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The Diocese of Ogdensburg Volume 79 Number 35

# NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

JANUARY 8, 2025

## Looby to lead Youth Ministry

Bishop Terry R. LaValley has named Patrick Looby, a Harrisville native, as the new director of Youth Ministry and Campus Ministry for the diocese.

Looby returns to the diocese after a career in Catholic education and Youth Ministry that took him to Virginia and Texas, and a year and a half serving on mission in Honduras.

In addition to building on existing youth ministry and diocesan offerings, Looby said he hopes to help establish youth ministry in more parishes.

FULL STORY, PAGE 4

## OPENING THE HOLY YEAR



PHOTO BY DARCY FARGO/NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

Joined by priests from around the diocese, Bishop Terry R. LaValley celebrated Mass opening the 2025 Holy Year on Dec. 29 at St. Mary's Cathedral. Read Bishop LaValley's homily on Page 3.

## ORGAN RESTORED



Father Lukas Gruber, parochial vicar at St. Peter's Parish in Massena, plays the recently-restored organ at Sacred Heart Church in Massena at "A Service of Lessons, Organ and Carols" held three days before Christmas as part of the church's 100th anniversary celebration.

FULL STORY, PAGE 5

# Pope ties debt forgiveness to peace

By AC Wimmer  
Catholic News Agency

Pope Francis marked the Angelus prayer on the first day of 2025 by calling on Christian nations to set an example through debt relief for the world's poorest countries and renewing his passionate plea for peace in global conflict zones.

Speaking from the window of the Apostolic Palace to what the Vatican reported as approximately 30,000 faithful gathered in St. Peter's Square for the solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, the pontiff connected the Church's World Day of Peace with the upcoming jubilee year,

emphasizing debt forgiveness as a concrete path to peace.

"The first to forgive debts is God, as we always ask him when praying the 'Our Father,'" Francis said. "And the jubilee calls for translating this forgiveness to the social level, so that no person, no family, no people may be crushed by debt."

The pope encouraged "the leaders of countries with Christian traditions to set a good example by canceling or reducing as much as possible the debts of the poorest countries."

Reflecting on global conflicts, Francis expressed gratitude for those working toward dialogue and negotiations in war zones.

He specifically mentioned Ukraine, Gaza, Israel, Myanmar, and Kivu, a region in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo that has suffered from prolonged violence and instability.

"Brothers, sisters, war destroys, it always destroys! War is always a defeat, always," the pope emphasized.

Francis reflected on the day's Gospel reading from Luke 2:16-21, which recounts the shepherds' arrival at the manger in Bethlehem. He drew attention to both what the shepherds saw — the child Jesus, whose name in Hebrew means "God saves" — and what remained unseen:

Mary's heart that "treasured and meditated on all these things."

"God chose to be born for us," Francis said. "The Lord came into the world to give us his very life." He connected this divine choice to what he called "the hope of redemption and salvation" that beats in Mary's maternal heart for all creation.

Earlier in the day, the pontiff pleaded for peace and the protection of human life at St. Peter's Basilica, calling for "a firm commitment to promote respect for the dignity of human life, from conception to natural death" in his New Year's Day homily.

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# When I look at it that way...

If I had been standing a foot to my right or a foot to my left, I wouldn't have seen it.

I was at St. Mary's Cathedral taking photos of the Mass that opened the 2025 Jubilee in our diocese. The Jubilee Cross had been placed in the sanctuary, and the lector was reading.

As I put the camera to my eye and pressed the button part way to get the camera to focus, I almost laughed out loud. From where I was standing, it looked like Jesus was on the cross, but he had his

hand on the lector's back.

"That looks weird," I thought. "Time to move."

Darcy L.  
Fargo

The angle was blocked during the proclamation of the Gospel, but when I returned to that spot during Bishop LaValley's homily, Jesus had his hand on Bishop LaValley's back, too.

I found myself distracted by Jesus' hand placement.

I frequently talk about the fact that I attend lots of events at the cathedral and in other churches, but I don't often get

to prayerfully enter into those Masses. I'm usually too busy thinking about where I should be standing, what's coming next, what adjustments I need to make on the camera... While I don't get to prayerfully experience the Masses, I get to see little moments, little details that others don't see.

This was one of those moments. I don't think anyone else had even close to the right angle to see it. As I stood there, camera around my neck, thinking about how weird the little detail was, it occurred to me: It wasn't weird. It was "on brand," as I like to say. It was per-

fect.

Jesus loves us always. Jesus was on the cross because of his love for us - both "us" in the collective sense and for each of us as individuals. It was personal and a sign of affection, just like placing a hand on someone's back is personal and a sign of affection.

I spent the rest of the Mass thinking about Jesus loving us from the cross.

Maybe I didn't get to enter into the Mass, but it was still a prayerful experience.

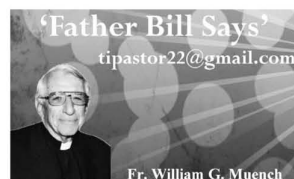
I'm pretty sure our Lord wanted me to have that experience. He put me exactly where I needed to be.

## Christmas visitors bring joy

I do enjoy visitors, especially at Christmas time. My visitors remind me of the magi. You know, the Feast of the Epiphany, and the coming of the magi to find the newborn, Jesus - the King of the Jews. They were Gentiles, often called wise men, who had discovered the birth of a king through the stars and were led to Israel. The Epiphany reminds us that Jesus came to save all people - Jew and Gentile. Like the magi, we are all invited to visit the Lord Jesus now and for all times.

Today I want to tell you about my visitors this Christmas. On the Sunday afternoon before Christmas, I received a text message asking me if I was open to having visitors. It was a young family that I knew well. They were traveling through this city heading to Ticonderoga. What a terrific surprise! I love visitors; they were like a Christmas present for me.

So, they stopped,



Meghan and Sudeep and their four children. Meghan is a Jebb from Ticonderoga. Her family are members of St. Mary's Parish in Ticonderoga where I was pastor for a while. So, I have known Meghan since she was a child. I celebrated their marriage - Meghan and Sudeep. He is from India. They met at Notre Dame University as students. Their wedding was ten years ago. I have not seen them since then. Now, there are four children.

What a treat! They now live near Chicago. They were traveling from there to Ticonderoga for Christmas. Their children were a delight - full of life and glad to get out of the car for a while. It was so enjoyable to catch up with

their lives for these past years. I had a great day with them.

Let me tell you about another visit the week before Christmas. The kindergarten class at our Holy Family School came calling. It was just a short walk across the street - there were 21 of them with their teachers. I knew them. I had visited them in their classroom. I must admit they brought lots of spirit and a welcome children's chatter to this very quiet house. So, there was lots of activity and some singing. They had lots to discover.

We read a story. After a while we went into the chapel. First we took a moment so that each child could introduce themselves. Then we said a prayer together. I must tell you that their visit made it a great day for me. I have always said that spending a day with such bright, happy children is like looking upon the face of God.

And there were so many others, like Msgr. Dennis Duprey, from Peru, New York, up around Plattsburgh. He's been a friend in ministry for many years. He had been visiting his sister in Rochester. Bishop Cunningham visited us for lunch on Christmas Eve; he brings a special blessing to the house by his presence. And, of course, I do want to include among the visitors, the many folks who came to all the Christmas Masses. Their presence indicated that their faith was very much alive here and all around the country.

