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The Diocese of Ogdensburg Volume 79 Number 20

# NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

SEPTEMBER 11, 2024

## 2024 Bishop's Fund Appeal kicks off

The story of the Bishop's Fund Appeal, first known as the Diocesan Development Fund, began in September 1959 by Bishop James J. Navagh. He saw a need for works of charity and education in the Diocese of Ogdensburg. As we embark on our 66th Bishop's Fund Appeal, we reflect gratefully on the past support of Catholics across the diocese and look to the future with hope knowing that many of the chapters of our lives will continue to be blessed through the ministries and programs supported by the Bishop's Fund Appeal.

FULL STORY, PAGES 7-11

## ANNUAL APPLEFEST



PHOTO BY JOHN RYAN

Bring summer to a close at the 46th Annual St. Augustine's Applefest on Saturday, September 21, at St. Augustine's Parish Center, Peru. The grounds open at 10:30 a.m. At 11 a.m., the parade leaves Peru Elementary School. After the parade, people will fill the grounds for live music, chicken BBQ, games, a train ride, face painting, a bouncy house, and a Grand Raffle. Roger's House and St. Vincent DePaul have a sale throughout the day. Food treats include applewood flavored Chicken BBQ, apple fritters, caramelized apples, fried dough, sweet sausages, hot dogs, michigans, and burgers. The grounds close at 4:30 p.m.

## DIGITAL OUTREACH



Father Christopher J. Looby, pastor of the Roman Catholic Community of St. Alexander and St. Joseph's in Morrisonville, St. Augustine's Church in Peru and St. James Church in Cadyville, is one of several pastors whose parishes are using digital media for outreach.

FULL STORY, PAGE 5

# Pope Francis celebrates Mass in Indonesia

By Kristina Millare  
Catholic News Agency

More than 100,000 worshippers participated in Pope Francis' celebration of Mass at the Gelora Bung Karno Stadium in Jakarta, Indonesia, on Sept. 5. The Holy Father encouraged the country's Catholics to always listen to the word of God — especially in times of weariness, disappointment, and failure.

Upon entering the stadium in a wheelchair, Pope Francis was immediately greeted by loud cheers and cries of "Viva Papa!" from a 60,000-strong crowd gathered for the Mass celebrated in Latin and Bahasa

Indonesian.

Eager to see the pope who travelled over 7,000 miles to be with them in their home country, another 40,000 Indonesian pilgrims, unable to get seats inside the Gelora Bung Karno Stadium, found places inside the stadium next door and surrounding areas within the main sports complex.

Reflecting on the fifth chapter of St. Luke's Gospel, which describes the first encounter between Peter and Jesus on the Lake of Gennesaret, the pope said it is necessary for a disciple of Jesus to first listen to and welcome the word of God.

"Let us not forget that the first task of the disciple —

and we are all disciples — is not to clothe ourselves with an outwardly perfect religiosity, to do extraordinary things or engage in grandiose undertakings. No! The first step is to know how to listen to the only word that saves — the word of Jesus," he said on the third day of his 45th apostolic journey to Southeast Asia and Oceania.

During the homily, Pope Francis said people are hungry and thirsty for the word of God and that the "human heart is always searching for truth that can feed and satisfy its desire for happiness" even during periods of darkness, confusion, or spiritual dryness.

"Peter has come to the shore

after a difficult night and not catching anything. He's tired, he's angry, he's disappointed," the Holy Father said. "And yet instead of remaining paralyzed by that emptiness, or impeded by his own failure, he says, 'Master, we have worked all night long but have caught nothing, but on your word I will let down the nets.'"

Drawing upon the witness and example of St. Teresa of Calcutta, whose feast day is Sept. 5, the Holy Father said the weariness and emptiness that followers of Jesus may feel in times of failure — just like the first pope St. Peter — are never reasons to despair or lose hope.

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CATHOLIC

PO Box 326

Ogdensburg, NY 13669

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Publish

45 issues

per year:

Weekly except

skipping every

other week be-

ginning July through August

and skipping one week in

December by the

Diocese of Ogdensburg.

622 Washington Street,

Ogdensburg, N.Y. 13669.

**Editorial Office:**

622 Washington Street,

Ogdensburg, N.Y. 13669.

**Telephone:**

(315) 608-7556

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catholic.org

**Entered at the****Post Office:**

Ogdensburg, NY

13669 and additional mailing

offices as

Periodical Postage.

**Subscription:****For one year:**

In-Diocese Rate: \$27

Outside of Diocese Rate: \$30

Matters for publication

should be addressed to

PO Box 326

Ogdensburg, NY 13669

and should be received by

Wednesday prior to

publication. Paper is

printed each Friday;

deadline is Wednesday.

Member, Catholic

Press Association.

**POSTMASTER:**

Send address changes to

North Country Catholic,

PO Box 326

Ogdensburg, NY

13669-0326

# What are you wearing?

"Are you sure that's what you want to wear on the first day of school?"

I asked that question to my son, Jake, as he came downstairs dressed for the first day of his senior year of high school.

He had on gray baggy sweatpants (a wardrobe staple for teen boys), a gray graphic t-shirt and a ball cap. It was the t-shirt that drew my attention.

On it, was a picture of Jesus wearing sunglasses and making peace signs with both hands and the

text, "He is Rizzin'"

For those not up to date on current slang, "rizzin'" or "got rizz" is a slang form of "charismatic." A guy who is rizzin' is the guy everyone wants to be around, the kind of guy who gets the girls and has lots of friends.

While I'm glad my son thinks Jesus is the guy with whom everyone should want to

spend time, I was worried how other teens at his school would react to the shirt. I had just talked to another parent who said

her daughter has been bullied at school partly because of her love of Jesus.

I outlined my concerns to Jake. His response?

He shrugged his shoulders. He did not care.

My 17-year-old son is braver than I am when it comes to sharing Christ in a place that might be hostile to His message. While he does it in a sort of punny, comical way, he does it. I have no problem wearing a t-shirt that talks about mental health or related issues, but I don't think I'd have the guts to walk around in a shirt that lets people know I love Jesus.

I think God used Jake and his shirt to send me a message: "What are you afraid of that keeps you from sharing my love?"

Even if someone is hostile to the message, what does it cost? Maybe a bit of discomfort. Lots of situations in life bring discomfort. At least discomfort for Jesus helps us get to heaven and maybe bring others with us.

I'm so grateful God sent me this wonderful child who loves Jesus and shows me how I could follow Him better. He literally wears his love of Christ as he goes into the world.

It's a really good look on him.

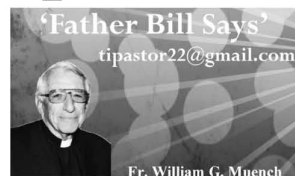


**Darcy L. Fargo**

## 'The importance of having joy'

This morning as I was walking back home after an early morning walk, I was passed by one of our schoolteachers who was walking to school. This was the first day of school last week. Without thinking, I said in greeting, "Have fun." I remember so well that teachers need that something unique, that spirit of joyfulness, that a good teacher finds and that brings joy and happiness as they begin a new day and a new school year.

I remembered a talk I recently listened to on YouTube. It was a talk given by Cardinal Tagle. In this talk, he presented the importance of having a joyful spirit as evangelizers, as a Catholic bringing the message of Jesus to our own lives and to the others we meet in our world. You may remember that Cardinal Tagle is the Vatican Prefect of the Dicastery for Evangelization. He wanted us, Catholics, to remember that we must develop the Lord's Spirit



of joy and love if we are going to lead others to Jesus and his message.

The Second Vatican Council renewed the call of all baptized Catholics to the important part of our vocation to evangelize - to bring Jesus to our part of the world. Let me remind you of the words of the Council: "Having been divinely sent to the nations that she might be - 'the universal sacrament of salvation,' the Church, the People of God, in the command of her founder and because it is demanded by her own essential universality, strives to preach the Gospel to all."

This Council goes on to make it clear that the Lord calls us all to be these evangelizers. Bishops and priests are called to this task by their ordination.

The Lord, Jesus, calls us all, lay men and lay women to an essential part of this task. As the People of God, we must be dedicated to transform our world with the message of Jesus.

Cardinal Tagle in this talk insists that we, Catholics, realize that only when we are filled with the Lord's spirit of love and joyfulness that we will be effective evangelizers. The success of our Christian life demands that we are filled with joy and find our happiness as we bring Jesus to our world. Jesus made it clear as we read in the Gospels that his disciples must truly transform this world in the Lord, Jesus, as loving, peace filled, joyful disciples.

Jesus showed us that he taught and spoke in total obedience to the Father. Jesus taught with authority and confidence because he spoke in obedience to the Father. Our vocation as disciples of the Lord means that we become confident evangelizers -

following Jesus in obedience to the Father.

Jesus demonstrated his loving Spirit as he demonstrated his readiness to be in communion with all others. He demonstrated this as he reached out to others in a Spirit of compassion to all, saints and sinners. Jesus constantly reached out in compassion and forgiveness, speaking to others, even sinners, as his brothers and sisters. Jesus demonstrated this with a loving, joyful spirit.

We, disciples of the Lord, are called to follow our Lord and Savior. We are called to love our neighbor as ourselves - we are called to reach out to others in the Spirit of Jesus. We can only accomplish this when we reach out to others with joy and peace. In this way we lead others to Jesus and to understand his message. Disciples of the Lord know how to radiate the joyful Spirit of the Lord - walking always in the Lord's path.



## FOLLOW ME

# 'Thank you for your witness of faithful love'

*Editor's note: The following is Bishop Terry R. LaValley's homily for the Marriage Jubilee Mass, celebrated Sept. 8 at St. Mary's Cathedral in Ogdensburg.*

Our Old Testament reading today from Isaiah is about fear and about faithfulness. God tells Isaiah his prophet, "Say to those whose hearts are frightened: Be strong, fear not!" Why not fear? Because "Here is your God." Fear is a natural and normal and necessary human emotion. It is the other side of desire, for the more we desire anything, the more we fear to lose it or miss it. That's true of everything we desire.

So many today are hesitant and afraid to decide to enter this permanent intimate partnership of life and love we call the vocation of marriage. So...the number of weddings taking place in our Churches is down significantly. Also, there is real fear to be open to co-creating with God new human life - children. We fear what it means for our finances. Maybe serious health concerns surface. Hear the Lord again: "Say to those whose hearts are frightened: Be strong, fear not!" Why: "Here is your God." God, Jesus Christ wants to be the third Partner in wedded love. That doesn't mean

that there will always be smooth sailing, but it does mean you will not be sailing alone.

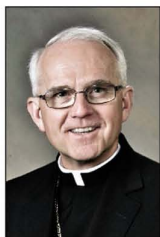
I've shared before that I received a gift years ago of a print of Jesus in a boat with a couple of His disciples. He is sleeping on a pad and the stormy waves are lapping up over the edge of the boat. The disciples are terrified.

You're familiar with the Gospel scene. They wake Jesus up for Him to do something. Jesus awakens and responds with the question: "Why are you afraid? Do you not have faith? I am here." That print is hung on the wall near the door of my chapel. When I finish morning prayer and leave the chapel to begin the new day, I gaze at the picture. With the unknown day ahead, I am reminded: "Be strong. Fear not! Here is your God."

We fear not because we know our God is faithful and always with us. Married couples, you have given yourselves for the good of the other and you have done this faithfully, time and again, for days and years and decades. Certainly, not without much sacrifice and tears. The fruit of that love and fidelity has borne beautiful fruit

for many of you - your children, many of whom join us here today.

When we look at the miracles in the Gospels, such as today's, and the incredible miracle of the Catholic Church, which in spite of the human failings of her leaders and members, has been the world's most powerful agent of holiness and civilization for two thousand years, all fear and hesitancy should evaporate. The



Bishop Terry R. LaValley

sign of your witness to married love is so powerful and needs to be proclaimed from the rooftops.

