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The Diocese of Ogdensburg Volume 80 Number 29

NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

NOVEMBER 19, 2025

Bishops issue statement on immigration

On Nov. 13, the Catholic bishops of New York State issued a joint statement on immigration signed by Timothy Michael Cardinal Dolan, Archbishop of New York, Most Reverend Edward B. Scharfberger, Apostolic Administrator of Albany, Most Reverend Robert J. Brennan, Bishop of Brooklyn, Most Reverend Michael W. Fisher, Bishop of Buffalo, Most Reverend Terry R. LaValley, Bishop of Ogdensburg, Most Reverend Salvatore R. Matano, Bishop of Rochester, Most Reverend John O. Barres, Bishop of Rockville Centre, and Most Reverend Douglas J. Lucia, Bishop of Syracuse

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KNIGHTS IN ACTION



Grand Knight Tom Wojcikowski of Knights of Columbus Council 291 in Carthage presents Father Todd Thibault with a check for the St. James Food Pantry with food pantry treasurer Becky Heagle. Funds were raised by ticket sales and donations from the council's annual Charitable and Benevolent program.

JOURNEY OF FAITH, MUSIC



Musician Khristina Hefferman has grown in her faith because God gifted her with musical talent and outstanding mentors.

FULL STORY, PAGE 4

Pope: Fraternity is one of 'great challenges'

By Victoria Cardiel
Catholic News Agency

Pope Leo XIV reflected Wednesday on the world's need for fraternity — a gift from Christ that frees us from selfishness and division.

Fraternity "is without doubt one of the great challenges for contemporary humanity, as Pope Francis saw clearly," the pope said during his general audience in St. Peter's Square on Nov. 12.

"The fraternity given by Christ, who died and rose again, frees us from the negative logic of selfishness, division, and arrogance," he added.

Continuing his meditations on

Christ's death and resurrection, Leo said "to believe in the death and resurrection of Christ and to live paschal spirituality imbues life with hope and encourages us to invest in goodness."

He observed that fraternity "cannot be taken for granted, it is not immediate. Many conflicts, many wars all over the world, social tensions and feelings of hatred would seem to prove the opposite."

Fraternity "is not a beautiful but impossible dream; it is not the desire of a deluded few," he emphasized, inviting the faithful "to go to the source, and above all to draw light and strength from him who alone frees us from the poison of en-

mity."

The pope reflected that "fraternity stems from something deeply human. We are capable of relationship and, if we want, we are able to build authentic bonds between us. Without relationships, which support and enrich us from the very beginning of our life, we would not be able to survive, grow, or learn. They are manifold, varied in form and depth. But it is certain that our humanity is best fulfilled when we exist and live together, when we succeed in experiencing authentic, not formal, bonds with the people around us."

He warned that "if we turn in on ourselves, we risk falling ill with loneliness, and even a nar-

cissism that is concerned with others only out of self-interest. The other is then reduced to someone from whom we can take, without ever being truly willing to give, to offer ourselves."

Recalling that "disagreement, division, and sometimes hatred can devastate even relationships between relatives, not only between strangers," the pope cited St. Francis of Assisi's greeting of "omnes fratres," ("all brothers") — "the inclusive way in which the saint placed all human beings on the same level, precisely because he recognized them in their common destiny of dignity, dialogue, welcome, and salvation."

NORTH
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What's the resolution?

I don't make New Year's resolutions.

I'm generally not the kind of person who can set some arbitrary date for change and actually make the change. I need to feel inspired - called, even - to a change if it's going to have even the slightest chance at being long-term or permanent.

I also strongly dislike winter, and I generally have zero desire to make it any harder than it already is.

I understand the impulse, though. A new

year feels like a new start - a fresh beginning. That seems like a great time to begin a new challenge or try to work on a "new you."



Darcy L. Fargo

So why am I thinking about New Year's resolutions when it's not even Thanksgiving?

The new liturgical year starts on the first Sunday of Advent. This year, that falls on Nov. 30. It's less than two weeks away.

As I was considering that fact and marveling at how fast this year went

by, it struck me: while lots of people celebrate a new year by choosing to impose some drastic change - a new exercise routine, a new diet, a new habit of going to bed early or taking an hour of silence each day - on themselves, our Church starts its new year with a season focused on waiting.