I want to close today with a wish to all for a Happy and Blessed New Year. My prayer of Hope: *"Loving and faithful God, as we stand on the threshold of this New Year, we place our trust in your unfailing love. You are the God of every new beginning, the One who makes all things new. Grant us the courage to face each day with hope and confidence."* Amen.



## FOLLOW ME

# Jubilee 2025: 'Look for hints of hope'

*Editor's note: The following is Bishop Terry R. LaValley's homily from the Mass opening the Jubilee Year on Dec. 29 at St. Mary's Cathedral.*

It is fitting that we begin the Jubilee Year of Hope during the Christmas Season. Pope Francis wrote, "We must pray that each day God may give us hope and give it to everyone, that hope which arises when we see God in the crib in Bethlehem."

You see, hope came into the world with that birth, the Incarnation of the Son of God. And what is this hope? Eternal life. God, Himself, comes into the world and gives us the strength to walk with Him into eternity. WOW!

This Feast of the Holy Family reminds you and me that God walks with us in Jesus as a family of faith. Walking with Him gives us the strength to live in the present times in a new way. For sure, sometimes it's a very challenging journey, but with it comes a vision of a new heavens and a new earth. For Christians, to hope means the certainty of being on a journey with Christ as a family of faith heading towards the Father who awaits us all. In his letter on hope, Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI wrote that "Hope never stands still, it is always journeying." (15-16) And so, we can never get too comfortable and stop growing in our relationship to Jesus. We get nowhere travelling in neutral or park. A couch potato Catholic is



PHOTO BY DARCY FARGO/NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

**Bishop Terry R. LaValley delivers his homily at the diocesan Mass opening the 2025 Jubilee on Dec. 29.**

a contradiction.

I'd like to point out two elements of my Episcopal Coat of Arms: my Episcopal Motto, Jesus' words: "Follow Me" and the symbol of an anchor. Both are evident in the Jubilee Logo on display in the Cathedral vestibule.

You'll notice that the figures on the Logo are supporting each other as they move forward, indicating the solidarity and fraternity which should unite all peoples. The figure in the front is clinging to the cross. It is not only the sign of the faith which this lead figure embraces, but also of hope, which can never be abandoned because we are always in need of hope.

We, also, see the rough waves under the figures, symbolizing the fact that life's pilgrimage of following Jesus does not always go smoothly in calm waters. We have only to consider how today Jesus' teachings are so often ignored or rejected. The world knows Him not. Especially today, on this Feast of the Holy Family, we are keenly aware that, for example, marriage, family and gender have no meaning today. The rougher the waters, the more determined we must be to get closer to Jesus.

Often the circumstances of daily living and events in the wider world require a greater call to hope. That's why in the LOGO we should pay special at-



The 2025 Jubilee logo

tention to the bottom part of the cross which has been stretched and turned into the shape of an anchor which is lowered into the waves. The anchor is a symbol of hope. Such hope gives stability to voyagers in turbulent times. In maritime jargon the anchor of hope refers to the "reserve anchor" used by vessels involved in emergency maneuvers to stabilize the ship during storms.

The Holy Father writes, "the image of the anchor is eloquent; it helps us to recognize the stability and security that is ours amid the troubled waters of this life, provided we entrust ourselves to the Lord Jesus. The storms that buffet us will never prevail, for we are firmly anchored in the hope born of grace, which enables us to live in Christ and to overcome sin, fear and death."

It is worth noting that the Jubilee of Hope LOGO illustrates that the cross bends down towards humanity, not leaving human beings alone, but stretching out to them to offer the certainty of its presence and the security of hope. Members of the local

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

## Update on diocesan reorganization

Dear friends,  
I hope you enjoyed a Holy Christmas and a Happy New Year. As we begin a new year, I want to update you on the Diocesan reorganization case. The Diocese continues to carry on its mission in the ordinary course. Parishes also continue their programs, services and activities.

As you are aware, we are in mediation

in an attempt to settle all contested issues, including the Child Victims Act (CVA) cases. Judge Christopher Sontchi continues as our mediator. We have participated in mediation sessions with the survivors who brought the CVA lawsuits, and with our insurers. All necessary parties have taken part in the negotiations, including our parishes, schools and

Catholic entities who are not direct parties of the reorganization case, but who will be required to contribute to the settlement with the abuse survivors.

The process is moving slower than we hoped, for a variety of reasons. We are committed to reaching a fair settlement of all claims. We have provided all information and documentation that has been

properly requested. We will continue to cooperate with this process until all matters are resolved.

I again ask for your prayers that a just resolution of all claims will be reached in the near future. We are committed to compensating the victims who have filed claims. At the same time, we will continue our mission as a diocese, meeting the

needs of all the people of the North Country. Thank you for your prayerful support. Asking God to bless you abundantly, I am

Faithfully yours in Christ,

*Terry R. LaValley*

Most Reverend  
Terry R. LaValley  
Bishop of Ogdensburg

# Home to grow ministry for youth, students

By Darcy Fargo  
Editor

While his life in ministry has taken him far from the North Country to Virginia, Texas and Honduras, new diocesan Youth Ministry and Campus Ministry Director Patrick Looby says he's now home.

"I've done youth ministry and Catholic education my entire career," he said. "I've done parish youth ministry, a bit of diocesan work, and I was in Catholic education after that. With a friend of mine, I started a Catholic High School in Virginia, Summit Academy. I've done Theology on Tap with the Dioceses of Arlington and Richmond. My wife and I partner together. For the past year and a half, we were in Honduras. We worked with a lot of families and teens, and we did a lot with teen motherhood and pregnancy. But I'm

from the North Country. I have roots here. I'm from Harrisville. When this opportunity came open to work in my home diocese and live back at home, we had to look at it. We spent a lot of time praying and discerning. If God takes us back to Honduras, we'll follow gladly. But if God wants us to stay home, we're open to that, too."

Looby said he hopes to help youth and those around them discover and use the gifts specific to that point in development.

"The challenge with youth ministry is pretty universal," he said. "CS Lewis referred to 'chronological snobbery.' People have a tendency to look down on what came before us. We do it collectively, looking at the generations who came before us as backwards or behind the times, and we often view our adolescence the same way. Maybe we didn't have



Patrick Looby

good youth ministry or we were placated when taught faith. That often has a negative effect on faith and on our perceptions of youth ministry. It's missed opportunity. We need to view that adolescent time period as a gift. Adolescents have no patience for insincerity, and they detect it very well. They question everything. That's a fantastic gift when you're developing catechetical gifts. You can try theories and approaches with teens, and they'll find every hole in what you're trying to say. It's a gift. Maybe it didn't feel utilized when we were going through, but it should be utilized. Utilizing those gifts and playing to those strengths sets us up for future ministry as those people become leaders in the Church. That contributes to vocations. Good youth ministry validates the role of adolescence in human de-

velopment and it builds its own future, as well."

Young adults, those served by campus ministry, retain the tendency to question everything but at a time in their lives when they also have more personal choice and autonomy.

"The only difference between young people in high school and young people in college is that high school students want autonomy. They're itching for it," Looby said. "College students have all the same attributes, but they're living in an open-map game. No one is telling them to go to Mass, to do their homework, to go to this party but not that one. The focus there is helping them manage that autonomy. God made us for freedom. That is where happiness lies. It's realizing that the autonomy and freedom are gifts, and our goal is to use them to be who we're made to

be."

Looby said he has two goals moving forward: Maintaining and building existing diocesan programming and helping "beef up" youth ministry at the parish level.

