

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Prop 1: The devil  
is in the  
details | Page 6

Superintendent's  
Conference held in  
Lake Placid | Page 9

The Diocese of Ogdensburg Volume 79 Number 27

# NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

OCTOBER 30, 2024

## 'A revival of prayer and action'

Bishop Terry R. LaValley reflects on Respect Life Month.

"Respect for the dignity of the human person and concern for the common good are the foundation stones of Catholic social teaching. Protecting human life from conception to natural death; promoting family life; gaining social justice in jobs, housing and health care; safeguarding the environment; showing concern for the immigrants; and attentiveness to the needs of the poor are among many issues for you and me to reflect upon during this Respect Life Month.

FULL STORY, PAGE 4

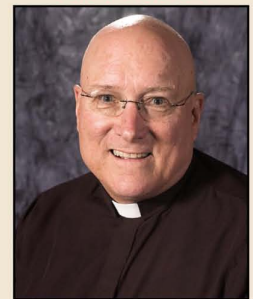
## LIFE CHAIN IN PLATTSBURGH



PHOTO BY MARY BETH BRACY

Life Chain participants in Plattsburgh gather for a photo after their peaceful, prayerful witness to the sanctity of all life from conception to natural death. Life Chain was held Oct. 6. Full story on Page 5.

## MAY HE REST IN PEACE



Father Gerald A. Cerank, a retired priest of the diocese, died the afternoon of Oct. 16, 2024, in Sarasota, Florida, where he resided since his retirement in 2014. In addition to serving parishes in Plattsburgh, Keeseville, Clintonville and Mooers Forks, Father Cerank served as a teacher and principal.

FULL STORY, PAGE 3

## Pope: Holy Spirit 'essential' for unity in marriage

By Hannah Brockhaus  
Catholic News Agency

Pope Francis said the Holy Spirit plays an essential role in the unity of a husband and a wife, and advised married couples to invoke the Spirit's help for their marriage, because the separation of spouses is a source of suffering for children.

"What can the Holy Spirit have to do with marriage, for example? A great deal, perhaps the essential," the pope said during his weekly audience with the public in St. Peter's Square on Oct. 23.

"Christian marriage is the

sacrament of self-giving, one for the other, of man and woman. This is how the Creator intended it when he 'created man in his own image ... male and female he created them (Gn 1:27),' Francis said to crowds gathered in an overcast square.

In the Wednesday general audience, the pontiff continued his series of teachings on the Holy Spirit, focusing on the role of the Third Person of the Trinity in the sacrament of matrimony, including the couple as a "realization of the communion of love that is the Trinity."

Francis said like the Trinity, "married couples, too, should

form a first-person plural, a 'we.' Stand before each other as an 'I' and a 'you,' and stand before the rest of the world, including the children, as a 'we.'"

"How much children need this unity — mother and father together — unity of parents, and how much they suffer when it is lacking," he emphasized. "How much the children of separated parents suffer, how much they suffer."

Drawing on the story of the wedding at Cana, Francis noted that for "so many couples, one must repeat what Mary said to Jesus, at Cana in Galilee: 'They have no wine.' The Holy Spirit is he who continues to perform,

on a spiritual level, the miracle that Jesus worked on that occasion; namely, to change the water of habit into a new joy of being together."

"It is not a pious illusion: It is what the Holy Spirit has done in so many marriages, when the spouses decided to invoke him."

"No one," the pope continued, "says that such unity is an easy task, least of all in today's world; but this is the truth of things as the Creator designed them, and it is therefore in their nature. Certainly, it may seem easier and quicker to build on sand than on rock; but Jesus tells us what the result is..."

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## I didn't ask for that

He helps without being asked.

It's become increasingly common for me to walk in the door at the end of my day and hear my son, Jake, say, "I fed the cats."

Or I walk in the door and see him standing at the kitchen sink doing dishes.

These aren't huge tasks, but him doing them means the world to me. While he helps in eleventy billion ways around the house when he's asked, and his

help is always appreciated, the times I don't ask mean even more.

It demonstrates that Jake is thoughtful and caring and wants to be helpful, and it shows he's self-motivated. It warms my heart.

After the most recent such incident, I took a couple minutes to thank God for putting this wonderful, inspiring young man in my life, this young man who helps without being asked.

**Darcy L. Fargo**

God used that moment to point out the fact that I'm not always grateful for the things He does without being asked.

I've brought some pretty huge requests to God in prayer lately. To be honest, I've been sort consumed with the fact that those prayers haven't been answered in the ways I hoped, and I've been more than a little angry with God as a result. That selfish part of my brain says, "why aren't you helping me the way I asked?"

God reminded me that I'm so blinded by wanting

things my way that I'm not seeing the countless ways he's blessing me and helping me without me asking. Every morning I wake up is a blessing from God that I didn't ask Him to give.

While I can be angry with God for not answering some prayers the way I want, God reminded me I still have plenty for which to be thankful, and He is always with me. He reminded me I should be grateful for those gifts he gives me purely out of His love.

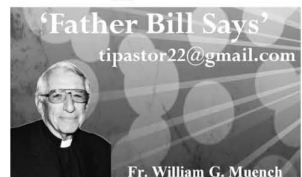
Even without being asked.

## Participation of the laity

The last few weeks, I have been rereading and restudying the documents of the Second Vatican Council. I especially enjoy focusing on the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (Lumen Gentium). Let me remind you, this document describes the Catholic Church as the People of God, then there is a chapter on the Hierarchy of the Church - the pope and the bishops. However, today, I would like to concentrate with you on the chapter on the laity of our Church.

One of the aims of the Council fathers was a call for our Catholic Church to make the laity more involved - participating more in the life of the Church. The chapter on the laity begin in this way: "Therefore, even when occupied by temporal affairs, the laity can and must, do valuable work for evangelization of the world."

Now, at this very time, during these weeks of October, at the Vatican, there is a general synod of the Church. This is a special

**Fr. William G. Muench**

gathering of some bishops, some priests, some religious sisters, and many lay men and women, meeting with Pope Francis. One of the concerns of this synod is to discuss how the clergy and the laity of the Church can continue to work together to bring to the People of God in the various parishes of the world in finding the holiness in union with our God. We should be praying for this synod; we hope that new opportunities will arise bringing love and peace to our Church.

I remember well the transformation that took place when the Vatican Council brought the wisdom of the Holy Spirit to form a certain newness to the ordinary life of the Church. The Council introduced new opportunities for the participation of the laity to the Church's

efforts to bring Jesus and his message to the Catholic people of this world.

I often tell the story of how certain lay people tell me how they refuse to be a preachy person with others. My response to them is usually, "good! We have far too many preachers these days." "What we do not have is enough people who know how to live well - being a loving person like our Savior, Jesus."

The Second Vatican Council wrote this in the chapter on the laity - "By their secular activity, the laity help one another achieve greater holiness of life, so that the world may be filled with the spirit of Christ and may more effectively attain its destiny in justice, in love and in peace."

I know that you are aware of the many terrific ways the Council made the laity more involved in our Catholic liturgy. Lay men and women act as lectors at Holy Mass, reading the Sacred Scriptures. Lay men and women are involved in an Offertory procession bringing the

chalice, the wine and water, to the altar for the Eucharistic celebration. Lay men and women now act as Eucharistic ministers at Mass, joining the priests and deacons in distributing Holy Communion to the people. Lay men and women now allowed to bring the Blessed Eucharist to the homes of the sick and dying. Many were surprised by these changes, but they have added so much to the life of each parish celebration.

These are such wonderful challenges - calling the laity to be more involved in participating in the Mass and the life of the Catholic Church. As you are aware, there are so many other parish activities in which the laity is now involved, like the religious education programs for children and for adults.

One more thing to mention here: In many places because of the lack of enough priests, a lay person is assigned to act as the pastor of a place, after adequate training. A visiting priest comes to celebrate the sacraments.



# Remembering Father Gerald A. Cerank

By Darcy Fargo  
Editor

"He was an outgoing, friendly man," said Msgr. John R. Murphy. "He loved his priesthood. He loved people. He was very dedicated to young people."

That's how Msgr. Murphy described Father Gerald A. Cerank. Father Cerank, who had been living in Florida since his retirement in 2014, died Oct. 16. He was 81.

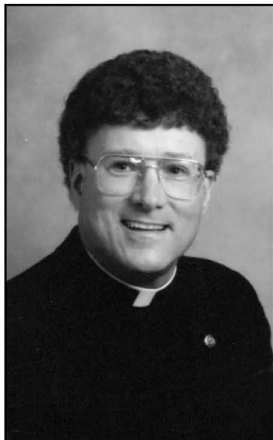
A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated in Sarasota, Florida, on October 24. Details of local arrangements were not yet finalized as of press time. A complete obituary will be published in a future edition.

Father Cerank, who hailed from the Long Island region town Port Washington, grew up in a Methodist family. In 1997, he told the North Country Catholic he was drawn to attend Mass for the first time during his senior year of High School.

"There was no one person or situation that inspired me to go," Father Cerank said in that 1997 interview. "Just a feeling that I should do it. I credited it to the Holy Spirit."

He then continued to attend Mass regularly when he was attending what is now SUNY Plattsburgh, where he earned a degree in elementary education. He was officially welcomed into the Catholic Church during his sophomore year of college.

