to learn from him," he said. "I need to work in the parish and learn from the parish and be open to feedback from the pastor and parishioners."

Deacon Boncoeur said his year in the diaconate gave him opportunities to grow in his ministry and helped prepare him for his priesthood.

"One of the best things was to learn to



Deacon Michelet Boncoeur was ordained to the diaconate by Bishop Terry R. LaValley on May 24, 2025. Deacon Boncoeur is scheduled to be ordained to the priesthood on May 30.

be with the people - to be with them, to get to know them, to let them approach me and talk to me and for me to approach them and talk to them," he said. "And my diaconate ministry allows me to preach the word of God and to be with the people and serve them."

He says he's looking forward to continuing those aspects of his ministry while also growing it.

"It is time to put into practice what I have learned at the seminary and what I have

learned in my time in the parishes," Deacon Boncoeur said. "I look forward to celebrating the sacraments."

Though he looks forward to celebrating his first Mass at Church of the Holy Family in Wassertown the day after his ordination, Deacon Boncoeur noted he's also a bit nervous.

"It's really mixed feelings," he said. "When you become a priest, it's what you do - you say Mass as celebrant. A priest, an old priest, once told me that it's ok if you're shaking or

sweating during your first Mass. It's not a problem. If you feel nervous, it's ok. You're just beginning. I will be nervous, but I'm very excited to celebrate my first Mass."

Deacon Boncoeur noted it's also a bit sad because his mother and brother, residents of Haiti, will be unable to attend.

"They'll be watching the ordination and my first Mass (online)," he said. "It is very hard. This celebration - it's huge in my culture. It would be a huge celebration when you have all your family with you. It's also hard that my father is not alive any more to see it. I remember the first time I told my parents, 'I want to be a priest.' My father said, 'ok! If it is God's will.' He was ok with it. My mother was not. She has only two sons, and she wanted grandchildren. Now, she is happy for me, except about not being able to come."

He noted, though, that he has family members coming in from around the United States, Canada and other locations.

"I'm also grateful for the support from Bishop LaValley, from the Vocations Director Father Chris (Carrara) and (former Vocations Coordinator) Sister Mary Eamon Lyng," Deacon Boncoeur said. "I'm grateful to Father Medenel for introducing me to this diocese and for his support, and to Father Al (Hauser) and Father (John) "Mickey" (Demo). And, of course, I'm grateful to God."

Dying with Christ, Living With Hope event postponed to September

By Colleen Miner
Diocesan Respect Life Co-Director

The spring Dying with Christ/Living with Hope Educational Conference has been rescheduled to the fall due to a conflict with the diocesan ordination.

The new date is Saturday, September 26, at St. Peter's Emmaus Room in Plattsburgh. The event will run from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

The new date will also provide the opportunity for college students to attend.

September 26 is the Feast of Saints Cosmas and Damien, patron saints of physicians and surgeons. They were twin brothers known for their exceptional skills in medicine and their compassionate care for the sick.

How appropriate then that we are learning about the new assisted New York suicide law, which will take effect on August 5, on their feast day?

Dying with Christ/Living with Hope was created by the Christian Medical and Dental Association of Canada, where assisted suicide has been legal for 10 years and is estimated to have killed 100,000 Canadians.

Learn about the slippery slope since legalization and how to prepare for what may be ahead in New York State.

The three-part video series focuses on demystifying death and

the dying process by discussing suffering, grief and our duty to care for others. Theologians and health-care professionals give helpful perspectives on life and death.

How will this new law affect you and your loved ones? Come discover how when we make a commitment to die with Christ, we can truly live with hope.

Small groups, led by those who have previously completed the course, gather after each video to reflect and share.

Jessica Rodgers, Coalitions Director for the Patients' Rights Action Fund, which defends people with disabilities, the elderly and poor from the threat of Physician Assisted Suicide, will be the guest

speaker.

The day concludes with a question-and-answer panel that will provide the opportunity to submit or ask questions.

The cost is \$10.

Walk-ins are welcome, but pre-registration helps plan materials and food.

Registration is now open at <http://www.rcdony.org/livingwithhope>.

Please contact the Respect Life Office with any questions.