"We need diocesan programming," he said. "It's good for everyone to come together and for teens to see they're part of a bigger church. Summer Camp, Youth Rally - that stuff needs to be done and done well. But of all the parishes in the diocese, only a handful have active youth ministry. The goal is to have vibrant youth ministry all around the diocese. That may mean regional efforts for some smaller parishes."

Looby said he also hopes to reinvigorate youth Respect Life programming and possibly bring back a service camp, like the Catholic Heart Work Camp that previously ran in the diocese.

"I want to get active in March for Life again," he said. "Clearly, respect life issues have not ended. And a lot of teens like to get their hands into community service. Catholic Heart Work Camp worked here. Guggenheim is fantastic, but a lot of teens are looking for that service component. I also have relationships with people and organizations in the Dominican Republic, Honduras, Guatemala and Belize. I'd love to look at service initiatives in central America."

He also said he looks forward to offering more training opportunities for youth ministry leaders and restarting the Diocesan Youth Council.

"Stay tuned," he said. "There's definitely more to come!"

## JOB OPENING

### Claims Representative

The Roman Catholic Diocese of Ogdensburg is seeking a **Claims Representative**. The position is responsible for processing Workers Compensation claims with the Third-Party Administrator, maintaining records and producing necessary reports. The position also supports the administration of property/liability and auto insurance.

An associate's degree in business is preferred. Experience with NYS Workers Compensation and other insurance is preferred. Candidates should possess excellent verbal and written communication skills, have the ability to work independently and manage/establish priorities to meet deadlines. Proficiency with Microsoft Office including Word and Excel is required. Candidates should have the ability to learn new software.

Starting Pay Range: \$44,815 - \$54,581.

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# Revived organ strikes a cord in Massena

By Keith Benman  
Contributing Writer

A sound 100 years old was heard once again at Sacred Heart Church in Massena during "A Service of Lessons, Organ and Carols" just three days before Christmas.

The church's organ, refurbished over the summer, belted out both popular carols and classical pieces during the more than one-hour performance. The 712-pipe instrument served as both accompaniment and inspiration for a choir, brass and flutes.

The event at the St. Peter's Parish church was one of several marking the 100th anniversary of the completion of the church building at 212 Main Street.

"It was perfect - just to have the organ playing fully... It was an absolutely perfect way to do this," said music director Joyce Giroux. "And we are really blessed to have an accomplished organist here as one of our priests."

That priest is Father Lukas Gruber, parochial vicar at St. Peter's Parish, who arrived in Massena in June. Also performing on the instrument was Devlin Germano, a St. Peter's parishioner.

Aidan O'Neill was one of about 20 choir members singing along with the organ at the service. It was his first time singing at a service with the organ and the experience exceeded his expectations.

"There's just something about the organ that just makes sacred music sound more, well... sacred," O'Neill said.

The service of lessons and carols came almost exactly 100 years af-



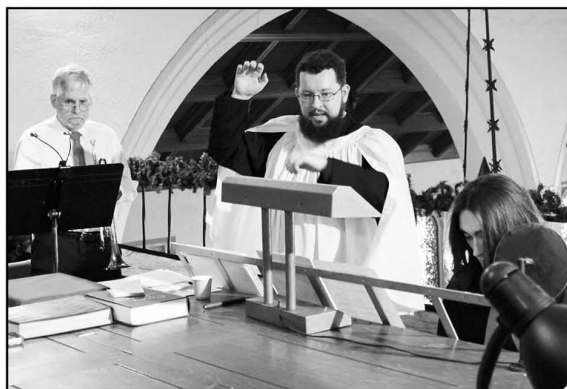
PHOTOS BY KEITH BENMAN

(Above) The choir belts out a number for a service of lessons and carols just before Christmas at Sacred Heart Church, in Massena. (Right) Father Lukas Gruber conducts the choir, as St. Peter's parishioner Devlin Germano plays the restored organ, at Sacred Heart Church.

ter the first Mass celebrated at the church on Christmas. The Romanesque church building replaced an earlier Sacred Heart Church, which was located about a quarter mile south.

The organ, ordered from the Estey Organ Co., of Brattleboro, Vermont, was installed in the new church just before that first Mass. For many decades it was played regularly at Masses, marriages, funerals and other services. But it has rarely been heard there in recent years.

Valves, pipes and other critical parts had deteriorated. The extensive refurbishing of the instrument was completed by Kerner & Merchant, an East Syracuse



company well-known for its work on organs all around the diocese.

The biggest drawback to playing the instrument in recent years was a series of notes that would not play when keys were struck. Called "dead notes," a skilled organist can play around a few but not the long list the Sacred Heart organ had accumulated, Father Gruber said. At the pre-Christmas service of lessons and carols, there was no need for that.

"It was night and day," Father Gruber said. "That huge portion of the organ that was un-

usable is now usable."

The St. Peter's parish choir was joined at the service by members from others including St. Mary's, Potsdam; St. Mary's, Canton; and St. Patrick's, Colton. Wind instruments including those of the North Coun-

try Brass also joined in.

Musical numbers included a Johann Sebastian Bach classic as well as numbers by more contemporary composers played as responses to readings from the Old and New Testament.

Bishop Terry LaValley was one of those participating in the service of lessons and carols. The bishop knows the church well, as Sacred Heart was his first assignment upon being ordained a deacon and then a priest in 1988.

Before the service, New York State Assemblyman Scott Gray read a legislative proclamation sponsored by himself and State Senator Dan Stec. The proclamation recognized Sacred Heart as an institution that enriches its community through a "legacy of faith and service."

The church community was honored by a similar proclamation issued by the Town of Massena in early November.

Other events in recognition of the 100th anniversary included a service of Solemn Vespers, or evening prayer, at the church on Dec. 8.

Earlier, in November, a time capsule to be opened in 100 years was enclosed in the cornerstone of one of the newly rebuilt church buttresses flanking the church's entrance.

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## Environmental Stewardship

## Pilgrims of hope

The Jubilee Year that began on December 29 calls us to be pilgrims of hope and builders of peace. To be peace builders, we need to clear our hearts of what blocks the light of Christ's love from shining forth in us.

There are numerous ways to cleanse the anger, fear, greed and other negative energies from the recesses of our heart. Turning to nature is one way.

Although it can be a challenge for most of us to get outdoors and take a walk through a wooded area or a snow-covered meadow, the solitude these settings offer is truly unique. It might seem as though the same peace and quiet can be experienced in a chair next to a wood stove, but such places lack the abundance of fresh air and indescribable network of life that exists around you. Whether you are aware of it or not, being immersed in nature can improve a person's view of life. It can allow compassion, forgiveness, generosity and other positive emotions to seep into our hearts and souls.

Even though most life is now dormant, all still contain that Divine spark of life. For a person with an open heart and a desire to experience the greatness of the Creator, encountering nature and becoming aware of the sights, sounds, smells, and complexity of any landscape can be mystical. We know from our earliest lessons that God is everywhere. Anyone willing to look deeply enough into the many facets of the myriad of gems present in nature will come to know that Our Lord is indeed in everything and is always willing to help us draw our attention away from the hatred, selfishness, and ego that separates us from our neighbors.

Try to use these winter days to connect with the Creator and seek His healing graces and energy, which He is waiting to bestow on anyone that asks for help.

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

I remember the USS Hope. It was originally a US Navy hospital ship that the United States donated to Project Hope in 1958. It travelled the world where needed to provide emergency medical assistance to people ravaged by illness or war.

The ship was retired in 1974 and replaced by land-based response teams. The ship had both altruistic and public relations value to the US.

