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The Diocese of Ogdensburg Volume 79 Number 16

NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

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EUCCHARISTIC CONGRESS

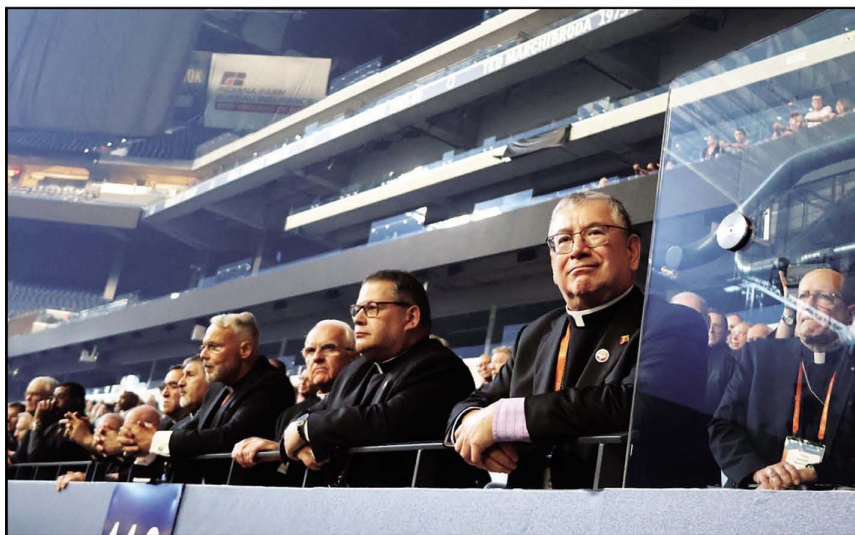


PHOTO COURTESY OF JD FLYNN/PILLAR MEDIA

Bishop Terry R. LaValley, Diocese of Ogdensburg, and Bishop Douglas J. Lucia, Diocese of Syracuse, join bishops from around the country for the National Eucharistic Congress at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis on July 17. Read more about the congress on pages 3 and 11.

ADMISSION TO CANDIDACY



Bishop Terry R. LaValley poses for a photo with seminarian Michelet Boncoeur after celebrating the Rite of Admission to Candidacy for Holy Orders on July 23 at Wadhams Hall in Ogdensburg. Boncoeur, originally from Haiti, has been completing pastoral work in the Catholic Community of Moriah, Crown Point, and Port Henry.

FULL STORY, PAGE 16

Pope: In adoration, we receive God's grace

By Hannah Brockhaus
Catholic News Agency

Do not be consumed by "the anxiety of doing" but spend time in rest and silent prayer to receive God's grace, Pope Francis said on July 21.

The pontiff told Catholics, especially those in ministry, to beware of "the dictatorship of doing" during his weekly reflection and Angelus.

"It is only possible to have a compassionate gaze, which knows how to respond to the needs of others, if our heart is not consumed by the anxiety of doing, if we know how to stop and how to receive the grace of God in the silence of adoration,"

Pope Francis said on a hot and humid day during the peak of summer in Rome.

Addressing the large crowd gathered in St. Peter's Square, Pope Francis said we are often "held prisoner by haste." He called it an important warning, especially for those in ministry and pastoral service.

"Am I able to stop during my days? Am I capable of taking a moment to be with myself and with the Lord, or am I always in a hurry for things to do?" he said from a window of the Apostolic Palace.

He added that sometimes families are forced to live a frenetic pace; for example, when a father has to work from dawn until

dusk to put food on the table. But this is a social injustice, he said, and we should help families in this situation.

The pope's remarks focused on the day's Gospel, which demonstrates how Jesus combined rest and compassion.

In the Gospel, Jesus invites his apostles to "come away by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while," but when they get out of the boat, they find the crowd already waiting for them.

Jesus' "heart was moved with pity for them, for they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things," the Gospel of Mark, Chapter 6, says.

"These may seem like two in-

compatible things - resting and being compassionate - but they actually go together," Pope Francis underlined.

Jesus is concerned for his disciples' tiredness, the pontiff said, because he is aware of the danger of our ministries and lives falling victim to an over concern with "things to do and with results."

"We become agitated and lose sight of what is essential," he emphasized.

Pope Francis also explained that the rest proposed by Jesus is not "an escape from the world, a retreat into a merely personal well-being," but a rest that helps us to have more compassion for others.

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It's a big deal

"Can I help?"

When I asked that question, the woman was standing on the bottom shelf of a retail display in the grocery store as she attempted to reach an item sitting back a bit on the top shelf.

She turned around to face me, stepping down from the shelf as she did so.

At a fraction of an inch shy of six feet tall, I'm taller than the vast majority of people. This woman was part of that vast majority. I was easily 10 inches taller than her, maybe more.

"Please," she responded.

"That would be great."

I didn't even need to stand on my toes to grab the item. I handed it to her in seconds and asked if she needed only one.

**Darcy L.
Fargo**

She thanked me for getting it and said she was all set.

"That was incredibly sweet of you," she said.

"No big deal," I said. "The height comes in handy sometimes."

"Maybe it's not a big deal to you, but it's a big deal to me," she responded. "I was never going to reach it, and that probably wasn't very safe."

We parted ways, smiling.

In the past few months, several people have pointed out that I seem to act on the belief that deeds/tasks/accomplishments have to be difficult to be worthwhile or important, and God has put it on my heart to work on that habit.

But I did it again that day at the grocery store with my "no big deal."

God gifted each of us with our own combinations of attributes, skills and talents; no two people are completely the same. A task that's easy for one person may be impossible for another.

God gave us our gifts to use to serve and glorify

him. Using our gifts to help others is one way we can do that. If we're using gifts given to us by God to easily assist another of His children, that's a big deal!

While I still regularly fall into that habit still, occasionally God gives me the grace to handle those situations better.

Since it's not uncommon to see people at stores who are struggling to reach desired merchandise, I hope to respond better the next time someone suggests using my height to get their item was kind or helpful. Maybe I'll say, "thank you. This height can be a blessing."

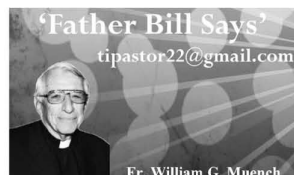
God's going to need to help me get there, though.

The gift of the Blessed Eucharist

Recently, my attention was on the Tenth National Eucharistic Congress in Indianapolis. The congress was the opportunity for all of us, Catholics, to reaffirm our belief and our love for the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist. The Blessed Eucharist is the heart and center of our faith as Catholics. Each time we participate in the Holy Mass, our faith is renewed and strengthened as Catholics.

You and I believe in the real presence of our Lord Jesus in the Blessed Eucharist. This is so important for us as Catholics. We believe that Jesus is truly present body and blood, soul and divinity in the Eucharist. This Eucharistic Congress is a celebration of our faith in the Eucharist, and we believe that the Lord Jesus is truly present in all of our Catholic Churches through the consecrated Blessed Eucharist reserved in the tabernacles.

The representative of



Pope Francis to our Eucharistic Congress was Cardinal Luis Tagle. I found the time to listen to his wonderful homily at the closing Mass of the congress through YouTube. I am familiar with Cardinal Tagle; many of his talks are also on YouTube. I find him to be a very powerful preacher.

In this homily at the congress, he begins by describing the Blessed Eucharist as a magnificent gift from God - a gift to us all. Jesus came to our world to live with us, to die for us, to rise from the dead. This was God's gift to us all. Jesus continues to be present among us for all time through the Holy Eucharist. This is God's gift to us all. Each time we, Catholics, gather to par-

ticipate at the celebration of Mass, we celebrate the Lord's presence with us - again, God's gift for us.

Cardinal Tagle then challenged us all to become missionaries by taking God's love to our world as we are now empowered by this Blessed Sacrament. May our faith and way of life lead others to God's love. May we lead others by our kindness and our concern touch others. Cardinal Tagle told us that Pope Francis' message to the Church of the United States is to be renewed through our conversion to the Holy Eucharist. We are a transformed people and always prepared to live as disciples of the Lord.

The message of the Eucharistic Congress is a challenge that all of us go into our world - bringing God's love and peace - having been made disciples of the Lord through the Holy Eucharist. The Lord is present with us and walks with us in all that we do. We will know

what to say, what to do. This closeness of the Eucharistic Lord gives us a new spirit, a more powerful faith. Each Mass ends with the challenge - "Go. Do something. Make the world a better place."

As a priest and a pastor, I have learned the importance of the Holy Mass in the life of a Catholic parish. Each time you and I celebrate Mass with the people of our parish, we are changed. After each Mass, we all, priest and people, go out as new and different people. Yes, every time we participate in a Mass, you must be new and transformed. You have spent time with the Lord. You have received the Blessed Eucharist in Holy Communion. You are well prepared to live better. You are prepared to transform your world. Jesus is with you in a unique and wonderful way. Each parish will be more alive. Let us thank God for the gift of the Blessed Eucharist.

'An awesome taste of heaven'

Participants from our diocese reflect on the National Eucharistic Congress

By Mary Beth Bracy, consecrated virgin
Contributing Writer

There are a few moments in life when we are blessed to be a part of something truly historic – and bigger than ourselves – something so awe-inspiring that it's as if we experience an actual taste of heaven on earth. The Eucharistic Congress in Indianapolis, held July 17-21, was one of these epic events in the midst of our National Eucharistic Revival. And yet, as our bishops and the other speakers reminded both those in attendance and those at home, the revival isn't over – it is only beginning! All of us are being sent to set the world on fire with this most important truth of Jesus' real presence in the Blessed Sacrament.

Throughout the Eucharistic Congress, 60,000 faithful were provided with opportunities to worship and praise together at special Masses at both a convention center and Lucas Oil Stadium; attend breakout sessions featuring popular speakers and a variety of exhibits; participate in revival sessions in the evening, which included Eucharistic Adoration with praise and chant music; and listen to keynote talks from Sister Miriam James Heidland, SOLT and Sister Bethany Madonna, S.V., to Jonathan Roumie and Bishop Robert Barron, to Father Mike Schmitz and Chris Stefanick.

There were also activities for the many children, young adults, and families in attendance. The positive energy of the faithful was palpable throughout the streets of Indianapolis, as people wore t-shirts reflecting their beliefs, sang hymns along their way, and shared God's love with others.

The mile-long Eucharistic procession was a highlight of the week; tens of thousands flocked through the streets, while others lined the sides of the road or watched from buildings. The procession ended at the Indiana War Memorial and Museum,

where an altar was placed on the top of the steps, and a sea of pilgrims knelt and prayed in the University Park below.

Several North Country natives were among those in attendance at the Eucharistic Congress and shared their pictures and reflections. More articles on living the Eucharistic Revival in our parishes will follow in upcoming issues of the North Country Catholic.