He felt the Holy Spirit urging him to pursue the priesthood after graduating college and spending some time working as a teacher. He was ordained by Bishop Stanislaus J. Brzana in St. Mary's Cathedral on May 13, 1972,



Father Gerald A. Cerank in a 1992 file photo

Msgr. Murphy said he became friends with Father Cerank when the two were both assigned to St. John's in Plattsburgh in the early 1970s.

"We were stationed together as assistance at St. John's from 1973 to 1976, when I was transferred," Msgr. Murphy said. "He was a skier early on. He enjoyed canoeing. He always had a tow-behind camper. He wasn't from here, but he came to love the Adirondacks and Lake Champlain. He and I bought little one-person canoes at the same time, and we did some pond canoeing together."

Father Cerank spent his active ministry in the eastern portion of the diocese - Plattsburgh, Keeseville, Clintonville and Mooers Forks, close to the lake and mountains he loved so much.

Msgr. Murphy noted that his friend, Father Cerank, also had duties as a principal at St. John's School very early in his priesthood.

"His time as a principal was a very big time in his life," Msgr. Murphy said. "Because of his education background, Bishop Brzana put a lot of trust

## Memorial Mass to be celebrated in Mooers Forks

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated for Father Gerald A. Cerank on Thursday, October 24, 2024, at San Pedro Catholic Church in North Port, Florida, by Father Thomas Carzon, OMV, pastor of the parish.

Details for a Memorial Mass at Saint Ann's Church in Mooers Forks will be shared when arrangements are complete. Burial will be in the cemetery of Immaculate Conception Church in Keeseville.

Father Cerank, 81, of Sarasota, Florida and formerly of the Diocese of Ogdensburg, died in the afternoon of Wednesday, October 16, 2024, in Sarasota.

Father Cerank was born in Port Washington, New York, on June 13, 1943. He was the son of Eugene and Cery (Hovi) Cerank.

He was raised in Port Washington and graduated from high school in Smithtown, New York, in 1961. Four years later, he received a bachelor's degree in elementary education from Plattsburgh State University. After converting to the Roman Catholic faith, he attended Saint Mary's Seminary in Kentucky, Wadhams Hall Seminary in Ogdensburg, Saint Joseph Seminary in Yonkers and Fordham University in the Bronx. Father Cerank was ordained a priest of the Diocese of Ogdensburg at St. Mary's Cathedral in Ogdensburg by Bishop Stanislaus J. Brzana on May 13, 1972.

After ordination, he was assigned as parochial vicar at Saint Mary's of the Lake in Cumberland Head and

teacher at Saint John's Central High School in Plattsburgh. The following year, he was named parochial vicar at the Roman Catholic Church of Saint John the Baptist and principal of Saint John's Elementary School in Plattsburgh, where he remained for seven years. The next eight years were spent in Keeseville in cooperative ministry as parochial vicar and pastor of Saint John the Baptist Church with its mission Church of the Sacred Heart in Port Kent and Church of the Immaculate Conception with its mission Saint Catherine's Church in Clintonville. Father Cerank became pastor of St. Peter's Church in Plattsburgh in 1988 and then in 1993 pastor of St. Ann's Church in Mooers Forks and St. Joseph's Church in Mooers. After 21 years, he retired to North Port, Florida.

In retirement, Father Cerank remained active in San Pedro Parish in Sarasota, where was part of a loving community. In his final days, he was lovingly supported by friends, Deacon Richard and Lynne Frohmiller.

Along with his parents he is predeceased by his brother, Ronald, and brother-in-law, Le Roy Zorn. Father Cerank is survived by his beloved sister, Jane Mary Zorn, and her children, Todd and Nadine (Zorn) Morton, and their families.

Florida arrangements are entrusted to Gendron Funeral Home in North Port. New York arrangements are entrusted to Hamilton Funeral Home in Mooers.

in him. He handled that with maturity and grace. He interacted so well with the staff, students and families."

Msgr. Murphy said Father Cerank also loved his priesthood.

"He desired to fulfill well the ministry of the priesthood," he said. "He was devout, and he had a love of the Eucharist. If you knew him, you could see the great reverence he

had for the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist. You could see it in his gaze on the hosts during consecration, his gaze on the chalice during consecration."

Msgr. Murphy said Father Cerank was warmly welcomed by the community of North Port in Florida and San Pedro's Church, where he assisted in parish ministry.

"He came to love the

people there, and the people there loved him," Msgr. Murphy said. "He still considered the North Country to be home, but he came to embrace the people there and found himself at home."

Looking back on his priesthood in an article celebrating his 40th anniversary of ordination, Father Cerank told the North Country Catholic, "I've never regretted it."

## FOLLOW ME

# 'We need a revival of prayer and action'

Respect for the dignity of the human person and concern for the common good are the foundation stones of Catholic social teaching. Protecting human life from conception to natural death; promoting family life; gaining social justice in jobs, housing and health care; safeguarding the environment; showing concern for the immigrants; and attentiveness to the needs of the poor are among many issues for you and me to reflect upon as today the Church marks Respect Life Sunday and the beginning of Respect Life Month.

Today, I ask you to celebrate life with me. We, as Catholic Christians, have been raised to believe - and we know - that all human life, even if weak and suffering, is always, always, always, a splendid gift of God's goodness. All human life, every human life, from conception to natural death, is a sacred gift from our Heavenly Father.

It is with this premise in mind, that we can see how the moral standards of the world have become rotten and decayed to the core. We are constantly bombarded by the false teaching of free love; marital promiscuity; the precious so-called freedom of choice to kill an unborn child and then sell the body parts without regard for the silent scream of the aborted; the desire to rid from this world the old and feeble, the undesirable, and the terminally ill. We have been sold a bill

of goods - one which erroneously tries to teach us that whatever is practical, pleasurable or financially feasible, is right and good. Yes, ours has become a throwaway culture. We are placed on the defensive and accused of being intolerant. We have lost our moral compass, our ground of values.

We, as Christians know God's law. We know right from wrong. We know God's law must be respected and obeyed to the best of our ability. We know that life, our own and that of others, is most sacred.

Nothing can destroy that sacredness - nothing can overshadow the goodness of God in creating and sustaining life. No human law, no politician can go contrary to God's law, no matter what the polls say.

I mean, help me understand why we get so upset and uptight about the killing of baby seals, the hunting of lions on safaris and the salvation of whales caught on the ice floes - yet today we allow babies in the very process of being born, to be killed through the partial birth abortions. There is something evil and so wrong with that picture. And so many of us, Catholic Christians will vote for politicians who support this. Such a crime has no impact on us. We have become indifferent and insensitive. Such seems to be the folly and downfall of humanity. Abortion

and euthanasia are heinous crimes that cry out to heaven for vengeance.

In our comfort, so many of us remain deaf to the silent scream of the pre-born child in its mother's womb and we ignore the heart-wrenching cries of the poor and homeless. They have become expendable.

For all of us who are here today, having been given life and breath, what does God want from us? A respect for human dignity, a respect for human life in all its forms. The poor, the elderly, the neglected, the dying, everywhere and every time to be treated as a man, a woman, to be considered as a child of God. Life is the most precious gift that God has ever given to us, all of us.

We all need the mercy and love of a Savior. It is our responsibility as God's children to foster and protect His divine teachings. That's where our support for the family is so crucial today. It is our responsibility to be counted either with Jesus Christ or against. "You cannot serve two masters." I am not the master of my own body! God is! I only wish our politically correct public office holders, particularly Roman Catholics, would heed those words of Christ. Let us resolve anew this Respect Life Sunday, to find ways to build up what the Holy Father refers to as this "field

hospital" we know as the Church and the domestic Church, our families. Let us minister to one another, constantly looking for ways to give the respect due every child of God, particularly the weakest and most vulnerable—the ones who have no one to speak on their behalf.

As faithful Catholic Christians, each of us is called to do the work of properly informing our consciences and voting for candidates and policies that will best advance the natural law, the protection of human rights, the dignity of every human person, the sacredness of all human life, and the teachings of Christ and His Church.

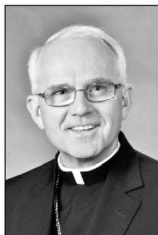
Specifically, as the NYS Bishops' Letter entitled, A Wolf in Sheep's Clothing, tells us, educating ourselves is especially important regarding Proposal 1 on this year's ballot. The title of that Proposal, "Equal Rights Amendment" might suggest a noble cause. But, if enacted, it will have dangerous consequences. Parents' authority over their minor-aged children will be stripped away, permitting children to make destructive and permanent decisions on their own which they could well live to regret, including so-called "gender affirming" treatments and surgeries. Such intrusive legislation will legalize child abuse and deny parents their natural rights to raise their children and decide what's best for them. This is extremely serious stuff! Such

mutilation of the human body must be prevented.

Pope St. John Paul II's words resonate today: "we are facing an enormous and dramatic clash between good and evil, death and life, the 'culture of death' and the 'culture of life'...we are all involved, and we all share in it, with the inescapable responsibility of choosing to be unconditionally pro-life." (Evangelium Vitae)

My sisters and brothers, we need a revival of prayer and action. We must renew our commitment to work for the legal protection of every human life, from conception to natural death and to vote for candidates who will defend the life and dignity of every human person. We must call for policies that assist women and their children in need. We must continue to extend the hand and heart of compassion to all who are suffering from participation in abortion through the Church's abortion healing ministries such as the Project Rachel Ministry.