USS Hope was one of my earliest exposures

to the word "hope."

Now it is part of everyday speech.

"I hope you have a pleasant day." "I hope you have a safe trip." "I hope I get a new bicycle for ...fill in the blank." "I hope you are feeling better." Etcetera, etcetera.

I can think of three people I know named Hope. The name connotes confidence and trust. One online source says of the name, "it became popular during the Protestant Reformation in the



Deacon  
Kevin Mastellon

## CALLED TO SERVE

## A jubilee of hope

16th century as a virtue name, along with other names like Faith and Charity."

Hope is a theological virtue too. Hope moves one to act in a morally good way.

Pope Francis has chosen the virtue of Hope as the theme for the Jubilee year of 2025.

In his edict *Spes non confundit* ("hope does not disappoint" from St. Paul's letter to the Romans) Francis writes:

"Everyone knows what it is to hope. In the heart of each person, hope dwells as the desire and expectation of good things to come, despite our not knowing what the future may bring. Even so, uncertainty about the future may at times give rise to conflicting feelings, ranging from confident trust to apprehensiveness, from serenity to anxiety, from firm conviction to hesitation and doubt. Often, we come across people who are discouraged, pessimistic and cynical about the future, as if nothing could possibly bring them happiness. For all of us, may the Jubilee be an opportunity to be renewed in hope. God's word helps

us find reasons for that hope."

I have a running debate in my mind whether to wish someone in a note or email good luck. The debate is between "hope" and "pray."

For example, should I tell my daughter "I hope you have a good trip." Or is it more appropriate to say, "I pray you have a good trip."

Hope and prayer are related, with hope shaping the expectation of prayer. Faith is the primary force that energizes hope.

Pope Francis says, "The coming Jubilee will thus be a Holy Year marked by the hope that does not fade, our hope in God. May it help us to recover the confident trust that we require, in the Church and in society, in our interpersonal relationships, in international relations, and in our task of promoting the dignity of all persons and respect for God's gift of creation."

Happy 2025. Happy Jubilee Year of Hope.

*Deacon Kevin Mastellon ministers in Watertown.*

*He is the director of Permanent Deacons for the Diocese of Ogdensburg.*

## Rest in Peace

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

**Jan. 8** — Rev. Michael Moris, 1893; Rev. Frederick C. Hatch, 1961; Msgr. Robert John Arquette, 1969; Rev. Leo McCarthy, O.S.A., 1975; Rev. Roland Gaulin, O.M.I., 1984; Rev. Anthony F. Pease, 1997; Msgr. Morris L. Dwyer, 2004

**Jan. 9** — Rev. James P. Santoni, O.M.I., 1890; Rev. Joseph Ferdinand Durin, M.S.C., 1897; Rev. Fred Commins, O.S.A., 1924; Rev. Joseph Edward Doyle, 1958; Rev. Jeremiah Albert O'Brien, 1974

**Jan. 10** — Rev. Christopher C. Poulin, 1904; Msgr. James O'Driscoll, 1913; Msgr. Frederick P. Diviney, 1961

**Jan. 11** — Msgr. John Andrew Cotter, 1964; Msgr. Anthime D. Charbonneau, 1976; Most Rev. Walter P. Kellenberg, 1986

**Jan. 12** — Msgr. Francis Joseph Maguire, 1978; Rev. J. Roger McGuinness, 2022

**Jan. 13** — Rev. Eugene Derome, 1951

**Jan. 14** — Rev. John M. Neenan, M.S.C., 1879; Rev. Benedict Scharff, O.F.M. Conv., 1964; Deacon Francis Bradley, 2000

**Jan. 15** — Msgr. James Joseph Lacey, 1942

## To Report Abuse

**If you have a complaint** of suspected misconduct involving diocesan clergy, religious, employees or volunteers, contact Victim Assistance Coordinator, Terrianne Yanulavich, Ph.D., LMHC, 5050 Route 374, Merrill, NY 12955; terriannayanulavich@yahoo.com; Phone: 518-569-0612; or Father Christopher Carrara, the Episcopal Vicar for Clergy; ccarrara@rcdony.org Phone: 315-393-2920 ext. 1340.

**If you have a complaint** of suspected sexual abuse or related misconduct by the bishops, contact the Catholic Bishop Abuse Reporting Service at 800-276-1562 or www.ReportBishopAbuse.org

## Bishop's Public Schedule

**Jan. 8** — Noon — Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

**Jan. 9** — Noon — Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

**Jan. 10** — Noon — Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

**Jan. 13-17** — New York State Bishops' Retreat at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Retreat and Spirituality Center in Venice, Florida

## Protecting God's Children

**The Diocese of Ogdensburg** is able to schedule sessions of the training, Protecting God's Children for Adults. This required training addresses the methods and means by which abusers commit abuse, and steps to prevent abuse from occurring. To arrange training, call 315-393-2920 or email jgrizzuto@rcdony.org



# Pope Francis: Become 'pilgrims of hope'

By AC Wimmer  
Catholic News Agency

Pope Francis called on Catholics to become "pilgrims of hope" in a BBC podcast on Friday, emphasizing that "hope and kindness touch the very heart of the Gospel."

Speaking just days after the opening of the 2025 Jubilee Year, the pope emphasized that "kindness is not a diplomatic strategy" nor "a set of rules to ensure social harmony or to obtain other advantages" but rather "a form of love that opens hearts to acceptance and helps us all to become more humble."

"Wars, social injustices, and the many forms of violence we are exposed to every day should not dishearten us nor draw us toward skepticism and discouragement," the Holy Father said in the audio message published Dec. 27.

The pope referenced G.K. Chesterton, noting that the British writer "was also held in high esteem by the Argentine poet Jorge Luis Borges."

Francis highlighted Chesterton's autobiographical invitation to "take the

elements of life with gratitude and not for granted."

Speaking about the recently begun jubilee year, Francis concluded with "a wish for hope, which is a theological virtue, together with faith and charity," praying that "the new year bring us peace, fellowship, and gratitude."

Pilgrims from around the world have been passing through the open Holy Door of St. Peter's Basilica this week, which Pope Francis opened on Christmas Eve to begin the 2025 Jubilee.

In his Christmas Day message, Pope Francis recalled, "the door of God's heart is always open; let us return to him. Let us return to the heart that loves us and forgives us."

The Catholic Church offers the faithful opportunities to grow in faith and spiritual renewal during this time, which is also known as a holy year.

An important part of the jubilee is the opportunity to receive a plenary indulgence — a grace granted by the Catholic Church through the merits of Jesus Christ to remove the temporal punishment due to sin.

# HUD: Homelessness rose 18 percent in past year

By Jonah McKeown  
Catholic News Agency

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) on Friday released a report estimating that nearly 772,000 people were experiencing homelessness in the United States at the beginning of 2024, the highest number recorded since data collection began in 2007.

HUD's figure, produced during an annual point-in-time count conducted in January 2024, represents an increase of 118,376 people and an 18% jump from the number of homeless people counted in 2023. About half of the people counted were in sheltered loca-

tions, such as homeless shelters or domestic violence houses, while half were in unsheltered locations.

More than half of people experiencing homelessness were in one of the nation's 50 largest cities.

A major factor in the rising number of homeless people in 2024, HUD reported, was migrants and people seeking asylum. For example, New York City saw a 53% increase in homelessness between 2023 and 2024, and an estimated nine out of every 10 new homeless people are asylum seekers, the report says. Experts cited by NPR said there is reason to believe the number of homeless asy-

lum seekers has dropped since HUD made its count due to new border security measures implemented last summer.