If you are unable to attend but would like more information on the Dying with Christ/Living with Hope program, please email: cminer@rcdony.org

Rest in Peace

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

May 13 – Rev. Ladislav J. Stasz, 1971; Rev. Edward E. Papp, 2016

May 14 – Deacon Vincent E. Irvin Jr., 2003

May 15 – Rev. William Rosziter, 1908; Msgr. James R. McClure, 1960; Deacon William G. Schmidt, 2016

May 16 – Rev. Moses Legault, 1908; Rev. John M. McIntyre, 1944; Msgr. Peter R. Riani, 2019

May 18 – Rev. John B. A. Legrand, 1891; Rev. Richard J. Cotter, 1928, Rev. Augustus J. Dumont, 1949

May 19 – Msgr. Arthur M. Leary, 1968; Deacon Vincent J. Frattali, 2003; Rev. Richard S. Sturtz, 2021

Bishop's Public Schedule

May 13 – 9:45 a.m. – Episcopal Council at Bishop's Residence

6 p.m. – Confirmation at the Catholic Community of St. Peter and St. Mary and St. Hedwig (at St. Peter's Church) in Lowville along with St. Stephen's Church in Croghan

May 14 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

7 p.m. – Confirmation at the Church of the Sacred Heart in Watertown along with St. Paul's Church in Black River, St. Mary's Church in Evans Mills and the Blessed Sacrament Parish in Watertown

May 15 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

6 p.m. – Confirmation at St. Andre Bessette Roman Catholic Parish (at Notre Dame Church) in Malone along with St. Mary's Church in Brushton and The Catholic Community of St. Augustine in North Bangor

May 16 – 8:45 a.m. – Highway to Heaven – The Journey Continues at St. Peter's Parish (Sacred Heart Church) in Massena

May 17 – 10 a.m. – Confirmation at Holy Angels Church in Altona along with St. Ann's Church in Mooers Forks, St. Patrick's Church in Rouses Point and St. Mary's Church in Champlain

May 18 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

May 20-22 – Presbyteral Assembly at the Cambria Hotel Lake Placid in Lake Placid

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

Environmental Stewardship

Dignity of work, workers

Have you ever noticed how many people touch your life through the work they do each day? Recently, I have begun to observe what I have often taken for granted and been unmindful of – how the work of others impacts my life and lifestyle. Scriptures and Church teachings reveal that through work, we – humans – both fulfill the command found in Genesis to care for the earth (Gn. 2:15) and to be productive in (our) labors. Work is seen as a participation in the creative work of God.

On May 1, we celebrated the Feast Day of St. Joseph the Worker, and the Church provides us with a model. This feast was instituted in 1955 by Pope Pius XII. Saint Joseph, the carpenter and foster father of Jesus, is recognized as the patron saint of workers, embodying the dignity of labor and the importance of humility in all vocations. His example encourages us to approach our work with care and integrity. The pope said, "The spirit flows to you and to all men from the heart of the God-man, Savior of the world, but certainly, no worker was ever more completely and profoundly penetrated by it than the foster father of Jesus, who lived with Him in closest intimacy and community of family life and work."

What might happen if we were more intentional in our response to those who serve our needs, whether in-person or by their public service this week? Our gratitude could be expressed in a word or simply in praying a blessing. We participate in the creative work of God by the work we do. We can care for the earth by choosing Fair Trade products, i.e. coffee, tea, cocoa, etc., that ensure workers are paid just wages and the product is sustainability grown (for more information, see Fair Trade Catholic Relief Services). This is one way of caring for the earth and workers. What are some other ways you can express care for the earth and the worker?

DEACON ASSEMBLY



Deacons of the Diocese of Ogdensburg and their wives gathered at the Cambria Hotel Lake Placid from May 4 to 6 for the annual Deacon Assembly. The event included workshops on funeral planning and cemetery issues, diocesan communications efforts, strategies for computer safety and other topics, as well as opportunities for prayer, fellowship, Mass and fun. On Tuesday, May 5, Father Christopher C. Carrara, diocesan Vicar for Clergy, celebrated Mass for the assembly. Pictured are, (top left) Deacon Philip and Linda Regan (Norwood, Norfolk & Brasher Falls), Deacon Bryan and Johnna Bashaw (Malone), Deacon James and Robin Law (Saranac Lake) and Deacon Guy and Linda Javarone (Blessed Sacrament, Watertown) attend the Mass. (Top right) Deacon Randy Smith (Plattsburgh) proclaimed the Gospel at the Mass. (Middle right) Father Carrara delivers his homily. (Bottom right) Deacon James & Diana Snell (Canton, Colton & Potsda) and Deacon Gary and Gayle Frank (Alexandria Bay & Clayton) listen to Father Carrara's homily. (Bottom left) In addition to Deacon Smith, Father Carrara was aided at the Mass by Deacon Donald Wilder (Blessed Sacrament, Watertown) and Deacon Ronny Gingrich (Lowville). (Middle left) Joyce Wilder served as lector for the Mass.