Join me in a concerted effort of prayer on behalf of all life, particularly between now and election day. May we witness, work, and vote so that all children in the womb will be protected in law and welcomed in love, and that all mothers and families will be strengthened by our support and accompaniment. Through our efforts and with our prayers, May God be Praised...forever May God be Praised!



Bishop Terry  
R. LaValley



# Life Chain: 'A voice for the voiceless'

By Mary Beth Bracy,  
consecrated virgin  
Contributing Writer

The annual Life Chain took place on Sunday, October 6 in Plattsburgh on Smithfield Boulevard between Cornelia Street and Champlain Centre Mall. Dozens gathered to show their support for life, peacefully praying and holding signs, such as: "Life the First Inalienable Right," "Jesus Heals and Saves," "Lord Have Mercy on Our Nation," and "Adoption not Abortion."

Janet and Dan Waldron were among several who were pleased to attend the Life Chain for the first time. They shared, "We should have done this a long time ago."

"I feel that it is necessary to be a voice for the voiceless, for each human life God has breathed life into at the moment of conception. He has a purpose and a plan for each of us and no one should have the right to end the life that God has given, for any reason; even the life growing under their own mother's heart," added Tina Powell, who also attended the Life Chain for the first time.

Father Douglas A. Schirmer, parochial vicar at Holy Cross in Plattsburgh, said he felt the event was important and affirming.

"I noticed the incredible joy," he said. "I've been to events where it's very somber. There was a lot more public support than I'm used to seeing. That was a big shot in the arm for me. Those kinds of actions [participating in Life Chains], especially in a democracy are really important for Catholics to engage in because not only do we have that right constitutionally, but we have a duty

morally to support the Church's teaching on life. How we do that may differ from person to person, but especially in our society those public actions really go a long way in fighting the fight. It's important for Catholics to see that as the norm; doing those things shouldn't be some radical action when we take a stand and support life publicly. Imagine if everyone in the parish did that - you'd have thousands on the street. It shouldn't just be a few, it should be most of us."

"I pray every single day for pro-life and for the conversion of abortionists and their supporters," added Sister Barbara Langlois, O.P., a member of the Dominican Sisters of Hope. She is a prayer warrior for life who attends daily Mass, prays at least four Rosaries before the Blessed Sacrament, and the Liturgy of the Hours, among other prayers each day.

Sometimes people are concerned about standing up for life because they are worried people will criticize them, noted Ken Racette of Holy Cross Parish.

"The Life Chain prayer time was beautiful on Sunday with the sun shining God's grace on those who were praying for the unborn children sacrificed daily each day in this country to the false gods of pleasure and convenience," he said. "The prayer time was especially peaceful and many, many of the passing motorists signaled support with briefs toots of the car horns, thumbs up signs or waves of hands. There is hope that the terrible injustices of the past three and a half years have awakened good people to the need for change and return to



PHOTO BY KAREN FARRELL

Ken Racette of Plattsburgh participates in the annual Life Chain event on Oct. 6.

God."

His wife, Kathy Racette, added, "I had the opportunity to be part of a larger group of pro-life people with the Life Chain the first Sunday in October. Holding a sign in front of me declaring I believe in the sacredness of life and especially the unborn who cannot speak for themselves is a privilege - the hour spent in prayer while motorists are passing by is a wonderful witness to the babies in the womb. It was a quiet peaceful prayer time for those who participated and many positive thumbs up beeps from those passing by."

Mark Beatham, also a Holy Cross parishioner, said, "I think it's important for us to dedicate ourselves in our community. That it's happening simultaneously in several places will help to turn things around. I want to thank the organizers."

"It is my first time to do it. It's wonderful to see people come out and help. Let's hope they get

the message. It's sad. My friend told me about it," shared Susan Sheffield of Holy Cross Parish in Plattsburgh.

Rose Bruce, also a member of Holy Cross, noted, "There seem to be a lot of people who are interested because they are tooting their horns, so that's a good sign for the pro-life movement."

During the Life Chain, Sister Jackie Sellappan, of the Sisters of the Cross of Chavanod, was "Praying everything goes well, that people would respect dignity not only of the unborn but also of the elderly as well."

Eve Duffy, a parishioner of St. Patrick's Church in Rouses Point, said it was a blessing for her to be at the Life Chain, which she attended many times before with her spouse, who passed away last year. "[My husband] Bernard Duffy was very active in Right to Life, he retired from the government to devote himself full-time to it. He had profound faith. He was really a good man."

Rose Blaise of St. Augustine's in Peru, said, "I think it's important for us to stand up for life because many people do not value life. All we ask is that people be open to the counseling of a pro-life volunteer."

"I've noticed much more positive reactions," agreed Holly Middleton of Champlain. "Lots of friendly toots. This nation sure needs life support. We are life support."

Deacon Kenneth L. Lushia reflected, "God has given us ten wonderful commandments. If we were to follow [them] many issues today would be non-existent - STDs, mandated vaccines for women. Abortion would largely go away if people practiced chastity and abstinence. I am hopeful that we will turn back to Jesus' direction to live God's life to the fullest, to get away from illness and strife."

"Planned Parenthood says abstinence would never work on their website and that they will do everything to stop that way of thinking," Deacon Lushia concluded. "They expect young people to engage in sexual activity. We don't educate our young people. There are so many good groups - National Womanhood has a podcast that educates mothers and daughters. Groups like Catholic Women in Business are all concerned with educating young people. Most people are so naïve, but it gets down to God made man and made woman. Scott Hahn says when we talk about our children, we say we have a son or a daughter. We cannot be afraid."

Life Chain events were also held in Massena, Potsdam, Saranac Lake and Watertown.

# Prop 1: The devil is in the details

*Editor's Note: The following is a guest commentary written by regular North Country Catholic contributor Jesse Sovie.*

This age-old expression was the first thing that came to my mind when I started researching Prop 1, after I first heard about it. For those of you who don't know, Prop 1 is a New York State Constitutional Amendment which will be featured on the backside of every New York State ballot in this upcoming November General Election.

This proposition titles itself as an amendment to protect against "unequal treatment". On its face, this may seem nice. I mean who would vote against a law centered around equality? A law about equal rights is about as American as apple pie and baseball. But as the expression goes, the devil is in the details. Despite its title about it preventing "unequal treatment"; the actual content and language of this proposition has little to do about equal rights and has everything to do with enshrining an agenda into the state constitution. The ramifications

of this law, if voted in, could infringe on so many other underlying rights we currently have as citizens.

The proposition is no ordinary piece of legislation seeking to become law. This proposition is a constitutional amendment, which if passed, becomes solidified into the New York State Constitution. For those that don't know, the process of adding an amendment to the constitution is quite different than the normal process where legislation is turned into law. To be added to the constitution, the legislation must first be passed through both the State Assembly and the State Senate during two different legislative sessions. Because New York has been under one party (Democratic) control in both legislative houses since 2018, this legislation was quickly drafted and passed in both 2022 and 2023 to prepare the legislation for its final stage this year. The last stage in the process is for the general public to vote upon the constitutional amendment. It is important to note that the final say comes down to the voters of NY State to determine whether

an amendment is added to the constitution or not. That level of power is not something we should view too lightly. I would encourage all registered voters to research this proposition very carefully before you go to cast your vote in this upcoming election.

The proposition seeks to add special protections by expanding what the state determines to be discrimination. Currently, there are laws prohibiting discrimination based on age, race, color, creed, sex, disability and religion. But this proposition would add "sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression" among others. The inclusion of these protections halfway through the amendment was very much intentional. There are many groups and much media coverage talking about how this amendment is all about protecting abortion rights. But that coverage is an attempt to distract people from seeing all the other issues contained in this legislation. As it stands, abortion is already codified into law in NY State and has been for a very long time. No rational person could argue that the same state that was advertising for residents from other states to come here to get abortions, could at the same time argue that abortion rights were somehow suddenly in danger here. Rather, these groups are using this proposition and media coverage to try to gin up energy and support from their core base voters to come out to vote in this election. Their deception should not be rewarded.

The truth is, if this proposition is passed, we will see the state

gain greater power and control over individuals, groups, organizations, churches and so on.

- We could see state mandates in all public and private schools that allow boys into girl's locker rooms or bathrooms, if a boy simply says he identifies as a girl one day.

- We could see an erosion of parental rights when the state says your minor child is allowed to get puberty blockers or gender altering surgeries without the parent's consent, as preventing the child from the treatments could be considered discrimination.

- Churches and religious groups could be forced to provide certain drug or medical procedures for their employees that violate their religious beliefs and codes.

- The state may be able to mandate who can be hired at certain organizations or religious groups.

- The state may very well use this amendment to allow illegal immigrants the right to vote, as illegal immigrants are currently allowed to vote in New York City local elections. So, if the immigrants move out of NYC, whose to say the state cannot argue that their civil rights are being violated when they are told they cannot vote in their new county?