HUD cited as a reason for growing homelessness a number of natural disasters that displaced people from their homes in 2023, including the Maui wildfires, which led to an estimated 87% increase in total homelessness in Hawaii.

In addition, rising rents and a lack of affordable housing in some communities, as well as the end of pandemic-era protections like the roughly 17-month national eviction moratorium that began in March 2020, have led to increases in unsheltered homelessness.

# CATHOLIC WORLD AT A GLANCE

## Pope offers condolences, prayers after New Orleans attack

Pope Francis offered his condolences after 15 people were killed in New Orleans when a U.S. Army veteran drove a pickup truck with an Islamic State flag into a crowd celebrating the New Year. The pope sent a condolence message to New Orleans Archbishop Gregory Aymond on Jan. 2 offering prayers for the souls of the deceased as well as the healing and consolation of the injured and bereaved. "His Holiness Pope Francis was deeply saddened to learn of the loss of life and injury caused by the attack that took place in New Orleans," said the message sent on the pope's behalf by Vatican Secretary of State Cardinal Pietro Parolin. "In assuring the entire community of his spiritual closeness, His Holiness commends the souls of those who have died to the loving mercy of Almighty God and prays for the healing and consolation of the injured and bereaved. As a pledge of peace and strength in the Lord, the Holy Father sends his blessing." The New Orleans attack is being investigated as an act of terrorism by the FBI.

## Bishop expelled from Nicaragua asks for prayers

Expelled last month by the Nicaraguan government of President Daniel Ortega and his wife, Rosario Murillo, the bishop who serves as president of the Nicaraguan Bishops' Conference thanked the Catholic Church in Guatemala for its support and called for prayers for the people of Nicaragua. Bishop Carlos Enrique Herrera Gutiérrez, OFM, of the Diocese of Jinotega made his appeal at the end of the opening Mass for the 2025 Jubilee, which was celebrated in the Archdiocese of Guatemala's cathedral. "I welcome your prayers: Pray not only for me but for the people of Nicaragua, so that one day we can be together and see each other, as brothers, and take our place again, where we were also born. Thank you and I commend myself to your prayers," Herrera said. The Ortega-Murillo dictatorship expelled Herrera from Nicaragua on Nov. 13, a few days after he had criticized the town mayor, Leónidas Centeno, an Ortega regime supporter, who interfered with a Sunday Mass by blasting loud music in front of the local cathedral.

## Judge suspends trial against McCarrick until his death

A Wisconsin judge last week ordered that a sexual assault case against disgraced former cardinal Theodore McCarrick will remain paused until the laicized clergyman dies. The criminal case against McCarrick in Wisconsin was suspended in January after a psychologist hired by the court found that the former prelate was not competent to stand trial. The misdemeanor sexual assault charges in the case relate to an incident that allegedly occurred in April 1977 near a house by Geneva Lake near Elkhorn. Court records indicate that Walworth County Circuit Court Judge David Reddy on Dec. 27 said the trial will not resume before the 94-year-old passes away. McCarrick is reportedly suffering from dementia. Reddy said the court "cannot dismiss the matter" under state law, but the court "will not set any further reviews on this matter and it will remain in suspended status until the defendant passes away," court records say.

## VIRTUAL EVENTS

## FRIENDSHIP GROUP MEETING

You are invited to our next Friendship Group Meeting, Become Your Best Self: Build a Closer Relationship with God and Others.

**Date:** Jan. 23

**Time:** 7 p.m.

**Place:** Zoom

**Features:** Imagine the best conversation you've ever had — one that set your heart on fire, challenged your thinking, brought you closer to God, and inspired you to act. Such interactions rise to the level of the sacred — sacred conversations — dialogues that transform hearts, strengthen relationships, and make the world a better place by converting compassionate love into action. Using Scripture, real-world examples, key scientific studies, and stories from his own formation, Dr. Reed provides approachable, fun-filled, well-researched advice on using sacred conversations to become your best self and build closer relationships with others and with the Lord. At this meeting, we will discuss chapters 1 - 3.

**Contact:** To sign-up for the Friendship Group, receive the meeting link and discussion questions, go to <https://mailchi.mp/sophiainstitute/friendship-groups> Questions? Contact Mary Beth Bracy at [mbracy@sophiainstitute.com](mailto:mbracy@sophiainstitute.com)

## CLINTON NORTHERN FRANKLIN

## PANCAKE BREAKFAST

Peru — St. Augustine's Knights invite you to a great breakfast.

**Date:** Jan. 12

**Time:** 8:30 a.m. to Noon

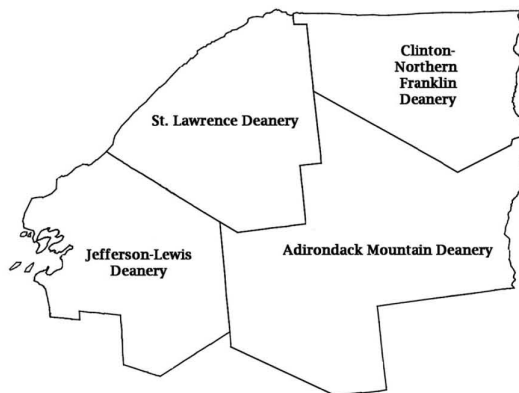
**Place:** St. Augustine's Parish Center

**Cost:** Adults, \$10; Children 5 to 11, \$5; Children under 5, Free; Take-outs, \$10

**Menu:** Pancakes, French Toast, Strawberry Sauce, Sausage, Bacon, Scrambled Eggs, Home Fries, Real Maple Syrup, Coffee, Orange Juice, and Milk.

## HOT DINNERS

Malone — St. Andre Bessette



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.

Parish to offer free community hot dinners.

**Date:** Every Wednesday

**Time:** 4 p.m. to 5

**Place:** St. Andre Outreach Center

**Features:** Food is prepared by the BOCES Culinary Arts Students. Eat in only.

## JEFFERSON-LEWIS

## SPAGHETTI &amp; MEATBALL DINNER

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

**Date:** Jan. 11, Feb. 8

**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

## VIGIL FOR LIFE

Watertown — LifeRight is hosting a Vigil Service for Life.

**Date:** Jan. 13

**Time:** 6 p.m.

**Place:** Watertown City Square

## HOLY HOUR AND DIVINE MERCY

Houseville — Exposition of the Most Blessed Sacrament and the Divine Mercy Chaplet will be observed the first Sunday of the

month.

**Date:** Feb. 4

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

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

**Contact:** 315-348-6260

## PANCAKE BREAKFAST

Carthage — Pancake Breakfast to be held in support of Augustinian Academy, sponsored by the Carthage K of C Father John Cosmic #291 and Ave Maria Circle.

**Date:** Feb. 9

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

**Place:** St. James Community Room

**Cost:** Adults, \$9; Seniors, \$7; Children under 10, \$4; Family of 4, \$27

**Menu:** Scrambled Eggs, Pancakes, French Toast, Ham, Sausage, Baked Goods, Juice, and Coffee

**Contact:** For more information call 315-493-3224

## ST. LAWRENCE

## MONTHLY BRUNCH

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

**Date:** Jan. 12 (Second Sunday of each month)

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

**Place:** Father Amyot Parish Center

**Cost:** Adults, \$10; under 12, \$5; under 5, Free; Omelets, add \$3;

Take-outs available

**Contact:** For more information contact Grand Knight Gil Gonthier 315-212-5166.

## THE RESCUE PROJECT

Massena — Join us as we experience the gospel surrounded by light food, conversation and prayer.