While I'm fairly sure there are patient people in this world, I'm also sure I'm not one of them. Frankly, I don't know anyone who enjoys standing in a long line at the grocery store or sitting for a long time in a medical office waiting room.

But waiting is part of life, and it's most certainly part of faith. God works according to His plan and on His timing. He does not work according to my plan or timeline (oh, how I wish He would).

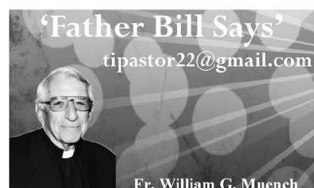
While the world celebrates a new year with people trying to work on what they think they need, God and His Church start their new year having us work on what they know we need - to wait for our savior and to let Him do the work of saving us.

That's the best resolution of them all.

'Intensely grateful to God'

I thought I would again mention a few things about being a grateful person this week. The month of November is all about gratitude. Just today I received an invitation to join a family - friends of mine - for Thanksgiving Dinner. So today I again thanked God for all my friends. I have many and I constantly know how blessed I am. As a pastor over the years, I remember the many wonderful parishioners and the many wonderful families I prayed with and were part of their lives, and they were all my friends. I continue to be truly grateful to God for them all.

The importance of gratitude is the subject of the Gospel reading at one of the morning Masses this week. This reading is the story of Jesus' healing of 10 lepers. This Gospel reading is often used at the Mass on Thanksgiving Day. In this story, Jesus is traveling to Jerusalem.



We know now that this will be the last time Jesus travels to Jerusalem. The Gospel tells us that on the way to Jerusalem Jesus enters a village. There 10 lepers approach him, crying out "Jesus, Master! Have pity on us."

As the story goes on - we are told that Jesus immediately sends the 10 to the priests. It was the responsibility of the priests to decide whether lepers could return to their community after they were healed. As the 10 lepers go, they then realize that they were healed. One of them stops and immediately returns to Jesus. This man expresses his gratitude and gives praise to God. Jesus is deeply impressed and says, "Ten were cleansed,

were they not? Where are the other nine? Has none but this foreigner returned to give thanks to God?" Jesus knows that this man is a Samaritan. Jesus is impressed by his gratitude - even though he is Samaritan. This story should challenge us; you and I must learn to be grateful constantly for all that God has done for us as followers of the Lord.

Each time I read this Gospel story, I take time to pray that I have remembered to turn often in gratitude to God each time something special has happened for me - each gifts from the Lord. Someone taught me ages ago that in faith I should be aware that each day for everyone of us they are all miracles. God transforms us all in so many ways - little ways, yet important ways, ways that give meaning to our lives - yes, truly miracles. So, today, I again want to take this very opportunity to again offer my prayers

of gratitude to our God for these many miracles - God has touched me.

One more thing today, yet probably the most important blessing of the Lord for which I am grateful: Our faith teaches us that God is constantly ready to forgive us our sins. How often I read in the Gospels that Jesus was constantly spending time with sinners; the Pharisees were always upset that Jesus associated with sinners, that Jesus ate with sinners. Personally, I know that I am a sinner, and I long to realize that Jesus is constantly reaching out to me in forgiveness, especially through the Church. I pray often that I will never forget that God forgives, that God comes to me in love and peace to show me the way, that I must take time in prayer and repentance and that I may change my life again and again. I am intensely grateful to God, who has never given up on me.

Strong response to 'Called by Name'

By Darcy Fargo
Editor

The response to the diocesan "Called by Name" initiative has exceeded expectations, and it's not done yet!

"We were hoping to get 75 to 100 names," said Deacon Garry Stevens, diocesan Vocations coordinator. "We garnered 150 names from across the diocese, and some parishes have not yet reported back. They're still filtering in. It exceeded what we hoped for."

The initiative, like those conducted in other New York dioceses, asked parishioners to submit the names of individuals they think have characteristics that would make them a good priest, deacon or consecrated religious.

"Some people received multiple nominations – one guy might be nominated four or five times, for example," said Deacon Stevens. "But we had 150 individuals named."

Individuals who were nominated each received a letter from his or her pastor congratulating them on being nominated and a letter from diocesan Vocations Director Father Christopher C. Carrara inviting them to one of three discernment events.