SUNDAY'S SCRIPTURE

Vibrant Church participation

College students have ended their school year. Soon our elementary and secondary school students will be on summer vacation. End of the semester, end of the year, those expressions always connote exams, reports and finishing things.

In today's our Gospel, Jesus finds himself at the end, the end of his ministry here on earth. In this passage, he is giving the apostles last minute instructions.

He will leave, but he will not leave them orphans, and he will send the Holy Spirit so that his presence can continue among them. Clearly, Jesus leaves his church, his people, in other words, us, in charge but with the guidance and support of the Holy Spirit.

Yes, the guidance, the protection and the gifts

of the Holy Spirit essentially give divine life to the Church, to all of us in the Church. However, the human part remains. In other words, we can be inspired, guided and directed, but we must act. Every member of the Church needs to use those gifts of the Holy Spirit for one's own benefit as well as for the benefit of others.

The Church from its very beginnings has been strong and has been weak, has suffered and has triumphed, has seen high points and has experienced low points. Every now and then, corrective action is implemented to rebuild what may have been lost.

It is no secret that active, vibrant Church participation has waned in our parishes. Decreased membership and partici-

May 17

Seventh Sunday of Easter

READINGS

Acts 1:12-14

1 Peter 4:13-16

John 17:1-11a

pation in Church life are not like decreases in other organizations. When we speak about Church, we are talking about salvation, about participation in the life of Christ, about eternal happiness. We want full and active participation, not because it looks good, but because we want people to share in the life of Christ as found in his Church.

Vocations face challenges. There are fewer priests and religious, yes, but there are also marriages that hurt and end up being broken. Fewer make a commitment to marriage. Many single, young people suffer

loneliness because they feel that they do not fit in, afraid to make a commitment to life. So, the Church, all of us, must make efforts to show the value and worth of one's vocation in life as a true calling from God.

The entire diocese aims to build parishes of living stones, a beautiful analogy that speaks about the living realities of parishes, people with physical assets of buildings. Shifting and dwindling populations have forced many changes in society. These same forces shape our parishes. As a Church, we wish to respond properly to those changes, to live in the present, and to prepare for the future. We want to plan and not merely react. We do this not just to increase numbers, but in an effort to promote the Body of Christ among current members, inactive members, and ultimately to all.

The work of building a vibrant parish is everyone's job, not just that of a few people. The parishes of today are already vastly different from the parishes of 30 or 40 years ago. The buildings are the same, but the parish is not the same in 2026. Parish life continues to have buildings, but the true parish life will also be different. We should be concerned about the Church because we are talking about the faith life of thousands of people. We want to help them in their journey to discover value in faith, value in Church participation, value in the sacraments, especially baptism and the celebration of the Eucharist, and value in being incorporated with Christ. So, let's all be guilty... but guilty in this sense. If we were put on trial for being a Catholic, would there be enough evidence to convict us? Let's hope so.



Msgr. Robert H. Aucoin

CALLED TO SERVE

Here comes this pope's first encyclical

International peace, artificial intelligence (AI) and a crisis in international law are expected to be topics in Pope Leo XIV's first encyclical. Press sources have given the letter a working title, *Magnifica Humanitas*, and have suggested the encyclical will be released by the Vatican May 15.

The date has significance. Pope Leo XIII published *Rerum Novarum* on that date in 1891. Leo XIII addressed the industrial revolution. He wrote about worker's and employer's responsibilities to the world. His encyclical was the foundation of Catholic Social Doctrine.

Leo XIV is expected to further define social teaching in this letter to bishops, priests, deacons, religious and the lay faithful.

An encyclical is a big deal. The pope may not address topics of faith and morals, (part of the doctrine of infallibility), but all Catholics are expected to pay attention to the teaching and follow the pope's advice.

The Church has a bunch of titles for official documents. Encyclicals draw the most attention. St. Pope John Paul penned 14, John XXIII is credited with 12. Leo's predecessors in the chair of St. Peter, Benedict, had three, and

Francis had four to his name.

Francis' 2015 encyclical *Laudato Si*, (Praise be to you - On Care For Our Common Home) is his most publicized.

A pope may choose to write a letter to the faithful because some issue or topic has his attention. These are called *motu proprio*. That's Latin for "by his own hand".

Pope Leo XVI has one Apostolic Exhortation to his name. An exhortation urges the Church to consider a particular spiritual matter that the

pope considers significant. *Dilexi te*, (I have loved you), was started during Pope Francis' tenure but was completed by Leo.

There are Papal Bulls, an official declaration, and an Apostolic Constitution, which deals mostly with "magisterial" matters, like specific diocese, or catholic universities.

A pope's comments during homilies, speeches, and the popular press conference can also send messages to the faithful.