**Date:** Tuesdays starting Jan. 21

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

**Place:** St. Mary's Social Hall and via Zoom

**Features:** Facilitated by Fr. John Riccardo, the Rescue Project seeks to proclaim the gospel in a compelling and attractive way over 8 weeks in a small group format.

**Contact:** For more information or to register, contact the parish office or visit our website at [www.massena.catholics.com](http://www.massena.catholics.com).

## MEAL DELIVERY DRIVERS NEEDED

The St. Lawrence County Office for the Aging is seeking drivers for home delivered meals in Brasher Falls, DeKalb, Canton, Gouverneur, Morristown, Ogdensburg, Potsdam and Star Lake.

**Features:** Drivers deliver hot, nutritious meals to older adults. Many are homebound and receive a lunchtime meal Monday through Friday. A critical component of this program is the daily wellness check that is provided. Drivers receive a mileage reimbursement. Routes can be between one hour and two hours. You can volunteer for one day a week or several.

**Contact:** If you are interested please contact Danielle Durant at 315-386-4730.

## DIOCESAN EVENTS

## PRIESTHOOD DISCERNMENT

Are you a single Catholic man, of high school age or older who is hearing the Lord's call to the Priesthood? You are invited to join fellow discerners and Father Howard Venette for the following gatherings.

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

**Dates:** Jan. 25, March 22, May 3,

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

**Features:** Lunch will be provided.

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

## FOSTER GRANDPARENT

FGP is a local program that shows you how you can apply the skills and wisdom you have acquired throughout your life to make a difference in the lives of others. All you need to join is the ability to give the kind of comfort and love that sets a child on the path toward a successful future. If you're 55 or older and want to share your experience and compassion, you have what it takes to be a Foster Grandparent. You'll also receive a small bi-weekly, non-taxable stipend that cannot be held against any current benefits you may already have as well as paid mileage for your travel. Opportunities available in Franklin, Essex, Clinton, St. Lawrence and Jefferson County.

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

## STATEWIDE EVENT

## NY DISCERNMENT RETREAT

Utica — The New York State Vocation Directors are sponsoring a Discernment Retreat for young men ages 18+.

**Date:** Jan. 9 - 11

**Place:** Good News Center

**Features:** Gather with young men from across New York State who are considering the call to priesthood. The NYS Vocation Directors and Seminarians will share their stories of faith and suggest ways of discernment. There will be time for personal prayer and social gatherings.

**Contact:** If you are interested, please register by e-mailing [vocations@syrdio.org](mailto:vocations@syrdio.org).



# Priest launches 'Rosary in a Year' podcast

By Francesca Pollio Fenton  
Catholic News Agency

First came "The Bible in a Year," then "The Catechism in a Year" — now comes "The Rosary in a Year," Ascension's newest podcast that will begin on Jan. 1, 2025.

Hosted by Father Mark-Mary Ames of the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal, the podcast will consist of daily 15-minute episodes that will guide listeners through a deeper encounter with all the elements of the rosary.

Ames, who experienced a conversion at age 18, spoke about his own journey with praying the rosary and how he hopes the new podcast might help those who experience barriers while praying the rosary.

Soon after his conversion, Ames said, he began praying the rosary daily. However, "at

the beginning, to be honest, it was a little bit of a struggle," he told CNA in an interview.

"I wasn't really taught how to do it and so I had this thing I was supposed to do every day, but I [didn't] really know how to do it," he explained. "So, what ended up happening is it became ... [a bit like] having a 15-minute phone call on the phone but nobody was on the other line ... a one-sided thing. I'm saying these things but there's not really a connection to God."

Ames admitted that he stopped praying the rosary for a period of time but was able to make it a daily habit again after years of growing in his faith, especially as he entered religious life.

He pointed out that he has come across a lot of people who struggle to pray the rosary due to a "sort of lack of maybe formation in it or guidance in it"

and hopes that "through some accompaniment, some formation and understanding of like what we're supposed to be doing, what the mysteries mean, that actually it will be something that is a huge source of grace for everybody who's praying it."

"The Rosary in a Year" podcast aims to serve as that form of accompaniment and guidance by taking listeners through six phases of deepening their understanding of the rosary. These include looking at what it means to pray in general and focusing on the actual prayers of the rosary and what they mean. The longest phase will be diving deeper into the mysteries of the rosary, practicing "lectio divina" and "visio divina," reflections from the saints, and finally praying the rosary.

Ames said he hopes these phases will help to build "the

muscle of prayer."

"I think there's a reason the rosary is so popular across demographics, across centuries, [and it's] because it is really in many ways a great unmatched means of prayer," he said.

As the new year approaches and with many people making new year's resolutions, Ames said an "ongoing, consistent resolution should be 'I want to make the next best step in my prayer life or develop a prayer life,' which is really a struggle for a lot of people."

Ames said he hopes those who listen to the podcast will "grow in their life of prayer and that particularly they fall in love, maybe for the first time, maybe again, with prayer and with the Lord and with Our Lady and with the rosary because they experience the rosary as this privileged doorway in which they get to encounter the Lord."

# Netflix offers film about the Blessed Mother

By Francesca Pollio Fenton  
Catholic News Agency

A new movie from Netflix about the Blessed Virgin Mary has received mixed reviews, with some Catholics on social media criticizing the film's depiction of Mary and the kind of relationship she had with Joseph.

"There's always going to be criticisms, no matter what kind of movie you make, but if you do it all for the right reasons, which we did, then to me that takes care of itself," the film's director, D.J. Caruso, a Catholic, told CNA in an interview.

According to Caruso, every decision made was done to "make the best possible movie" and "to pay great reverence to this amazing woman and her life."

Netflix's "Mary" was released on the digital streaming platform Dec. 6. It is considered a coming-of-age biblical

epic and portrays Mary's experience after her miraculous conception of Jesus and her journey on the run from King Herod.

Remaining true to the Scriptures was at the "foundation" of creating the film, Caruso said. The script went through 74 drafts and received input from Catholic, Jewish, and Muslim religious leaders, including the late Auxiliary Bishop David G. O'Connell of Los Angeles, who served as Caruso's spiritual adviser.

One memory the Catholic director holds close to his heart is a conversation he had with O'Connell about the script and the bishop told him: "Please, give Joseph a voice ... Joseph was a hero and we never see Joseph as a hero."

"So, I promised him that I would make Joseph that," Caruso shared.

Another aspect Caruso wanted to focus on was the humanity of Mary,

which also played a role in inspiring the creation of the film.

"I always felt, particularly by the younger audience or the younger faith-based group, that there's a great appreciation for the Holy Mother and everything she is — this great, iconic, beautiful woman," he said. "But what was it like when she was a young woman and this was all happening? To use her as our anchor and to see this all happening through her eyes and the humanity she had ... It just to me felt like it was the most compelling way to tell the story."

As a father to a young

daughter, Caruso thought: "Wouldn't it be great if a 17-year-old saw this movie and went like, 'Mary is cool. Not only do I love her but she's so cool.'"

Caruso believes portraying the human side to divine figures as well as holy figures, such as the Blessed Mother, "makes them endearing, it makes

them relatable."

"There's a great reverence paid to them, but at the same time, in that reverence, you never got to see the struggles or what was it like and in order for me to do this what's it going to cost? It takes great courage and great sacrifice to do something amazing the way Mary did," he explained.