The first event was held Nov. 16 in Lowville. The second will be Nov. 23 in Morrisonville, and the third will be Nov. 30 in Norfolk.

"Bishop (Terry R.) LaValley also sent letters to the seniors who attended Camp Guggenheim last year and the youth who attended the Leadership Weekend inviting them to the discernment events," said Deacon Stevens. The

first two events – the one in Lowville and the one in Morrisonville – will be for men who were nominated as individuals who would make good priests and good deacons. The third event will also include women nominated for consecrated religious life."

Deacon Stevens said most of the nominations received nominated men.

"They were pretty well divided between the priesthood and the diaconate," he said. "There was a smaller percentage for consecrated life," he said.

High school aged individuals invited to attend the discernment event can attend with parents, while those nominated as potential deacons can attend with their wives.

All the discernment events will include adoration, discussion about discernment, remarks from Bishop LaValley and breakout sessions specific to the individual vocations.

"We have a good roster of clergy attending each event," Deacon Stevens said. "We have parents of seminarians attending and wives of deacons, and they'll share their stories, as well."

Deacon Stevens said he anticipates future discernment events will be planned if it's determined there's need based on additional nominations or the discussions at the currently planned events.

He also noted that there will be an additional discernment opportunity for men of high school and college ages from around the state at the New York State Discernment Retreat from Jan. 8 to Jan. 10 at the

Good News Center in Utica.

A weekend of reflection for those discerning is also planned for March 6-7 at Wadhams Hall for high-school-aged men.

"We're working on that event with (Diocesan Director of Youth Ministry) Patrick Looby," said Deacon Stevens. "He's helping us put together the program."

Deacon Stevens noted that all the programs have been conducted with support from other diocesan offices.

"(Information Technology) has been super in helping with the logistics and registrations and spreadsheets," he said. "And we had good participation from our parishes. A lot of good questions were asked about what we were trying to achieve and how to best participate, and the parishes have been very good in their follow-up."

CALLED BY NAME

*Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;
I have called you by name: you are mine.
- Isaiah 43:1*

**NOMINATE SOMEONE WHO MAY BE
CALLED TO SERVE GOD
AS A PRIEST, DEACON
OR CONSECRATED RELIGIOUS**



NOMINATION CARDS WILL BE AVAILABLE IN OUR CHURCH OCTOBER 11 & 12 AND OCTOBER 18 & 19 AND CAN BE FOUND ONLINE USING THE QR CODE
NOMINATED INDIVIDUALS WILL BE INVITED TO A SPECIAL DISCERNMENT EVENT IN NOVEMBER



An initiative of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Ogdensburg

What is a Foster Grandparent?

Foster Grandparents are role models, mentors, and friends to children with exceptional needs. The program provides a way for volunteers age 55 and over to stay active by serving children and youth in their communities. They are placed in a classroom setting with a child or children who are in need of emotional support, development of basic learning skills, friendship, companionship, encouragement, individual attention, and unhurried help. The program currently has 40 volunteers and serves more than 100 kids per year.

The Foster Grandparent Program is hosted by the Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Ogdensburg and supported by AmeriCorps Seniors, a federally funded agency responsible for building volunteer based programs for over 50 years and counting.



Sometimes when you get to be my age, you wake up and say what good am I and along came the Foster Grandparent Program that keeps me going! "

Roy Foote
age 83
Foster
Grandparent



Am I Qualified to be a Foster Grandparent?

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. Additionally, you receive paid holidays, vacations, sick and personal leave.



Want more info about how to get started?

Contact Melissa Howard,
Volunteer Coordinator

PHONE:

(518)359-7688

EMAIL:

mhoward@cathcharities.org

80 Park Street, Suite 2
PO Box 701
Tupper Lake, NY 12986

Local musician shares journey of faith

By Mary Beth Bracy,
consecrated virgin
Contributing Writer

Khristina Heffernan has blessed the North Country with her musical talents for years.

"When I was a kid, I grew up at the (Plattsburgh) airbase," Heffernan reflected. "People knew I played the piano, and I started playing the flute."

Heffernan was quickly enlisted to perform and continues to play at various churches. She often cantors at Masses and has even taught herself how to play the organ.