The form, context, and

seriousness of the message are all important.

One pundit suggested that Leo's first encyclical might be the defining document of his pontificate. This Italy based commentator wondered "What if just a few pages could reveal everything about the near future of the Catholic Church?"

If it does nothing else, it raises the expectation for this initial document from the U.S. born pope, Leo XIV.

Don't touch that dial!

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



Deacon Kevin Mastellon

CATHOLIC WORLD AT A GLANCE

Filipino priest withdraws as bishop-designate

TAGBILARAN CITY, Philippines — Father Gerardo F. Saco Jr., the priest appointed by Pope Leo XIV to become the next bishop of the Diocese of Tagbilaran in the Philippines, has decided not to proceed with his episcopal ordination, a move that surprised many clergy and faithful in Bohol province and across the Philippine Church. In an official statement released by the Diocese of Tagbilaran on May 5, Saco said that after “much prayer and careful discernment,” he had decided not to continue with the episcopal ordination scheduled for May 26. “I sincerely ask for your understanding regarding this change of heart,” Saco said in the statement. “It comes from a deep awareness of my own human limitations and inadequacies.” Saco, who had been serving as diocesan administrator since October 2025 following the appointment of Bishop Alberto Uy as archbishop of Cebu in 2025, was appointed bishop of Tagbilaran by Pope Leo XIV on March 25.

Cardinal: Early for talk of sanctions for German bishops

Cardinal Pietro Parolin, the Vatican secretary of state, said on May 6 it would be premature to discuss sanctions against the German bishops for blessings of same-sex couples. Parolin, however, did not rule out an intervention by the Holy See but expressed hope that it would be avoided. “It is premature now to speak of sanctions. Let us hope we never have to get to sanctions, and that problems can be resolved peacefully, as they should be in the Church,” Parolin told reporters on the sidelines at a book launch at the Patristic Institute in Rome on Wednesday. Several members of the German Bishops’ Conference, citing the Vatican declaration *Fiducia Supplicans*, have formalized blessings for same-sex couples in their dioceses in Germany. Recently, a 2024 letter was circulated from the Dicastery of the Doctrine of the Faith prohibiting this practice. Pope Leo XIV has also weighed in on the issue, recently stating that the Holy See does not agree with the German bishops with the “formalized blessing of couples” beyond the allowances of *Fiducia Supplicans*.

Bishops urge congress to ‘put children and families first’

The U.S. Catholic bishops are calling on Congress to move forward appropriations that promote families, protect unborn children, and support women. In a May 4 letter to Congress, Bishop Daniel Thomas of Toledo, Ohio, who heads the Committee on Pro-Life Activities for the U.S. bishops, urged Congress “to advance appropriations that respect and affirm the dignity of all human life, from conception to natural death.” Addressed to the chairs and vice chairs for the committees on appropriations of the U.S. House and the U.S. Senate, Thomas in the letter voiced support for policies that support women and children, defund abortion providers, and support restorative reproductive medicine. “We continue to call for policies that put children and families first,” he said. “Funding priorities, aligned in this way, must respond to mothers in need and their babies, born and preborn alike.”

Poll: Most Americans favor pope’s call for peace

By Tyler Arnold
EWTN News

A poll found two-thirds of Americans have a positive view of Pope Leo XIV’s calls for peace amid the Iran war and a majority of people hold a negative view of President Donald Trump’s criticisms of the Holy Father and threats to destroy Iranian civilization.

The Washington Post-ABC News-Ipsos poll surveyed 2,560 American adults between April 24–28. The poll has a margin of error of plus or minus two percentage points.

Pollsters asked people whether they hold a positive or negative view about statements and actions by Trump, Leo, and Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth.

It found that 66% of people have a positive view of Leo asking Americans to contact members of Congress to work toward peace and reject war and only 30% view his words negatively.

Leo made that comment to reporters on April 7 after Trump threatened to annihilate the “whole civilization” of Iran if the country did not reach a peace deal with the U.S. The Holy Father called the threat “a sign of the hatred, the division, the destruction that the human being is capable of.”

The pontiff also called the language “unacceptable,” and the poll found most Americans agreed with that assessment. Only 21% of people viewed the threat positively, and 76% viewed it negatively.

Americans also disliked Trump saying “I don’t want a pope who thinks it’s OK for Iran to have a nuclear weapon,” which was one of the president’s reactions to the pope’s comments. It found just 38% of people viewing the retort positively and 57% viewing it negatively.

Leo never said Iran should have nuclear weapons but rather spoke against nuclear proliferation in the Middle East when Iran and Israel entered military conflict in 2025. The pontiff also spoke against nuclear weapons more broadly.