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## SUNDAY'S SCRIPTURE

## 'How do we nourish our baptism?'

Imagine this hypothetical situation. You suddenly find out that you are not baptized even though you always thought that you were. Would that make a difference to you? What would you do? Would you panic? Would you reflect and say something like: "Well, I've done quite nicely so far without being baptized. What difference does it make?" But, then, that nagging question remains: isn't baptism like a "boarding pass" for heaven? We need it to get in and get a good seat?

Well, today, we celebrate the baptism of Jesus in the Jordan by John the Baptist. Surely, Jesus and John did not understand baptism to be a boarding pass

to heaven. Rather, they knew, as we do, that baptism is the time for us to believe in God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as He has revealed Himself and to change our direction in life so that it conforms to what God expects of us.

Here's an imperfect analogy about baptism. Some people like the small sliver of soap left from a large bar into a new bar so that the small sliver becomes perfectly enmeshed or grafted into the larger piece. It's funny how little things can give us pleasure.

Well, in baptism we are like the little sliver of soap that tries to be grafted to the larger piece, in this case Jesus himself. In Baptism,



Msgr. Robert H. Aucoin

January 12

The Baptism of the Lord

READINGS

Isaiah 42:1-4, 6-7

Acts 10:34-38

Luke 3:15-16, 21-22

we want to become one with Christ, one with his body, the Church.

In this event, we have a visible demonstration of Jesus as both God and man. God the Father speaks from heaven, and Jesus lowers himself in his human condition to be baptized by John.

So, too, without baptism, we retain original sin, the sin passed on to us from our first parents. Baptism removes that original sin and takes us from the water to the embrace of God our Father. Baptism is the moment when, like the small bar of soap, we become grafted to Jesus. We become part of his life, and he shares his life with us.

We think of baptism as a baby sacrament. We baptize infants because parents want for their children what is best for them, a relationship with Jesus.

However, that bonding

with Jesus needs nourishment. Baptism is a once in a lifetime event that needs constant attention. How do we nourish our baptism? It starts with the basics. Weekly participation in the Eucharist is necessary. Sunday worship is the hallmark of the Catholic's life. Nothing can be more important for a Catholic than regular Sunday Mass. Missing Sunday Mass is stating that something else is more important than God in one's life.

Prayer is another essential element of nourishing our faith. Without regular conversations with God in prayer, our faith life will be weak. Also, living God's law is a visible demonstration of our commitment to our relationship with God.

When a couple presents a child for baptism, the child will be baptized in the faith of the parents since the child cannot express for himself his faith and the desire to avoid evil. If the parents have not been practicing their faith, the priest or deacon may challenge them about their level of commitment in raising the

child as a Catholic. After all, family is the place where children learn their faith.

So, our celebration focuses on a historical event that displays the humanity and divinity of Jesus. Likewise, we have an opportunity for us to review how we, as humans, are doing in our grafting with the Lord. Are we becoming one with Him, letting him lead or are we going our own way without him? Tough questions that require a personal response.

We believe that all human beings are made in the image and likeness of God. That image and likeness confers a human dignity on all persons. Baptism augments that dignity by making us brothers and sisters with Jesus in his Church.

This little prayer may help us understand how important it is for us to be one with Christ:

Arms of Jesus, lift us up when we fall. Voice of Jesus, call us back when we stray. Blood of Jesus, wash us clean when we become soiled. Body of Jesus, feed us when we grow hungry. Heart of Jesus, help us love one another as you love us.

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

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

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

# Honoring martyrs

On the Feast of St. Stephen Pope Francis reflected on the life of the first martyr and the countless men and women today who share in his witness by giving their lives for the Gospel.

The Pope emphasized that Stephen's death was not a defeat but a profound act of faith and love, mirroring Christ's own sacrifice. As told in the Acts of the Apostles, St. Stephen was stoned to death after being accused of blasphemy by Jewish leaders shortly after Christ's ascension into heaven.

"Sadly, even today, many men and women are persecuted – sometimes to the point of death – because of the Gospel," Pope Francis said. "They are not killed out of weakness or to defend an ideology but to share the gift of salvation with everyone. And they do so, first and foremost, for the good of their persecutors... they even pray for them."

The Pope invited the faithful to reflect on their own lives: "Do I feel the desire for everyone to know God and be saved? Do I know how to wish good even for those who make me suffer? Do I care about the many brothers and sisters persecuted because of their faith, and do I pray for them?"

Pope Francis referenced Blessed Christian de Chergé, a Trappist monk martyred in Algeria in 1996. Christian and six of his monastic brothers were kidnapped and killed by extremists during Algeria's civil war.

Brother Christian and the other monks were beatified in 2018. Pope Francis called him a "martyr of our time," recalling that in his spiritual testament, "foreseeing his imminent death, he called his future murderer a 'last minute friend' and expressed this wish to him: 'May we, blessed thieves, find each other again in Paradise, if it pleases God, our Father.'"

"Understand?" the Pope said on Thursday. "Thinking of who would kill him, he called him 'friend' and 'brother' and wished to have him with him in Heaven. This is what God's love is like, the love that saves the world! How we need this love. Let us ask ourselves, then: Do I feel the desire for all to know God and to be saved? Do I also want the good of those who make me suffer? Do I take an interest in and pray for the many brothers and sisters who are persecuted for their faith?"

Christian's words echo St. Stephen's prayer for his persecutors: "Lord, do not hold this sin against them" (Acts 7:60).

The Pontifical Mission Societies, which support the Church's missionary work in over 1,150 territories, join Pope Francis in urging the faithful to pray for persecuted Christians and support missionary efforts. The Pope's call reminds us that the witness of martyrs is not confined to history; it is a living reality that invites all to deepen their faith.

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

## OBITUARIES

**Alexandria Bay** – Petr Podhrazsky, 67; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 27, 2024 at St. Cyril's Church; burial in Grove Cemetery, LaFargeville.

**AuSable Forks** – Walter G. Fournier Sr., 78; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 2, 2025 at Holy Name Church; burial St. Matthew's Cemetery.

**Cadyville** – Dorothy A. Crouse, 86; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 30, 2024 at St. James Church; burial in White Creek Cemetery, Eagle Bridge.

**Canton** – Anthony Collora, 74; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 4, 2025 at St. Mary's Church; burial in St. Henry's Cemetery, De Kalb.

**Carthage** – Jasmine J. Solomon, 101; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 28, 2024 at St. James Church; burial in St. James Cemetery.

**Champlain** – Henry Clarence Gooley, 89; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 3, 2025 at St. Mary's Church; burial in St. Mary's Cemetery.

**Constableville** – Richard W. Hayes, 65; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 31, 2024 at St. Mary's Church.

**Croghan** – Kathleen M. Grondin, 82; Private Services to be held.

**Deferiet** – Dennis T. Turpin Sr., 76; Private Services to be held.

**Hogansburg** – William Francis, 91; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 3, 2025 at St. Regis Mission; burial in St. Lawrence Cemetery.

**Gabriels** – Clayton "Ted" Fountain, 81; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 23, 2024 at Church of the Assumption.

**Lowville** – Virginia Mae Swanson Sunderhaft, 104; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 4, 2025 at St. Peter's Church; Burial in Lowville Rural Cemetery.

**Malone** – Marilyn Teresa Gareau Tatro, 89; Services to be held in the

Spring.

**Malone** – Geradine Rose (LaRock) Marlowe, 87; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 6, 2025 at Notre Dame Church; burial in Notre Dame Cemetery.

**Massena** – Real C. "Frenchie" Coupal, 84; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 28, 2024 at St. Mary's Church.