FATHER BRYAN D. STITT, CANTON

My presence behind the Blessed Sacrament (in the Eucharistic procession) was unplanned, but an absolute joy. I tried to stay focused on the Blessed Sacrament during the entire procession, but at one point we stopped, and I looked around to see if there was a problem. Just then I saw Mrs. Amy Schirmer (mother of our newly ordained Father Douglas Schirmer) kneeling at the side of the road. Of all the thousands of people, to see in that moment someone from Ogdensburg – what a beautiful sign of God's providence.

What a blessing to return from the Eucharistic Congress to the beginning of the five weeks of the Bread of Life Discourse. It's as if the Good Lord wanted us all to reflect for the next month on all the gifts of the Congress.

FATHER THOMAS R. SZYDLIK, DIOCESE OF PEORIA (PLATTSBURGH NATIVE)

It was almost overwhelming to be in Lucas Oil Stadium and pray before the Blessed Sacrament with 50,000 people. Some of them I knew, but most I did not. We were all connected by our common love for the Lord – I was grateful to be there and to experience such beauty!

CAROLYN PIERCE, HEUVELTON

All during the Eucharistic Congress I heard the comment,

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Bishops from around the United States, including Bishop Terry R. LaValley, participate in a mile-long Eucharistic procession as part of the National Eucharistic Congress held July 17-21 in Indianapolis.

Bishop LaValley recalls 'electrifying environment'

It's been a very inspiring couple of weeks. Come with me as I share some highlights. On July 15, I attended the beautiful Episcopal Ordination and Installation of Most Reverend John McDermott as the new Bishop of Burlington. The next day, Bishop (Douglas) Lucia and I headed west for Indianapolis to participate in the National Eucharistic Congress.

This event began with a Bishops' Day of Prayer and Reflection. Cardinal (Timothy M.) Dolan reminded the bishops that we all walk by faith, not by sight. We must recover the power of the invisible. This is essential for our sacramental Church. Just because we don't see something or Someone, that doesn't mean that what's unseen is less real. In many respects, we've lost the sacramental moorings of our faith.

Bishop (Donald J.) Hying of Madison, Wisconsin addressed the question of diocesan pastoral planning, (something about which we are very much aware here in the Dio-

cese of Ogdensburg).

The challenges we face with declining population, Mass attendance, Church vocations, etc. are not unique to our local Church. He reminded us that we must go back to the Pentecost Event and focus on our personal relationship with Jesus and how this encounter informs and motivates the mission of the Church and our individual call to follow Jesus.

Both presentations provided ample material for the bishops to reflect upon and to discuss insights in a sharing session that proved most helpful and affirming of our own local efforts to stay mission focused: Christ led, Christ fed and hope-filled.

I had never been to Lucas Oil Stadium before. It is the home of the NFL Indianapolis Colts. Banners hung from the rafters noting legendary players and coaches of the team. This football gridiron where professional athletes and avid fans gathered for football con-

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Participants from our diocese reflect

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

"it's like a foretaste of heaven" repeated again and again. While I went with a group of family and friends, there were 60,000 new friends just waiting to worship, sing, smile, talk, and share. The joy was palpable and contagious. Even the three hours we spent waiting - and walking - around the outside of the convention center to get registered was full of happy conversations. Every person I met had some place, person, or experience in common. We'd maybe grown up near each other, or had gone to common schools or conferences or just were both so happy to be in this blessed place.

The week was full of evidence that Jesus was present and was in charge, leading to many of what we called "Eucharistic miracles." One example is from Saturday. We had wanted a group photo, but it took all week to get three generations together in one place; it came at the end of benediction after the Eucharistic procession. We asked a new friend (of five minutes) to snap the photo. We wanted a priest in the photo, but our own priests were busy with the procession. I glanced around the park and spotted a group of priests waiting for the crowd to move. I told them our diocese and asked if any wanted to be in the picture. One priest from Missouri jumped right up and offered to help. As we walked back, he mentioned that he knew Ogdensburg. After spending the week trying to explain where I lived, I was amazed! What was the connection? Turns out he was a Basselin scholar - a recipient of the scholarship of which Father (Richard) Sturtz



(Left) Michael Pierce of Heuvelton poses for a photo with Bishop Douglas J. Lucia of Syracuse and Bishop Terry R. Lavalley of Ogdensburg at the National Eucharistic Congress. (Right) Members of the Pierce family gathered at the Eucharistic Congress along with a priest from Missouri who was a Basselin Scholar and familiar with the Diocese of Ogdensburg.



never tired of singing the praises - and had come to visit Croghan where Mr. Basselin lived! Father Sturtz often exhorted me to point young men toward that scholarship. Out of the over 2000 priests there that I might have asked, God led me to a priest that had a connection with us!

We kept a record of these "miracles" that started before we left the driveway until we came back. It was so evident in the seemingly "chance" encounters and events that could only have been orchestrated by God. We logged at least 25 of these miracles - big and small - and know they will continue to appear if we look for them through Jesus in the Eucharist. We were reminded that Jesus is in charge. And Mary is at His side, bringing us along the way to meet Him.

Other things I treasure are the opportunity to celebrate different rites of the Mass, the healing sessions, the talks by the revival speakers, and 60,000 people receiving Eucharist reverently, the

silence at Adoration.

A fellow pilgrim, who came with 240 others from Oklahoma City summed up her thoughts to me saying "everyone is so good to each other. No one is pushing or complaining while in line, they are holding doors for each other, and waiting patiently and engaging with others around them. It's like a little bit of heaven." And as Bishop (Andrew) Cozzens reminded us at the conclusion of the Congress, this isn't the end, it's only the beginning. We need to take Jesus from the revival and bring Him to the world.

MICHAEL PIERCE, HEUVELTON

As an eighteen-year-old, I attended the "Awaken"/Youth Track. Our host for the week was Oscar Rivera, from Fall River, Massachusetts. Throughout the week, we focused on the story of Bartimaeus, the blind man from Mark's Gospel. The first day, we talked about background. The world saw Bartimaeus as a nuisance, and treated

him in a way utterly below his dignity. Like Bartimaeus, we have all been mistreated in some way, and may still suffer from the wounds left behind. But, like He did with Bartimaeus, Jesus sees beyond what the world tells us, loves us completely, and offers us healing.

The next day, we talked about trust. The Bible says that when Bartimaeus heard Jesus, "he threw aside his cloak, sprang up, and came to Jesus." For Bartimaeus to walk must've required great trust. He couldn't have known what obstacles lay before him. But, when he heard Jesus call, he had complete faith in Jesus and, for his reward, received his sight. When we place total trust in the Eucharistic Jesus, we receive the spiritual sight we need to navigate these confusing times we live in.

The third day, we talked about following Jesus after being healed. Mr. Rivera pointed out another important point in Bartimaeus' story. The Bible says, "Immediately he received his sight and fol-

lowed Him on the way." Nowhere does it say anything about Bartimaeus going back to get his cloak. This represents his total severance from his old life. He begins a new life following Jesus, without ever looking back. The same must be true for us. If we truly want a Eucharistic revival, we must remove whatever is keeping us from Jesus, and begin anew. As Jesus says in the Gospel of Luke, "No one who sets a hand to the plow and looks to what was left behind is fit for the kingdom of God."

Note: Many of the talks from the Eucharistic Congress that are referenced in the reflection below, along with others, may be viewed for free on YouTube or by visiting ewtn.com and selecting On Demand.

REGINALD PIERCE, ALLENTOWN, PA (ORIGINALLY FROM HEUVELTON)

The recommendations of the Congress aren't sensible (and that's a good thing). Revival was on the lips of all at the

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National Eucharistic Congress

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10th National Eucharistic Congress in Indianapolis this past weekend and it's not hard to see that revival is needed as the influence, money, and members of the Catholic Church here and in other Western nations continue to dwindle. The organizers of the Congress say they are depending on those who attended to be the sparks that ignite the hoped for revival but, at first glance, they don't seem to be asking very much: "Go home" and "Walk With One."

I participated in four days of the Congress. They aren't recommending that we go home and gain more knowledge (Father Mike Schmitz, Thursday evening session). They aren't recommending that we create new programs (Father John Burns, Thursday morning session). They are telling us to expect to return again and again to the same struggles (Sister Josephine Garrett, Friday night session). They aren't recommending that we pay very much attention to the major political parties (Bishop Rober Barron & Gloria Purvis, Saturday night session), they aren't even asking for fearless missionaries (Bishop Joseph Espallat, Friday morning session) and yet they are praising those who are imprisoned (Lila Rose, Thursday night session) and those who have been killed (several presenters throughout the weekend made reference to the 16 virgin martyrs of Compiègne, whose feast day marked the beginning of the Congress). They are asking us to refrain from trying to fill ourselves, even with spiritual things (Sister Josephine Garrett).

And in spite of all that, they are trusting

us. They are trusting the revival of faith and the spreading of the Gospel in this country (and then the world) to incompletely healed, incompletely courageous, incompletely filled, incompletely knowledgeable, incompletely prepared ordinary Catholics.

And that's a good thing.

The church is meant to be making herself ready and waiting and radiant for the wedding feast of the Lamb (Rev 19:8). Her radiance, the claritas that completes her beauty – the beauty without which she cannot fulfil her destiny as the bride of Christ – "is the just deeds of the saints." You see, there was another, even more crucial word on the lips of all at the Congress: repentance. The revival which we seek will come about, God willing, not through the perfect plan, the right politics, the perfect social programs, but through the conversion of each and every one of our hearts. It will come, if it is to come, when we are pierced with sorrow for our sins, pray fervently to be united with Jesus, and are given the grace to practice the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience to the hilt. And if no revival comes about, so be it. If we all draw close and hide ourselves in the pierced side of the Lord Jesus and all those we try to walk with ignore us, let us be at peace. Let us content ourselves to be the people who suffer the loss of everything, even if it means delivering our bodies to be burned, provided we do not lose the love of our God.

MARY BETH BRACY, CONSECRATED VIRGIN, PLATTSBURGH

Since the Eucharistic



Consecrated Virgin Mary Beth Bracy of Plattsburgh and Amy Schirmer of Ogdensburg take a selfie at the consecrated virgins exhibit at the National Eucharistic Congress.

Heart of Jesus captured my heart as a teenager, I have wanted to reciprocate His Love and help lead others to Him. The Eucharistic Revival and Congresses are like a dream come true. Some of the most moving aspects for me were seeing hundreds of people flood into the 24/7 Eucharistic Adoration chapel across from the Convention Center during the Congress. I was blessed to pray there more than once and each time the Church had standing room only. It reminded me of the words of Blessed Dina Belanger who said: "If souls but understood the Treasure they possess in the Divine Eucharist it would be necessary to encircle the Tabernacles with the strongest of ramparts for, in the delirium of an overwhelming and holy hunger, they would themselves press forward to feed on the Bread of Angels." When I drew close to the altar to pray before the Blessed Sacrament one night, I noticed that families had brought hundreds of roses to leave before our Eucharistic King.