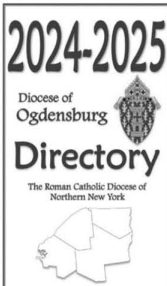
- On an individual level, we could see small businesses being decimated by fines, penalties or lawsuits, such as a baker or photographer who refuse to use their talents for a same sex wedding, due to the baker's or photographer's deeply held religious beliefs. If you don't believe me, just look at Colorado, where their dis-

crimination laws have allowed the state to fine and penalize small business owners, regardless of the business owner's First Amendment rights. Some businesses in these other states finally win their cases after years of litigation, only to end up bankrupt from all the legal fees they paid to defend their rights.

Some might read this and think I am just fear mongering. But nothing could be further from the truth. The power the state is seeking from this proposition, as well as the vagueness of its language, are both very intentional and by design. In an age where government overreach is alive and well, and increasing by the day; we as citizens need to be even more vigilant in what it is we are voting for, when we go to exercise our God given right to vote. It is not a mere coincidence that governments are getting larger and stronger, while we citizens are being distracted and divided.

Those that crafted this legislation are banking on voters to vote blindly for this proposition based on its catchy and nicely worded title. They do not want the public at large to research this proposition or think about its possible ramifications. Do not give them satisfaction by blindly voting yes on this issue. Please think this issue over carefully and tell your friends and family about it. It is very important we don't open Pandora's box with this legislation. When you go to cast your ballot, be sure to flip your ballot over to the backside and vote "NO" on this proposition. Your Rights as a citizen may depend on it.

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## Environmental Stewardship

## Earth stewards

As followers of Christ, we are called to take care of the earth and preserve it for generations to come. How are we doing? News about global warming and melting polar caps can seem daunting, too big for us to have an impact here in the North Country.

Let's look at some things we can impact; things we can change to remain faithful stewards of the earth. Avoid buying single-use plastics. Plastics are made from fossil fuels and it can take over 100 years for plastic to decompose. We have been tricked into believing that those single use plastics are being recycled. We place them in our recycling bins and trust that they are going to be taken to a recycling plant. Really, only 9 percent of plastics are recycled, 19 percent are incinerated and the rest, 72 percent, are placed in landfills. Consider for a moment all the single-use plastics in our homes, i.e. water bottles, containers for laundry detergent, toothpaste tubes, to name a few.

Companies make products that do not require plastic packaging. Laundry soap sheets dissolve in the washer and provide the same cleaning power as liquid. The envelopes take up less space than detergent jugs and are compostable. There are bar shampoos, reusable metal straws, conditioner packaged in aluminum containers....

As consumers we have a great deal of power. Do a web search for "zero waste," and you will find a lot of plastic/waste-free products. Zero waste products are designed to eliminate waste and promote sustainable living. They are typically reusable, recyclable, or compostable, aiming to reduce the reliance on single-use and non-biodegradable materials. Using these products reduces our carbon footprint. We can make a difference by the choices we make as consumers. What choices are God calling you to make?

By Joanne Nugent-Ward  
Watertown Faith and Ecology

## Bishop's Public Schedule

**Oct. 30** – 10:30 a.m. – Diocesan Finance Council Meeting at Bishop's Residence followed by Lunch

**Oct. 31** – 9:45 a.m. – Episcopal Council Meeting at Bishop's Residence followed by Lunch

4 p.m. – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

**Nov. 1** – 6:30 p.m. – Deacon Candidates Class on Canon Law at Wadhams Hall in Ogdensburg

**Nov. 3** – 5 p.m. – Andrew Dinner - Watertown (Location TBD)

**Nov. 4** – 10:15 a.m. – Mass with the Students at St. James School in Gouverneur followed by Classroom Visits

**Nov. 5** – 9 a.m. – Mass at Clinton Correctional Facility in Dannemora

**Nov. 6** – 11 a.m. – Development Board of Advisors Meeting at Bishop's Residence followed by Lunch

## To Report Abuse

**If you have a complaint** of suspected misconduct involving diocesan clergy, religious, employees or volunteers, contact Victims Assistance Coordinator, Terriane Yanulavich, Ph.D., LMHC, 5050 Route 374, Merrill, NY 12955; terrianeyanulavich@yahoo.com Phone: 518-358-3145, Ext. 7179 days; 518-569-0612 evenings; 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](http://www.ReportBishopAbuse.org)

## Rest in Peace

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

**Oct. 30** – Rev. Michael F. Burns, 1921; Rev. Thomas E. Owen, 1945; Rev. Peter N. Butler, 1973

**Oct. 31** – Rev. James Rooney, 1863; Rev. Lucien Jean, M.S.C., 1964; Rev. Ivan G. Boyea, 1996

**Nov. 2** – Rev. Thomas Walsh, 1888; Rev. John Henry Lyons, 1931; Msgr. James J. Ruddy, 1987

**Nov. 3** – Rev. Thomas Plunkett, 1904

**Nov. 4** – Msgr. Benjamin Harrison Staie, 1970

**Nov. 5** – Most Rev. David E. Bacon, 1874; Rev. Bernard Wyzykowski, 1969; Rev. John Michael Wyzykowski, 1969

## Protecting God's Children

**The Diocese of Ogdensburg** has scheduled Protecting God's Children training sessions. This required training addresses child abuse, the methods and means by which abusers commit abuse, and the five steps to prevent abuse from occurring and stop it from continuing. Pre-registration is encouraged at [www.virtus.org](http://www.virtus.org). Upcoming sessions:

**Oct. 30** – 6 p.m. – St. Peter's Church, Lowville

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*Respect Life  
Month*



I CAME SO THAT  
THEY MIGHT HAVE  
**LIFE**

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*In honor of our daughter Stephanie*
- ♦ Office of Youth Ministry

## A PRAYER FOR LIFE

to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament

O Jesus, you came that we might have *life*—and have it in abundance. Together with the Father and the Holy Spirit, you form us in our mothers' wombs and call us to love you for all eternity.

As your most precious gift of human life is attacked, draw us ever closer to your Real Presence in the Eucharist. Dispel the darkness of the culture of death, for you are the light that shines in the darkness, and the darkness cannot overcome it.

By the power of your Eucharistic Presence, help us to defend the life of every human person at every stage. Transform our hearts to protect and cherish all whose lives are most vulnerable.

For you are God, forever and ever.

— AMEN.



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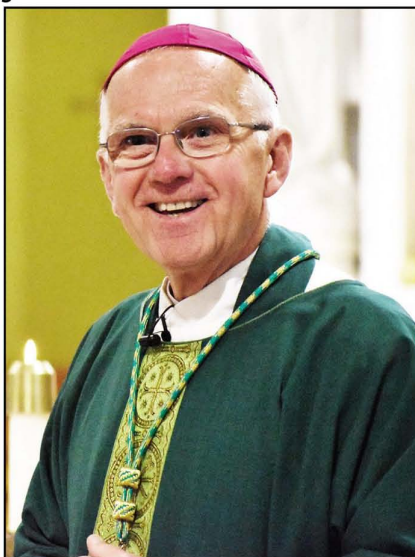
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# EDUCATORS GATHER

The annual diocesan Superintendent's Conference was held Oct. 21 at the Cambria Hotel & St. Agnes Church in Lake Placid



(Left) Sister Ellen Rose Coughlin, a Sister of St. Joseph, diocesan superintendent of schools, addresses teachers and administrators from around the diocese during the Superintendent's Conference. (Right) Bishop Terry R. LaValley celebrated Mass at St. Agnes Church in Lake Placid as part of the conference.



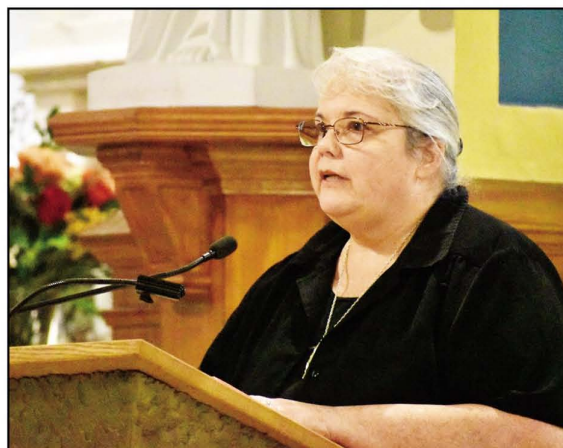
Educators from St. Bernard's School in Saranac Lake attend Mass during the diocesan Superintendent's Conference held Oct. 21 in Lake Placid.



Dr. Sarah Wannemuehler, keynote speaker, discusses legal issues and suggested policies with Catholic school educators at Superintendent's Conference.



Teachers Megan Czadzeck (St. Bernard's School, Saranac Lake), Shalen Wells (Seton Catholic School, Plattsburgh), Andrew Trainor (St. Agnes School, Lake Placid) and Karley Wake (St. James School, Gouverneur) read the General Intercessions during the Mass celebrated as part of the Superintendent's Conference.



Sister Sueanne Johnson, a Sister of St. Joseph and principal of Augustinian Academy in Carthage, served as lector during Mass celebrated during the Superintendent's Conference.