**Massena** – Loretta A. Bronchetti Perez, 73; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 21, 2024 at Church of the Sacred Heart; burial in Calvary Cemetery.

**Morrisonville** – Marjorie A. (Morgan) Wood, 87; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 6, 2025 at St. Alexander's Church; burial in parish cemetery.

**Ogdensburg** – Georgianna (DiNapoli) Burns, 80; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 31, 2024 at St. Mary's Cathedral; burial in Oswegatchie Mausoleum.

**Peru** – Gladys Veronica (Fountain) Benware, 93; Funeral Services Jan. 5, 2025 at Hamilton Funeral Home Chapel; burial in St. Augustine's Cemetery.

**Peru** – Shawn Everett Ezero, 32; Funeral Services Dec. 27, 2024 at Hamilton Funeral Home; burial in St. Augustine's Cemetery.

**Plattsburgh** – James L. Corron, 86; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 4, 2025 at St. Peter's Church; burial in Plattsburgh Community Mausoleum.

**Plattsburgh** – Mary (Strack) Kuta, 98; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 26, 2024 at St. John's Church; burial in Most Holy Redeemer Cemetery, Niskayuna.

**Plattsburgh** – Nancy J. (Wilson) Pelkey, 78; Mass of Christian Burial April 10, 2025 at St. Peter's Church; burial in St. Patrick's Cemetery, Rouses Point.

**Plattsburgh** – Sally Tourville, 92;

Mass of Christian Burial at a later date.

**Port Leyden** – Karen J. (Millick) Gaylord, 75; Funeral Services Jan. 4, 2025 at Trainor Funeral Home, Inc., Boonville; burial in Calvary Cemetery.

**Potsdam** – Nathan David Snell, 78; Mass of Christian Burial July 12, 2025 at St. Mary's Church, Potsdam burial in Chapel Hill Cemetery, Parishville.

**Redwood** – Juliette "Judy" (Amyot) Ferguson, 105; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 3, 2025 at St. Francis Xavier Church; burial in St. Francis Xavier Cemetery.

**Sackets Harbor** – Timothy J. Spencer, 72; Services to be held at a later date.

**Ticonderoga** – Ralph Joseph Corbo, 90; Funeral Services Dec. 28, 2024 at Wilcox & Regan Funeral Home; burial in St. Mary's Cemetery.

**Ticonderoga** – Mary "Ma" (Fuller) Huestis, 86; Memorial Mass Jan. 10, 2025 at St. Mary's Church; burial in Valley View Cemetery.

**Tupper Lake** – Cecile Marie Patry, 93; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 3, 2025 at St. Alphonsus Church.

**Tupper Lake** – Sally Jean (Russell) Poirier, 90; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 6, 2025 at St. Alphonsus Church.

**Tupper Lake** – David S. Premo, 91; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 3, 2025 at St. Alphonsus Church; burial in Holy Name Cemetery.

**Watertown** – Elenor Love Ebbinghausen, 82; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 3, 2025 at St. Patrick's Church; burial in Glenwood Mausoleum.

**Watertown** – Luke B. Mallan Jr., 96; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 4, 2025 at Holy Family Church; burial in Glenwood Cemetery.





Photos by Darcy Fargo  
(Left) Servers Tyler Fitzgerald, a seminarian, and Landon Downs of Morristown lead as the diocesan cross for the 2025 Holy Year is carried into St. Mary's Cathedral by seminarians Michael Lennox and Kevin McCullough. Prior to the opening Mass, the cross trekked from its normal home at St. Francis of Assisi Church in Constable to St. Peter's Church in Plattsburgh, St. Alphonsus Church in Tupper Lake and Holy Family Church in Wadsworth. The cross will remain in the cathedral throughout the Jubilee. (Top right) Deacon Mark LaLonde proclaims the Gospel at the Mass opening the Holy Year in our diocese. (Bottom right) Idona Germano served as lector for the Mass, celebrated Dec. 29.



## Hints of hope

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councils of our Knights of Columbus have been on a journey with our Jubilee Cross. This one doesn't bend, but it has traveled here from several parishes, reminding us of its profound importance in each of our lives and of our need to embrace it.

In the Bull of Indiction of the Jubilee of the Year 2025 entitled, *Hope Does Not Disappoint*, the Holy Father writes, "For everyone, may the Jubilee be a moment of genuine, personal encounter with the Lord Jesus, the 'door' of our salvation, whom the Church is charged to proclaim always, everywhere and to all as 'our hope' (1 Tim 1:1). The celebrated Opening of the Holy Doors of our Cathedral Church calls to mind the opening of the door to heaven. We believe it's a narrow gate, but one that widens when Jesus accompanies us and we follow His teaching.

This Jubilee Year of Hope provides you and me with many opportunities to strengthen our relationships with Jesus Christ and capture the hope that such closeness promises.

We are setting out with a new determination to embrace the graces that will flow. Journeying through life with one another we will grow ever closer to Jesus who is the Way, the Truth and the Life.

I was so encouraged when I started reflecting on the number of hints of hope here in the Church of the North Country. I was reading recent Advent issues of our North Country Catholic and found so many indications of vibrancy of faith in our Diocese, signs of real hope. For instance, the section on parish life, entitled "Around the Diocese" included notices of events involving: Book Clubs, Adoration of the

Blessed Sacrament, Parish Dinners, Devotion & Holy Hours, Sacred Songs Christmas Concert, parish Advent Retreats, Organ Recitals, Rosary with Devotions, Holy Hour & Divine Mercy Chaplet, Divine Renovation, Foster Grandparent programs, Men's Prayer Groups, Gabriel Projects and Project Rachel, Priesthood Discernment Gatherings, First Saturday Rosary Devotion, Rosary For Life, Knights of Columbus Monthly Brunch, Holy Hour for Vocations, Benefit Spaghetti meal & Silent Auction by a local K of C Council, Parish Anniversary celebrations, and Christmas seminarian and parents gatherings. So many faith-filled groups including: the lay associates of the Sisters of St. Joseph, the Living Flame of Love group, "Alpha" and "Renovation" groups, the Catholic Daughters of the Americas, local Knights of Co-

lumbus councils, Legion of Mary, Parish Altar & Rosary Societies, our Catholic Schools, Commissioned Lay Ministers, and Cursillo, to mention just a few. We are blessed with such faith-filled Consecrated Religious, Deacons, Consecrated Virgins, brother Priests, among many others. We don't need to look very far to see hints of faith in action which clearly speak of the reason for hope today.

As we launch the Year of Hope in this Diocese of Ogdensburg, I encourage us all to look for hints of hope around us. Particularly during those times of discouragement, loneliness, fear or confusion, look for hints of hope that will boost your response to the call to holiness. This Jubilee Year you will find special events and occasions to heighten our awareness of the signs of hope in our midst. Please partic-

ipate in these opportunities for special graces. The more we recognize and embrace such signs of hope, the more we can become signs of hope for others, enroute to the Father's House. As Pope Francis wrote, "This hope, which transcends life's fleeting pleasures and the achievement of our immediate goals, makes us rise above our trials and difficulties, and inspires us to keep pressing forward, never losing sight of the grandeur of the heavenly goal to which we have been called." With the Psalmist, "I am sure I shall see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Hope in Him, hold firm and take heart. Hope in the Lord." (Psalm 27:13-14). My sisters and brothers, we are Christ-led and Christ-fed, so we are Hope-filled and so through the journey May God be praised...forever may God be praised!