No family is perfect. No spouse has all the answers. None of us is a perfect saint, but we are Christ's friends and messengers, and He will work through us to spread His light into the dark corners of the world around

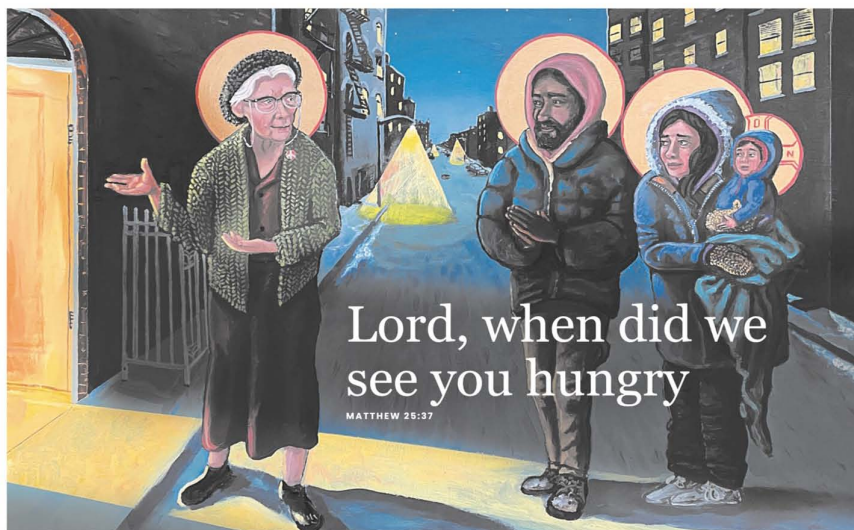
us, if we give Him the chance. And we do that through our Christ-centered words, example, and actions. You do that as a faith-filled spouse whose daily sacrifice for the sake of loved ones are a powerful, inspiring sign of hope for us all.

Over breakfast one morning, Cathy said to her husband, Peter "I bet you don't know what day this is." "Of course I do," Peter indignantly answered. Then he went out the door on his way to the office. At 10 a.m., the doorbell rang, and when Cathy opened the door, she was handed a box containing a dozen long-stemmed red roses. At 1 p.m., a foil-wrapped, two-pound box of her favorite chocolates arrived. Later, a boutique delivered a designer dress. Cathy couldn't wait for Peter to come home. "First the flowers, then the candy, and then the dress!" she exclaimed, "I've never spent a more wonderful

Groundhog Day in my whole life!" Men, as I'm sure you have already learned, 'tis better safe than sorry!

My friends, our society today must pay better attention to the love story that your lives reveal. Your love story teaches us all lessons on fidelity, commitment and sacrifice. All married couples struggle and sacrifice.

It is in the struggles of loving that Christian discipleship is lived out and made perfect. A marriage jubilee is truly an occasion for you and your families, and especially for this family of faith to thank God for the blessings you are. Thank you for your witness of faithful love. Thank you for taking the leap of faith, knowing that Jesus is your constant Companion in life's struggles. Thank you for coming and sharing your joy at Eucharist. Congratulations to you and your families and God bless you all!



Lord, when did we see you hungry

MATTHEW 25:37

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# Proposal 1: 'A wolf in sheep's clothing'

## NY bishops urge 'No' vote on 'Equal Rights Amendment'

*Editor's Note: Below is a statement from the Catholic bishops of New York, Timothy Michael Cardinal Dolan, Archbishop of New York; Most Rev. Edward B. Scharfenberger, Bishop of Albany; Most Rev. Robert J. Brennan, Bishop of Brooklyn; Most Rev. Michael W. Fisher, Bishop of Buffalo; Most Rev. Terry R. LaValley, Bishop of Ogdensburg; Most Reverend Salvatore R. Matano, Bishop of Rochester; Most Rev. John O. Barres, Bishop of Rockville Centre; Bishop Douglas J. Lucia, Bishop of Syracuse; and the auxiliary and emeritus Bishops of New York State. It was issued Sept. 5.*

On November 5, faithful citizens throughout the nation will have the opportunity once again to exercise their sacred right to vote. Pope Fran-

### Text of Proposal Number One, An Amendment

Concurrent Resolution of the Senate and Assembly proposing an amendment to section 11 of article 1 of the constitution, in relation to equal protection

Section 1. Resolved (if the Assembly concur), That section 11 of article 1 of the constitution be amended to read as follows:

§ 11. a. No person shall be denied the equal protection of the laws of this state or any subdivision thereof. No person shall, because of race, color, ethnicity, national origin, age, disability, creed [or], religion, or sex, including sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy, pregnancy outcomes, and reproductive healthcare and autonomy, be subjected to any discrimination in [his or her] their civil rights by any other person or by any firm, corporation, or institution, or by the state or any agency or subdivision of the state, pursuant to law.

b. Nothing in this section shall invalidate or prevent the adoption of any law, regulation, program, or practice that is designed to prevent or dismantle discrimination on the basis of a characteristic listed in this section, nor shall any characteristic listed in this section be interpreted to interfere with, limit, or deny the civil rights of any person based upon any other characteristic identified in this section.

§ 2. Resolved (if the Assembly concur), That the foregoing amendment be submitted to the people for approval at the general election to be held in the year 2024 in accordance with the provisions of the election law.

Explanation – Matter in underscored is new; matter in brackets [ ] is old law to be omitted.

#### The text of Proposal 1 as presented by the New York State Board of Elections website.

cis has reminded us that as thoughtful Catholics, we must participate in the public square for the sake of the common good. Every Catholic is called to do the work of properly informing his or her conscience and voting for candidates and policies that will best advance the natural law, the protection of human rights, the dignity of the human person, the sacredness of all life, and the teachings of

Christ and His Church. It is a presidential election year, and there are important votes to be cast for Congress and the state Legislature as well. Importantly, in New York, like several other states, there is also a critical referendum on the ballot.

Educating oneself will be especially important in the case of Proposal 1, sometimes referred to as the "Equal Rights Amendment." The ti-

tle suggests a noble cause, as all children of God should be treated equally under the law. However, this proposed amendment to the state Constitution is broadly written and could have dangerous consequences if enacted, which is why we oppose it and urge you to vote no. The measure would, effectively, permanently legalize abortion without restriction and up until the moment of birth in New York. Aside from being redundant in a state that already has stripped away all abortion limitations, the amendment would render impossible any change to the law if the hearts and minds of New Yorkers were ever to shift toward protecting the child in the womb.

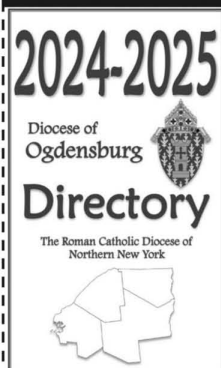
The amendment's sweeping language and inclusion of "age" as a protected class could also lead to parents' rights being stripped away. Courts could decide that parents have no authority over their minor children on important matters and permit children to make destructive and perma-

nent decisions on their own which they could well live to regret, including but not limited to so-called "gender affirming" treatments and surgeries.

The relationship between parents and their children is sacred. Parents must be able to support and guide their children in accord with the natural law, without interference from the government or courts, which would be reaching beyond their competency.

Proposal 1 is a wolf in sheep's clothing that could lead to darkness for many New York families. This amendment disregards the lives of unborn and struggling children in the name of political agendas. It could have dangerous consequences for these children and their parents. As they look to make their voices heard in the public square, faithful Catholics should consider these consequences and vote no. Likewise, they should thoughtfully vote their informed conscience up and down the ballot so that we might usher in change for good.

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# Pastor, parishes share the faith digitally

By Mary Beth Bracy, consecrated virgin  
Contributing Writer

Pastors, parishes and ministry participants are using modern media to proclaim the gospel and build community in the North Country and beyond.

Father Christopher J. Looby, pastor of Saint Alexander's in Morrisonville, St. James in Cadyville and St. Augustine's in Peru, shared how the parish uses media to proclaim the Gospel.

"At our parish, we use a variety of digital resources to evangelize," he said. "I produce a daily podcast [now called The Father Chris Podcast]. The podcast is accessible on our parish website (<https://www.rccalexanderaugustinejames.org/>) and can also be found on Apple Podcasts, Amazon Music, and Spotify. Additionally, I provide the text of my homilies on my blog, which is also available on the parish website."

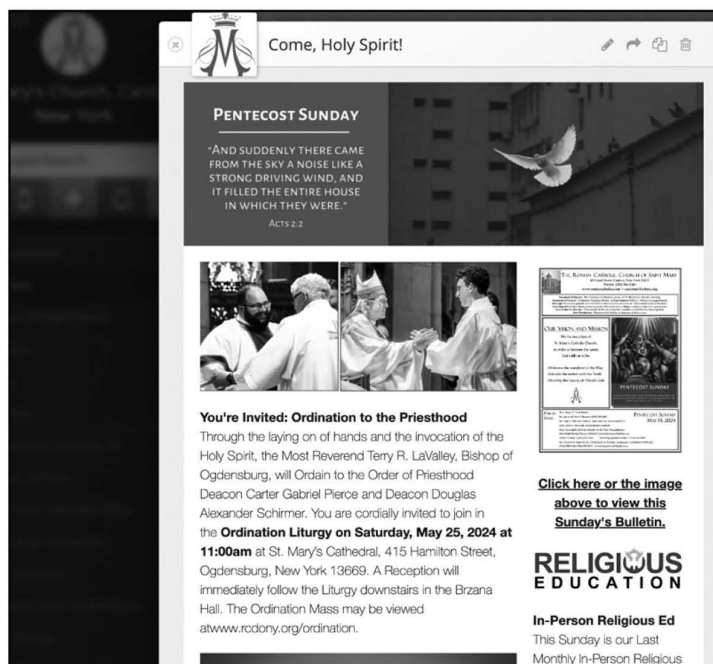
The pastor, when he was serving in Ticonderoga, also used podcasting to offer seasonal spiritual aids.

"Beyond daily homilies, I lead parish retreats through special limited series podcasts," he said. "For instance, during Advent, we had a series called 'Journey Through Joy: Reflections on the Joyful Mysteries,' and in Lent, we presented 'Rending and Mending Our Hearts: Reflections on the Stations of the Cross.' Recently, to honor our Blessed Mother during May, we featured 'Days of Light: Reflections on the Luminous Mysteries.'"

Faithful have expressed gratitude to Father Looby for this ministry.

"People have expressed appreciation for having access to these reflections and homilies, especially those who may not be able to attend Mass in person regularly," he said.

When asked for suggestions about how other parishes can incorporate technology, Fa-



A screenshot of a Flocknote email sent by St. Mary's Church in Canton.

ther Looby shared, "My advice is to embrace digital evangelization wholeheartedly. Start with something manageable, like a podcast or a blog, and ensure that your content is easily accessible on multiple platforms. Consistency is key - regular updates and postings help maintain engagement. Also, listen to your parishioners' feedback and be willing to adapt your approach based on their needs and preferences."

Amanda Conklin, the former director of New Evangelization at St. Mary's in Canton, shared how they use the digital world to get the word out in their parish.

"St. Mary's in Canton sends a weekly Flocknote with upcoming events, that Sunday's Bulletin, photos, etc.," she said. "We also use it to help with different sign-ups. Flocknote has a great sign-up feature that you can customize. We use it to schedule sacramental interviews, ask for volunteers, sign-ups for parish events, and send Novena prayer e-mails."

"I use Flocknote in several ways," related John Schneider, director of Evangelization and Christian Formation at St. Peter's Parish in Massena. "It's power is in the ability to reach people in both small groups or widely among several ministries, targeting people we want to reach. It allows email and/or text messaging. We're finding people check their texts and reply more often than their emails."

"We also use Flocknote to communicate directly with different groups in the parish," noted Conklin. "We have a Religious Education group, Music Ministry group, Parish Nurses group, etc. People can even 'comment' (a.k.a. reply) and we can have a conversation if they have questions, etc. It is sort of like a fancier, group text without everyone seeing everyone else's information. We have recently been using Flocknote to send out notifications when a parishioner has died with information about their services and a link to their obituary where we encourage our parishioners to

pray for the family and the deceased individual."