"When I play, I feel God's presence," she said. "When I heard a choir once, it was an electrifying experience. I feel like God is over my shoulder. I have sometimes heard the whole church erupt!"

Heffernan said George Shnob, who was the choir director and organist at St. Peter's in Plattsburgh for years, inspired her to play music, and she grew in her abilities from working with him. Heffernan and Shnob used to play duets on the piano and organ. He would play the organ and she the piano alternately; he would know which key she would switch to.

Lita Kelly Paczak has also been influential in Heffernan's life and was her confirmation spon-

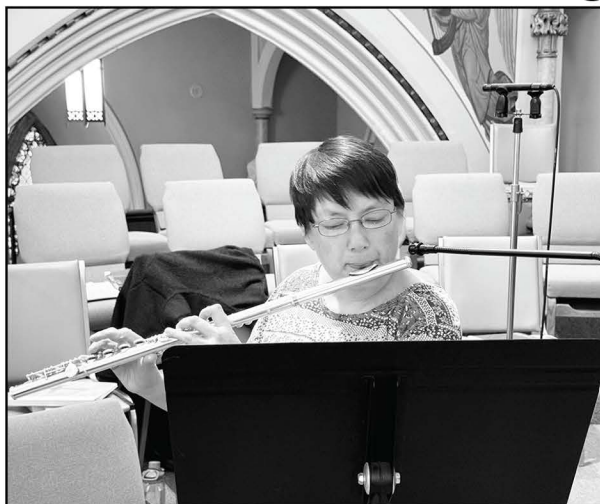


PHOTO BY PEGGY DECELLE

Musician Khristina Heffernan, who plays and cantors at Masses in the Plattsburgh area, practices flute.

sor. When Heffernan was confirmed at the airbase chapel, she played "Ave Maria" on the piano and Paczak sang.

"That's when faith became more alive and personal for me," shared Heffernan.

"When I began to teach music in 1989 at St. John's Academy, Khristina Heffernan was one of my eighth-grade students," said Paczak. "St. John's Academy only had Pre-K to the eighth grade. When I taught them songs to enjoy, hymns for our Masses and what they needed to learn for Christmas and spring concerts, Khristina came to be with me at the end of many days. She and I talked about good ways to sing songs and perform fine. She

did what I taught her, and could let me know that she was learning how to play a piano."

The teacher said her student eventually started assisting with performances.

"Getting very talented, it was my pleasure to see and hear her playing excellently," continued Paczak. "I played my guitar and was able to have piano performers play along with me at our concerts. Eventually, Khristina went to high school, and I let her know that I couldn't have a former pianist help me at our St. John's Academy's Christmas concert, and she and I both chose for her to do it. What she did was so very good, and I still enjoy remembering that she helped us every time we needed her."

Paczak became a close friend and mentor to Heffernan. Along her faith journey, Heffernan suffered from a serious health ailment, and a priest gave her the anointing of the sick.

"God saved my life," Heffernan recalled.

While it was music

that brought Heffernan and Paczak together, their friendship extended outside of it.

"Lita stuck by me through a lot of bad times and good," Heffernan said. "One bad time is she went with me and my mother to Boston Children's hospital on October 19, 2020. I was born with a heart defect and was due for surgery. It meant a lot that she went. The support meant a lot to me and my family. Not only has she surprised and supported me through my health, she supported me throughout my own music career by coming to concerts mostly . . . She has helped me so much."

"Being in touch with each other even since then, I still have enjoyed finding many excellent copies of music that she collected for me and gave them to me to understand what she was performing," added Paczak. "Khristina also, very kindly, has given me videos of Masses that she was doing as she worked many years at Churches. I went to precious Masses that she was doing, being able to love the hymns that taught us all what served Our Lord Jesus Christ's Words. Her sharing what our Loving God has taught her helps all of us, too."

Heffernan likes to help out in churches wherever she can play, and has played in several around the North Country before.

"I am grateful to be home," said Heffernan, who is currently helping with the music ministry at St. Peter's, mostly playing the flute. When needed, she also fills in playing piano at the 5:15

p.m. Mass at St. John's.