# CATHOLIC WORLD AT A GLANCE

## Harris rejects religious exemption for abortion laws

Vice President Kamala Harris confirmed that she would oppose religious exemptions in abortion laws if elected president and emphasized that she would not make concessions to Republicans on the issue. The Democratic nominee made the comments in a Tuesday interview when NBC News' Hallie Jackson asked Harris "what concessions would be on the table" when considering federal laws on abortion and specifically whether she would consider "religious exemptions." "I don't think we should be making concessions when we're talking about a fundamental freedom to make decisions about your own body," Harris responded. Jackson followed up on the question, asking whether the vice president would extend "an olive branch" to moderate Republicans who support legal abortion but do not support all of Harris' abortion policies. But the Democratic nominee also rejected this, saying abortion "cannot be negotiable." "I'm not gonna engage in hypotheticals because we could go on a variety of scenarios," Harris said. "Let's just start with a fundamental fact, a basic freedom has been taken from the women of America: the freedom to make decisions about their own body. And that cannot be negotiable, which is that we need to put back in the protections of Roe v. Wade."

## Court to hear case on transgender surgeries for minors

The United States Supreme Court is scheduled to hear a case to determine the legality of a Tennessee law that prohibits doctors from performing so-called transgender surgeries on minors and prevents doctors from prescribing them puberty blockers and hormones. The law is facing a legal challenge from President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris' administration as well as from three families in the state. Although the case only addresses Tennessee's law specifically, a Supreme Court ruling could set a nationwide precedent that would apply to state laws around the country that prohibit gender transition surgeries and drugs for children. More than 20 states restrict or prohibit doctors from performing such surgeries or providing such drugs for patients under the age of 18. The court scheduled oral arguments for the case to be heard in December — less than two years after Gov. Bill Lee signed the prohibition into law. State law prohibits doctors from performing surgery on a minor's genitals that are intended to make them resemble the genitals of the opposite sex. It also prohibits chest surgeries and other aesthetic surgeries intended to make the child appear more similar to the opposite sex. The law further prohibits doctors from prescribing puberty blockers, which delay a child's natural development during puberty, if the intention is to facilitate a gender transition. It also prevents doctors from prescribing estrogen to boys and testosterone to girls if the intention is to facilitate a gender transition. Doctors and health care providers can incur a \$25,000 penalty for violating the state law.

# Cardinal: 'People of God' should be involved in selecting bishops

By Almudena Martínez-Bordiú

Catholic News Agency

Cardinal Robert Francis Prevost, prefect of the Dicastery for Bishops, on Wednesday cited some of the "gifts" that candidates for bishops must have, a decision reserved to the Holy Father but whose selection process will increasingly involve the participation of the "people of God."

At the beginning of his Oct. 23 address to journalists in Rome at the daily Synod on Synodality briefing, the cardinal said the question of the selection process for bishops in each episcopal conference and the way in which it is carried out has been one of the issues discussed during the synod.

"The question is: How can this process of searching for candidates be made more synodal and include the greatest participation not only of bishops but of priests, religious, and laypeople?" Prevost said.

One of the most important functions of the apostolic nuncios is to participate in this selection process. The Vatican "ambassadors" play a crucial role in the selection of candidates.

This new approach oriented toward a "synodal" style requires, according to the cardinal, that the nuncio "know the people well" during pastoral visits and that they not just be "received by the parish priest" and participate in the ceremonies.

It is also necessary to "get in touch with parish groups" to listen to their problems and reflect on the ways in which the Church can be strengthened.

Asked about the "criteria" necessary for selecting bishops, Prevost emphasized both their universal character and, at the same time, their specificity due to the particular areas in which they are carried out.

"We ask the nuncios to draw up reports that will then be sent to the dicastery and subsequently presented to the Holy Father," which include a series of aspects about the candidate.

Among some of these requirements, the prelate mentioned the candidate's "worthiness" in addition to the study on whether he has had "serious problems that no one knows anything about," certain health problems, "or if there are other aspects" in his back-

ground "that would make him not a good candidate."

"But we also look at the specific dioceses and their needs. That's why the apostolic nuncio is in charge of reporting not only about the bishops but also about the priests, laypeople, and religious. To know what the diocese is like, its needs, and what bishop they need," he added.

The cardinal pointed out that this closeness to the people of God should exist as long as the apostolic nuncio "does his job correctly" — that is, studying the local situation, speaking with the people, and looking for ways to find the best candidate.

He noted that Pope Francis has spoken many times about these criteria, highlighting "the smell of sheep" that bishops must have as a result of walking alongside the people of God and even "suffering with them."

In addition, he pointed out that a candidate must also have the gift of leadership, sometimes even in "communities that have many good priests," but without a good leader, "they're going nowhere."

Prevost spoke about the pastoral duties of bishops, who are not "business administrators only dedicated to organizations and structural and ceremonial matters."

"They have to be shepherds who walk joyfully with the people of God," he said.

The prefect of the Dicastery for Bishops, which is responsible for everything related to the constitution and provision of the particular Churches and the exercise of the episcopal function in the Church, emphasized that prelates are also called to be "judged and evaluated" on their actions and attitudes. For the cardinal, "the tension of being pastors and being evaluated is what it means to be bishops."

In this regard, he quoted the Holy Father, recalling that the only authority of bishops "is to serve," and he insisted on the importance of "changing the entire dynamic and paradigm of the structure of power," with an eye to the service that a bishop must exercise toward all the members of his diocese.

*This story was first published by ACI Prensa, CNA's Spanish-language news partner. It has been translated and adapted by CNA.*



# Pope releases encyclical on Sacred Heart

By AC Wimmer  
Catholic News Agency

Pope Francis released a new encyclical *Dilexit Nos* ("He Loved Us") on Oct. 24, calling for a renewed understanding of devotion to the Sacred Heart in the modern era and its many pressing challenges.

In the document, the pope argues that the spirituality of the Sacred Heart offers a vital response to what he calls a "liquid society" dominated by technology and consumerism.

Pope Francis writes: "Living as we do in an age of superficiality, rushing frenetically from one thing to another without really knowing why, and ending up as insatiable consumers and slaves to the mechanisms of a market unconcerned about the deeper meaning of our lives, all of us need to rediscover the importance of the heart."

Subtitled "Letter on the Human and Divine Love of the Heart of Jesus Christ," the document is the first papal encyclical dedicated entirely to the Sacred Heart since Pope Pius XII's *Haurietis Aquas* in 1956.

Throughout the document, Francis weaves together traditional elements of Sacred Heart devotion with contemporary concerns, presenting Christ's heart as the principle unifying reality in a fragmented world.

The document's release fulfills an announcement made by the pope in June, when he noted that meditating on the Lord's love can "illuminate the path of ecclesial renewal and say something meaningful to a world that seems to have lost its heart."

At a press conference presenting the document on Thursday, Italian Archbishop Bruno Forte said the encyclical expresses "in a profound way the heart and the inspiring motive of the whole ministry and magisterium of Pope Francis."

The theologian added that in his opinion, the text is "the key to understanding this pope's magisterium."

Forte, who is a member of the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith, presented the encyclical together with Sister Antonella Fraccaro, superior general of the Disciples of the Gospel (Discepoli del Vangelo). The approximately 30,000-word encyclical draws extensively from Scripture and tradition, featuring insights from St. Thérèse of Lisieux, St. Francis de Sales, and St. Charles de Foucauld.

Released as the Synod on Synodality is concluding its monthlong deliberations in Rome, the document emphasizes both personal spirituality and communal missionary commitment.

Francis develops his vision across five chapters, beginning with a philosophical and theological exploration of "the importance of the heart" before moving through reflections on Christ's actions and words of love, the theo-

logical meaning of Sacred Heart devotion, its spiritual dynamics and social implications.

"The algorithms operating in the digital world show that our thoughts and will are much more 'uniform' than we had previously thought," Francis writes, arguing that technological solutions alone cannot address the deeper needs of the human heart.

He emphasizes that the meaning of the word "heart" is not sufficiently captured by biology, psychology, anthropology, or any other science.

"In this age of artificial intelligence, we cannot forget that poetry and love are necessary to save our humanity. No algorithm will ever be able to capture, for example, the nostalgia that all of us feel, whatever our age, and wherever we live," Francis writes.

The pope emphasizes that devotion to the Sacred Heart is not merely a private spiritual practice but has profound implications for social life and human relationships.

"The world can change, beginning with the heart," he writes, connecting individual transformation with broader social renewal.

The encyclical builds on centuries of Catholic devotion to the Sacred Heart while offering fresh insights for mod-

ern challenges. Francis cites extensively from previous papal teachings, particularly from St. John Paul II.

"Devotion to the Sacred Heart, as it developed in Europe two centuries ago, under the impulse of the mystical experiences of St. Margaret Mary Alacoque, was a response to Jansenist rigor, which ended up disregarding God's infinite mercy," the late pope writes.

"The men and women of the third millennium need the heart of Christ in order to know God and to know themselves; they need it to build the civilization of love."

In a significant theological and philosophical development, the encyclical engages deeply with modern thought, particularly through its discussion of German philosopher Martin Heidegger's understanding of human emotion and understanding.

The pope cites Heidegger's insight that "philosophy does not begin with a pure concept or certainty but with a shock," as "without deep emotion, thought cannot begin. The first mental image would thus be goosebumps."

For Francis, this is where the heart comes in as it "listens in a non-metaphoric way to 'the silent voice' of being, allowing itself to be tempered and deter-

mined by it."

"The heart is also capable of unifying and harmonizing our personal history, which may seem hopelessly fragmented," the pope writes, "yet is the place where everything can make sense."