The poll found that Americans also overwhelmingly disliked Trump posting an AI-created image of himself resembling Jesus Christ, finding only 9% of people viewed it positively and 87% viewed it negatively. The president deleted the image and said he thought it portrayed him dressed as a doctor rather than Christ.

Americans also disliked a public prayer by Hegseth in which he asked God for “overwhelming violence of ac-

tion against those who deserve no mercy” in relation to U.S. attacks on Iran. Only 27% of Americans viewed those comments positively, 69% negatively.

Trump’s approval among Catholics and Americans broadly has fallen in recent months amid the Iran war and the higher cost of gas and food and broader hikes in inflation.

The poll found Trump’s disapproval from Americans rose to 62% and his approval rating was only 37%. On certain key issues, Trump’s approval is even worse, with 66% disapproving of the way he is handling Iran and 76% disapproving of the way he has handled the cost of living.

It found 46% believe Trump’s attacks on Iran are inconsistent with his campaign promise to avoid foreign wars, 22% see it as consistent, and 30% are unsure. It found 36% of people believe military force against Iran was the right decision, and 61% view it as a mistake.

American views about Leo are much better, although many non-Catholics still do not have an opinion about the first American pontiff.

Only 38% of Catholics said they approve of Trump, and 61% said they disapprove. Among white Catholics, 49% approve and 51% disapprove. Among Hispanic Catholics, 25% approve and 72% disapprove.

The poll found that 41% of Americans have a favorable view of Leo, 16% have a negative view, and 43% have no opinion. Among Catholics, 61% have favorable views of the pope, 14% have unfavorable views, and 25% do not have an opinion.

Among Democratic or Democratic-leaning Catholics, 76% have a favorable view of Leo, 14% have a negative view, and 18% have no opinion. With Republican and Republican-leaning Catholics, 48% have a positive view, 23% have a negative view, and 29% have no opinion.

The poll found 60% of white Catholics have a favorable opinion of Leo and 15% have a negative view, with 24% holding no opinion. For Hispanic Catholics, 59% have a favorable view 12% have a negative view, and 29% have no opinion.

John White, professor emeritus of politics at The Catholic University of America, told EWTN News the poll shows “the danger and absurdity” of Trump directly criticizing Leo when the president is facing bad poll numbers and when those who have an opinion about the pope mostly view him positively.

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: Father John Yonkovic, 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.

ADIRONDACK MOUNTAIN

FRIENDSHIP VOLUNTEERS

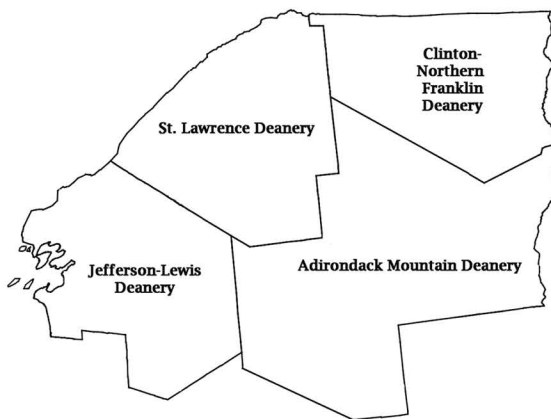
Lake Placid - Mercy Care for the Adirondacks is recruiting new volunteers to help their elder neighbors age in place more successfully.

Date: May 27

Place: Heaven Hill Farm

Features: New Volunteers will join Mercy Care's more than 100 Friendship Volunteers from Lake Placid, Saranac Lake, and Tupper Lake and surrounding areas who are helping their elder neighbors stay connected to their communities while helping to make their lives a little easier and happier. A complementary lunch will be provided. Volunteers of all faiths are encouraged and invited to participate.

Contact: There is no cost for the training, but registration is required. To register for the training, please visit Mercy Care's website at www.adkmercy.org or contact Lexi Bevilacqua, Mercy Care's Director of Programs and Mission Integration, at abevilacqua@adkmercy.org or call Lexi for more information at 518-523-5446.



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.

CLINTON NORTHERN FRANKLIN

SOAKING PRAYERS SESSIONS

Come enjoy a relaxing prayer opportunity at two different locations.

Plattsburgh: Newman Center, 1:30 p.m. to 3:30; 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 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

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

FIRST FRIDAY

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

Date: June 5

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

BENEFIT CONCERT

Peru – Mark your calendars for

the 20th anniversary for the Benefit Concert for the North Country Mission of Hope, Towne Meeting Band will be performing.

Date: June 7

Time: 7 p.m.