Recently, Heffernan played the organ during the Holy Hour of Eucharistic Adoration with Solemn Exposition at the Eastern Region Commissioned Lay Ministry Year of Hope Pilgrimage at St. Peter's in Plattsburgh. Also, she played the flute at the Marriage Jubilee Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral in Ogdensburg. And, she performed at the "The Look, Feel & Sound of Hope" art and music celebration at St. Bernard's in Saranac Lake, both singing and playing the flute.

Heffernan has previously recorded music, and "Holy is His Name" is Heffernan's favorite hymn. Presently, she performs in a symphonic band at SUNY Plattsburgh and sings in Champlain Valley Voices.

Additionally, Heffernan comes from a close-knit family. She has a brother who has a young daughter, and a sister with four children. She tries to help out with her nieces and nephew whenever she can.

Some fun facts about Heffernan: Her patron saint is St. Jude. She also enjoys reading and photography. Her favorite musicians include the Piano Guys, Celine Dion, and John Michael Talbot.

For those who are interested in music, Heffernan's advice is: "Go for it! Have a back-up plan but go for it. Talk to a music teacher or someone who plays."

As far as future plans, Heffernan related, "I would like to continue to play the flute at St. Peter's. I know I will go along with whatever God plans and throws at me."

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For you too were once aliens

The following is a statement from the Catholic Bishops of New York State. It was issued Nov. 13 and was signed by Timothy Michael Cardinal Dolan, Archbishop of New York. Most Reverend Edward B. Scharfenberger, Apostolic Administrator of Albany, Most Reverend Robert J. Brennan, Bishop of Brooklyn, Most Reverend Michael W. Fisher, Bishop of Buffalo, Most Reverend Terry R. LaValley, Bishop of Ogdensburg, Most Reverend Salvatore R. Matano, Bishop of Rochester, Most Reverend John O. Barres, Bishop of Rockville Centre, and Most Reverend Douglas J. Lucia, Bishop of Syracuse

In September, a striking mural depicting immigrants of the past and present was dedicated at Saint Patrick's Cathedral in Manhattan. Among the multitude of those immigrants now gracing the narthex walls of our venerable metropolitan cathedral – nameless men and women who came to this land often “tired... [and] yearning to be free” – stands a young Saint Frances Xavier Cabrini.

Mother Cabrini, a woman consecrated to the Lord, was an indefatigable advocate, protector, and educator of newly arrived immigrants to New York. A native of Italy, she overcame anti-Italian prejudice in her adopted country of America and established, with God's grace, numerous charitable institutions and schools to serve those finding their way in a new land.

Mother Cabrini reminds us of the Church's long-standing care and concern for immigrants, as the mural itself, stunning in its scope, illustrates

an indisputable fact: New York was and is a land of immigrants whose contributions have enriched and transformed, indeed built, our society.

Contemplating this magnificent mural at a moment when our nation considers again the plight of the immigrant, we recall that Christian charity, as lived so powerfully by Mother Cabrini, demands we welcome the stranger and treat every individual with respect and dignity.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church makes this clear.

“The more prosperous nations are obliged, to the extent they are able, to welcome the foreigner in search of the security and the means of livelihood which he cannot find in his country of origin. Public authorities should see to it that the natural right is respected that places a guest under the protection of those who receive him.”

“Political authorities, for the sake of the common good for which they are responsible, may make the exercise of the right to immigrate subject to various juridical conditions, especially with regard to the immigrants' duties toward their country of adoption. Immigrants are obliged to respect with gratitude the material and spiritual heritage of the country that receives them, to obey its laws and to assist in carrying civic burdens.” (n. 2241)

Pope Leo XIV, like his predecessors, has already taught this truth and shown particular solicitude towards migrant refugees—those who leave their homes not simply to seek a better life abroad, but who are forced to take flight because of violence and oppression in their own



Sign the pledge today by scanning the QR code or visiting this link: www.usccb.org/cabrinipledge. Saint Frances Xavier Cabrini is the patron saint of all migrants. We seek her intercession for the concerns we have mentioned. By joining us in signing the Pledge, you commit your prayers and energy for the welcome, protection, promotion, and integration of migrants.

nations. In his first apostolic exhortation, *Dilexisti*, proclaimed on October 4, 2025, the Memorial of Saint Francis of Assisi, he wrote:

“The Church, like a mother, accompanies those who are walking. Where the world sees threats, she sees children; where walls are built, she builds bridges. She knows that her proclamation of the Gospel is credible only when it is translated into gestures of closeness and welcome. And she knows that in every rejected migrant, it is Christ himself who knocks at the door of the community.” (Section 75)

In recent years, many such refugee migrants have come to New York. Some have arrived from war-torn countries like Ukraine and Afghanistan; others from Central or South America have fled poverty, authoritarian governments, and drug cartels that made life in their country of origin dangerous for themselves and their families. Some have been granted refugee or tem-

porary protected status, while others have no legal status. Most of these migrants – the majority, our neighbors – are good people who arrived on our shores seeking a better life.

Sadly, as in any group, some have exploited the system and committed serious crimes and other misdeeds. Those immigrants or refugees who commit crimes should face the appropriate criminal and civil penalties, including deportation. At the same time, general enforcement of the immigration laws must be carried out in a humane manner that does not target the hard-working and law-abiding; that does not permit the wanton and unnecessary separation of families; and that does not rely on campaigns of fear that cripple whole communities.

As such, we do not support the sweeping revocation of the temporary protected status that was granted to many migrants who arrived in this country to escape the horrors occurring in their own, and who have justifiably relied upon the legal protections our government offered to them. Such persons should not be subject to the arbitrary cancellation of their legal status and threatened with a sudden return to the troubled and dangerous nations from which they fled. At the same time, while we support the right to peacefully protest and witness opposition to political policies, we can never condone violence against immigration and law enforcement agents.

Before the complex questions of immigration, we maintain, without question, that our government has a duty to secure our borders and ensure that those

who wish to enter the United States do so lawfully. In union with our brother Bishops across the United States, we have consistently urged our civil leaders to craft immigration laws that respect our borders and create an orderly process for those who wish to enter our nation, while offering a measure of forgiveness towards those who arrived here without legal status but who have proven their contributions and loyalty to our country over a period of time.

These are all good points to ponder. However, most important to recall is the law of Christ set down in the Great Commandments: To love God with all our hearts and to love our neighbor as ourselves. All other imperatives are subject to this law of charity, and it is concerned neither with legal status nor country of origin. As individuals and as a society, we are bound to follow this supreme command and to make all our actions consistent with it, to the best of our abilities, even in difficult circumstances.

Returning to the example of Mother Cabrini, the Bishops of the United States have called on Catholics in all walks of life to stand in solidarity with immigrants and refugees by signing The Cabrini Pledge, an Invitation to be Keepers of Hope. We encourage New York Catholics to sign the pledge. By doing so, you will follow in the footsteps of our beloved Mother Cabrini in acknowledging our duty to welcome, to protect, to promote, and to integrate immigrants in accordance with the guidance proclaimed by Sacred Scripture and the Magisterium of the Church.

VIRTUAL EVENTS

LIVE EVENT WITH POPE LEO

This November, our young people are being invited into something truly special. For the first time, Pope Leo XIV will engage in a live digital dialogue with young people in the United States. This moment will take place during the 2025 National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC), and we want every young person in our diocese to have the opportunity to be part of it, whether individually or as a parish community.

Date: Nov. 21

Time: 10:15 a.m.

Place: Online

Features: Live broadcast of the Papal Dialogue, the ability to download the broadcast for future use, and follow up resources for schools, youth ministries and families. Can't join live? A same-day recording will be available to all who register, making it easy for any parish or family to participate on their own schedule.

Contact: We encourage your parish and/or families to register for FREE (<https://ncyc.us/ncyc-digital-experience-a-journey-with-pope-leo-xiv/>) or Patrick Looby at plooby@rcdony.org

CLINTON NORTHERN FRANKLIN

CRAFT FAIR

Chazy — Sacred Heart Church to have a craft fair.

Date: Nov. 22

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

Place: Parish Center

Features: Great craft festival with a variety of craft vendors. Hot lunches available, baked items, silent auction. Handicapped accessible and free admission.