Since I volunteered to help in guest services

and also at the Consecrated Virgins booth for most of the days, I didn't have time to attend talks until the evening. However, due to the kindness of one of the exhibit workers, I was blessed to be able to see both the Shroud of Turin replica and the Miracles of the Eucharist exhibit created by Blessed Carlo Acutis, along with his relics and those of several other saints. Although I've been blessed to read a few books on the Shroud and also previously seen some of the Miracles in the Eucharist, I found myself moved beyond words and could only pray in my heart: "My Lord and my God!" (John 20:28). This wasn't my experience alone, as people waited in line for two to four hours to see these glimpses of our Savior. It was important for me to venerate the relics because, as a consecrated virgin, I consider it to be one of the greatest blessings of my vocation to prayerfully intercede for others. So many people who were sick, suffering, or struggling in some way had asked for my prayers both before and during the pilgrimage

and I wanted to ask our heavenly friends to intercede for them and the needs of our diocesan Church.

The nightly Eucharistic Adoration at Lucas Oil Stadium was also very powerful. To be in the midst of 60,000 people and yet experience a silent hush as people knelt on the cement for long periods of time out of reverence and devotion was truly heartening. It was like being surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses, while at the same time feeling like Christ's gaze rested on you alone. On the day of healing, Father Boniface Hicks, OSB led a special litany and Eucharistic procession throughout the stadium. It was really like the scenes in the Gospels where Jesus came to cure everyone, whether their needs were physical, emotional, psychological, or spiritual. For this reason, I also found the praise and worship with Matt Maher deeply transformative. Organizers took great care to have the only lights in the stadium be on Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, so the focus was on Him as songs like "Run to the Father" were sung.

I pray that all of the faithful will go out and work so that every soul on the face of the earth may also share in this experience of Eucharistic Love through daily Mass and ongoing Adoration. In the words of St. John Paul II, "In a child's single look fixed on the gentle Host I met the heavenly Father looking at me with love." The heavenly days and closing liturgy were triumphant reminders of what the world can be like if we do God's will on earth as it is in Heaven by living in perpetual praise of His glorious presence among us.

Environmental Stewardship

What's in your shopping cart?

This year's Earth Day theme, "planet vs. plastic," calls for "the end of plastics for the sake of human and planetary health." Is this achievable?

Bakelite, the world's first commercial plastic, was patented Dec. 7, 1909. My Mom majored in polymer chemistry in the 1950s. She recalls how, when plastic first came on the market, it was hailed as progress. It was indestructible. Now we know indestructible isn't good. She regrets being one of the scientists who helped develop plastics.

I've shunned plastic bags in the produce aisle for a long time. I use a re-usable water bottle. I don't use straws. I buy shampoo bars instead of bottles. I carry a coffee cup in my car so I don't have to use disposable ones. I buy an ice cream cone rather than a dish of ice cream — not because I care for the cone, but because it produces less waste. When I can, I buy fresh and avoid packaged products at the supermarket. I buy produce from farm stands or a farmers' market, but even market vendors use plastic to wrap products. My actions are a drop in the bucket; we are inundated with plastic.

However, using my consumer power can influence and impact businesses and the marketplace. Through our purchasing decisions, we shape trends, products, and services. When consumers support certain brands or products, they can impact market dynamics and business strategies. So, whether it's demanding sustainable practices, favoring ethical companies, or advocating for specific features, consumers play a crucial role in shaping the business landscape.

What action will you take to avoid the wave of plastics in your shopping cart?

By Yvona Fast, author, www.yvonafast.com
Faith and Ecology Member,
Lake Clear

Bishop's Public Schedule

July 31 — 11 a.m. — Council of Priests Meeting at Our Lady of Grace Parish in Morristown

Aug. 3 — 10 a.m. — Mass and pilgrimage with the Catholic Daughters of America to St. Anne's Shrine in Vermont

Aug. 4 — 11 a.m. — Mass at St. Bartholomew's Church in Old Forge

Aug. 6 — 4:30 p.m. — Mass for Youth Camp at Camp Guggenheim in Saranac Lake

Aug. 7 — 4:30 p.m. — Picnic with the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart in Cape Vincent

Aug. 9 — Noon — Diocesan Staff Picnic at Bishop's Residence

Aug. 11 — 2 p.m. — Mass Celebrating the 60th Anniversary of Ordination to the Priesthood for Reverend Andrew J. Amyot and the 25th Anniversary of Ordination to the Diaconate for Deacon John A. Levison at St. Andrew's Church in Norwood

Aug. 12 — 10 a.m. — Youth Server Appreciation Day at Camp Guggenheim in Saranac Lake

5 p.m. — Bishop's Fund Appeal Reception at St. Patrick's Parish Center in Port Henry

Aug. 13 — 5 p.m. — Bishop's Fund Appeal Reception at St. Mary's Parish Center in Indian Lake

Aug. 14 — 9:45 a.m. — Episcopal Council Meeting at Bishop's Residence followed by Lunch

Protecting God's Children

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

Aug. 8 — 6 p.m. — St. Bernard's School, Saranac Lake

Aug. 12 — 1 p.m. — Diocesan offices, Ogdensburg

A GROWING VOICE

Practicing patience

"Patience is a virtue." If I had a dollar for each time I've heard that in my life... well, you get the idea. I have pretty much zero patience for just about everything; whether it's waiting for dinner to finish cooking, or waiting, unable to sleep, to go to Camp Guggenheim.

This got me thinking about how we are all just here on a little visit to Earth. Our real home, our real destination is, of course, Heaven.

In retrospect, we all have our patience tested and used every day, in that we are waiting to go to Heaven. Sometimes, it feels like a never-ending journey, and in the hustle and bustle of daily life, it's easy to forget that ultimate destination.

But perhaps, the concept of pa-

tience isn't just about waiting for small things like cooked meals or upcoming events. Maybe it's about understanding the bigger picture and being patient in the journey towards our spiritual destination.

It's a reminder to live each day with purpose, kindness and understanding as we navigate this temporary stop on our way to something greater. Whether it's the patience to deal with life's little inconveniences or the patience to accept that some things are beyond our control, it's all part of this larger test we're facing.

And maybe, just maybe, the more we practice patience in our everyday lives, the better prepared we'll be for that ultimate journey to our real home, Heaven.



Erin Savarie

Rest in Peace

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

July 31 — Rev. Napoleon Brisson, 1950; Rev. Michael O'Reilly, 1980

Aug. 1 — Rev. J. Everett Denesha, 2013

Aug. 2 — Rev. Zephyrin Jutras, 1919

Aug. 4 — Rev. Alexandre Soulerin, O.M.I., 1892; Rev. Adolphe Saurel, 1925; Rev. Willie Caron, M.S.C., 1972

Aug. 5 — Rev. M. Calixte Mourier, O.M.I., 1912; Rev. David N. Burke, 1913; Gerald A. Sharland, 1973

Aug. 7 — Msgr. Edmund H. Dumas, 2000; Rev. Lawrence E. Cotter, 2016

Aug. 8 — Rev. Donald E. Seguin, 1976

Aug. 9 — Rev. Edward B. May, O.S.A., 1953; Rev. James N. Flattery, 1997

Aug. 10 — Rev. Walter J. LaRocque, 1936; Rev. Joseph Bolduc, O.M.I., 1956; Rev. Cornelius Vullings, M.S.C., 1971; Msgr. Anthony A. Milia, 2010; Deacon Bruce C. Wadsworth, 2013

Aug. 11 — Rev. Gilbert Monroe, O.F.M., 1958; John M. Kennedy, 1979

Aug. 12 — Rev. Pierre Gagnon, O.M.I., 1901; Rev. John M. Varrily, 1913

Aug. 13 — Msgr. Bernard F. Kellogg, 1993; Rev. Rolland A. Hart, 2022; Deacon Lawrence C. Morse, 2022

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, at 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



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MAKING SENSE OF BIOETHICS

Contextualizing near-death experiences

Near-death experiences (NDEs) are a complex set of phenomena that often include reports of leaving one's body, seeing it from outside or above, passing through a tunnel of light, seeing various forms of illumination, experiencing the presence of deceased relatives and friends, and even sensing the presence of angelic or divine beings. Between 12 and 15 percent of resuscitated heart attack patients report NDEs.

Sometimes discussions of these experiences include spiritual interpretations and religious overtones, and some commentators have claimed that "near-death experiences are certainly pronounced and conspicuous evidence of a transphysical soul" that we may use "to extract information about the afterlife."

Such strong claims, however, require further substantiation, even as they trigger vigorous discussion.

NDEs, to be clear, are not instances of a person actually dying and then returning from the dead to tell about it. If an individual were to die and return to life, there would have to be a supernatural explanation and cause. Human corpses do not come back to life, apart from the rare miraculous events surrounding the deaths of Jesus, Lazarus, the daughter of Jairus, the son of the widow and Nain, as we see in the Gospels.

Human death always involves the key no-

tion of irreversibility, which is to say: the irreversible cessation of circulatory and respiratory functions, or the irreversible cessation of all functions of the entire brain, including the brain stem, as explained in the 1981 Guidelines of the American Medical Association. NDEs involve situations that are reversible.

They may be caused by physiological phenomena that arise as the human brain faces various stressors, like oxygen deprivation, rather than any properly supernatural phenomena.

While supernatural forces could, in theory, cause an NDE, explanatory entities should not be multiplied beyond necessity, as "Occam's razor" counsels.

The Church's wisdom in evaluating such matters is that we should generally prefer a natural explanation for a phenomenon, unless and until the evidence for a supernatural explanation becomes truly compelling or overwhelming.

Rather than presupposing a supernatural explanation for NDEs, scientists have considered alternative explanations by examining stressful, near-death situations and their effects on brain function.

A 2023 Scientific American article notes how researchers "analyzed EEG data from four comatose patients

before and after their ventilators were removed.

As the patients' brains became deprived of oxygen, two showed an unexpected surge of gamma activity, a type of high-frequency wave linked to the formation of memory and the integration of information."

This raises the prospect that even in situations of severe hypoxia, certain brain functions may, at least briefly, operate in ways that could still affect thought and perception.

Dr. Kevin Nelson, a researcher who has studied near-death experiences extensively, notes "One of the most common causes of near-death experiences is fainting," which is able to generate a sense of being separated from your own body, or a feeling of euphoria. Researchers have also reported that a restriction of oxygen flow to the eye can sometimes result in an experience of tunnel vision.

Others have argued that central nervous system hallucinatory mechanisms may contribute to NDEs. The well-known neurologist, Dr. Oliver Sacks, notes how migraine headaches can generate illusions or hallucinations, which sufferers often describe as pulsating lights, shimmering illumination, or fields of brightness.