"The Gospel tells us this in speaking of Our Lady, who saw things with the heart."

The document calls for a renewal of traditional Sacred Heart practices on this understanding while emphasizing their contemporary relevance.

"Our communities will succeed in uniting and reconciling differing minds and wills, so that the Spirit can guide us in unity as brothers and sisters. Reconciliation and peace are also born of the heart. The heart of Christ is 'ecstasy,' openness, gift, and encounter."

The pope concludes by connecting this spiritual vision to the Church's broader mission in the modern world, calling for what he — following St. John Paul II — terms a "civilization of love" built on the foundation of Christ's love.

This vision also connects directly to previous social encyclicals by Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'* and *Fratelli Tutti*, presenting Christ's love as the foundation for addressing and solving contemporary challenges.

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## CLINTON NORTHERN FRANKLIN

**CRAFT FAIR**

Brushton — St. Mary's Altar and Rosary Society to have their annual Holiday Fair.

**Date:** Nov. 2

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

**Place:** Parish Center (across from B-M Bus Garage)

**Features:** A Large selection of Vendors will be present selling gifts, decor, bake goods, home-made doughnuts, Chance Auction & much more. What a great way to get a special gift for someone. Adirondack BBQ food truck will be there for lunch.

**Contact:** Call Dianne Russel for more information 518-319-4252.

**HARVEST DINNER**

Plattsburgh — Holy Cross Parish to have a harvest turkey dinner with all the trimmings.

**Date:** Nov. 3

**Time:** 11:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

**Place:** Holy Cross Parish Center

**Cost:** Adults, \$15; Children 6-12, \$7; under 5, Free; All Take-Outs, \$15

**CRAFT FAIR**

Chazy — Sacred Heart Church to have their Fabulous Fall Craft Fair.

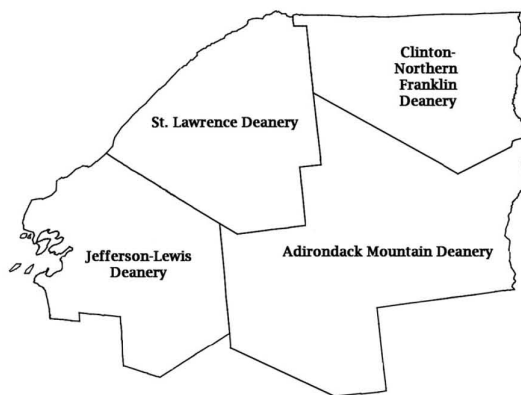
**Date:** Nov. 9

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

**Place:** Sacred Heart Parish Center

**Features:** Great craft festival with a variety of craft vendors. Hot lunches available, baked items, silent auction. Handicapped Accessible and Free Admission.

**Contact:** For more information, contact Sharon Nephew 518-578-2666.



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](mailto:news@northcountrycatholic.org).

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

**HARVEST DINNER**

Morrisonville — St. Alexander's Church to have their annual harvest turkey dinner with all the trimmings.

**Date:** Nov. 10

**Time:** 11:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

**Place:** Take-out only at St. Alexander's Church

**Cost:** \$15

**Features:** Also available at the door are raffle tickets, Basket Raffle and Bake shop.

**Contact:** Home Delivery within 10 miles, call 518-561-5039

## JEFFERSON-LEWIS

**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:** Nov. 3, Dec. 1

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

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

**Contact:** 315-348-6260

**SPAGHETTI DINNER**

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

**Date:** Nov. 9

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

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

**Cost:** Adults, \$9; Seniors, \$8;

Children 12 and under, \$5; under 5, Free

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

**PANCAKE BREAKFAST**

Constableville — St. Mary's Youth Group with the Faith Formation classes will be hosting a sit down pancake breakfast.

**Date:** Nov. 10

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

**Place:** St. Mary's Church hall

**Cost:** Adults, \$9; Children under 12, \$4.50

**Menu:** Pancakes, scrambled eggs, ham and home fries

**Features:** Profits that will be used for St. Mary's Faith Formation and family activities such as Karate & Family Fun Nights. These activities are open to all families not just those who attend Mass in Constableville.

**Contact:** If you have questions, please call our Parish Office at 315-348-6104

**SPAGHETTI DINNER**

Lyons Falls — There will be a drive-thru spaghetti dinner held.

**Date:** Nov. 12

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

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

**Cost:** \$12

**Menu:** Spaghetti with Dino's Meat Market sausage and meatballs, homemade sauce, tossed

salad, Italian bread and dessert.

**Features:** The dinner proceeds will go to the Salvation Army Red Kettle Fund to start out the upcoming Christmas season. The proceeds stay in Southern Lewis County to help many needy families.

**Contact:** To pre-order, call 315-348-8945 or 315-348-8577.

**RAFFLE**

West Leyden — Tickets for two separate raffles at St. Mary's Nativity are now on sale.

**Cost:** \$5 a piece or 5 for \$20, They can be purchased after the 4 p.m. Mass, by calling the Parish office at 315-348-6104, online at <https://catholicparishesofslc.weebly.com/tithely-giving.html> or from any parish council member.

**Features:** The first raffle is the church's traditional afghan raffle. Parish Council member Diane Markham created an 8 x 10 piece featuring a deer against a sunset background. The drawing for it will take place at the conclusion of the annual Chinese auction on Nov. 2. The second raffle is the Lenten Creation Raffle. During this past Lent, West Leyden native and parish council member Jeff Nellenback built a rustic sofa table, a bulky bench, and a wooden wall quilt. These will be raffled as a first, second and third prize raffle with the drawing taking place after 4 p.m. Mass on Dec. 21.

## ST. LAWRENCE

**HOLIDAY BAZAAR**

Star Lake — St. Hubert's Parish to have a Holiday Bazaar.

**Date:** Nov. 2

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

**Features:** Bake Sale, Silent Auction, Wine Tasting Booth with Thousand Island Winery, Raffles, Gift Baskets and make your own Gingerbread House contest. Lunch will be served from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Accessible to people with disabilities.

**HARVEST DINNER**

Gouverneur — St. James School to have a Harvest Dinner.

**Date:** Nov. 7

**Time:** 4:30 p.m. until sold out  
**Cost:** \$15

**Menu:** Turkey dinner with all the fixings, mashed potatoes, dressing, vegetable, roll and dessert. Eat in or take out.

**FALL BAZAAR**

Massena — Annual Fall Bazaar to be held.

**Date:** Nov. 9

**Time:** 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

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

**Contact:** For more information contact to parish office at 315-769-2469

**MONTHLY BRUNCH**

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

**Date:** Nov. 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 Gonthier 315-212-5166.

**EUCCHARISTIC CONSECRATION**

Ogdensburg - 33 DAYS TO EUCHARISTIC GLORY: 8 Week Book Study to be held.

**Date:** Nov. 11 — Dec. 30

(Monday's)

**Time:** 9:30 a.m. or 6:30 p.m.

**Place:** Bishop Brzana Hall, St. Mary's Cathedral

**Features:** 33 Days to Eucharistic Glory is the first ever Eucharistic Consecration. This spiritual resource presents profound truths, astonishing historical facts, powerful practical examples, a daily virtue to adopt, extraordinary prayers, and inspiring stories—all in an easy-to-follow daily format. This spiritual guide will change the way you spend time with Jesus in the Eucharist.

**Contact:** For more information email, text or call Deacon Bill O'Brien at [billob315@gmail.com](mailto:billob315@gmail.com) or (315) 528-0461



## SUNDAY'S SCRIPTURE

## Pray, invite, encourage

Today's Gospel and first reading present two very clear lessons: first, there is one God; second, we must love God above all else. Our world has as many different ways of loving God. Our vocation in life contains the principal way in which we love God and, by extension, our neighbor.

This week, we celebrate National Vocations Awareness Week. We express our love for God and neighbor through our vocation. Today, I focus on one particular vocation, the priesthood.

The vocation of priesthood remains a necessary part of our Church just as marriage, family life, single life are necessary elements of our Church. Without the Eucharist, without people there could be no Church.

Today, more than ever, we need holy, dedicated priests to serve God's people in the Church.

More need to respond to God's invitation to priesthood. How do we do that?

First, we need to pray.

That sounds very simple, but when was the last time that you prayed for more men to respond to God's invitation to priesthood? When was the last time that you prayed that God would choose someone in your immediate family to become a priest?

Second, we need to invite people to consider priesthood. After all, your invitation may be God's voice of invitation for that person. Whom should you invite? Well, start close to home: your son, your grandson. It could be a nephew, an uncle. Maybe you could invite the brother-in-law you cannot stand. It would, at least, get him out of the picture while he's off to the seminary.

Once in Old Forge I was giving a presentation about vocations. In the parking lot after

Nov. 3

Thirty-first Sunday  
in Ordinary Time

READINGS

Deuteronomy 6:2-6

Hebrews 7:23-28

Mark 12:28b-34

Mass, a woman came running up to me and said: "Father, this is my husband. Take him. He's yours. I've had enough." Obviously, the one you invite must be eligible. Obviously, he was not, although by the time they got home, maybe he was. I never found out.

Third, we need to encourage people to consider the priesthood. When I was rector of the seminary, numerous students told me that they received very little encouragement about coming to the seminary even from within their own families. Here are some of the responses they would receive after they expressed interest in the seminary.