The benefits of Flocknote are innumerable, Conklin added. "I think our use of Flocknote has fostered a greater community and connection within our parish. There are many who do not use social media but do e-mail and can stay up-to-date on parish happenings with Flocknote. When our snowbirds are out of state, they can still keep tabs on their home parish. It also helps us spread the word about larger diocesan events. It is a great tool to get the word out quickly and to a large group if something happens of note or an event time/location changes, etc. It helps people in their prayer life by keeping them on track with novenas. We can send paperwork once instead of printing extra unneeded paper. Flocknote has been incredibly helpful when promoting our parish events like Trivia Night and our Trust Truth speaker series. We can use beautiful imagery to spread the Truth of the Gospel. We truly use it here at St. Mary's in Canton to aid in evangelizing through our pillars: Welcome, Educate, and Worship."

Flocknote is easy to set-up and has several practical advantages, Conklin enthused.

"I would strongly recommend Flocknote to other parishes," she said. "I'll admit I was skeptical at first, but I've seen what an amazing tool it can be. It has helped the Parish Office stay organized and be more efficient, and it is also very helpful for parishioners. It is very user friendly. Flocknote offers great graphics, templates, and even the ability to insert fun GIFs into Flocknote e-mails/texts. They are constantly trying to improve and are frequently rolling out new features. Instead of someone having to go to our website or Facebook to find information, we bring it di-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9

## Environmental Stewardship

## Living simply

Over the past half century, our throw-away culture and consumer-driven society have developed many gadgets and devices that make life easier, yet which have resulted in substantial harm to the planet's health. The demand for fossil fuels and the overuse of plastics and natural resources have seriously impacted our life-sustaining environment.

During this Season of Creation, we are called to try to adopt a simpler lifestyle as promoted by St. Francis of Assisi. Altering common routines may not seem to be all that impactful, but every little effort in helping to reduce the effects we have on our surroundings makes a difference.

Stocking the freezer or pantry with preserved, locally grown produce is one small way to benefit the environment while helping local farmers. There are significant transportation costs associated with shipping foods long distances, and a fair percentage of that money purchases fossil fuels.

There are numerous ways to prepare fruits, berries and vegetables for later use. These procedures require time and effort. Engaging in practices that were routinely used a century ago by our ancestors is not easy. It's worth the effort, though.

It must be emphasized that living a simpler life is not always easy. As a society, we regularly take the easy way which is often detrimental to the planet. Living as St. Francis did, in harmony with nature, may initially sound appealing, but after a few minutes of actually engaging in this lifestyle most people would quickly consider him crazy. In a similar way, some of the ideas cited by Jesus seem good until the time comes to put them into practice. For us the time has come to make a decision to live a simpler life or to do irrevocable harm to the planet. The decision is ours to make and implement.

By Tom Kalinowski  
St. Bernard's Parish,  
Saranac Lake

## Rest in Peace

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

**Sept. 11** – Rev. J. A. Langlois, 1872; Rev. Hyacinth Rueberg, 1913

**Sept. 12** – Rev. Abraham T. Guertin, 1933; Rev. Vincent Skiba, 1984

**Sept. 13** – Deacon Edward A. Wight, 2021

**Sept. 14** – Rev. Russell Charles O'Neil, 1951

**Sept. 15** – Rev. George Lessard, O.M.I., 1978; Rev. Joseph V. Rossitto, 2004; Deacon William S. Raven, 2023

**Sept. 16** – Rev. Henri Victor Lecompte, O.M.I., 1892; Rev. Alphonse Nolin, O.M.I., 1936; Deacon Marvin M. Connor, 2022

**Sept. 17** – Rev. William E. Capron, 1949; Msgr. Louis D. Berube, 1999

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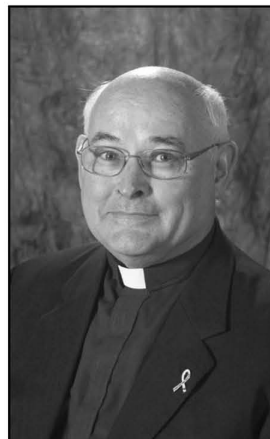
# Father Robinson named dean of Jefferson-Lewis Deanery

Effective Sept. 1, Bishop Terry R. LaValley has appointed Father Donald A. Robinson as Dean of Jefferson-Lewis Deanery.

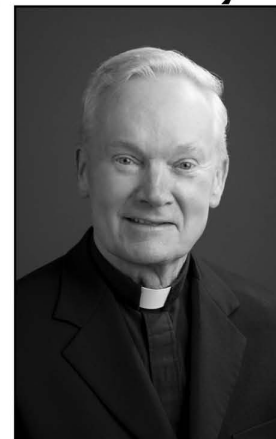
The move was made after Father Arthur J. LaBaff resigned from that position.

Father Robinson, pastor of The Roman Catholic Community of Brownville and Dexter and St. Andrew's Church in Sackets Harbor, has previously served as pastor of St. James Minor Church in Carthage and St. Mary's Church in Copenhagen, at St. Anthony's and St. Patrick's in Watertown, and St. Mary's in Champlain.

Father Robinson also previously served as an associate pastor at St. Peter's in Lowville,



Father Arthur J. LaBaff



Father Donald A. Robinson

Notre Dame in Malone and St. Anthony's in Watertown. He was also a teacher at Immaculate Heart Central School in Watertown, a member of the Wadhams Hall Seminary faculty and later vice-president of the seminary college, diocesan director of seminarians and vocations director.

Father Robinson, 70, was ordained May 3, 1980.

Father LaBaff, 85, was named sacramental administrator for the linked parishes of St. Mary's in Clayton and

the Catholic Community of Alexandria Bay in 2021. He previously served as pastor of St. Mary's in Clayton with an oratory at St. John the Evangelist since 2010 after serving as its administrator in 2009.

He was ordained May 28, 1966, by Bishop Thomas A. Donnellan.

Father LaBaff served as assistant pastor at Our Lady of Victory in Plattsburgh, Notre Dame in Malone and St. Mary's in Ogdensburg, and was pastor in Morristown, Lisbon, and Chateaugay with its mission in Brainardsville, as well as in Notre Dame Church in Malone and then St. Patrick's in Watertown.

Father LaBaff also served the diocese as youth director, overseeing the department as Guggenheim summer camp program began in 1972.

Also in 1972, the priest was named assistant chancellor and director of the Bishop's Fund until 1977 when he was named chairman of the Bishop's Fund Committee.

## Protecting God's Children

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

**Sept. 12** – 6 p.m. – St. James Minor Church, Carthage

**Sept. 24** – 5:30 p.m. – St. James School, Gouverneur

## Bishop's Public Schedule

**Sept. 11** – 9:30 a.m. – Diocesan Department Head Meeting at Wadhams Hall in Ogdensburg

**Sept. 12** – 9:40 a.m. – Mass at Immaculate Heart Central School in Watertown

**Sept. 13** – 9:30 a.m. – Mass at Seton Catholic School followed by Lunch

**Sept. 14** – 11 a.m. – Fest Day for the Sisters of the Cross of Chavanod in Cadyville followed by a Reception

**Sept. 15** – 10 a.m. – Sisters of St. Joseph Motherhouse Mass and House Blessings

**Sept. 16** – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

**Sept. 17** – 9:30 a.m. – Mass at Cape Vincent Correctional Facility

**Sept. 18** – 10:30 a.m. – Investment Advisory Committee Meeting followed by Lunch at Bishop's Residence

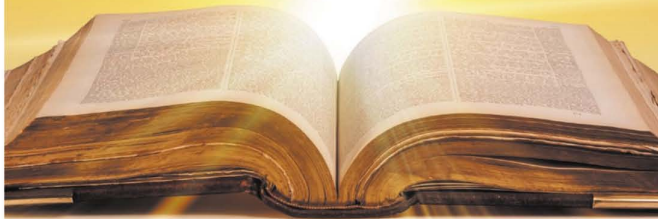


# LIVING STORIES OF OUR FAITH



## 2024 BISHOP'S FUND APPEAL

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE  
OF OGDENSBURG



FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO VIEW THE

**2024 BISHOP'S FUND**

VIDEO, PLEASE VISIT [WWW.RCDONY.ORG/BFA](http://WWW.RCDONY.ORG/BFA)



Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

All our life stories begin with a plan carefully crafted by our Creator. As we turn the pages of each chapter, Jesus' Mystical Body, the Church assists us in following the Father's plan for us. God's guidance, nurturing and love is ever present as we grow through every chapter, whether it be the brightest and most joy-filled chapters, or the chapters of our lives that are most difficult.

The story of the Bishop's Fund Appeal, first known as the Diocesan Development Fund, began in September 1959 by Bishop James J. Navagh. He saw a need for works of charity and education in the Diocese of Ogdensburg. As we embark on our 66<sup>th</sup> Bishop's Fund Appeal, we reflect gratefully on the past support of Catholics across the diocese and look to the future with hope knowing that many of the chapters of our lives will continue to be blessed through the ministries and programs supported by the Bishop's Fund Appeal.

Your continued support enables us to:

- Be a source of comfort and hope to those who are in difficult chapters in their lives and are experiencing hardships because of job loss, health concerns, loss of homes to fire and flooding, and for those who are struggling to put food on the table for their families through grants from the Bishop's Good Samaritan Fund;
- Provide a foundation of faith for young people as they attend Catholic Schools, parish Religion classes, attend youth retreats and Camp Guggenheim; and
- Provide education and encouragement to our seminarians, priests, deacons and commissioned lay ministers through the ministries promoting Church Vocations, Education of Seminarians, Continuing Education of Priests, Deacon Formation and Formation for Ministry.

This year, it is our hope to reach a goal of \$1,330,000 to continue the important ministries and programs supported by the Bishop's Fund Appeal. Any funds received over our goal will provide additional grants through the Bishop's Good Samaritan Fund.

I am grateful to the many generations of North Country faithful who have generously contributed to the Bishop's Fund Appeal. I invite you to support the 2024 Bishop's Fund Appeal so that we may continue to share *Living Stories of Our Faith*.

Faithfully yours in Christ,

*Terry R. LaValley*

Most Reverend Terry R. LaValley  
Bishop of Ogdensburg

## BISHOP'S FUND APPEAL

## Living Stories of Our Faith

By Valerie Matthews

Director, Bishop's Fund Appeal

"It wasn't until after I was in seminary that I realized the huge influence of the Bishop's Fund. I looked back on all I had done as a teenager, and its presence was everywhere. I went to youth conferences, Camp Guggenheim, Youth Alive and youth rallies. I realized a lot of people were making a lot of sacrifices to make sure these events go on. I would not have been as open to my vocation if I hadn't spent time at Camp Guggenheim. When you think about it, you realize how impactful the Bishop's Fund is," shared Father

Martin Cline, pastor of St. Bernard's in Saranac Lake. "As pastor here at St. Bernard's, I have a gentleman who is in the Diaconate Program, five parishioners had just finished Formation for Ministry when I became pastor, we have our religious ed programs and a school that have relied upon the Bishop's Fund as well as nine kids from the parish going to Camp Guggenheim this year. In everything the parish does, you can see the impact and the influence of the Bishop's Fund Appeal."

Your gifts to the Bishop's Fund Appeal make this possible.

Gifts to the annual Bishop's Fund Appeal

support the essential ministries and programs of the Diocese of Ogdensburg. These ministries and programs are there to be a source of guidance, education and hope for parishioners in every chapter of their faith stories and provide parishes with the tools to be strong, vibrant, and welcoming.

The 2024 Bishop's Fund Appeal - Living Stories of Our Faith - will begin in parishes across the Diocese of Ogdensburg the week-end of September 14 and 15.

This year, it is our hope to reach a goal of \$1,330,000 with any gifts collected over our goal to be used as additional grants through the Bishop's Good Samaritan Fund.