Sacks has also described the work of

Swiss neuroscientist Dr. Olaf Blanke who was able to generate a hallucination, "a 'shadow person' in a patient by electrically stimulating her left temporoparietal junction. 'When the woman was lying down,' Sacks reported, 'a mild stimulation of this area gave her the impression that someone was behind her; a stronger stimulation allowed her to define the [someone] as young but of indeterminate sex.'"

NDE's can also resemble drug-induced experiences, and many have noted the similarity of NDE accounts to essays written by conscious drug users about their experimentations and trips while using drugs like mushrooms, cannabis, LSD, ayahuasca, etc.

Sacks also offers the important observation that the reason hallucinations seem so real is that "they deploy the very same systems in the brain that actual perceptions do."

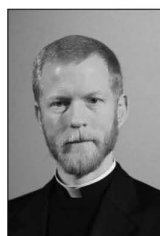
When a person is hallucinating a face, the fusiform face area, nor-

mally used to perceive and identify faces in the surrounding environment, is activated; when someone is hallucinating a voice, the auditory pathways are stimulated. It seems reasonable to believe that NDEs may rely on similar mechanisms.

Sacks also raises the possibility that NDEs may not occur when individuals are actually suffering an absence of circulation to the brain or when they are trapped in a deep coma, but rather as they are surfacing out of the coma and their cortex is beginning to regain function.

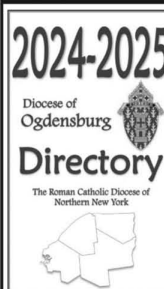
Since it is difficult to verify the cause of an individual's NDE, it is wise to use some caution around the interpretation of such experiences.

The most authoritative source of information about the afterlife remains the One who came from heaven, redeemed us through His suffering, death and resurrection, and who invites us to follow Him into eternal life.



Father Tad Pacholczyk, Ph.D.

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OBITUARIES

Alexandria Bay – Brent A. Reynolds, 26; Mass of Christian Burial July 19, 2024 at St. Cyril's Church; burial in Barnes Settlement Cemetery.

AuSable Forks – Dale "Wally" Chester Walton, 71; Mass of Christian Burial July 16, 2024 at Holy Name Church; burial in Holy Name Cemetery.

Canton – Mary E. (Newcombe) Ames, 88; Mass of Christian Burial July 24, 2024 at St. Mary's Church; burial in parish cemetery.

Canton – Gerald Francis Whalen, 93; Services to be held at a later date.

Champlain – Gerald B. Babbie, 82; Mass of Christian Burial July 16, 2024 at St. Mary's Church; burial in parish cemetery.

Champlain – Rene A. Barriere, 79; Mass of Christian Burial July 22, 2024 at St. Mary's Church.

Clayton – Leslie Elizabeth Delaney, 73; Graveside services July 23, 2024 at Clayton Cemetery.

Crown Point – Elsie Ann Spaulding Osher, 75; Mass of Christian Burial July 29, 2024 at Sacred Heart Church.

Gouverneur – Janice Finnegan Clark, 79; Mass of Christian Sept. 26, 2024 at St. James Church; burial in Stark Cemetery, South Colton.

Hogansburg – Donald James Buckshot, 63; Mass of Christian Burial July 20, 2024 at St. Regis Church.

Hogansburg – Jake William "Tahakie" LaFrance, 78; Mass of Christian Burial July 23, 2024 at St. Regis Church; burial in St. Joseph's Cemetery.

Keeseville – Jeannette A. (Liberty) Giddings, 78; Graveside Services July 23, 2024 at Evergreen Cemetery.

Lake Placid – Lois (Vallier) DiNicola, 91; Mass of Christian Burial July 24, 2024 at St. Agnes Church; burial in St. Agnes Cemetery.

Lake Placid – William "Bill" P. Elliott, 71; Mass of Christian Burial July 13, 2024 at St. Agnes Church.

Lowville – Randall Murphy, 61; Funeral Services July 18, 2024 at Iseneker Funeral Home, Inc.; burial in Beaches Bridge Cemetery.

Malone – John R. Shaw, 68; Funeral Services July 24, 2024 at Frary Funeral Home.

Massena – Richard Danboise, 89; Funeral Services July 25, 2024 at Phillips Memorial Home; burial in Calvary Cemetery.

Massena – Elizabeth I. "Betty" (Zelius) Krywanczyk, 87; Mass of Christian Burial July 22, 2024 at St. Mary's Church; burial in Calvary Cemetery.

Massena – Gary L. Trippany, 72; Mass of Christian Burial July 26, 2024 at Sacred Heart Church; burial in Calvary Cemetery.

Mooers Forks – Shirley (Lucia) McDonald, 86; Funeral Services July 18, 2024 at Rabideau Funeral Home.

Mooers Forks – June Sylvia (Bechard) Trombley, 88; Mass of Christian Burial July 19, 2024 at St. Ann's Church; burial in Town of Ellenburg Mausoleum.

Morrisonville – Margaret "Maggie" M. (LaPorte) Reome, 98; Mass of Christian Burial July 23, 2024 at

St. Alexander's Church; burial in St. Alexander's Cemetery.

Ogdensburg – Patrick J. Denney, 81; Graveside Services Aug. 9, 2024 at St. Mary's Cemetery.

Peru – Guy Dowd Banker, 91; Mass of Christian Burial July 23, 2024 at St. Augustine's Church.

Peru – Peter Francis Keenan, Sr., 94; Mass of Christian Burial July 26, 2024 at St. Augustine's Church; burial in St. Augustine's Memorial Columbarium.

Peru – Lucille E. (Soulia) Parsons, 92; Mass of Christian Burial July 18, 2024 at St. Augustine's Church; burial in parish cemetery.

Peru – Gregory Robert Timmons, 68; Mass of Christian Burial July 22, 2024 at St. Augustine's Church; burial in parish cemetery.

Plattsburgh – Dora M. Bushey, 99; Funeral Services July 19, 2024 at the R.W. Walker Funeral Home; burial in Plattsburgh Community Mausoleum.

Plattsburgh – Anthony J. Gagliardi, 99; Mass of Christian Burial July 26, 2024 at Our Lady of Victory Church; burial in St. Mary's of the Lake Cemetery, Cumberland Head.

Plattsburgh – Barbara Evelyn (Remieres) Gladue, 93; Mass of Christian Burial July 23, 2024 at St.

Peter's Church; burial in St. Peter's Cemetery.

Plattsburgh – Fred W. Kelley, 87; Mass of Christian Burial July 24, 2024 at St. Peter's Church; burial in St. Peter's Cemetery.

Plattsburgh – Patrick M. Mitchell, 69; Mass of Christian Burial July 25, 2024 at St. John's Church.

Plattsburgh – James Page, 80; Mass of Christian Burial July 15, 2024 at St. Peter's Church; burial in St. Peter's Cemetery.

Plattsburgh – Richard Seymour, 83; Funeral Services July 20, 2024 at Brown Funeral Home.

Rouses Point – Julie (Hanigan) Casey, 97; Mass of Christian Burial July 19, 2024 at St. Patrick's Church.

Tupper Lake – Donald W. Donah, 88; Mass of Christian Burial at St. Alphonsus Church.

Waddington – Kristian N. Daley, 33; Mass of Christian Burial July 17, 2024 at St. Mary's Church; burial in St. Mary's Cemetery.

Watertown – MaryBeth Stenard Chen, 58; Memorial Masses to be held on July 21, 2024; burial in Glenwood Cemetery.

Westport – Curtis Mousseau, 64; Memorial Mass July 18, 2024 at St. Philip New Church.

THE MONTHLY PRAYER REQUEST FOR PRIESTS

WOULD YOU PRAY FOR A PRIEST EACH DAY?

PRAYER SUGGESTION

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

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

AUGUST

DIOCESE OF
OGDENSBURG, NY

2024

August
Immaculate
Heart

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SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 REV. ALFRED H. FISH	2 REV. J. MICHAEL GAFFNEY	3 REV. J. MICHAEL GAFFNEY	4 REV. J. MICHAEL GAFFNEY	5 REV. J. MICHAEL GAFFNEY	6 REV. J. MICHAEL GAFFNEY	7 REV. J. MICHAEL GAFFNEY
8 REV. J. MICHAEL GAFFNEY	9 REV. J. MICHAEL GAFFNEY	10 REV. J. MICHAEL GAFFNEY	11 REV. J. MICHAEL GAFFNEY	12 REV. J. MICHAEL GAFFNEY	13 REV. J. MICHAEL GAFFNEY	14 REV. J. MICHAEL GAFFNEY
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29 REV. J. MICHAEL GAFFNEY	30 REV. J. MICHAEL GAFFNEY	31 REV. J. MICHAEL GAFFNEY				

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ADIRONDACK MOUNTAIN

UKRAINIAN BENEFIT CONCERT

Lake Placid - There will be a Ukrainian benefit concert by Dr. Alexander Tentser.

Date: Aug. 10

Time: 7:30 p.m.

Place: St. Agnes Church

Features: The music of Chopin will be featured. Please join us for this benefit. Proceeds from Free Will Offerings will be divided two ways: 1. Anna Hoyt will oversee the purchase of supplies for refugees. 2. The Dominican Father's Orphanage in Kyiv. Checks may be made out to St. Agnes; please write "Ukraine" on the subject line.

FAMILY BBQ

Port Henry - The North Country Cursillo cordially invites you to attend a Family BBQ.

Date: Aug. 17

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

Place: St. Patrick's Church

Features: There will be food, games and friendship, as well as a sharing of what Cursillo is all about. Cursillistas, invite your friends! All are welcome, but RSVPs are required so we know how much food to prepare.

Contact: RSVP by Aug. 9 to Elaine Sater, North Country Cursillo Secretary, nccsec2019@gmail.com.

WOMEN'S MINISTRY

Ticonderoga - Join for a Women's Ministry, a place of fellowship, faith and friendship.

Date: Every third Friday of the month.

Time: Immediately following the 9 a.m. Mass

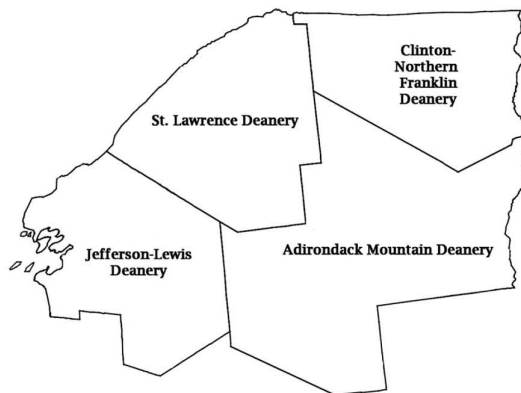
Place: St. Mary's Church

Features: Light breakfast will be served. In addition to weekly fellowship, there will be a summer Book Club.

CLINTON NORTHERN FRANKLIN

OUR LADY OF THE ADIRONDACKS EVENTS

Ellenburg Center - We are pleased to announce the House of Prayer is open during the summer and fall seasons for the following



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.

regular activities. All are welcome!