You want to be a priest? Why would you want to do that? You're

way too good looking to become a priest! How dumb is that! Are priests supposed to be ugly?

Then, there is: "Priesthood? You're way too smart for that!" That comment makes it sound as if you need to be as dumb as the person making the remark.

"You want to go to the seminary? Why don't you go to a real college first?" If someone said to you, I would like to be an engineer, would you respond with "Why don't you study accounting first? Then, decide later if engineering is for you." Would you tell someone interested in teaching to study law first, then decide later? Of course not! The same applies to priesthood. The seminary provides the opportunity for a man to discern if priesthood is the right vocation. The seminary staff works with candidates to help them decide. If priesthood is not the right choice, then they would encourage them to look elsewhere for a vocation.

"Why would you ever

want to be a priest? There are way too many sacrifices attached to priesthood." Give me a break. Tell me what vocation in life does not have sacrifice. The sacrifices of priesthood are different from other sacrifices.

A simple formula: pray, invite, encourage. The priests of tomorrow are going to come from the families of today. Future priests will not come from the recollections of today. They will come from your families. Priests are not some kind of Marvel comic book character who suddenly emerge from the slime of the earth. Priests come from the people of God to live their vocation by serving the people of God. Priests don't come from heaven, but we hope to end up there.

So, when someone asks me what am I going to do to make sure that there are priests in the future, I just turn the question back to them - what are you going to do? The answer? Pray, Invite, Encourage

## Around the diocese

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

## DIOCESAN EVENTS

## ANDREW DINNERS

Come and join Bishop LaValley to learn more about being a priest. Any man of high school age and above is welcome to attend the Andrew Dinner sponsored by the Vocation Office. Parents are welcome to attend.

**Schedule:** Jefferson-Lewis Sunday, Nov. 3 St. Anthony's Sechi Hall, Watertown; St. Lawrence Sunday, Nov. 17 Brzana Hall, Ogdensburg; Clinton-Northern Franklin Sunday, Nov. 24 Emmaus

Room, Plattsburgh

**Time:** The program begins at 5 p.m. followed by Holy Hour and dinner with Bishop Terry R. LaValley, and area pastors and priests.

**Contact:** If you are interested in attending, speak to your pastor and register at <https://www.rcdony.org/andrewdinner>.

## PRIESTHOOD DISCERNMENT

Discernment is a call, listen with others. It is a journey of faith, traveling with companions. Are you a single Catholic man, of high school age or older, who

is hearing the Lord's call to the Priesthood? You are invited to join fellow discerners and Father Howard Venette for the following gatherings.

**Place:** St. Mary's Church, Canton  
**Dates:** Nov. 23; 2025: Jan. 25, March 22, May 3,

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

**Features:** Lunch will be provided at each of the church locations.

**Contact:** Registration required, please go to [www.rcdony.org/priesthooddiscernment](http://www.rcdony.org/priesthooddiscernment). For more

information **contact:** Father Howard Venette – [hvenette@rcdony.org](mailto:hvenette@rcdony.org)

## FOSTER GRANDPARENT

FGP is a local program that shows you how you can apply the skills and wisdom you have acquired throughout your life to make a difference in the lives of others. Get involved in the community and build relationships to last a lifetime. All you need to join is the ability to give the kind of comfort and love. If you're 55 or older and want to share your experience

and compassion, you have what it takes to be a Foster Grandparent. You'll also receive a small bi-weekly, non-taxable stipend that cannot be held against any benefits you already have as well as paid mileage for your travel. Additionally, you receive paid holidays, vacations, sick and personal leave. Opportunities available in Franklin, Essex, Clinton, St. Lawrence and Jefferson County.

**Contact:** Melissa Howard, Volunteer Coordinator at (518) 359-7688 or E-mail: [mhoward@cathcharities.org](mailto:mhoward@cathcharities.org)

# The Great Warning

A recent mantra comes from the COVID pandemic and says: "Follow the science." Then, the TV commercial tells to check the Facts....Car Facts. We want measurable, provable, and clear-cut facts, science, and knowledge.

What about the experience of person x, the experience of person y, and the experience of person z. No one can verify those experiences except the person who experienced them. Does that mean we should pay no attention to them? Can we believe them?

What about the Bible? Can we believe all that? The visions and comments in the Book of Revelation affirm many things hard to understand and difficult to grab onto. Is there anything in this book that can affect me?

We go to the movies. Time and again, Hollywood produces films focusing on the end of the world, the artists' versions of the Apocalypse, stories loosely

based on Sacred Scripture. As a result, this type of movie is not on my "must see" list.

A recent film did make it to my "must see" list: "The Great Warning." The movie is really a documentary with personal testimony from several people who experienced near-death experiences. A Spanish nurse who worked in an abortion clinic, an American daredevil who feared nothing, an Australian playboy alcoholic working diligently at corporate success, and a young woman without much religious upbringing form the cast of characters as they narrate their journeys from nothingness to an intense relationship with God.

The film is based on the book *The Warning: Testimonies and Prophecies of the Illumination of Conscience* by Christine

Watkins who appears and gives her testimony about the reasonableness of her interviewees and how their experiences fit with current understandings of the divine and the contents of the Book of Revelation.

Although he or his videos are not part of the movie, the voice of Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen is heard, audio segments from his many presentations that testify about human behavior, lack of conscience, and deviation from the God's plan for humanity. His words were spoken before the main characters were born, but they predict their eventual lifestyles and behavior.

The movie has several segments focusing on the teachings and visions of St. Faustina Kowalska. These segments corroborate the main charac-

ters' experiences. Yes, the film goes far beyond our everyday experiences. We dislike hearing these stories and experiences and might be tempted to disregard them since we cannot experience what they experienced. However, they all force us to face the reality of a life poorly lived and the life that God expects of us.

"The Great Warning" makes the viewers re-evaluate the Scriptures' teachings about the end of the world. Even more importantly, the movie helps the viewers look at their own lives and realize their negative and positive impact of human behavior.

"The Great Warning" is one of those movies with limited showings. I encourage readers to go and see it when it becomes locally available. Trailers and segments are available on YouTube. These clips will give you a taste of the film's value.

Msgr. Robert H. Aucoin



## CALLED TO SERVE

# Serving at the altar

Becoming an altar boy was an honor and a privilege. "Boy" because girls were not allowed to serve in the Sanctuary back in the pre-Vatican II days. That prohibition was removed by the bishops at the Council.

I do not recall if I was in favor of that move or against. It didn't matter. The bishops spoke and we followed. Today, for what it is worth, I would side with the decision.

In the days prior to the Council, a boy in my parish in Queens could not apply to be an altar

boy until fifth grade. We learned all the Latin responses and prayers of the Mass. We did not necessarily know exactly what we were praying, but we had a pretty good idea.

My father, who was an altar boy in his day, helped me learn the Latin. We also learned the moves and actions required of an altar boy, the ritual of the Mass.

Once commissioned to serve at Mass, we were scheduled regularly for a weekday or weekend Mass. If for some reason the priest entered the sanctuary without a server, one or two deputed boys would race to the dressing area

to don a cassock and surplice and reverently enter the sanctuary to assist.

Fast forward to today.

It is more difficult to attract young people to serve. I cannot put a finger on why. Perhaps it has to do with the regimen required. Maybe a lack of individual confidence is to blame. It could be that parents

do not encourage their children to serve.

Since Mass is now said in the vernacular, learning Latin responses is not an issue. The altar server today assists the priest and the deacon at Mass; they may carry the cross, the candles, and the incense if used

in the opening procession. Altar servers help prepare the altar with the bread and the wine for consecration and wash the celebrant's hands, called the lavabo, prior to consecration. The server also holds the Missal for the celebrant when Father offers prayers at the beginning and end of Mass from his chair.

A server rings bells at the epiclesis, when the priest asks the Holy Spirit to bless the offerings of bread and wine that will be consecrated, and then when the Host and Chalice are elevated for our reverence during consecration.

An altar server often rings a small bell or bells during the consecration to draw attention to the precise moment when transubstantiation - the

conversion of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ - takes place.

One Sunday when I was an altar server, I was probably in high school then, I fainted during Mass. The bells were under me. My friend Brian, who was serving with me, pulled the bells out from under me so he could ring them at the proper time. What a trooper!

The ushers dragged me off, gave me a glass of water, and I was back in no time.

Being at the altar during Mass was and is the high point of my day.

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



Deacon Kevin Mastellon



# Priest murdered in Mexico

The Catholic community of Chiapas shares in these hours pain and prayers after the murder of an indigenous priest parish priest in the Cuxtitali neighborhood of San Cristobal de las Casas. The attack on Father Marcelo Pérez Pérez, as the victim was called, occurred on his way back from the parish of Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, in San Cristobal de las Casas, where he had celebrated Mass. According to the ongoing investigation, two armed men on motorcycles approached the car in which Father Marcelo was sitting and shot him on Sunday morning, October 20.

Known for his work for justice and peace in the region's indigenous communities and as a mediator in conflicts in areas such as Pantelhó, where violence and insecurity have increased

significantly and armed groups have long fought for control of the territory, the priest had received a number of death threats over the years, including for his actions and denunciations of the actions of armed groups in the region.