The Bishop's Good Samaritan Fund provides emergency assistance for those experiencing house fires or flooding, and those who need assistance with heating and utility costs,

prescription or medical expenses, and it assists local food pantries such as the food pantry in Schroon Lake, New York.

"As part of a group project, our Confirmation class decided to help the food pantry in Schroon Lake which was in desperate need of food and supplies because a grant that they had previously received had been cut" shared Emily and Makala, Confirmation students. "We raised funds at church for Tops gift cards and then we learned about the Bishop's Fund Appeal and how we could ask for a grant through the Bishop's Good Samaritan Fund. The Bishop's Good Samaritan Fund gave a grant of \$500 which helped buy a lot of food for the food pantry. Please help as much as you can, every little bit helps"

Your gifts to the Bishop's Fund Appeal make this possible.

this vital Appeal has a direct and powerful im-

act on the lives of your Sisters and Brothers in Christ. From the children in faith formation and religious education classes in our parishes and Catholic schools, to the teens who attend Camp Guggenheim and Youth Rallies, to the young couples and families who participate in Pre-Cana and Family Guggenheim, to the women and men who are discerning a Church vocation, you are making a difference.

Please take a moment to prayerfully consider a pledge or a one-time gift to the 2024 Bishop's Fund Appeal. Every gift is important, every gift makes a difference!

Donations can be mailed to: The Bishop's Fund Appeal, PO Box 150, Ogdensburg, New York 13369 or made online at [www.rcdony.org/giving/donate-now-bishop-s-fund](http://www.rcdony.org/giving/donate-now-bishop-s-fund).

To learn more about the Appeal and to view the 2024 Bishop's Fund video, please visit [www.rcdony.org/bfa](http://www.rcdony.org/bfa).

*I recall your sincere faith that first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and that I am confident lives also in you. (2 Timothy 1:5).*

## LIVING STORIES OF OUR FAITH

LOVING FATHER, WE KNOW THE STORY—  
THAT YOU SO LOVED US THAT YOUR WORD BECAME FLESH  
AND DWELT AMONG US,  
THAT HE LAID DOWN HIS LIFE THAT WE MIGHT HAVE LIFE,  
AND THAT HE CONTINUES TO OFFER HIMSELF IN  
A MOST SPECIAL WAY IN THE HOLY EUCHARIST.

OUR STORIES OF FAITH ARE AS VARIED AS WE ARE.  
SOME ARE DRAMATIC, MANY ARE QUITE ORDINARY.  
THEY ARE FILLED WITH LAUGHTER AND TEARS,  
BLESSINGS AND CROSSES.

LORD GOD, GIVE US OPENNESS TO SHARE OUR STORIES.  
GIVE US WISDOM TO SEE HOW THEY FIT INTO YOURS.  
GIVE US CHARITY TO SEE HOW THEY FIT INTO ONE ANOTHER'S.  
BLESS OUR 2024 BISHOP'S FUND APPEAL THAT YOUR  
OPENNESS, WISDOM, AND CHARITY MAY HELP SPREAD OUR  
STORIES—  
THE STORY—THROUGHOUT THIS DIOCESE AND  
TO THE ENDS OF THE WORLD. THROUGH CHRIST OUR LORD.  
AMEN.

### 2024 BISHOP'S FUND APPEAL



YES! I WANT TO MAKE MY GIFT TO THE 2024 BISHOP'S FUND APPEAL

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_ PARISH \_\_\_\_\_

SEND CHECK MADE PAYABLE TO: **Bishop's Fund Appeal**  
OR FILL IN CREDIT CARD INFO.

☐ CHARGE MY CREDIT CARD FOR ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ CARD NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_ EXP. DATE \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

☐ SINGLE GIFT ☐ PLEDGE ☐ MATCHING GIFT TO CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

TOTAL GIFT \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
NOW PAYING \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
PLEDGE AMT DUE \$ \_\_\_\_\_

MAIL TO:  
BISHOP'S FUND APPEAL  
PO BOX 150  
OGDENSBURG, NY 13369

OR PLACE IN YOUR PARISH COLLECTION



## BISHOP'S FUND APPEAL

## Supporting Family Life efforts

By Stephen Tartaglia  
Family Life Director

In English 101 at Monroe Community College way back in September 1989, my teacher asked us to write our first essay as an introduction of ourselves and what we wanted to accomplish by the end of 4 years, 10 years and 25 years. The purpose was to give him a sample of our writing, but it also served to help us think about our lives and set goals. I remember initially listing a lot of superficial stuff that I wanted. However, the more I reflected, the more I realized that what I really wanted more than anything else, what would make me the happiest, was a wife to love and to build a family with, and a career that would be both meaningful to me, pleasing to God and that would pay enough to support a family.

It makes sense to figure these things out as early as we can and to work hard to achieve them. But it is a daunting task for young adults because we live in a culture that opposes God and His plan for marriage and families.

It's a big challenge to help young people enter relationships that will lead to good marriages, to support them

as their families grow, and to help them as they face challenges that threaten the sanctity of marriage and family life. This, of course, is exactly what the Family Life Office does. Programs that the Family Life Office provides include, but are not limited to: The Dating Project, Pre Cana, Family Guggenheim, Surviving Divorce, Life-Giving Wounds Retreat, Marriage Jubilee, and Loving Authentically.

The Dating Project teaches parents and teens about how to avoid the cultural pressure to engage in "hooking up," that is, having one-night stands, and instead, to practice dating properly. Pre Cana is a marriage preparation course that is offered while a couple is engaged to help them understand what the sacrament of matrimony is, to help them discern if they are truly being called to this sacrament, and to prepare for a healthy and good marriage if they are.

Family Guggenheim is a retreat offered three times each year for the entire family at Camp Guggenheim on Lower Saranac Lake. The two sessions held in late August begin Thursday afternoon and end on Sunday afternoon. The third session, held on the weekend preceding the Columbus Day

holiday, is shorter, starting Friday evening and ending Sunday afternoon. Families spend time praying and playing together and practicing skills that enable families to thrive and grow in holiness.

Surviving Divorce is a 12-week support group that helps people who are going through a separation or divorce to stay connected to the Church and to deal with the painful and complex thoughts and emotions that are entailed in their situation. Life-Giving Wounds is a retreat for adults who, at one point or another in their life, experienced the separation or divorce of their parents. They carry wounds with them that, unless addressed, stay with them for the rest of their lives, causing many to reject the faith, leave the Church, and not get married. Those that do get married have a significantly greater likelihood of having a divorce themselves. The retreat, offered annually, is very successful in addressing these wounds and gives the participants the opportunity to begin healing.

The Marriage Jubilee, is an annual gathering of married couples, no matter how long or short they have been married, to celebrate their commitment within a mass celebrated by

Bishop Terry R. LaValley. Couples renew their marriage vows, and have their rings blessed. The Mass is followed by a reception in which the couples receive a certificate, signed by Bishop LaValley, acknowledging their years of marriage.

The Loving Authentically program is a two-part presentation which teaches people about the connection between sex, happiness, and Catholic teaching, explaining why the Church teaches what it does in the area of sexuality. The first part is a showing of the video *Unprotected: A Pope, The Pill, and the Perils of Sexual Chaos*, with a talk and discussion led by Diocesan Natural Family Planning Directors, Angelo and Suzanne Pietropaoli. This is followed by two talks on achieving happiness in relationships by Catholic Theologian, Dr. Maura Hearden Fehlner. The presentation is for everyone, although most appropriate for those 13 years and older. Lunch is provided and it is free admission.

The ministry of the Family Life Office, including all these valuable programs, is made possible by contributions made to the Bishops Fund. Thank you so much for your generosity. Your contributions are making a world of difference!

## Share faith digitally

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

rectly to them and they can always look back to reference something if they forget."

Above all, this technology may be used to remind the faithful of their identity as children of God.

"Flocknote is a great tool for a wide age range of parishioners. It is a great example of being in the world but not of the world," Conklin noted. "With so many features, a

parish can really customize their use of it to what their needs are. There are even capabilities for parishioner profiles where you can keep track of baptismal dates, spouses, children, etc. We plan on using it in the future to remind the recently baptized (and parents) of their Baptismal Anniversary as Pope Francis has called us to celebrate that day and remember it!"

St. Peter's employs

other means to evangelize digitally as well, commented Schneider.

"Facebook is our other main communication tool for when we want to promote public events; it's more for evangelization outside the parish that Flocknote. We have sent news releases to North Country Now to promote Alpha events with moderate success. A big drawback is, if it's not a paid ad, it's not a priority and can get set aside

or lost in 'Community Events,' plus they edit them, especially titles."

The goal of any digital outreach, Father Looby explained, is to strengthen the Body of Christ.

"It's important to remember that digital evangelization is not just about technology but about building connections and fostering community," he said. "Use these tools to reach out and engage with people where they are,

making the message of the Gospel more accessible and relevant to their daily lives."



*Support And Pray  
For Vocations*

## LIVING STORIES OF OUR FAITH



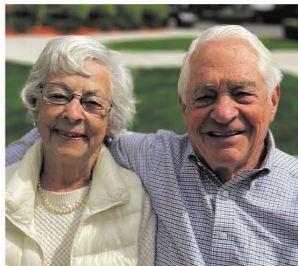
It wasn't until after I was in seminary that I realized the huge influence of the Bishop's Fund. I looked back on all I had done as a teenager, and its presence was everywhere. I went to youth conferences, Camp Guggenheim, Youth Alive and youth rallies. I realized a lot of people were making a lot of sacrifices to make sure these events go on. I would not have been as open to my vocation if I hadn't spent time at Camp Guggenheim. When you think about it, you realize how impactful the Bishop's Fund is. As pastor here at St. Bernard's, I have a gentleman who is in the Diaconate Program, five parishioners had just finished Formation for Ministry when I became pastor, we have our religious ed programs and a school that have relied upon the Bishop's Fund as well as nine

kids from the parish going to Camp Guggenheim this year. In everything the parish does, you can see the impact and the influence of the Bishop's Fund Appeal. When I make my gift, I look at it as I am writing my check out to the seminarians and to the kids in our Catholic Schools. I'm making my gift to faces I know. I am making my gift so that people I know have opportunities, so our parish has a new deacon or trained religious ed teachers. Before you make a gift, pray about what it means to you. Pray for the people you know who are going to be affected by your gift. The size of your gift is not what is important, it's the sacrifice. Thank you to all who have contributed. I would not be where I am today without you.

**Father Martin Cline, Pastor of St. Bernard's, Saranac Lake**

Through Youth Ministry, we try to foster in our young people that our faith is a life-long journey. The work that we do at Camp Guggenheim and at Youth Ministry events really assists the youth's ability to recognize, deepen, and embrace their faith. These young people are the future leaders of our communities, so we want to give them a solid foundation in their faith and the ability to stand strong in that faith. The support of the people of the diocese to the Bishop's Fund Appeal is so important and vital to our ministries and the work that we do. We certainly could not do that work without your support. We appreciate your support; every gift helps.

**Anita Soltero, Director of Youth Ministry and Eastern Region Faith Formation Director**



We were both born and raised here in Ogdensburg. We've given to the Bishop's Fund almost since the beginning. The Bishop's Fund supports many different worthwhile ministries and helps families who are having hard times. Giving alms to the poor is one of the corporal works of mercy, and the Bishop's Fund covers the whole myriad of it from the young to the old, educating our priests and deacons as well as providing Camp Guggenheim for the kids. The education of our priests and deacons is so important because we are so short of priests. We very much encourage others to get involved and support the Bishop's Fund. It comes back to you a hundred-fold. The joy of giving is not about how much you give but that you get involved. Even if you can give in a small way, you will see

the rewards of giving. Whatever you can give, if you are giving from your heart, that's all that matters.