Schedule: Wed., Open 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. with Dan Hobbs, Volunteer; 2nd Thurs., Open 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. with Volunteers Eve McGill and Lucy Wood facilitating Recitation of Rosary at 11 a.m. and Soaking Prayer from 12:30 p.m. to 1:30 p.m. (Please bring a bag lunch. Light refreshments provided.); Fri., Open Noon to 4 p.m. with Volunteer, Cheryl LaGree, leading Divine Mercy Chaplet at 3 p.m. followed by Recitation of the Rosary; First Sat. Devotions to the Immaculate Heart of Mary beginning at 8 a.m. with Deacon Ken Lushia; Second Mon., 6 p.m. Mass followed by Board Meeting.

Features: All are welcome to attend. Is the Lord calling YOU to become involved? Come and see the House of Prayer, a quiet, simple treasure of the North Country. Are you thinking of a private/group (7 max) overnight retreat or a day meeting (20-30 max)? Call Sarah at 518-534-9976 for more information.

GOLF TOURNAMENT

Plattsburgh - The 20th annual McSweeney's/North Country Mission of Hope Golf Tournament will be held.

Date: Aug. 9

Time: 12:30 p.m.

Place: Barracks Golf Course

Features: The tournament is a two-person scramble with a shotgun start, games, prizes, and meals served on the course. All proceeds benefit the Mission feeding programs.

Contact: Please contact Deacon James Carlin at 518-593-9718 or jpcarlin1963@gmail.com for more information or to sign up to play.

HEARTWELL HOMESTEAD GOLF TOURNAMENT

Plattsburgh - Heart Well Homestead to have its First Annual Gold Tournament.

Date: Aug. 23

Time: shotgun start at 12:30 p.m.

Place: The Barracks Golf Course

Cost: \$65 for Barracks members and \$75 for non-members

Features: Help us to establish this home for mothers.

Contact: Register your team by Aug. 9, sponsor a hole, volunteer or make a donation at www.HeartWellHomestead.org/#events.

YARD AND BAKE SALE

Ellenburg - St. Bernard's and St. Edmund's to have a parish yard and bake sale.

Date: Aug. 23 and 24

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

Place: St. Edmund's Church Hall

CHINESE AUCTION

Lyon Mountain - A Chinese Auction to be held.

Date: Aug. 25

Time: Drawings begin at 3 p.m.

Place: Lyon Mountain American Legion

Features: We will have a 50/50, Michigan platter, and some special drawings.

Contact: If you would like to donate gifts or gift cards, please give to Jean LeClair (518-735-4782) or leave them at the Legion with your name on it so we will know who donated it.

REDFORD PICNIC

Redford - 168th Annual Redford Picnic to be held.

Date: Aug. 28

Time: Activities start after the 10:30 a.m. Mass

Place: Grounds of the Church of the Assumption Parish Center

Features: Full meals of either roast beef or ham from Noon to 6 p.m., Fancy Booth, Pie Booth, Games of Skill and Chance, Pull-Tabs, Refreshments, Food Stand, Rides on the famous Merry-Go-Round, etc. Raffles for \$5000, Afghans, handmade baskets and more.

JEFFERSON-LEWIS

SUMMER CONCERTS

Clayton - The Music Ministry of St. Mary's Church, Clayton is pleased to present two summer concerts.

Schedule: Aug. 4th at 6:30 p.m. at Frink Waterfront Park in Clayton. Bring a chair, bring a friend for this free concert featuring St. Mary's music ministry choir, soloists, small groups, and our youth choir. Aug. 11 at 6:30 p.m. in St. Mary's Church, Clayton, we will present "An Evening of Sacred Music: Songs of Praise & Thanksgiving." This is also a free concert featuring St. Mary's music ministry, organist Vincent Kinnard, Silver Tones Flute Choir, pianist Helen Timerman, and soprano Kathryn Ingerson.

Features: All are welcome and encouraged to attend these events. A free-will offering will be available at both events to

support the work of our music ministry.

Contact: For more information, contact St. Mary's parish office at 315-686-3398.

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: Aug. 4, Sept. 1, Oct. 6

Time: Following 11 a.m. Mass

Place: St. Hedwig's Church

Contact: 315-348-6260

HUMAN TRAFFICKING INFORMATION MEETING

Clayton - The Calyton Community Churches will be holding a Human Trafficking informational meeting to help spread awareness.

Date: Aug. 22

Time: 7 p.m.

Place: River Church

Features: Following in the footsteps of The Sisters of St. Joseph combating Human Trafficking by spreading Awareness. There will be a panel of speakers led by Anita Seefried-Brown from the Alliance for Better Communities to explain the issue and what is happening in our local areas. We invite all to attend this free event.

Contact: For more information call 315-686-3194.

OUTDOOR MASS AND DINNER

Lyons Falls - St. Martin's and St. John's will be hosting their annual outdoor Mass and dinner.

Date: Aug. 24

Time: Serving dinner from 4:30 p.m. to 5:45 p.m. and after the 6 p.m. Mass.

Place: Riverside Park

Cost: Dinner is \$5, It consists of a hamburger or hot dog, corn on the cob, salt potatoes, dessert and a drink. Additional hamburgers and hot dogs can be purchased.

RAFFLES

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

Cost: \$5 a piece or 5 for \$20,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

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 has created an 8x10 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 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

ST. JAMES RAFFLE

Gouverneur — St. James School to have summer raffle with a chance to win \$10,000. Only 350 tickets will be sold.

Cost: Donation price of \$100 each

Features: Grand Prize, \$10,000; 2nd Prize, \$5000; 3rd Prize, \$2500; 4th Prize, \$1500, 5th Prize, \$500. Grand Prize drawing will be held Sept. 8 at the chicken bar-b-que being held at the school. Per NYS Tax Law, required withholding & tax documents will be completed upon payment of prize monies. Need NOT be present to win.

Contact: Tickets are available by calling the church office at 315-287-0114.

FIRST SATURDAY ROSARY

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

Date: Aug. 3

Time: 3:15 p.m.

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

MEN'S PRAYER GROUP

Massena — First Saturday of the month, men's prayer group to meet for Mass and Adoration.

Date: Aug. 3

Time: 9 a.m.

Place: Sacred Heart Church

MONTHLY BRUNCH

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

Date: Aug. 11

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.

GOLF TOURNAMENT

Gouverneur — St. James to have their 20th Annual Golf Tournament.

Date: Aug. 25

Time: 10 a.m. last minute registration, 11 a.m. shotgun start

Place: Emerald Green Golf Course

Cost: \$50 per person, \$200 per team

Features: Preregister a team and be entered into a drawing for free registration next year! Cost Includes: Green fees, cart fee, welcome gift, hot dog lunch, cash bar, dinner and a chance to win great prizes! Door Prize, 50/50, Contests and more! \$1,000 Cash Payout; Split For Best Team Score: Men, Women, & Coed, "Swinging for Education"

Contact: Pre-register at St. James Parish Office or print a registration form from our FB page or website www.stjamesk-6.org. Forms are also available at Church entrances. Pre-registration strongly suggested. For more Information call 315-287-0114 or 315-487-8173

PATRIOTIC ROSARY

Ogdensburg - The Legion of Mary is planning to sponsor the Patriotic Rosary.

Date: Sept. 16

Time: Noon, following the 11 a.m. Mass

Place: St. Mary's Cathedral

Features: Join us to pray for our country with beautiful historic essays and inspirational patriotic hymns. The program includes intentional prayers for our government, our state and local leaders, and the citizens of all 50 states. Pray for the USA.

DIOCESAN EVENTS

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.

Schedule: St. Bernard's Church, Saranac Lake Nov. 23, March 22, 2025

St. Mary's Church, Canton Sept. 21, Jan. 25, 2025, May 3, 2025

Time: 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

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

Contact: Registration required, please go to www.rcdony.org/priesthooddiscernment. For more information **contact:** Father Howard Venette — hvenette@rcdony.org

SUMMER TRAINING OPPORTUNITY

Norfolk — ALL Catechetical Leaders, (DREs) veterans, new and certified, are asked to join us for a training session, "The Ins and Outs" of Parish Catechetical Leadership.

Date: Aug. 3

Time: 9:15 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Place: Norfolk Parish Center

Features: Three Course Credits will be given to everyone toward Certification or Continuing Ed. Lunch provided. \$50 stipend for attending.

Contact: Register at rcdony.org/called Questions contact Anita Soltero asoltero@rcdony.org

or Cathy Russell crussell@rcdony.org

YOUTH SERVER

APPRECIATION DAY

Saranac Lake - ALL parish youth altar servers, lectors, greeters, music/choir members, greeters, ushers and faith formation assistants with their families are invited to a Youth Server Appreciation Day. Sponsored by Youth and Vocations Offices.

Date: Aug. 12

Time: 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Place: Camp Guggenheim

Contact: Registration required by Aug 5th at rcdony.org/ya. Questions, contact Anita Soltero, Youth Director at asoltero@rcdony.org

FAMILY GUGGENHEIM

Saranac Lake — Family Guggenheim to be held with the theme "Trailblazers for Jesus"

Date: Aug. 22-25 or Oct. 11-13

Features: Yee Haw! Come join us for a rootin' tootin' good time at Family Guggenheim, a place to play and pray together as a family.

Contact: For more information and to register, go to <https://www.rcdony.org/newsevents/family-guggenheim.html>. Questions? Call Steve Tartaglia at 315-393-2920.

DIVINE RENOVATION

Lake Placid — Day long workshop to be held to help "Unlock" your parish and help it to be fully alive and renewed.

Date: Aug. 23

Time: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Place: St. Agnes Parish

Cost: \$30 per person or \$25 for 4 or more.

Features: Learn the 3 keys to unlocking your parish; Be equipped for mission through practical workshops and resources; Connect with a growing community of learning in the space of parish renewal; Be inspired to dream of what possible for your parish. This is a joint project of St. Agnes is Lake Placid, St. Peter's in Massena, and the Diocesan Office of the New Evangelization.

Contact: For more information contact the Office of Evangelization at mdonders@rcdony.org or Gin Shaw at renewal@stagneslp.org Register at <https://divinerenovation.org/events/> and register for DR Unlocked: Northern New York.

SUMMER CERTIFICATION OPPORTUNITY

Massena - All parish catechists; new, veteran and certified are asked to join us for to receive three course credits toward certification or continuing ed.

Date: Aug. 24

Time: 9:15 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Place: St. Mary's Social Hall

Features: These are courses not previously offered. Please bring a bag lunch, beverages provided.

Contact: Questions contact Anita Soltero at asoltero@rcdony.org or Cathy Russell at crussell@rcdony.org

MARRIAGE JUBILEE

Ogdensburg — Annual Marriage Jubilee to be held.

Date: Sept. 8

Time: 2:30 p.m.