Due to the constant threats, the diocese of San Cristóbal de las Casas had decided to transfer him from the municipality of Simojovel to the parish of Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe. "Chiapas is a time bomb, many people have disappeared, been kidnapped and killed by organized crime," he said in an interview last September 13 during a peace rally attended by parishioners from the three dioceses of Chiapas. In August 2024, he confirmed that a bounty of one million pesos (almost 50,000 euros) had



## 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  
mbrett@rcdony.org

been placed on his life in Simojovel, but that he would continue his peace process under the protection of God. "I have a divine mandate," he told the newspaper "El Sol de México" on August 2, 2024.

The bishop emeritus of San Cristóbal de las Casas, Cardinal Felipe Arizmendi Esquivel, expressed his deep sadness and recalled that Father Marcelo was one of the first indigenous priests from the Tsotsile ethnic group that he ordained. "He always worked for justice and peace among the indigenous peoples, especial-

ly in Simojovel, and accompanied the victims of internal violence in Pantelhó," said Cardinal Esquivel. According to the Cardinal, the priest never engaged in party politics, but always fought for respect and justice between communities: "He fought for the values of the Kingdom of God to come alive in the communities. The values of truth and life, holiness and grace, justice, love and peace."

"Father Marcelo Pérez was a living example of priestly commitment to the neediest and weakest in society. His pastoral work, which was

characterized by his closeness to the people and his constant support for those most in need, leaves a legacy of love and service that will remain in the hearts of all those he touched through his ministry," said the Mexican Bishops' Conference in a communiqué on the priest's violent death, signed by its President Rogelio Cabrera López and its Secretary General Ramón Castro Castro. "The murder of Father Marcelo not only deprives the community of a pastor who was committed to his people, but also silences a prophetic voice that fought tirelessly for peace, truth and justice in the Chiapas region..." said the Bishops' Conference...

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

## OBITUARIES

**Altona** – Mary Elizabeth (Hemingway) Seguin, 77; Mass of Christian Burial Oct. 22, 2024 at Holy Angels Church; burial in St. Louis of France Cemetery, Sciota.

**Canton** – Joseph Michael Guarino, 60; Mass of Christian Burial Oct. 23, 2024 at St. Mary's Church; burial in St. Henry's Cemetery, DeKalb Junction.

**Dannemora** – Gloria I Gordon, 84; Mass of Christian Burial Oct. 30, 2024 at St. Joseph's Church.

**Elizabethtown** – William A. Denton, 89; Mass of Christian Burial Nov. 9, 2024 at St. Elizabeth's Church; burial in Riverside Cemetery.

**Hogansburg** – Mitchell J. Gray, 49; Mass of Christian Burial Oct. 22, 2024 at St. Regis Church.

**Hogansburg** – Antonia (Grammatica) Herne, 91; Mass of Christian Burial Oct. 24, 2024 at St. Regis Church;

**Hogansburg** – Christie (Lazore) Roundpoint, 92; Mass of Christian Burial Oct. 23, 2024 at St. Regis Church; burial in Kateri Cemetery.

**Lake Placid** – Joan Marise "Joanne" Brady, 89; Mass of Christian Burial Nov. 30, 2024 at St. Agnes Church; burial in St. Bernard's Cemetery, Saranac Lake.

**Lake Placid** – Lt. Col. Donald L. Dew, 87; Mass of Christian Burial Oct. 25, 2024 at St. Agnes Church; burial in St. Agnes Cemetery.

**Lake Placid** – Donald J. Stewart, 74; Mass of Christian Burial Oct. 24, 2024 at St. Agnes Church; burial in St. Agnes Cemetery.

**Lake Placid** – William J. Wylie, 60; Graveside Services Oct. 25, 2024 at North Elba Cemetery.

**Lowville** – Susan Demo Salmon, 66; Funeral Services Oct. 28, 2024 at Iseneker Funeral Home, Inc.

**Malone** – Diane M. (Sancomb) Rivers, 79; Burial at New St. Joseph's Cemetery.

**Morrisonville** – Wanda (Bellows) Lawliss, 93; Mass of Christian Burial Oct. 25, 2024 at St. Alexander's Church; burial in Parish cemetery.

**Norfolk** – Jean (Oakes) McGinnis, 90; Graveside Services Nov. 2, 2024 at Visitation Cemetery.

**Ogdensburg** – Edward John Savage, 69; Funeral Services Oct. 23, 2024 at Frary Funeral Home.

**Ogdensburg** – Shona Lynn Wall, 44; Funeral Services Oct. 25, 2024 at Fox & Murray Funeral Home.

**Peru** – Daniel Henry Fracalossi, 73; Mass of Christian Burial Oct. 26, 2024 at St. Augustine's Church.

**Plattsburgh** – Donald F. Rushford, 93; Mass of Christian Burial Oct. 25, 2024 at St. Peter's Church; burial in Town of Plattsburgh Community Mausoleum.

**Plattsburgh** – Stella Teagle, 91; Mass of Christian Burial Nov. 11, 2024 at St. Peter's Church.

**Port Leyden** – Charlotte M. (White) Bourgeois, 86; Funeral Services Oct. 22, 2024 at the Trainor Funeral Home, Inc.; burial in Calvary Cemetery.

**Saranac Lake** – Patricia L. (Boyea) Thompson, 83; Mass of Christian Burial Oct. 21, 2024 at St. Bernard's Church; burial in Notre Dame Cemetery, Malone.

**South Colton** – Floyd A. Supernault, 90; Mass of Christian Burial Oct. 25, 2024 at St. Paul's Church; burial in St. Patrick's Cemetery, Colton.

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[www.northcountrycatholic.org](http://www.northcountrycatholic.org)

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# Faith groups back NY nuns in court case

By Madalaine Elhabbal  
Catholic News Agency

A group of nuns and religious associations fighting for exemption from a New York law mandating they provide abortion coverage to their employees has gained support from a coalition of Muslim, Jewish, Hindu, Catholic, and other Christian groups as they take their legal battle to the Supreme Court.

In *Diocese of Albany v. Harris*, the plaintiffs are suing the state of New York after it mandated employers to cover abortions in their employee health insurance plans. The nuns have been engaged in the litigation since first filing suit in 2017. Their case is one of several religious freedom cases that could be on the Supreme Court docket this term.

Twenty states including Texas, Florida, Georgia, and Ohio have thrown their weight behind the case, alongside the University of Notre Dame's Religious Liberty Clinic and various Catholic health care pro-

fessionals and organizations. Together with the various religious groups, they collectively filed seven friend-of-the-court briefs asking the Supreme Court to block the mandate.

"New York is bullying nuns into bankrolling abortions because they serve all people, no matter their faith," said Eric Baxter, vice president and senior counsel at the religious liberty law firm Becket, in a press release. "That is unacceptable — as this outpouring of support shows, religious organizations should be free to care for the needy without having to violate their beliefs."

The plaintiffs, including the Sisters of St. Mary, a contemplative order of goat-herding Anglican nuns, asked the state in the filing for protection against the regulation, but the New York court refused.

Following the initial decision, the religious groups appealed to the Supreme Court, which returned it to the state court in May. In their filing, they asked the court to reconsider the case in light of *Fulton v. City*

of Philadelphia, a religious liberty case that upheld the religious liberty of private Catholic adoption agencies.

However, the lower court once again denied the plaintiffs' appeals, upholding the abortion mandate, leading Becket to appeal to the Supreme Court a second time.

The seven briefs include a joint contribution from Muslim and Hindu groups as well as from Jewish and Christian groups, including the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops (USCCB) and representatives from various Protestant denominations.

In their respective briefings, the diverse coalition explains why the protection of religious freedom is crucial for those who are practicing members of a minority faith.

"Abortion has been at the center of a religious, moral, political, and judicial firestorm for decades," the amicus briefing filed by the Christian coalition reads. "Until recently, supporters and opponents of abortion rights acknowledged

that coercing religious organizations to support abortion triggers profound questions of religious freedom."

Having previously forced religious charity organizations to include contraception in their employee health plans, the briefing states, "New York has taken the long next step" by "dragooning religious organizations into becoming complicit in abortion," a move the briefing calls "an intolerable invasion of religious autonomy."

"The Constitution protects the free exercise of religion," the brief submitted by The Islam and Religious Freedom Action Team of the Religious Freedom Institute (RFI) and the International Society for Krishna Consciousness adds. "In a religiously pluralistic and highly regulated society like ours, there can be no free exercise of religion for minority faiths without religious exemptions."

The Supreme Court will consider whether to hear the case "later this fall," according to Becket.

## 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

(With ecclesiastical approval)

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

Or whatever the Lord  
inspires you to offer Him

November



NOVEMBER

DIocese of  
OGDENSBURG, NY

2024

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
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## A DAY AWAY



St. Agnes Alpha #6 Day Away was held at the new Vida Preserve in Jay on Oct. 20. According to the program's website, "Alpha helps create a space for honest conversation around some of life's biggest questions. It is designed to provide guests an opportunity to connect with one another while providing the opportunity to share thoughts, ideas, and opinions in a safe and caring environment. Alpha helps bring people together while providing the chance to encounter Jesus." The program, centered around a meal, video presentations and small-group discussion, is running in Lake Placid, Massena and Ogdensburg.