**Ned and Helen, Ogdensburg**





## LIVING STORIES OF OUR FAITH



As part of a group project, our Confirmation class decided to help the food pantry in Schroon Lake. When we visited the food pantry, the coordinators told us that they were in desperate need of food and supplies. They explained that a grant to the food pantry had been cut. We first decided to raise funds at church for Tops gift cards of \$25 each. This would assist families in purchasing turkeys for Thanksgiving. We raised enough money to purchase over 20 gift cards. We then decided we would like to help the food pantry even more. At that time, our youth group leader told us about the Bishop's Fund Appeal and how we could ask for a grant through the Bishop's Good Samaritan Fund. We knew a grant from the Bishop's Good Samaritan Fund

would help the food pantry because their funding had been cut. The Bishop's Good Samaritan Fund gave a grant of \$500 which helped buy a lot of food for the food pantry. Please help as much as you can, every little bit helps.

**Emily and Makala, Schroon Lake**

I was not raised Catholic. I came into the Church late, and the Lord just gradually and steadily guided me. When I was about fifteen, my mom came into the Church, and at that point I started analyzing and examining the teachings of the Church a little more closely. Through the writings of St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas, and St. John Henry Cardinal Newman, many of my questions were answered. Through interactions with the good priests of the diocese, I realized that there was somewhere to be going instead of just questions to be asked. One morning after spending an entire evening helping a family friend in need, I attended Mass. After hearing the homily about a man who had reserved himself from God, I realized that is what I had been doing. To really answer God's call, I realized I had to give everything, and that included the willingness to help those in need. That homily gave me a sense of purpose and a sort of fire inside. It is my hope to see people light up with the fire of the Holy Spirit. The opportunity to offer the sacraments, to preach, to teach, and to offer the catechesis serves that goal of introducing people to Jesus Christ, who died and rose for us and wants us to be like Him so that we can approach the Father in eternity. During my eight years of seminary, the Bishop's Fund has helped me with medical needs that I just did not have the money for, as well as, enabled me to pursue an education that I could not have gone after on my own with my own resources. Thank you for your generosity; we cannot do this without you. When you give to the Bishop's Fund, you are giving to support active ministry. You are giving to support the Church here in the North Country. Thank you.



**Father Douglas Schirmer, Parochial Vicar at Holy Cross Parish, Plattsburgh**

## THE DIOCESE OF OGDENSBURG

622 WASHINGTON STREET, OGDENSBURG, NY 13669

315-393-2920 | [RCDONY.ORG/BFA](http://RCDONY.ORG/BFA)



## THE BISHOP'S FUND APPEAL

provides financial assistance to the vital ministries of  
the Diocese of Ogdensburg.

The following ministries are supported:

- Education of Seminarians
- Family Life Office
- Natural Family Planning Office
- Respect Life Ministry
- Bishop's Good Samaritan Fund
- Formation for Ministry Program
- Office of the New Evangelization
- Continuing Education and Formation of Priests
- Priests' Graduate Studies
- Vocation Office
- Permanent Deacons
- Deacon Formation
- Tuition Assistance Program
- Campus Ministry Program
- Matching Gifts to Catholic Schools
- Department of Faith Formation
- Diocesan Center of Youth Ministry
- Young Adult Ministry
- Guggenheim Center
- Department of Worship

## WAYS TO GIVE

**Gifts of Cash:** Checks should be made payable to the "Bishop's Fund Appeal."

**Pledge:** A gift to the Bishop's Fund Appeal may be paid in four payments - at the time of the pledge, December, February and April.

**Online Giving:** The Bishop's Fund Appeal offers the opportunity to make your gift and pledge payments online using a credit card. To donate online, please visit [www.rcdony.org/giving/donate-now-bishop-s-fund](http://www.rcdony.org/giving/donate-now-bishop-s-fund). If making a pledge, enter your first payment in the "amount" box and in the comments section indicate the total amount you wish to pledge.

**Automatic Pledge Payments:** To set up automatic credit or debit card pledge payments, please contact the Bishop's Fund Office at 315-393-2920.

**Matching Gifts:** Many companies endeavor to match the charitable contributions of employees. Please contact your company's Human Resource Department to determine if your company participates in the Matching Gift Program for Catholic Schools.

**Gifts of Securities:** Federal tax laws offer special incentives for gifts of non-cash property especially that which has increased in value since it was acquired. Please contact the Bishop's Fund Office at 315-393-2920 for transfer instructions.

**Qualified IRA Contributions:** For those who are 70 ½ or older, you may wish to consider a tax-free gift directly from your IRA to the Bishop's Fund Appeal. Please contact the Bishop's Fund Office at 315-393-2920 for instructions.

**Bequests:** When considering gifts to a charity in your Will, please remember the Bishop's Fund Appeal. Gifts can be made in the following manner through your Will: Specific dollar amount; a percentage of your estate or a particular asset such as real estate or other valuables.

**Mailing Your Gift:** Please feel free to mail your donation to: The Bishop's Fund Appeal, PO Box 150, Ogdensburg, NY 13669.





# Poll looks at spiritual health of U.S. Catholics

By Matthew Bunson & Daniel Payne  
Catholic News Agency

The findings of a new EWTN News/RealClear Opinion Research survey shed light on the spiritual health of adult Catholic U.S. citizens and reveal consistently concerning indicators of low Mass attendance, low belief in the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist, and sporadic (though growing) participation in the sacrament of confession.

The survey was conducted from Aug. 28-30 among 1,000 Catholics with a margin of error of +/- 3 percentage points.

According to the survey, 31% of American Catholics attend Mass once a week, 16% once or twice a month, 32% a few times a year, and 9% once a year. Twelve percent attend Mass daily or more than once a week.

Frequent Mass attendance was significant among younger generations. Catholics under

the age of 40 attend Mass more frequently than older Catholics, with 17% of 18- to 29-year-olds and 22% of 30- to 39-year-olds attending daily or more than once a week.

That compares with 6% of 40- to 49-year-olds, 7% of 50- to 59-year-olds, 9% of 60- to 69-year-olds, and 13% of those 70 years or older.

Among Catholic voters, 52% believe in the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist, while 32% do not; 16% are unsure. Belief in the Real Presence varies slightly according to gender, with 56% of men believing in it compared with 49% of women.

Eighteen percent of the Catholics surveyed said they never go to confession and 24% go less than once a year. Another 19% go once a year and 23% go several times a year, while 16% go to confession at least once a month.

Meanwhile, 39% of Catholics surveyed this year report

they generally accept most of the Church's teachings and try to live their lives accordingly, outnumbering the 28% who say they accept all of the teachings, 20% who consider themselves Catholic but do not accept some key teachings, and 14% who say Catholicism has only a minor influence on their lives.

Just under one-third of Catholics aged 18-29 this year said they accepted all the teachings of the Church, higher than the 29% of Catholics aged 70 or more years who said the same.

Among Catholics who said they accept "most" of the Church's teachings, meanwhile, roughly 35% of those aged 18-29 said they did, compared with 45% of those 70 and older.

Some increases in Mass attendance, frequency of confession

The findings on Catholic belief in the Real Presence are similar to results obtained

from a 2022 poll of Catholic likely voters. That poll found that half of respondents affirmed a belief in the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist while 38% said they did not believe.

Confession habits this year, meanwhile, were improved from the 2022 polling: In the 2022 survey, 28% of respondents went to confession less than annually, and 35% never did. Just 10% of respondents that year said they went to confession monthly.

Weekly Mass attendance, meanwhile, was slightly higher in 2022, with 33% of respondents that year reporting weekly Mass-going.

Yet Mass attendance in this year's August poll was higher in other categories: In 2022, just 7% of respondents said they attended Mass daily or more than once a week, while 14% said "once or twice a month" and 24% said "a few times a year."

## OBITUARIES

**Adams** — Robert John LaComb, Sr., 97; Mass of Christian Burial Sept. 6, 2024 at St. Cecilia's Church; burial in St. Cecilia's Cemetery.

**Brasher Falls** — Francis W. Youmell, 84; Mass of Christian Burial Sept. 7, 2024 at St. Patrick's Church; burial in parish cemetery.

**Chasm Falls** — Alan Emile Bourg, 67; Mass of Christian Burial Sept. 6, 2024 at St. Helen's Church.

**Clayton** — Carol E. (Kendall) Barnes, 76; Mass of Christian Burial Sept. 5, 2024 at St. Mary's Church; burial in Riverside Cemetery, Wellesley Island.

**Croghan** — Kenneth J. Bush, 80; Mass of Christian Burial Sept. 7, 2024 at St. Stephen's Church; burial in St. Stephen's Cemetery.

**Crown Point** — Edward Isadore

"Bud" Dolback Sr., 91; Graveside services Sept. 6, 2024 at family cemetery.

**Dannemora** — John Oscar Schaefer, 85; Mass of Christian Burial Sept. 4, 2024 at St. Joseph's Church; burial in Westbury, NY.

**Fort Covington** — Jacqueline Finnegan Havey, 95; Mass of Christian Burial Sept. 7, 2024 at St. Mary's Church; burial in St. Joseph's Cemetery, Bombay.

**Glenfield** — John R. West, 65; Mass of Christian Burial Sept. 6, 2024 at St. Mary's Church; burial in Old Glendale Cemetery.

**Hogansburg** — Dustin E. Oakes, 34; Mass of Christian Burial Sept. 3, 2024 at St. Regis Church; burial in St. Lawrence Cemetery.

**Malone** — Margaret Child Arqui-

ette, 92; Services to be held at a later date.

**Massena** — Katherine A. (Burns) Foley, 94; Mass of Christian Burial Sept. 28, 2024 at St. Mary's Church; burial in St. Patrick's Cemetery, Brasher Falls.

**Morrisonville** — Norman E. Baker, 84; Mass of Christian Burial Sept. 6, 2024 at St. Alexander's Church.

**Norwood** — Clarence Elbridge Cutler, 91; Mass of Christian Burial Sept. 10, 2024 at St. Andrew's Church; burial in Calvary Cemetery.

**Norwood** — Linda L. (Butterfield) Hayes, 74; Mass of Christian Burial Sept. 6, 2024 at St. Andrew's Church; burial in Crary Mills Cemetery.

**Ogdensburg** — Eleanor (Randall) Cunningham, 100; Funeral Services Sept. 4, 2024 at Frary Funeral Home; burial in Notre Dame Cemetery.

**Ogdensburg** — Lorraine Hutt, 91; Mass of Christian Burial Sept. 13, 2024 at Notre Damer Church.

**Ogdensburg** — Helen A. (Burley) Montgomery, 93; Funeral Services Sept. 5, 2024 at the Fox & Murray Funeral Home; burial in Oswegatchie Mausoleum.

**Ogdensburg** — Steven G. Rivers, 87; Memorial Mass Sept. 4, 2024 at Notre Dame Church; burial in Notre Dame Cemetery.

**Ogdensburg** — Betty (Rogers) Smith, 99; Mass of Christian Burial Sept. 6, 2024 at St. Mary's Cathedral; burial in Oswegatchie Mausoleum.

**Star Lake** — Murray S. Hawley, 74; Mass of Christian Burial Sept. 3, 2024 at St. Hubert's Church; burial in Oswegatchie Cemetery.

**Ticonderoga** — Francis J. Emmi, 56; Funeral Services Sept. 6, 2024 at the Wilcox & Regan Funeral Home; burial in South Cemetery of Putnam Station.

**Tupper Lake** — Cecile Agnes (LaLumiere) Jarvis, 95; Mass of Christian Burial Sept. 4, 2024 at St. Alphonsus Church.

**Watertown** — Richard L. Guga, 83; Sept. 6, 2024 at Reed & Benoit Funeral Home; burial in North Watertown Cemetery.

**Watertown** — Jacqueline Jane "JJ" (Starling) O'Brien, 91; Services to be held at a later date.

# Court blocks Biden 'gender reassignment' mandate

By Peter Pinedo  
Catholic News Agency

A U.S. district judge has placed a nationwide block on a Biden administration rule mandating that federally funded hospitals perform surgical interventions to alter the body's appearance to mimic that of the opposite sex.