Place: Augustine's Church

Cost: Donation

Features: For the 13th year Town Meeting will be performing. They are known for their innovative blend of Folk, Soft Rock, and Americana. This concert will include special guests as well. Donations from the concert have provided support to people in Nicaragua, the North Country, and to the yearly mission to Appalachian Kentucky.

Contact: For more information visit www.townemeeting.com or www.ncmissionofhope.org

JEFFERSON-LEWIS

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

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: June 7

Time: Following 11 a.m. Mass

Place: St. Hedwig's Church

Contact: 315-348-6260

SPAGHETTI DINNER

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

Date: June 25

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

MOUNT CARMEL FEST

Watertown – St. Anthony's to have their 108th Mount Carmel Festival.

Schedule: June 26, 5 p.m. to 10; June 27 1 p.m. to 10; June 28, 1 p.m. to 10. Religious Procession at 5 p.m. and giant fireworks at 9:30 p.m.

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

ST. LAWRENCE

ROSARY WITH DEVOTIONS

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

Date: June 6

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: June 6

Time: 3:15 p.m.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

Pope urges Catholics to read printed books

By **Almudena Martínez-Bordiú**
EWTN News

Pope Leo XIV on Thursday underscored the enduring value of printed books in the digital age, saying reading “nourishes the mind” and offers Christians a valuable opportunity to proclaim Christ.

The pope made the remarks May 7 during an audience at the Vatican with employees of the Vatican Publishing House, or Libreria Editrice Vaticana, which was founded in 1926 and is celebrating its centenary this year.

The Holy Father said the book “is an opportunity to think,” defending the physicality of printed books in an increasingly digital culture because, he said, they remind readers of the im-

portance of “thought, reflection, and study.”

“Reading nourishes the mind; it helps to foster a conscious and well-formed critical sense, guarding us against fundamentalism and ideological shortcuts,” Pope Leo said.

“For this reason, I urge everyone to read books, as an antidote to closed-mindedness, which is reflected in rigid attitudes and reductive views of reality,” he added.

The pope also emphasized that books offer an opportunity for encounter.

“When we hold a book in our hands, we ideally encounter its author,” he said. “But at the same time, we meet those who have read it before us, or who are reading it now or will read it

in the future.”

Pope Leo noted that Pope Francis had taught Catholics “to practice the culture of encounter,” adding that “a book is a bridge to others, a source of dialogue that enriches us, a stimulus to expand our own perspective.”

For Christians in particular, the pope said, books can be “an opportunity to proclaim Christ.”

“We know well how reading a saint’s biography or a well-written spiritual reflection can touch the heart,” he said.

He also pointed to the Virgin Mary, who is often depicted in the Annunciation “intent on reading the holy Scriptures,” and to St. Anthony of Padua, who is commonly shown holding “the open Book of the Gospels, upon which the Infant Jesus stands.”

“We often see St. Augustine seated at a desk before a large book and, at times, holding a heart in his hand: truth and charity,” the pope said.

“At the school of Mary and the saints, let us nourish ourselves with the word of God, so that it may shape our way of thinking and acting,” Pope Leo added.

The pope concluded by recalling the words of St. Paul VI, who in 1976 met with employees of the Vatican Publishing House for its 50th anniversary and urged them to “look ahead, to refine ideas and plans for the future.”

“I thank you for your work, which I hope you will carry out with dedication and passion,” Pope Leo said. “And I cordially bless each of you and your loved ones.”

Moth species named after Pope Leo XIV

By **Tessa Gervasini**
EWTN News

Researchers have named a moth species “*Pyralis papaleonei*,” or “Pope Leo moth,” in honor of the Holy Father.

“The new species is dedicated to the head of the Catholic Church, Pope Leo XIV,” authors Peter Huemer, Lauri Kaila, and Andreas H. Segerer wrote in a research article on the species. “The pontiff is a strong advocate of climate and environmental protection, and we hope that his voice may serve as an example for humanity.”

In the journal, *Nota Lepidopterologica*, the

entomologists said the species was discovered on the Mediterranean island of Crete. It is a medium-sized species with a 2-centimeter wingspan, gold spots, and prominent white bands.

“Furthermore, due to its distinctive coloration and overall appearance, the new species belongs to a group of Pyralidae whose species names refer to high secular or ecclesiastical offices including *Pyralis regalis*, *Pyralis imperialis*, *Pyralis princeps*, and *Pyralis cardinalis*,” they wrote.

Butterflies are often named after external characteristics, geographical locations, or in honor of distinguished individuals, according to a press release from Tiroler Landesmuseum Ferdinandeum, or the Tyrolean State Museum, located in Innsbruck, Austria.