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

SOAKING PRAYERS SESSIONS

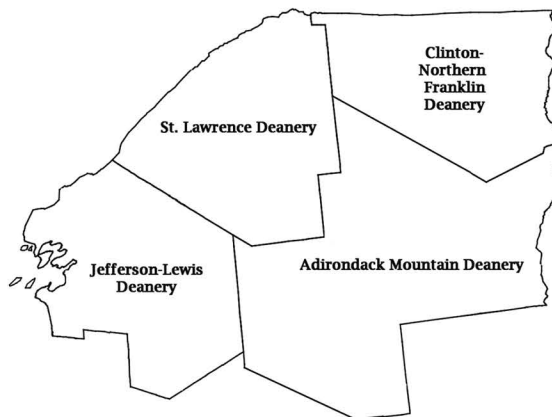
Plattsburgh — Soaking prayer Sessions to be held the first Monday of each month.

Date: Dec. 1

Time: 1 p.m. to 3 and 6 p.m. to 8

Place: Newman Center

Features: Praise and worship



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@northcountycatholic.org.

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

followed by soaking prayer. Led by Eve McGill, Living Waters Ministry. All are welcome.

Contact: evemcgill@charter.net 518-645-2648

CELEBRATION OF LIFE PLANNING

Ellenburg Center — The Bereavement and Community Support Committee of Saint Bernard's and Saint Edmund's Parishes invites the public to a "Celebration of Life Planning Expo."

Date: Jan. 17 (if inclement weather, it will be Jan. 24)

Time: 10 a.m.

Place: St. Edmund's Parish Hall

Features: This free event will provide helpful resources for families wishing to prepare for their end-of-life needs. Participants will include grief counselors, estate planners, legal and financial advisors, funeral directors, clergy, musicians, caterers, florists, monument and memorial specialists, cemetery and mausoleum representatives, and organizations that assist families during times of loss.

Contact: For more information, contact Mary Ellen Tomo at (518) 569-4447

JEFFERSON-LEWIS

POLISH CHRISTMAS WAFFER

Houseville — The Polish Christmas Wafer or OPLATEK is available.

Cost: \$3 per package of 4 sheets, plus shipping and handling

Features: The Christmas wafer or OPLATEK, is part of a Polish, Lithuanian and Slovak custom that is observed during the vigil of Christmas (Wigilia.) After the first star is visible, family and friends gather around the dinner table to break and share the OPLATEK which symbolizes the presence of Christ, the Newborn Child. The OPLATEK is sent and shared with family and friends all over the world as a symbol of love, unity and forgiveness.

Contact: To order please call 315-348-6260 and leave your name and phone number.

CHRISTMAS COMMUNITY TABLE

Clayton — Enjoy over 50 delicious dishes from appetizers to desserts.

Date: Dec. 6

Time: 10:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Place: St. Mary's Parish Center

Cost: \$10

Features: Part of the Christmas in Clayton weekend with many venues in the village hosting events and shopping. Also stay for the Christmas parade Saturday at 6 p.m.

Contact: St. Mary's parish office Email: claytonsec@rcdony.org Phone Number: 315-686-3398
HOLY HOUR AND DIVINE MERCY

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

Date: Dec. 7

Time: Following 11 a.m. Mass

Place: St. Hedwig's Church

Contact: 315-348-6260

SPAGHETTI & MEATBALL DINNER

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

Date: Dec. 13

Time: 4 p.m. to 7

Place: St. Mary's Parish Center

Cost: Adults, \$12; Seniors, \$10; Children 12 and under, \$5; under 5, Free

Contact: For more information call 315-629-4678

CHRISTMAS CONCERT

Clayton — Join us in scripture and song as St. Mary's Choir and Youth Choir, St. Cyril's Choir, and Turning Point Men's Barbershop Chorus collaborate to present a concert of sacred Christmas music.

Date: Dec. 14

Time: 4 p.m.

Place: St. Mary's Church

Features: Please enjoy this free concert as a gift to our community. Donations are welcome at the door to support our ministries. A brief reception will follow in the parish hall.

Contact: For more information please call the parish office: 315-686-3398

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: Dec. 14

Time: 8 a.m. to noon

Place: St. James Community Room

Cost: Adults, \$10; Seniors, \$8; Children under 10, \$5; Family of 4, \$30

Menu: Scrambled Eggs, Pancakes, French Toast, Ham, Sausage,

Baked Goods, Juice, and Coffee

Contact: For more information call 315-493-3224

RAFFLE

Constableville — Raffle to be held for youth and Faith Formation activities.