This comes after Texas and Montana sued the administration over changes it made in May to the Affordable Care Act's section prohibiting discrimination based on sex.

The rule broadened the meaning of "sex" to include "gender identity." This meant that federally funded hospitals were required to perform so-called "gender reassignment" surgeries or face a range of penalties including having their funding removed.

Texas and Montana argued that the change violated portions of state law that prohibit such surgical interventions performed on minors' sexual and reproductive organs and ban Medicaid funding for these operations.

The two states argued that the Biden administration has given them "an impossible choice" to either "violate and abandon state law or risk devastating financial loss."

The ruling, issued on Aug. 30 by Judge Jeremy Kernodle for the Eastern District of Texas, expanded an earlier court decision that blocked

the mandate for hospitals in Texas and Montana. Kernodle said the Biden administration's mandate is "unlawful" in all hospitals, not just those in Texas and Montana.

Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton called the ruling a "major victory for Americans across the country."

"When Biden and Harris sidestep the Constitution to force their unlawful, extremist agenda on the American public, we are fighting back and stopping them," Paxton said.

Jennifer Carr Allmon, executive director of the Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops, told CNA that the Texas bishops are "grateful" for the nationwide stay.

Allmon said that gender transition surgeries are "not authentic health care" because these procedures "interrupt natural developmental processes and can result in infertility and other serious health risks, especially for children, all of which may be irreversible."

"Health care providers must be free to refuse to perform these harmful interventions without risk of penalty," she said. "The Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops advocates for health care that is oriented toward honoring the dignity of each person while respecting the religious liberty and conscience rights of medical professionals."

The Biden administration will likely appeal the ruling to the Fifth Circuit Appellate Court.

# CATHOLIC WORLD AT A GLANCE

## French church ravaged by arson, suspect was arrested

The historic Church of the Immaculate Conception in Saint-Omer, in the Pas-de-Calais department of northern France, was ravaged by arson on the night of Sept. 2. According to local authorities, the fire started at around 4 a.m. It then spread to the side and central aisles, then to the roof and bell tower, which rapidly collapsed. The fire was contained by 7:15 a.m. thanks to the efforts of 120 firefighters. While no injuries were reported, some 60 local residents living near the building were evacuated as a precaution. The initial investigation revealed that a 39-year-old individual, identified as Joël Vigoureux, allegedly broke into the premises, smashing a stained-glass window. Arrested and taken into police custody on the evening of Sept. 2, Vigoureux, is said to have been convicted on numerous occasions of similar acts. While the images released by the media showed only the metal skeleton of the church steeple and the exact extent of the damage has yet to be determined, the intervention of the parish priest, Father Sébastien Roussel, enabled the rescue of the Blessed Sacrament and some 20 other religious artifacts, including the reliquary bust of St. Corneille.

## Court allows admin to cut funding over OK abortion dispute

The Supreme Court this week declined to stop the Biden administration from stripping the state of Oklahoma of millions of dollars in federal funding in a dispute over an abortion directive from the federal government. The state had filed a lawsuit against the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) in November 2023 claiming the Biden administration suspended millions of dollars in federal Title X funding over the state's refusal to provide referrals for abortion as part of its family planning services. The Title X Family Planning Program, enacted in 1970, distributes federal grants to community clinics and health departments to provide contraception services and other family planning and health services. Federal law forbids Title X funding from being used to directly procure abortions. Oklahoma said the federal government had unlawfully stripped the state of about \$4.5 million in funds after state officials would "not commit to providing referrals for abortion" in Oklahoma's Title X programming.

## Pope begins Indonesia visit with call for dialogue

On Pope Francis' first full day of public appearances in Indonesia on Sept. 4, the pope called upon the political leaders of the world's largest Muslim country to protect the country's delicate balance of many cultures and religions by respecting the human rights of all, including minorities. "In order to foster a peaceful and fruitful harmony that ensures peace and unites efforts to remove the imbalances and suffering that still persist in some areas of the country, the Church desires to increase interreligious dialogue," Pope Francis said in his opening speech. The pope was welcomed to the Indonesian capital of Jakarta by a grand ceremony at the official residence of the Indonesian president. The ceremony marked the start of the pope's highly anticipated 11-day visit to four countries in Southeast Asia and Oceania.

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# Poll: Harris leads Trump with Catholic voters

By Matthew Bunson  
Catholic News Agency

Vice President Kamala Harris leads among Catholic voters over former president Donald Trump, according to the findings of a new EWTN News/RealClear Opinion Research survey two months away from the presidential election.

The poll, conducted from Aug. 28-30, surveyed 1,000 Catholics and has a margin of error of +/- 3 percentage points.

Catholic voters, like most of the electorate, consider the economy by far the most pressing issue facing the country and oppose transgender surgeries for minors and transgender males competing in women's sports. They are divided on the question of who should set policy on abortion, U.S. support for Ukraine, and Israel's war against Hamas in Gaza. The findings also reveal a significant gender gap among Catholic voters, while Trump is currently receiving support from 30% of Catholic Latinos.

According to the findings, 50% of Catholic voters currently support Harris for president while 43% support Trump and 6% are undecided. Harris is also ahead of Trump among Catholic Latino voters, leading the former president 60% to 30% overall but with 9% still undecided. This is important given the growing size and influence of Latinos in American Catholicism.

The vice president also leads Trump among Catholic African American voters 82% to 12% and Catholic Asian voters 58% to 35%. Trump carries non-Hispanic white Catholic voters by a margin of 52% to 42%.

Similarly, Harris leads the former president in every age group, with her biggest leads among Catholic voters aged 30-39 and 40-49. Interestingly, her smallest margin is

among the 18- to 29-year-olds, Gen-Z Catholic voters (many of whom will be voting for the first time in 2024), where she holds a statistically insignificant lead of 44% to 43%.

Among Catholic voters, she has also managed so far to avoid damage from President Joe Biden's low job approval rating, currently at 49% disapproval with 41% approval, while 10% are neutral.

## A CATHOLIC GENDER GAP

Especially notable is the gender gap that has emerged among Catholic voters. Female Catholic voters support Harris over Trump 56% to 37%, while male Catholic voters favor Trump 49% to 43%.

Similarly, on the generic ballot for control of Congress, 49% of Catholics support the Democrat candidate while 41% support the Republican candidate. Female Catholic voters, meanwhile, favor the Democrat candidate 54% to 35% while male Catholic voters support the generic Republican 48% to 43%.

The gender gap exists across many other issues. The economy is considered by far the most pressing issue of the election by both men and women — 51% overall, 54% female and 48% male. But the second most important issue for Catholic women voters is abortion at almost 13% (compared with 6% for Catholic male voters).

Catholic male voters rank border security and immigration as second most important at 17% (compared with 9.5% for Catholic female voters).

Among all Catholic voters, after the economy, the next most important issues are border security and immigration at 13% and abortion at 10%.

When asked who should be responsible for setting abortion policy: state legislatures, the federal government, or neither, 45% of female Catholic voters say neither, com-

pared with 28% of male Catholics. Overall, Catholics in the era after the fall of Roe v. Wade are divided on the question — a plurality of voters (38%) think neither the state legislature nor the federal government should be responsible for setting abortion policy, 34% think state legislatures should be responsible, and 29% say the federal government should be responsible.

## DIVIDED ON KEY ISSUES

Similar divides among Catholic voters are visible when it comes to some of the most important foreign policy questions. When asked how Israel is carrying out its response to Hamas' savage Oct. 7, 2023, attack, 41% consider it somewhat or completely acceptable, while 39% consider it somewhat or completely unacceptable. Twenty percent are not sure.

As for the ongoing Russian invasion of Ukraine, 37% of Catholic voters think the U.S. is providing too much support to Ukraine, 36% think it is giving about the right amount of support to Ukraine, and 28% say the U.S. is not providing enough support to Ukraine, a plurality of over two-thirds of Catholic voters favoring U.S. support for Ukraine.

Moving on to China, only 6% think China poses no threat, and close to half would call China a significant or severe threat.

Areas of broader agreement do extend to some of the most controversial cultural issues. Half (50%) of Catholic voters oppose puberty blockers/cross-sex hormone treatment or surgical procedures for minors, while 14% support both procedures, 7% support surgical procedures, and 7% support puberty blockers.

A majority of Catholic voters (67%) also think athletes who were born male but now identify as girls or women should not be able to compete in women's sports and

athletics, while 18% say they should; 15% are unsure. Fifty-six percent of Catholic voters favor the death penalty for a person convicted of murder, while 23% oppose it, and 21% are unsure.

## MASS ATTENDANCE

The poll also found that when it comes to Mass attendance, 12% of American Catholics attend Mass daily or more than once a week, 31% once a week, 16% once or twice a month, 32% a few times a year, and 9% once a year. Harris leads among every category of Mass-attending Catholics save for daily Mass attendees who support Trump 55% to 30%.

Unlike the findings in previous polling of Catholics, in this unusual election at least, regular Mass attendance or adherence to Church teaching may no longer be an indication that the voters will vote for the Republican presidential candidate.

In addition, this is the most volatile presidential election in modern American political history, and this first poll was conducted in the immediate aftermath of the Democratic National Convention.

It also comes well before the scheduled first presidential debate on Sept. 10, and other events between now and Nov. 5 may have a substantial impact on the race, such as another international crisis or the felony sentencing hearing for Trump in a New York courtroom on Sept. 18.

National polls are finding the race extraordinarily tight with the candidates effectively tied both nationally and in every battleground state. In that environment, each vote is needed, and Catholic voters will have a key role to play in deciding the next occupant of the White House.

EWTN News and RealClear Opinion Research will continue to track Catholic voter attitudes all the way to Election Day.

# VIRTUAL EVENTS

## FRIENDSHIP GROUP MEETING

Deepen your love of the Holy Eucharist our next Friendship Group Meeting.

**Date:** Sept. 26

**Time:** 7 p.m.

**Place:** Zoom

**Features:** Father Jonas Verdeflor, OMV will share with us about Ignatian meditation and how it can guide us toward a greater love of the Real Presence of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist in Communion and Adoration. We will discuss the introduction and first chapter of the book "Beloved Lover" by Father Gregory Cleveland, OMV.

**Contact:** To order the book, please visit [omvusa.org](http://omvusa.org) and enter SUMMER24 at the checkout to receive 10% off. If you haven't signed up for the Friendship Groups, here is the link: <https://mailchi.mp/sophiaiinstitute/friendship-groups>. Questions? contact Mary Beth Bracy at [mbracy@sophiaiinstitute.com](mailto:mbracy@sophiaiinstitute.com).

## ADIRONDACK MOUNTAIN

## COMPASSIONATE COMPANIONS

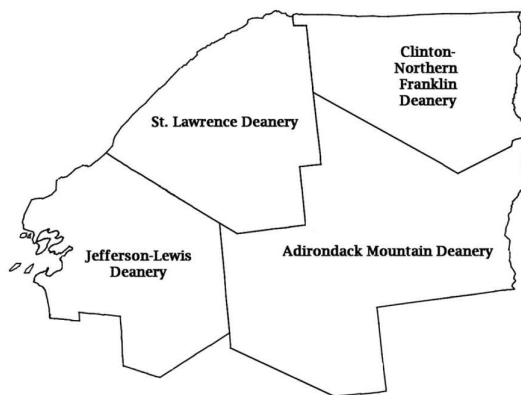
Ticonderoga - Southern Adirondack Compassionate Companions, a faith-based Age-friendly Communities Initiative, is recruiting new volunteers and has scheduled a Compassionate Companions Volunteer Training Program.

**Date:** Sept. 17

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

**Place:** Knights of Columbus Hall

**Features:** We are inviting new volunteers from Ticonderoga, Schroon Lake, Crown Point, and surrounding communities in southern Essex County to pioneer this new Age-friendly Communities Initiative based on the successful model of Mercy Care for the Adirondacks in the Tri-Lakes region of the Adirondacks. Southern Adirondack Compassionate Companions will provide informal social supports to older adults, such as in-home visits, social outings, assistance with grocery shopping, or transportation to medical appointments. There is no



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

Parishioners are invited to send information about activities to:

North Country Catholic, PO Box 326,

Ogdensburg, NY 13669

e-mail [news@northcountrycatholic.org](mailto:news@northcountrycatholic.org).