Within the *Pyralis* ge-

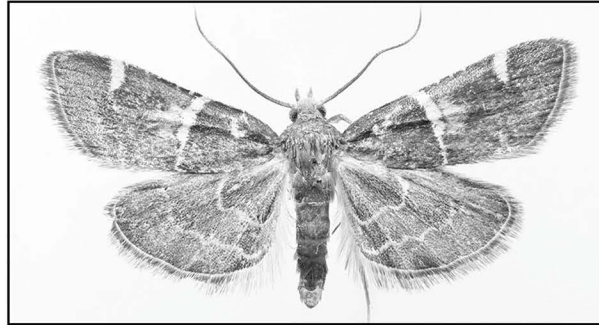


PHOTO COURTESY OF THE TYROLEAN STATE MUSEUM

Pyralis papaleonei species.

nus, a different tradition has emerged. As early as 1775, Austrian naturalists and Jesuits Michael Denis and Ignaz Schiffermüller described the first species of the group as *Pyralis regalis*, or “royal,” due to its coloration.

This prompted similar names including *Pyralis princeps* and *Pyralis cardinalis*, which belong to the superfamily Pyraloidea comprised of 16,000 described species worldwide.

In the Old Testament (Genesis 2), Adam is instructed to name all

animals. According to the museum, this led to the action of taxonomy — the science of classifying, naming, and categorizing organisms — to often be considered, “in the biblical sense, the oldest task of humankind.”

According to Huemer, head of studies at the Tyrolean State Museum, the naming process is more than a scientific act but a symbolic gesture. For the Pope Leo moth, it is an appeal to the head of the Catholic Church and to draw attention to humanity’s

central responsibility for the preservation of creation.

“We are facing a global biodiversity crisis, yet only a fraction of the world’s species has been scientifically documented,” Huemer said in a statement. “Effective conservation of biodiversity requires that species are first recognized, described, and named.”

Huemer’s call echoes the pope’s “call for conversion” at a 2025 international conference on climate justice, celebrating the 10th anniversary of Pope Francis’ encyclical *Laudato Si’*.

“It is only by returning to the heart that a true ecological conversion can take place,” the Holy Father said. “We must shift from collecting data to caring, and from environmental discourse to an ecological conversion that transforms both personal and communal lifestyles.”





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

Marian month in China

Prayer for peace is the focus of many processions, liturgical celebrations and communal rosaries that are bringing together Catholic communities in all Chinese provinces these days.

Since the evening of April 30, liturgies and processions have been taking place in countless Catholic churches and shrines across mainland China.

From the Shrine of Sheshan near Shanghai to the Shrine of Housangyu in Beijing, from cathedrals to small village chapels, groups of Catholics large and small are gathering before the altar and statues of Mary to pray together for the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary during the Marian month of May.

Marian devotion is deeply rooted in the faith of Chinese Catholics. They have always viewed participation in the prayers and liturgies of the Marian month as an opportunity and a sign of their connection with the universal Church and the successors of Peter. In a time torn apart by wars that cause suffering for entire nations, believers in China are also praying for the preservation of communion and the restoration of peace everywhere.

In the Basilica of Our Lady of Sheshan in the Diocese of Shanghai, Bishop Joseph Shen Bin celebrated a solemn Mass on the afternoon of April 30 to open the Marian month. Faithful from all over mainland China and abroad participated, along with seminarians from the Sheshan Seminary.

In addition to praying for peace, the bishop of Shanghai explained the true meaning of a pilgrimage: "It does not consist merely of walking a path or simply performing rites, but touches the depths of every person's heart: With every step we take, we move away from worldliness and draw ever closer to the grace of God." Therefore, he emphasized: "First and foremost, we must remain in daily prayer and nourish our lives with the Word of God. Second, we must follow the example of the Virgin Mary and bear witness to our faith through holiness. Finally, pilgrimage should be experienced as a means of inner renewal."

To mark the opening of the Marian month, the parish of Lucheng in the Diocese of Wenzhou announced the theme for the month: "Devotion to Mary: Spiritual deepening in service to the communion." The parish of Qianku had already opened the Marian month on April 30 with a solemn procession and prayer vigil attended by thousands of faithful.

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

Pope Leo meets Rubio amid tensions with Trump

By Ishmael Adibuah
EWTN News

On Thursday Pope Leo XIV met with U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio at the Vatican, with the meeting coming amid tensions between the Holy See and U.S. President Donald Trump.

Trump has expressed his disapproval of Leo's public statements denouncing the U.S.-led war on Iran. The Holy Father has repeatedly called for peace amid the ongoing conflict.

According to a statement released by the U.S. Department of State, the pontiff and Rubio discussed "the situation in the Middle East and topics of mutual interest in the Western Hemisphere."