Place: St. Mary's Cathedral

Features: Bishop Terry R. LaValley, will be presiding.

Contact: To register, go to www.rcdony.org/jubilee. For more information, contact Steve Tartaglia at 315.393.2920 or startaglia@rcdony.org.

YOUNG ADULT RETREAT

Saranac Lake — Young Adult Retreat to be held.

Date: Sept. 20-22

Place: Guggenheim Lodge

Features: Save the dates so you can join us for this weekend retreat to pray and gather in community with other young adults while enjoying the peace and beauty of Saranac Lake and the Adirondacks.

Contact: We need your help! If you would like to help plan the details for the retreat and are a young adult in your 20s or 30s, contact Marika Donders at mdonders@rcdony.org.

Eucharistic Congress ends with prayer for 'new Pentecost' for U.S. Church

By Courtney Mares
Catholic News Agency

The National Eucharistic Congress concluded Sunday with a Mass with tens of thousands of people in an NFL football stadium, where the crowd prayed for "a new Pentecost" in the U.S. Church.

Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle presided over the closing Mass in Indianapolis' Lucas Oil Stadium on July 21 as Pope Francis' special envoy for the event. He shared that the pope told him that he desires the congress to lead to "conversion to the Eucharist."

"The presence of Jesus in the Eucharist is a gift and the fulfillment of his mission," said the cardinal pro-prefect of the Vatican Dicastery for Evangelization.

"Those who choose to stay with Jesus will be sent by Jesus," Tagle added. "Let us go to proclaim Jesus zealously and joyfully for the life of the world."

The nearly 60,000 Eucharistic congress attendees were sent out with "a great commissioning" on Sunday morning in which keynote speakers urged participants to proclaim the Gospel in every corner of the country.

"What the Church needs is a new Pentecost," Mother Adela Galindo, the foundress of the Servants of the Pierced Hearts of Jesus and Mary, told the crowd in her keynote speech before the Mass.

"The Church must be

TWELVE POWERFUL QUOTES FROM THE EUCHARISTIC CONGRESS

Francesca Pollio Fenton
Catholic News Agency

More than 50,000 Catholics recently gathered at Lucas Oil Stadium and the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis for the National Eucharistic Congress from July 17–21.

The week was filled with opportunities for the faithful to grow closer to Jesus present in the Eucharist through perpetual adoration, Mass, confession, praise and worship, and talks from a plethora of Catholic speakers including Bishop Robert Barron, Jonathan Roumie, Father Mike Schmitz, Mother Olga of the Sacred Heart, Sister Bethany Madonna, and many more.

Here are 12 of the most powerful quotes given by speakers at the congress:

"Knowledge can make one great; but only love can make you a saint." — Father Mike Schmitz

"Your Christianity is not for you. Christianity is not a self-help program, something designed just to make us feel better about ourselves. Your Christianity is for the world." — Bishop Robert Barron

"The Eucharist for me is healing. The Eucharist for me is peace. The Eucharist for me is my grounding. The Eucharist for me is his heart within me." — Jonathan Roumie

"The Lord is not overwhelmed by you. He loves you, and he sees you, and he's not deterred by anything." — Sister Miriam James Heidland

"We need a new Pentecost. We need to be filled with boldness. We need to be filled with intrepidity. We need to be filled with love, with generosity to be able to sacrifice everything for the sake of the kingdom." — Mother Adela Galindo

"We have him and nobody can take him away from us." — Mother Olga of the Sacred Heart

"The love of God has been poured into our hearts and it's the kindness of God that leads us to life-giving repentance." — Sister Bethany Madonna

"You can never have a revival without repentance." — Father Mike Schmitz

"He who made the promise is true and so we can be people who repent with courage and joy. What a contradiction to be people who say 'I'm broken and I'm sinful, and I'm joyful and I'm hopeful.' What would the world do with a pilgrim people like that?" — Sister Josephine Garrett

"It's time for faithful Catholics to stop trying to live for God. Instead we should start living from him. The body and blood of the Lord is the source of our life, our energy, and our joy. So let's eat and drink here and every day to our heart's content and then let's rush out into a starving world and tell everybody we meet, 'Starving people, listen! We found where the food is!'" — Monsignor James Shea

"Those who choose to stay with Jesus will be sent by Jesus ... Let us go to proclaim Jesus zealously and joyfully for the life of the world." — Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle

"Brothers and sisters, we believe that God desires to renew his Church and that this renewal will happen through you. And that in renewing his Church, he will renew the world." — Bishop Andrew Cozzens

CATHOLIC WORLD AT A GLANCE

Report: Response to abuse in New Zealand was 'inadequate'

As part of a six-year investigation into decades of abuse and neglect in the country, New Zealand pointed to the Catholic Church among other institutions for what it said was the Church's role in perpetuating abuse. New Zealand's abuse commission, Abuse in Care: Royal Commission of Inquiry, focused on uncovering abuse and neglect in state and faith-based care institutions from 1950 to 1999 in a final report released on Wednesday. The report found abuse and neglect of 200,000 survivors in New Zealand state and faith-based institutions, and pointed to the Catholic Church and Catholic institutions in particular for enabling abusers. "If this injustice is not addressed, it will remain as a stain on our national character forever," Arrun Soma, chief adviser of the commission, said in a video statement. The New Zealand commission said the Catholic Church and Catholic entities responded inadequately to complaints of abuse and neglect, appointed abusers to schools, and prioritized forgiveness over safeguarding and accountability.

Australian bishop hails Eucharistic Congress as model

As the National Eucharistic Congress in Indianapolis drew to a close, an Australian bishop praised the event as a model for revitalizing the Catholic faith across the world and expressed hope that it could inspire similar revivals worldwide. Auxiliary Bishop Richard Umbers of Sydney, who attended the congress as an international observer, said that the U.S. gathering had generated a lot of interest in Australia, according to the Australian Catholic Weekly. "We are very interested in learning all the aspects of the journey to this national congress," Umbers said.

"We've been following this revival, and it has captured our imagination." The bishop noted that the congress, which drew over 50,000 participants from all 50 states and 17 countries, demonstrated the power of Eucharistic devotion to unite and energize the faithful. "It has been an amazing experience that we can all gather so many people," Umbers said. "We talk about Real Presence, but for that we need to be present, and present in the liturgy."

Conference for Single Catholics to deepen faith, connections

The upcoming 2024 National Conference for Single Catholics promises to embolden the faith of participants who, as single people, seek to discover through fellowship a deepened relationship with Christ the bridegroom — and perhaps even a like-minded spouse. Anastasia Northrop, who started the annual event more than 20 years ago, told CNA that it provides practical aids for growing in faith and forming lasting relationships. This year, the conference will be held Aug. 16–18 in Las Vegas and feature opportunities for worship, prayer, and sacraments but also dancing, socials, and exhibits. "There was a template for dating in my grandparents' time, but now there isn't because of the hookup culture and everything. So good Catholics ask, 'How do I date? How do I have a relationship?' They want a practical instruction manual about how to go about it," Northrop said. Featured speakers for the conference this year are Christin Jezak, Matt Ingold, and Marilyn Sherman.

Quebec cardinal returns to ministry

By Jonah McKeown
Catholic News Agency

Cardinal Gérald Cyprien Lacroix of Quebec announced July 21 that he will resume his duties as archbishop after a voluntary six-month withdrawal amid abuse allegations.

Lacroix, a member of the Council of Cardinals that advises Pope Francis, had been accused in a lawsuit made public in January of abusing a 17-year-old girl almost four decades ago.

The Vatican had in March commissioned André Denis, a former judge of the Superior Court of Quebec, to conduct an investigation into the allegations. Lacroix "categorically" denied the allegations made against him.

"Never, to my knowledge,

have I made any inappropriate actions towards anyone, whether minors or adults," Lacroix said in January. "My soul and my conscience are at peace in the face of these accusations, which I refute."

In May, the Vatican said it would take "no further canonical procedure" after the investigation found no evidence of misconduct or abuse.

According to a July 22 statement from the archdiocese, Denis found that "the elements gathered during my investigation make it implausible that the facts attributed to the cardinal occurred."

The alleged victim did not participate in the investigation, however, and Denis said the investigation could be reopened if she chooses to participate, CBC reported.

Lacroix has been a cardinal since 2014 and archbishop of Quebec since 2011. He said he will celebrate Mass on July 26 for the feast of St. Anne - a popular saint in Canada and patron saint of Quebec - at the famous Sainte-Anne-de Beauré sanctuary.

"It has been a difficult journey, but the conclusions of Judge Denis' investigation, the support of those around me, and the possibility of making myself heard that could result from the request for intervention lead me to calmly resume my ministry," Lacroix said in the Monday statement.

"The community knows to what extent the Church of Quebec condemns reprehensible acts and knows the measures we have taken to prevent them," he said, urging the re-

porting of any kind of abuse that harms "the moral, spiritual, and physical integrity of our brothers and sisters."

When it was filed in 2022, the class-action lawsuit against the Archdiocese of Quebec included the testimony of 101 people who said they were sexually assaulted by dozens of clerics or Church staff from 1940 to the present.

The Canadian law firm Arsenault Dufresne Wee Avocats, which has also filed several other class-action lawsuits against other Catholic dioceses and religious orders, filed the lawsuit.

In that filing, Cardinal Marc Ouellet, the former Archbishop of Quebec, was also accused of sexual assault. The Vatican in 2022 said an investigation revealed "no elements to initiate a trial" against Ouellet.

Eucharistic Congress ends

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

faithful to the Gospel ... not watering down the message of the Gospel," she said. "We were born for these times. It is a time to go out in haste to a world that urgently needs to hear God's word and God's truth."

"Here is what we need to proclaim," the Nicaraguan sister said. "That no darkness is greater than the light of the Eucharist. That no sin is greater than the merciful heart of the Eucharist."

"Basically, brothers and sisters, that love is greater than death!" exclaimed the nun, who received an enthusiastic standing ovation from the crowd.

More than 1,600 priests, seminarians, bishops, and cardinals processed into Mass in the Indianapolis Colts' stadium in a dramatic opening procession

lasting 25 minutes. An additional 1,236 religious sisters and brothers were praying in the stands, according to the event organizers.

The Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra played the classical hymns "Panis Angelicus" and "Ave Verum Corpus" as Communion was brought to tens of thousands of people in the stadium.

Many people commented on the incredible energy, positivity, and hope among the congress participants who traveled from all 50 states to take part in the five-day event July 17-21.

"I don't want to sound dramatic, but the National Eucharistic Congress has been something of a triumph - a crowded, crazy, and occasionally chaotic triumph. Peace and joy reign," Stephen White, the executive director

of the Catholic Project, commented on X.

"His presence is palpable and pervasive. The Lord is here," White added.

Father Aquinas Guilbeau, OP, predicted that the legacy of the National Eucharistic Congress will be like that of the 1993 World Youth Day held in Denver for the Church in the U.S.