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

cost for the training, but registration is required. Lunch will be provided.

**Contact:** To register for the training, please contact Pam Arzberger, Southern Adirondack Compassionate Companions Program Coordinator, or visit [route74catholics.org](http://route74catholics.org). For more information, email Pam at [compassionatecare83@gmail.com](mailto:compassionatecare83@gmail.com) or call 518-547-0782.

## CHICKEN AND BISCUIT DINNER

Malone - The Malone Council of the Knights of Columbus will hold a Chicken and Biscuit dinner.

**Date:** Sept. 18

**Time:** 4 p.m.

**Place:** Knights of Columbus

**Cost:** \$12

**Features:** You can choose take-out, drive-thru, or eat in. Proceeds will benefit the Women's Healing Retreat to be held in October.

**Contact:** For more information, please contact Angelo Pietropaoli at 518-483-0459 or Gene Bashaw at 518-483-5383.

## 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

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.

## APPLEFEST

Peru - The 46th Annual St. Augustine Applefest to be held.

**Date:** Sept. 21

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

**Schedule:** 10:30 a.m., Giant Craft Fair, Food Booths, Kids Activ-

ities; 11 a.m., Parade, Live Music, Chicken BBQ, Games, Bounce House, Train Ride, Raffles. Grand Raffle Drawing at 4 p.m.

## TURKEY DINNER

Chazy - Sacred Heart Parish is having their Harvest Dinner.

**Date:** Sept. 22

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

**Place:** Parish Center

**Cost:** Adults, \$15; Children 6-12, \$8

Menu: Roast turkey, mashed potatoes, gravy, dressing, corn rutabaga, rolls and butter, beverage, apple or pumpkin pie.

**Features:** Visit our Sinners' Den Pantry for "sinfully" delicious goodies. Raffle with great prizes. Please join us! We are handicapped accessible.

**Contact:** For more information, 518-846-7650 or [Chazypa@rcondony.org](mailto:Chazypa@rcondony.org)

## COMPASSIONATE COMPANION TRAINING

Plattsburgh - Compassionate Companions of Clinton County to have a Volunteer training.

**Date:** Oct. 9

**Time:** 8:45 a.m. to 1 p.m.

**Place:** St. Joseph's Community Outreach Center

**Features:** Compassionate Companion Trained Volunteers are generous and kind people carrying out errands of mercy to help their neighbors age in place more successfully by providing their gifts of companionship and friendship, easing isolation and loneliness by establishing and strengthening meaningful social relationships between older adults and their family, friends and volunteers, encouraging and enabling participation in the life of their communities.

**Contact:** To learn more or to register for the training please contact Starr at 518-825-0697 or [Starr@stalexanders.org](mailto:Starr@stalexanders.org)

## JEFFERSON-LEWIS

## GOLF TOURNAMENT

Clayton - The Catholic Community of Alexandria is hosting the Father Meehan Memorial Golf

Tournament.

**Date:** Sept. 13 (rain date Sept. 20)

**Time:** Sign in at 11 a.m., shotgun start at 11:30 a.m.

**Place:** LA Golf Course

**Cost:** Captain and Crew, \$400 per 4 person team, includes fish fry dinner.

**Features:** Prizes, 50/50, and Silent Auction. Register after Mass at St. Cyril's Church, Alexandria Bay or look for "Father Meehan Memorial Golf Tournament" on Facebook.

**Contact:** For questions, contact St. Cyril's/St. Mary's parish office at 315-686-3398.

## SPAGHETTI & MEATBALL DINNER

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

**Date:** Sept. 14

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

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

**Cost:** Adults, \$9; Seniors, \$8; Children 12 and under, \$5; under 5, Free

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

## SILENT AUCTION AND BBQ

Watertown - Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Church is having their Annual Silent Auction and Pulled Pork BBQ Dinner.

**Date:** Sept. 21

**Time:** Doors open at 3 p.m. for raffle items and dinner will be served starting at 5 p.m.

**Features:** Silent Auction items to bid on, large raffle items, 50/50 raffle and much more. Pre-sale tickets will be available the weekend of Sept. 14th & 15th after all Masses.

**Contact:** For further information, please contact the office at 315-782-1474.

## 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.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 16



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**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. All tickets remain in the drum and are eligible for every prize drawing. 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.

## ALPHA

Ogdensburg — You are invited to Alpha.

**Date:** Tuesdays, starting Sept. 10

**Time:** 5:30 p.m. to 8

**Place:** St. Marguerite D'Youville Academy

**Features:** Alpha is a series of weekly sessions to explore life and the Christian faith in a friendly, open and informal environment. No pressure. No follow-up. No charge. And dinner is included!

**Contact:** Please register at <https://ogdensburgcatholics.org/alpha>. Or contact us to register or ask questions at 315-393-3930 or email [ogdenburgsec@rcdony.org](mailto:ogdenburgsec@rcdony.org)

## ALPHA

Massena — You are invited to ALPHA.

**Date:** Tuesdays starting Sept. 10

**Time:** 6 p.m. to 8:30

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

**Features:** This is a free event.

**Contact:** For more information call 315-769-2469

## ST. JAMES 150TH

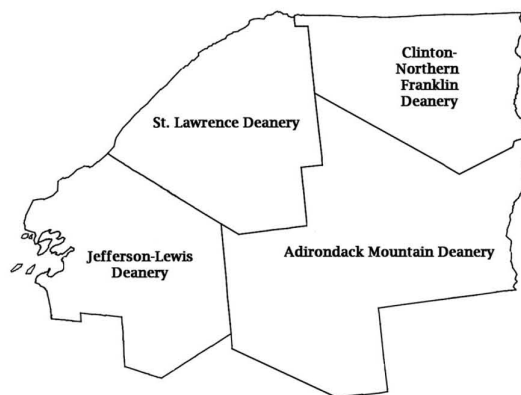
Gouverneur - Commemorating 150 yrs of our parish and 100 yrs of our church with a dinner celebration.

**Date:** Sept. 28

**Time:** 6 p.m.

**Place:** Casablanca Restaurant

**Cost:** \$10 per person



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

Parishioners are invited to send information about activities to:

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

e-mail [news@northcountrycatholic.org](mailto:news@northcountrycatholic.org).

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

**Contact:** Please RSVP to St. James Parish Office at 315-287-0114. You can pay at the office or on our website [www.oswegatchi-catholics.org](http://www.oswegatchi-catholics.org).

## SLFA CLM ANNUAL DINNER

Norfolk — The Annual SLFA Deaneries Commissioned Lay Ministers Association presents the CLM Annual Dinner.

**Date:** Oct. 16

**Time:** Mass at 5 p.m., followed by dinner at 6 p.m.

**Place:** Fr. Andrew Amyot Parish Center

**Cost:** \$20 per person

**Features:** Join us for an evening of prayer and reflection with a celebration of Mass and presentation entitled: Pope Francis "Year of Prayer" the Lord's Prayer, with guest speaker The Most Reverend Terry LaValley, Bishop of the Diocese of Ogdensburg. Also speaking will be Hattie Taylor, Campus minister for St. Mary's church in Potsdam and St. Patrick's church in Colton.

**Contact:** Register here: <https://www.rcdony.org/clm-event>

## DIOCESAN EVENTS

## SSJ LAY ASSOCIATE PROGRAM

The Sisters of St. Joseph invite you to a one of their informational meetings if you are interested in

learning about their Lay Associate Program.

**Schedule:** Sept. 22 at St. Patrick's Church in Watertown from 2 p.m. to 4.

**Features:** Associates meet once a month to learn about the spirituality, the charism and mission and history of the Sisters of St. Joseph, pray together, and discuss ways to deepen one's spiritual life. This group is open to men and women.

**Contact:** If you are interested, please contact Sister Mary Eamon ([smelyngssj@yahoo.com](mailto:smelyngssj@yahoo.com)) or Sister Bethany [srbethssj@gmail.com](mailto:srbethssj@gmail.com) or call 315-782-3460.

## 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](http://www.rcdony.org/priesthooddiscernment). For more information **contact:** Father Howard Venette — [hvenette@rcdony.org](mailto:hvenette@rcdony.org)

## HIGH SCHOOL LEADERSHIP WEEKEND

Saranac Lake — High School students in grades 9-12 are invited for an action-packed weekend of fun, friends, skill building workshops and moving prayer experiences.

**Date:** Sept. 20-22

**Place:** Camp Guggenheim

**Cost:** \$95

**Contact:** Register at [rcdony.org/leadership](http://rcdony.org/leadership) before Sept. 18th to secure your spot! Contact Anita Soltero at [asoltero@rcdony.org](mailto:asoltero@rcdony.org) with questions or call 315-393-2920.

## 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](mailto:mdonders@rcdony.org).

## BLUE MASS

Canton — Bishop Terry R. LaValley will celebrate the annual Blue Mass.

**Date:** Sept. 29

**Time:** 2:30 p.m.

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

**Features:** The Blue Mass is the Church's way to offer thanksgiving to God for the dedication and sacrifices made by the men and women of Fire, EMS, Corrections, Law Enforcement, and Communications. First Responders, their families, and all the faithful are

invited to attend this Sunday celebration. Uniforms are encouraged but not required.

**Contact:** Questions can be addressed to Father Chris Carrara, Blue Mass Committee Chair at [info@rcdony.org](mailto:info@rcdony.org) or by phone at 315-393-2920.

## MIDDLE SCHOOL RETREATS

The Vocation Office and the Office of Youth Ministry is sponsoring a Middle School Retreat (Grades 6-8)

**Date:** Clinton-Northern Franklin & Adirondack Deaneries, Oct. 4 at Holy Cross Parish Center, Plattsburgh; Jefferson-Lewis & Adirondack Deaneries, Oct. 9 at IHC Jr/High School, Watertown; and St. Lawrence & Clinton-Northern Franklin Deaneries, Oct. 16 on at St. Mary's Social Hall, Massena.

**Time:** Each of the Deanery Retreat locations sessions are from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

**Features:** The purpose of a Middle School Retreat is to guide young women and men to prayerfully consider what God's plan is for their lives. This invitation is open to students in Grades 6-8 both in the Catholic schools and public schools. This is a Retreat Day for the students and is considered a legal excused absence.

**Contact:** Your pastor, Catholic school principal, or Religious Education Coordinator for a registration form. Registration forms due by Sept. 30

## FAMILY GUGGENHEIM

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

**Date:** 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.

# Catholic media company makes best workplaces list

By Jonah McKeown  
Catholic News Agency

Catholic media company Ascension was recently named to the 2024 Fortune Best Small Workplaces List — a feat the company says is a first among Catholic organizations.

Based in metro Philadelphia, but with a fully remote workplace model, Ascension is known for its publishing division, Bible study resources, YouTube presence, and the popular podcasts “Bible in a Year” and “Catechism in a Year,” which are hosted by Father Mike Schmitz.

To compile the list, analytics firm Great Place to Work analyzed survey responses of more than 31,000 employees from Great Place to Work Certified companies. Based on their analysis, 99% of Ascension employees reported that it was a “great place to work.”

For 2024, Ascension placed eighth on Fortune’s list of best workplaces in the U.S. with 10 to 99 U.S. employees. In addition to the top-10 designation overall, Ascension was also named as No. 64 on Fortune’s list of Best Workplaces for Millennials 2024 (Small And Medium) earlier this year.

Jonathan Strate, Ascension’s CEO since 2017, told CNA in an interview that Ascension has been intentionally working on improving its work culture for years, using benchmarking tools like the Trust Index from the Great Place to Work Institute.