It also stated that their meeting "underscored the strong relationship between the United States and the Holy See and their shared commitment to promoting peace and human dignity."

The Holy See published its own statement of the meeting, which,

according to Vatican spokesperson Matteo Bruni, lasted for 45 minutes.

The statement described the meeting as an encounter where "cordial discussions" took place regarding the "fostering of strong bilateral relations between the Holy See and the United States of America."

This week Trump expressed his desire that Rubio tell the pope that "Iran cannot have nuclear weapons." The president has repeatedly claimed, without evidence, that Leo wants the Middle Eastern country to develop nuclear armaments.

Leo has rejected those allegations. On May 5 at Castel Gandolfo he stated that the Church "has spoken for years against all nuclear weapons." On Wednesday, Vatican Secretary of State Cardinal Pietro Parolin stated that the Holy See "has always worked, and will continue to work, on nuclear disarmament."

Parolin, who also met Rubio on May 7, also described Trump's recent verbal attacks against the pope as "strange."

OBITUARIES

Ausable Forks – Frank Harte Madden, 94; Mass of Christian Burial June 5, 2026 at Holy Name Church; burial in Fairview Cemetery.

Carthage – Samuel P. Lundy, 83; Mass of Christian Burial May 6, 2026 at St. James Church; burial in Hillside Cemetery, Champion.

Champlain – Armand P. Bechard, 88; Mass of Christian Burial May 8, 2026 at St. Mary's Church.

Clayton – Herbert William Seymour, 80; Mass of Christian Burial July 12, 2026 at St. Mary's Church.

Constable – Donald G. Perry, 98; Mass of Christian Burial May 11, 2026 at St. Francis Church; burial in St. John Bosco Cemetery.

Fort Covington – Helen F. (Charlebois) Perusse, 68; Mass of Christian Burial May 23, 2026 at

St. Mary's of the Fort Church.

Lake Placid – Debra Ann (Hallett) Strack, 72; Mass of Christian Burial May 9, 2026 at St. Agnes Church.

Malone – Mary Kathryn Tulloch, 86; Private Services.

Morrisonville – Carole D. (Engleman) Sorrell, 81; Mass of Christian Burial May 5, 2026 at St. Alexander's Church.

Norfolk – Rose (Wolfe) Wagstaff, 90; Mass of Christian Burial May 15, 2026 at Church of the Visitation; burial in Visitation Cemetery.

Ogdensburg – Marlene Bette (Fisher) Dufort, 92; Mass of Christian Burial May 8, 2026 at St. Mary's Cathedral; burial in St. Mary's Cemetery.

Peru – Anthony "Tony" Tyrell, 86;

Mass of Christian Burial May 6, 2026 at St. Augustine's Church.

Plattsburgh – Richard P. Pecore, 87; Mass of Christian Burial May 11, 2026 at St. Peter's Church; burial in parish cemetery.

Plattsburgh – Charles H. Stone, 82; Mass of Christian Burial May 7, 2026 at St. John's Church.

Rouses Point – Rosalie M. (Guay) Tetreault, 85; Mass of Christian Burial May 4, 2026 at St. Patrick's Church.

Saranac Lake – John Joseph McBride, 90; Mass of Christian Burial May 9, 2026 at St. Bernard's Church; burial in St. Bernard's Cemetery.

Watertown – Amber M. Long, 50; Funeral Services May 11, 2026 at Reed & Benoit Funeral Home; burial in Brookside Cemetery.

Around the diocese

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

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: June 6

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: June 14 (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 Gonthier 315-212-5166.

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 (wait list only)

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/>

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.

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 McCullouch. 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 recep-

tion 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.

SURVIVING DIVORCE

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

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

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

Features: Surviving Divorce features twelve video presentations that cover topics such as shock and grief, anger and forgiveness, money issues, dealing with children and a former spouse, and annulment and remarriage. This program is for the newly separated and divorced and those still struggling with issues many years later. It will help them find answers to their questions, restore their hope, and begin authentic healing.

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

PILGRIMAGE

RHINE RIVER CRUISE

Join Father Donald Robinson on a 10 day cruise.

Date: Dec. 3-12, 2026

Cost: \$4,599 from New York (*Air/land tour price is \$4,049 plus \$550 gov't taxes/airline charges)


Features: On board the luxurious MS Amadeus Silver II Visiting: Freiburg, Strasbourg, Speyer, Rudesheim, Koblenz, Cologne, Rothenburg, Nuremburg, Munich

Contact: For more information contact Father Donald Robinson at donrob4@twcnr.com / (315) 408-0858

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