"Its grace will shape the Church for the next 50 years," Guilbeau said.

Nearly 60,000 tickets were sold for the National Eucharistic Congress, according to organizers, including the day passes that were sold after the start of the event.

Tagle began his homily by greeting the crowd in more than five languages, including Chinese, Vietnamese, Spanish, French, and Italian.

"The Holy Father

prays, as we all do, that the congress may bear fruit, much fruit, for the renewal of the Church and of society in the United States of America," Tagle said.

In his homily, the cardinal noted that "where there is a lack or a weakening of missionary zeal, maybe it is partly due to a weakening in the appreciation of gifts and giftedness."

"If our horizon is only that of achievement, success, and profit, there is no room to see and receive gratuitous gifts. There is no place for gratitude and self-giving," he added. "There will only be a relentless search for self-affirmation that eventually becomes oppressive and tiring, leading to more self-absorption or individualism."

Tagle underlined that the Eucharist is "a privileged moment to expe-

rience Jesus' mission as a gift of himself."

At the end of Mass, Bishop Andrew Cozzens announced to roaring applause that the U.S. bishops are planning to hold another National Eucharistic Congress in 2033, the Year of Redemption marking 2,000 years since Jesus' crucifixion.

The bishop of Crookston, Minnesota, who spearheaded the Eucharistic revival, also announced that another Eucharistic pilgrimage from Indianapolis to Los Angeles will take place in 2025.

"What do you say as you come to the end of the 10th National Eucharistic Congress?" Cozzens said. "It has been my experience and I hope yours that we've lived an experience of heaven. Of course, the Eucharist is a foretaste of heaven."

'Faith and humility' mark Katie Ledecky's life

By Gigi Duncan
Catholic News Agency

Katie Ledecky, an Olympic athlete considered to be one of the best female swimmers of all time, often speaks about her faith and experiences of attending Catholic schools.

After winning her first Olympic gold medal in 2012 at age 15, Ledecky has gone on to become one of the best female swimmers of all time. With 10 Olympic medals and 21 world championship titles under her belt, Ledecky is poised to be one of the top competitors in the Paris Olympics later this month.

While her swimming feats have brought Ledecky accolades worldwide, those who knew the Maryland native in her youth while she attended Catholic schools describe her as being a bright, kind, and faithful student.

"She's not only a wonderful athlete, but she is also a role model that you would want a young, Catholic woman to be," Sister Rosemaron Rynn shared with CNA. "She's grown into this wonderful person because of her great parents, her family life, and also the fact that she keeps herself close to God."

Sister Rosemaron, who served as Ledecky's principal at the Little Flower School in Bethesda, Maryland, said Ledecky attended the school from pre-K to eighth grade. "Her mom was a part of the Mystical Rose Society that takes care of the altar and other things in the church," she added.

"Katie used to help her mom now and then with that, and I know from reading stories about her that she continues to



PHOTO BY STONE RIDGE OF THE SACRED HEART SCHOOL

Katie Ledecky visits students at Stone Ridge of the Sacred Heart School following the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Olympic games

say that her faith is very important," Sister Rosemaron continued. "She has said that she prays before each event, and I believe that the Lord has really blessed her."

In a 2016 interview with the National Catholic Register, CNA's sister news partner, Ledecky shared that she often prays a Hail Mary before each of her races, stating: "More than anything, praying just helps me to concentrate and let go of things that don't matter in that moment. It gives me peace knowing I'm in good hands."

"I think our devotion to Mary is very beautiful," Ledecky said. "She has a sacred role in Catholicism, and her strong faith and humility are things we can learn from."

Humility is another attribute that Sister Rosemaron credits Ledecky as having, telling CNA that "[Katie] never touted the fact that she was that good. In fact, it blew our minds when we found out that she was going toward the Olympics."

"She'd come in during the morning before

school started, her hair all wet because she had been out swimming before school," she said. "But she never bragged about anything, ever. She was truly humble."

Upon entering Stone Ridge School of the Sacred Heart for high school in 2011, Ledecky continued to remain "extremely grounded" and "humbly gracious" amid her rise to fame, according to Stone Ridge Principal Catherine Karrels.

"On our swim team, there were students of all levels. We had Katie who was an Olympian and students who were just learning how to make their way across the pool," Karrels told CNA. "One of the things I admired about Katie was that she was so inclusive and celebratory for the other kids and all that they were able to accomplish."

In addition to being a member of the Stone Ridge swim team and setting numerous records, Ledecky also participated in many of the school's service opportunities. She volunteered as a teacher's aide in her former elementary school, served meals to

homeless people at the Shepherd's Table soup kitchen, and helped lead Stone Ridge's campus ministry program among others.

"Katie really cares deeply about other people and is very focused on community and family. I think a lot of that comes from her faith in that she sees the dignity in everyone around her," Karrels said. "All of these things fit in with a faith life that is grounded in strong values that come from her family and that were also expressed in her education here at Stone Ridge."

Ledecky has kept her Catholic formation and roots close to her, often making stops to see both the Little Flower School and Stone Ridge following her Olympic feats and accomplishments. As Sister Rosemaron recounted, Katie would visit her and the other sisters, "bringing her medals, letting us each wear one to take pictures with her."

Karrels echoed this, sharing with CNA that Ledecky has done "a great job in keeping in touch with us, frequently coming back to campus when she's in town."

"She will often come and talk to our student body and engage with the kids. Usually when she does that, she wants it to be very informal," Karrels continued. "She likes to come back and check in with her teachers and coaches, roam the halls, and see how everyone's doing. I think she also knows how much we like for the young girls to be able to see and get to know her because she's such an inspiration and a great role model for them in so many different ways."

Set to compete in the upcoming Olym-

pic games' 200-meter, 400-meter, 800-meter, and 1500-meter freestyle events - two of which she currently holds the record for - the 27-year-old Ledecky is favored to win the gold for several of these events.

Sister Rosemaron and her fellow sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary plan to watch Ledecky and cheer her on, and the priests and congregation at the Church of the Little Flower expressed their prayers and well wishes for the athlete as she competes in Paris.

Stone Ridge will be hosting an Olympic Pep Rally on July 25, where more than 500 are expected to celebrate not just Ledecky but the school's other two alumni competing for Team USA in swimming - Phoebe Bacon and Erin Gemmell.

Karrels, who will be traveling to Paris in order to cheer on her former students and report back to the Stone Ridge community, shared that "it's astounding to have such high representation from our alumni."

"I am thrilled to be going to watch Katie, Phoebe, and Erin compete," she stated. "Hopefully when they get back from the games, we'll be able to find a time for them to come to campus and tell their stories to our students, and to celebrate again all that they've accomplished and all the lessons they learned."



SUNDAY'S SCRIPTURE

Satisfying our hunger

Did you ever hear about Joey Chestnut? His adopted middle name is "Jaws," a name that he has earned through his many successful attempts in food eating contests. Among his many victories, he counts the Nathan's hot dog contest by downing 74 hot dogs, including the buns, in ten minutes. He has many other eating records under his belt and amazingly not much fat under his belt. Some of his other victories of food consumption in record times are 103 burgers, 78 matzo balls, 45 slices of pizza, and 380 wontons. Surely a man of great diversity



Msgr. Robert H. Aucoin

and multinationalism in his eating habits.

Probably, Joey does not consult the official USDA food pyramid, but assuredly after each one of those contests he eventually gets hungry again.

Well, in today's Gospel and first reading, we hear a lot about food. God fed the Israelites in the desert, but eventually they grew tired of that food. In the Gospel, in speaking to the crowds, Jesus tells them that, if they are following him just because he was able to give them some bread and fish, as we heard in last week's Gospel, then they are following him for the wrong reason.

Jesus uses this occa-

August 4

**Eighteenth Sunday
in Ordinary Time**

READINGS

Exodus 16:2-4, 12-25

Ephesians 4:17, 20-24

John 6:24-35

sion to speak to them about spiritual hunger and how to satisfy that spiritual hunger and food for eternal life. His discourse is an obvious reference to the Eucharist, that which we celebrate each Sunday. This Eucharist feeds our spiritual hunger because the Eucharist is the body and blood of Christ, not some mere representation or symbol.

Relatively speaking, it is easy to recognize the signs of poor nutrition or even malnutrition.

Likewise, we quickly know when we are physically hungry. But the signs of spiritual hunger or spiritual malnutrition are not always as obvious. Spiritual malnutrition creeps in slowly, without being totally recognized. Spiritual hunger quickly morphs into "other things are more important now." Eventually, indifference creeps in and suddenly becomes "I don't care."

St. John Bosco said it clearly: "The longer you stay away from Communion, the more your soul will become weak, and, in the end, you will become dangerously indifferent." The end result, of course, is a total detachment from God and anything that resembles true spirituality.

A serious confusion, even malaise about the

Eucharist, has invaded the Church and is weakening our faith and understanding of the Eucharist. Have we forgotten, or minimized, the awesome gift of the Eucharist as the necessary food on our holiness menu? We come to worship to feed on Jesus who is, in his own words, our Bread of Life. We come to hear His words of life that refresh our faith, our hope, and our love. We come to consume His Body and His Blood in Holy Communion. We come for the greatest, most mind-boggling gift, the very presence of Jesus Christ.

The bottom line is this: How hungry are you for God? Could you win a spiritual hunger contest as Joey Chestnut won his?

CALLED TO SERVE

The word 'update' scares me

The first thing that occurred to me was to feel sorry for all the folks affected by the "oops."

Oops is a polite way of saying "We screwed-up."

Oops is usually followed by "mea culpa!" and then some sort of repair.

That was all prompted by the software update a company unleashed a couple of weeks ago.

Can I step aside for a moment to say that all software updates, no matter how trivial, make me nervous. We put a lot of trust in the systems developers and software coders who author the updates. As the software becomes more sophisticated, the challenge for the people who write the code is more complex. Pray for them.

Back to the update of a couple of weeks ago. One news report said, "Microsoft's CrowdStrike outage brought the world to a standstill impacting nearly 8.5 million Windows devices worldwide. A faulty software update from CrowdStrike, the US-based cybersecurity company caused the disruption that crippled the day-to-day operations across sectors."

The glitch impacted large users like airlines, banks, businesses, schools, and governments, along with some health and emergency services.

We felt the disruption in our parish in Watertown. A planned baptism had to be postponed because the oops

caused the Godparents to be stranded in California when their flight was cancelled.

The impact on Blessed Sacrament was minimal and could be called secondary fallout.

I saved Microsoft's explanation of the event because it was so succinct. Double-speak might be a better descriptive.

"A configuration change in a portion of our Azure backend workloads caused interruption between storage and compute resources which resulted in connectivity failures that affected downstream Microsoft 365 services

dependent on these connections," Microsoft said.

Ah. I get it now.

Sometimes the scripture readings are as confusing as that Microsoft explanation. The readings do not seem to make any sense to us. The major difference is the scripture readings are from God, so they must mean something important.