The process has involved surveying employees to measure trust in management and oth-

er factors, Strate said, leading to feedback on areas needing improvement such as leave policies, professional development, and fair pay.

As a fully remote company since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, Strate said through careful and deliberate hiring processes and ensuring that employees are self-directed and motivated, they are able to trust employees to manage their own schedules.

Strate said the workplace culture at Ascension has contributed to a low employee turnover rate of less than 3%, which allows the company to reallocate resources typically spent on recruiting and training new employees toward enhancing employee benefits.

Ascension rolled out new paid family leave policies in 2023, expanding its maternity leave offering from one paid week to 12 and its paternity leave offering from one week to six. The company also introduced six weeks of paid leave for new adoptive parents.

Ascension also offers a rare leave policy for couples experiencing pregnancy loss: 12 weeks for mothers and six weeks for fathers.

As a father of six himself, Strate said at the time the new leave policies went into effect that he sees an opportunity for Catholic organizations to lead the way “going above and beyond what the law requires” in implementing family-focused policies, like paid leave, that can help to “build a culture of life.”

Ascension has since made the templates for

their new benefits publicly available in an effort to encourage other organizations to adopt similar policies.

Now, over a year on from the start of their new leave policies, Strate said they have found that investing in employee satisfaction has ultimately paid off through increased dedication and retention. Strate also said he believes they’ve created a company that is a great place to work for anybody, not just Catholics.

“If you don’t invest in [benefits and workplace culture], you are at risk of losing some great people and not being as competitive out there,” he noted.

Strate said some Catholic organizations — especially nonprofits, which Ascension is not — may be hesitant to invest in the kinds of competitive benefits that employees want, but he noted that companies that don’t make that investment will need to contend with “costs that come with employee dissatisfaction.”

“To be really intentional about the employee experience is the first place to start,” he said.

“And if you communicate a commitment to wanting to do that ... The employees pay it back to you in the form of dedication, in the form of sticking around.”



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## SUNDAY'S SCRIPTURE

## Focusing on the 'who' of Jesus

A few days ago, when I was preparing this homily, I spoke with my buddy Alexa and asked her to play a song for me. In the Gospel, Jesus asks what people are saying about him. His question made me think about the old Doobie Brothers song: "Jesus Is Alright." Alexa was able to provide the tune, so I did not have to turn to Google or Siri.

If you belong to a younger generation, you may have worn a bracelet or at least have seen - WWJD: What would Jesus Do. This phrase was

meant to help remind us about how Jesus would have faced certain situations, how Jesus would have responded.



Msgr. Robert H. Aucoin

Turn now to today's gospel reading. Jesus asks two questions: "Who do people say that I am?" and "Who do you say that I am?" Both questions focus on the "who" of Jesus. Who exactly is he? This question is not unlike

the same question we ask today for example: "Who is Kamala Harris? Who is Donald Trump? Who is this one and who is that one?" Well,

September 15

Twenty-fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

READINGS

Isaiah 50:5-9a

James 2:14-18

Mark 8:27-35

the answer will depend on whom you ask and that person's experience with the object of the question. With any one of these names, you are likely to get as many different answers as the number of people asked.

So, Jesus asks what others are saying about him but is really more interested in what his closest disciples say about his identity. In other words, Jesus is not interested in hearsay but wants to know from those who have the closest association with him.

Peter speaks up and does not hesitate to affirm that Jesus is not at all like the other prophets, rather Jesus is the Messiah. A strong act of faith from a man who so often exhibited weak-

ness. Jesus' reaction to Peter's act of faith may sound strange: "Don't tell anyone!" Why would Jesus want it kept a secret?

The answer is simple. Jesus wanted first to teach people who the Messiah would be, how he would live, what he would do, and, especially, what being a disciple would mean, not what they thought about the Messiah.

He immediately uses the opportunity to begin teaching them about who the Messiah is and the implications of being a disciple. When Jesus introduces the idea of suffering to attain glory, Peter reacts negatively and tells Jesus that he has it all wrong. Jesus does not hesitate to tell Peter that he does not understand because he is thinking in human terms not in divine terms. The hard reality is that discipleship can lead to suffering.

What we have done, especially in more recent years, is describe Jesus in our terms using our structures, our

notions. We make Jesus into what we want him to be rather than who he truly is, what he truly did, and how he saw the world. We want a glorious Christ, but not a pained and suffering one. We want a happy religion without the discipline attached to that joy. We stage-manage Jesus into our image and likeness rather than the one truly found in the Gospels.

I am happy to know that the Doobie Brothers can sing "Jesus is just all right with me," and I would certainly always want to make sure that I am acting as Jesus would want me to.

However, we cannot reduce discipleship to a song or a slogan or a banner. Rather, true discipleship must reflect what Jesus says: "Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me." If we believe that discipleship is somewhere else or in some other way, we have made a mistake. Take up your cross. Follow Jesus.

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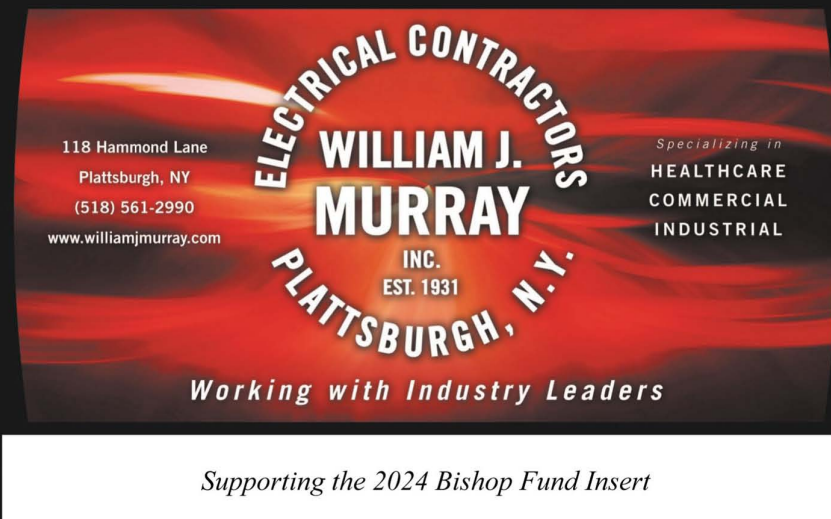
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# Landry appointed national director

The Pontifical Mission Societies USA (TPMS USA) is pleased to announce the appointment of Father Roger J. Landry as the new national director effective in January 2025. This appointment has been approved by Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle, the pro prefect of the Dicastery for Evangelization, following the suggestion of the Board of Directors headed by Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan, archbishop of New York.

Father Landry, a priest of the Diocese of Fall River, Massachusetts, and Chaplain of Columbia University, brings extensive experience and a dynamic vision to TPMS USA. His background in pastoral work, bioethics, youth ministry, and missionary activity aligns perfectly with TPMS's mission to support the global Church's mission-



Father Roger J. Landry

ary efforts.

Father Landry concluded a 65-day Eucharistic pilgrimage across the United States as part of the Eucharistic Revival and the 10th National Eucharistic Congress. He was the only priest who walked with Jesus during the entire pilgrimage, underscoring his dedication to bringing Christ to all corners of the world.

"The Board of Directors is thrilled to welcome



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Father Roger J. Landry as the new National Director of The Pontifical Mission Societies," said Timothy Michael Cardinal Dolan. "His commitment to the mission of the Church and his extensive experience make him the ideal leader to guide TPMS USA in its efforts to support the global mission of evangelization, particularly where the message of the Gospel has only recently been introduced, where the Church is materially poor and cannot sustain itself, and also where our brothers [and sisters] in the faith are persecuted."

"It is a great joy and a tremendous honor to be asked to take on these new duties," said Father Landry. "From the time I was a little child, I have loved the mission of the Church. I would go to bed reading about the great missionaries who gave their lives to spread the faith, so today I am overjoyed at the possibility of helping all those on the front lines through The Pontifical Mission Societies USA. As Pope Francis has regularly reminded us, the Church doesn't just have a mission; the Church is a mission, and each of us, as disciples of Jesus

Christ, we too don't just have a mission; we are a mission on this Earth."

Father Landry is a Harvard College graduate and an alumnus of the Pontifical North American College in Rome and has been appointed by Pope Francis as a permanent Missionary of Mercy following the extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy of 2015. He has served in various capacities, including Attaché to the Holy See's Permanent Observer Mission to the United Nations, pastor, Chaplain at Columbia University, and executive editor of a diocesan newspaper. His work with Aid to the Church in Need USA and his leadership in organizing and participating in the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage highlight his commitment to addressing the needs of the global Church.

## CALLED TO SERVE

# Arrive early, stay late

We were preparing for the start of Mass recently when the celebrant checked the time on his iPhone and said, "two minutes to go. We will wait, since a bunch of people will show up in the next minute or so."

On that same weekend, I was standing in the gathering area of a different church with my alb and stole draped over my arm. A Holy Hour was to begin after that Mass, so I was waiting.

I watched as about a dozen people, after receiving Holy Communion, proceeded straight out the door. Some acknowledged this deacon with a nod of the head as they walked by, others looked the other way avoiding eye contact.

I have always had a thing about folks who show up at the last minute or are late for the beginning of Mass and for those who bolt before Mass is over.

They are not necessarily the same folks either. Time is a common denominator, I think. Habit is another.

From the time I was a kid I learned that you did not enter any event just as it started or after the event was in full swing. It was true of school, movies, plays, and especially Mass. You always arrived a few minutes early so you could find your seat, get comfortable, buy popcorn, or maybe prepare yourself for the event to follow. Like Mass.

We were trained as al-

tar servers back then, and I believe altar servers are still taught they should show up 10 to 15 minutes before Mass to let Father know you have arrived and in case

Father has a task for you. The server also needed to make sure all the things he or she would need during Mass are in its proper place.

Bells, books, wine and water and the vessels for washing the celebrant's hands come to mind. The processional cross or candles might be on the list.

Now, many years later as a deacon, I still check to make sure all is ready

for Mass to begin at the appointed time. Altar servers should too.

In the pews, the faithful can use a couple of extra minutes before Mass to look at the readings, say a Rosary, or just sit quietly praying and communing with God.



Deacon  
Kevin Mastellon

Mass is finished when the celebrant and other ministers process down the aisle and the closing hymn is completed.

Those few extra minutes after

Communion have a purpose. We are supposed to think about what we have just experienced, the miracle of bread and wine transformed

into the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Jesus Christ. We have a chance to thank God for the gift of his Son that we have just received in Holy Communion, or the blessing we have received from the minister.

When I was a kid in Queens, the excuse for early departure was either to get at the head of the line at the bakery after Mass, or to get out of the parking lot before everyone else.

They were lousy excuses then, and I expect they do not hold much water today.

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



## SHARING SWEET TREATS



On August 8, 2024, St. Andrew's Altar & Rosary Society of Norwood held their annual ice cream social in the village park. The group, along with Father Ray Moreau, treated the community to free ice cream and sweets. The Norwood Brass Firemen, who entertained that night, and Stewart's Shops helped support this event.

## Siena College to host symposium on integral ecology

Join us at Siena College or via livestream for a two-day symposium on sustainability and integral ecology October 10-11.

Antonio Guterres, secretary-general of the United Nations, will deliver the keynote address.

Speakers and sessions will address the global realities of the climate crisis, as well as efforts that can be undertaken by individuals and organizations to address this most urgent issue.

The symposium is free to attend in-person, and a virtual option is available at registration.

The first day begins at 12:30 on Oct. 10, and that evening ends with a 7:30 p.m. keynote address.

The second day of the symposium begins with opening prayer at 9 a.m. and will conclude with a 7 p.m. evening presentation featuring a series of short plays written by Siena students, alumni and local playwrights.

Siena College vows to be a global leader in higher education in its devoted responses to the cries of the poor and the planet, as articulated in the papal encyclicals *Laudato Si* and *Fratelli Tutti*.

For more information, or to register, visit [siena.edu/integralecology](https://siena.edu/integralecology).



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