Deacon Kevin Mastellon

That's one of the reasons we have a homily. The preacher's job is to make the readings mean something to us, make the readings relevant so we can carry that message from God with us as we grapple with the world

in the coming week.

It does not help if the homilist is as confusing as the readings are sometimes. The preacher's challenge is to be clear and understandable.

The listener's challenge is to pay attention not just to the reading but also to the preacher who hopefully will focus our thoughts to a message from God.

No "do-overs" in preaching. No "fixes" masking as an update of an update.

In short, there is no room for an oops from the pulpit.

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

Resilience in faith



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

The Society for the Propagation of the Faith

Sister Mary Ellen Brett, SSJ, Director

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mbrett@rcdony.org

In the heart of Nigeria's turbulence, where echoes of violence reverberate and where Christians are often the target of violent attacks, such as the massacre perpetrated on Christmas Eve in Plateau State, stands a beacon of hope and unwavering faith – Father Solomon Patrick Zaku, the National Director of The Pontifical Mission Societies Nigeria (TPMS) since 2020.

Father Zaku's journey as the National Director involves coordinating activities across 60 dioceses, promoting a universal missionary spirit through prayer and mission animation. But his role extends beyond mere administration; it's about igniting a missionary zeal in every baptized individual, encouraging them to contribute to the Church's mission in their unique ways.

"We need to help people understand, through missionary formation, that we are all called to

be missionaries... We are all called to help the missions," Father Zaku said when speaking about the mission of TPMS Nigeria: "We seek to instill a sense of personal responsibility and active participation in the faith among all believers."

With some 214 million people, Nigeria is Africa's most populous nation, and it absolutely pulsates with Christian energy. It's the largest Christian nation in Africa, too, with some 80 million believers, and the faith is not a simple yes in a census. According to the Pew Research Center, a staggering 89% of Nigerian Christians attend church services at least once a week, one of the highest shares in

the world. In the U.S., by way of comparison, it's about 26% plus a 5% attending virtually.

Yet, this missionary zeal is tested against a backdrop of harrowing adversity. Nigeria, a country once relatively peaceful, now finds itself ensnared in a web of insecurity affecting every region. From the Boko Haram insurgents in the northeast to banditry and kidnappings in other parts, the nation's fabric is tearing apart, with Christians often caught in the crossfire.

The numbers tell a grisly tale: According to Genocide Watch, a nonpartisan watchdog group, some 11,500 Christians have been killed in Nigeria since 2015, meaning 2,300 a

year, which translates into roughly one new Christian martyr every four hours. Some 4 to 5 million Christians are believed to be internally displaced. ...The tragic Christmas Eve attack in Plateau State, claiming over 200 lives, predominantly women and children, is a stark reminder of the perilous reality.

In his 14 years of priesthood, Father Zaku has witnessed Nigeria's descent into chaos. Yet, his resolve remains unshaken. Originating from a predominantly Muslim family in Yobe State, he chose priesthood, fully aware of the inherent risks. Surviving multiple attacks and witnessing the destruction of his parish, his faith, far from faltering, has only grown stronger.

Reflecting on his journey and challenges, Father Zaku states, "I really knew that it was not going to be easy to be a priest... I come from the northern part of the

country... So even from my father's family, after I became a Christian, I've experienced persecution."

Father Zaku extends heartfelt gratitude to the supporters of TPMS in the United States. Their generosity, both material and spiritual, has been a lifeline for the Church in Nigeria. In these trying times, this global brotherhood reminds us that we are not alone in our struggles: "your financial contributions have really strengthened us during our moments of need. We know that we are not alone because we have brothers and sisters who do a very powerful and generous effort from afar."

Article by Ines San Martin and courtesy of the National Pontifical Mission Societies.

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

Bishop LaValley recalls experience

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

tests was transformed into an extraordinary sacred space where over 60,000 fellow pilgrims gathered to celebrate our Eucharistic faith.

I can't imagine any Super Bowl event (even if it involved my NY Giants!) that could match the electrifying environment that God's Spirit and the Presence of His very Body and Blood caused. We don't need another strategic plan, we need missionary disciples whose ongoing, life-long encounters with Jesus change

us into joy-filled disciples in mission, thousands of which we witnessed at the stadium.

With the focus on the Eucharist, we heard many presenters tell their story of the Eucharist's impact in their lives and in the lives of others. The Masses and Eucharistic Exposition and Adoration saw the stadium transformed into a worship space for thousands, including so many young people, consecrated Religious, Deacons, Consecrated Virgins, Priests and Bishops. It was so good to see moms and dads

and their children participating.

As I was visiting one of the numerous booths, I noticed in the distance a tall lad with a familiar John Deere cap on his head. Michael (Pierce) was one of thousands of our youth who participated in the Revival. It was good to see Heuvelton represented with Michael and his family.

The Eucharistic Pro-

cession in the streets of Indianapolis was extraordinary. I saw many familiar faith-filled faces from our diocese lining the streets. So many knelt on the hard pavement and sidewalks as the Blessed Sacrament passed by. When we finally reached our destination, the city park, we sang "Holy God, We Praise Thy Name." I looked out at the

throng of people and felt so proud to be a Roman Catholic and so privileged to be your bishop.

Even with all the blessings packed into the pilgrimage, it still feels so good to be home! As Mary Beth (Bracy), our Consecrated Virgin from Plattsburgh observed, "What an awesome taste of heaven!" AMEN to that!

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Seminarian: 'I always asked God to guide me'

By Mary Beth Bracy, consecrated virgin
Contributing Writer

"I grew up in a devoted Catholic family. My parents treasured the Catholic Church," shared Michelet Boncoeur, a seminarian who is currently completing a pastoral year at the Catholic Community of Moriah, Crown Point, and Port Henry. "I felt the calling in high school but did not tell my parents and pastor until I completed my high school studies."

Boncoeur, a Native of Haiti, was baptized, received first Communion and was confirmed in the same church, Saint Martin de Tours of Delatte. Growing up, he and his older brother, Luckson, were so similar in appearance, people thought they were twins.

The Catholic faith has always been central to Boncoeur's life.

"My parents wanted me to follow Christ," he said. "They advised me to enter a youth group called Chiro. I learned to be mature in that group and cast out my timidity. I used to go to summer camp because of Chiro. The Chiro leaders taught me how to respect, tolerate and appreciate the people I live with."

Boncoeur's parents also provided him a Catholic education.

"I did all my studies in a Catholic school in the countryside of Haiti, except for the last level, which I did in a public school in the Town of Petit-Goave."

The seminarian said Mass attendance was required of students.

"Being in a Catholic school, the students had to participate in Mass every Sunday. If, for example, I skipped one Sunday and did not go to church, I would be sent back home. My parents needed to take me to school and explain why I did not attend church. My parents were very strict with us. And so my brother and I did our best to behave at home and school. I used to be the head of all my high school classes, and my school's principal admired my efforts. I always did my best to keep my grades high and to make my parents happy. Because of my efforts, the school gave me a scholarship."



PHOTO BY DARCY FARGO/NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

Bishop Terry R. LaValley embraces seminarian Michelet Boncoeur after celebrating the Rite of Admission to Candidacy for Holy Orders on July 23 at Wadhams Hall in Ogdensburg. The rite is celebrated when it has been established that the intention of an individual aspiring to Holy Orders is supported by qualifications and sufficient maturity.

Following secondary school, Boncoeur taught French grammar and then entered the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart (MSC) in 2010. He studied philosophy at St. Francis of Sales Institute from Fall of 2010 to May 2013. In May 2013, he discerned out of the congregation and taught Introduction to Philosophy and French grammar.

"While teaching, I was still thinking about becoming a priest," he said.

He then discovered the Society of the Divine Word (SVD)."

"I entered Divine Word College Seminary (in Epworth, Iowa), where I (got to) know the SVDs," he said. "It was precisely on January 10, 2017, that I entered the USA. At that time, it was so cold. During my time at DWC, I had an opportunity to meet people from different backgrounds. I learned many things from them."

He completed English as a second language studies then obtained an associate degree in intercultural studies.

"I was admitted to the novitiate with the Society of the Divine Word on July 29, 2020. I professed my first vows on July 31, 2021," he said.

Then, Boncoeur enrolled at Catholic Theological Union (CTU) in the fall of 2021 and is pursuing a master's degree

in Divinity (MDiv). On May 23, 2024, he graduated from CTU with a master's in Liturgy. He has completed two and a half years of Theology toward the MDiv. He also completed courses at Xavier University in New Orleans, Louisiana.

"I am now applying to Mount St. Mary's University in Maryland to continue my theological studies," he said.

While his journey has taken him to many places, Boncoeur said God has led the way.

Boncoeur has previous ministerial experience in Iowa, Illinois, Mississippi and in New York, having served the homeless, cared for elderly sisters, ministered in a hospital, educated children, assisted in parish life in numerous ways.

"I always ask God to guide me on the right path during my journey," he said. "Since I was younger, I often prayed that God's will be done unto my life. I usually ask Him to bless me, my family, and the people I live with. In my prayers, I always ask God to give me good health to do God's work."

The seminarian said he felt God was calling him to a different path for his priesthood.

"I am very grateful to the Society of the Divine Word for the formation I received from the congregation. However, after

those years of experience in religious life, I realized that I felt much more attracted to the diocesan priesthood. So, I talked to (Father) Medenel Angrand, a Haitian priest of the Ogdensburg diocese, about my desire to become a diocesan priest. Father Medenel explained his experience and pastoral work in the Diocese of Ogdensburg. The Ogdensburg Diocese and the rural nature was very attractive to me. After my acceptance to the Diocese of Ogdensburg on October 26, 2023, the bishop assigned me to the Catholic Community of Moriah, Crown Point, and Port Henry in New York for a pastoral year. This outstanding learning experience began on November 13, 2023. It's been a fantastic experience working with and learning from my pastor and every parishioner."

In the North Country, Boncoeur continues to serve.

"I have been writing reflection bulletins, serving as an acolyte, doing Communion service in my pastor's absence, bringing Communion to the sick, assisting at funerals, and teaching catechism for the Confirmation class," he said.

Boncoeur spoke about the vocation to the priesthood and our universal call to holiness. "Whether a priest, religious, or layperson, one is from a family," he said "Marriage life can be seen as the mother of all vocations. A priest is a person chosen by God for a particular purpose: to make God known to others, especially to the voiceless, powerless, migrants, poor, marginalized, and most vulnerable in our society. Hence, being a priest means being with people and serving them. A great example is when the high priest Jesus washed the disciples' feet. Being a priest means having a servant attitude. As I discern my vocation to the priesthood, I often pray to God to grant me the humility to do God's work while serving others, specifically the most vulnerable ones in our society."

Among Boncoeur's many talents, he also plays the drums, and he speaks Creole, French, and English, and he can understand Spanish.