Date: Drawing Dec. 21

Time: 10 a.m.

Place: St. Mary's after Mass

Cost: Tickets are \$5 each or 5 for \$20

Features: First-place winner will receive a Virtual Reality Headset, the second-place winner will receive a 50" smart television and the third-place winner will receive a ten-inch tablet.

Contact: They can be purchased after the 10am Mass, from various St. Mary's parents, by calling the Parish office at 315-348-6104 or by going online to <https://catholicparishesofslc.weebly.com/church-offering--raffles.html>

ST. LAWRENCE

FALL FESTIVAL

Waddington — St. Mary's to have their Fall Festival.

Date: Nov. 22

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

Place: St. Mary's parish hall

Features: Free Admission. Crafters, Vendors, Silent Auction, Bake Sale, Lunch available.

Contact: For more information contact Patty Van Patten at 315-388-4393 or Debbie Sharpe at 315-322-5501.

MONTHLY BRUNCH

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

Date: Dec. 14 (Second Sunday of each month)

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

Place: Father Amyot Parish Center

Cost: Adults, \$10; under 12, \$5; under 5, Free; Omelets, add \$3; Take-outs available

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

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

Around the diocese

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

RAFFLE

Potsdam – The Potsdam Knights of Columbus Council 340 will be having a raffle.

Date: Dec. 17

Time: 7 p.m. (winners need not be present)

Cost: \$5 a ticket or 5 for \$20

Features: First Prize, Cutco Knife; Second Prize, Syracuse Mets Family Fun Pack; Third Prize, Stay and Play at the Akwesasne Mohawk Casino; Thirty or more additional prizes.

Contact: For more information contact Grand Knight Michael Lahendro at mlanhendro@hotmail.com or joecatholictebo@gmail.com

TRIVIA NIGHT

Ogdensburg – The Vocations Committee for the Catholic Churches of Ogdensburg, Heuvelton and Lisbon is planning a Trivia Night.

Date: Jan. 2

Time: Doors open at 6 p.m., trivia starts at 7 p.m.

Place: Martin Fieldhouse

Features: All funds raised will be donated to the Diocese of Ogdensburg to help offset the miscellaneous college costs for the seminarians. Join us for a night of fun and friendly competition in a contest of general knowledge across a variety of topics! Teams of up to 6 will compete for the bragging rights and the Grand Prize. All players are eligible for door prizes! Mulligans will be sold at the door.

Contact: More rules and registration at www.ogdensburgcatholics.net/trivia or email vocation-sarenotrivial@rcdony.org

ROSARY WITH DEVOTIONS

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

Date: Dec. 6

Time: 8 a.m.

Place: Notre Dame Church, Ogdensburg

Features: Rosary with devotions

FIRST SATURDAY ROSARY

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

Date: Dec. 6

Time: 3:15 p.m.

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

MENS GROUP

Massena – Men's group to meet the first Saturday of every month.

Date: Dec. 6

Time: 9 a.m. Mass with meeting to follow

Place: Sacred Heart Church

DIOCESAN EVENTS

CALLED BY NAME ANDREW DINNERS

The Diocese of Ogdensburg invites high school-aged young men and women to an evening of prayer, reflection, and conversation about God's call. These events help young people explore vocations to the priesthood, consecrated religious life, or the diaconate.

Schedule: Morrisonville, Nov. 23 and Norfolk, Nov. 30

Time: 3:45 p.m. to 7

Features: Each evening includes prayer, talks, small-group discussion, and dinner. Parents are welcome to attend and support their children's discernment journey. Note: Only the Nov. 30 event includes a breakout session for young women interested in the consecrated religious life.

Contact: Register at: <https://www.rcdony.org/andrewdinner>

LIVING WITH HOPE

Saranac Lake – The Respect Life Office will have a discussion to learn more about NYS Physician Assisted Suicide Bill and Canada's MAID.

Date: Nov. 29

Time: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Place: St. Bernard's Church

Cost: \$10 donation requested

Features: The theme will be "Dying with Christ, Living with Hope." When we make a commit-

ment to die with Christ, we can truly live with hope. Discussions feature theologians and health-care professionals giving perspectives on suffering, grief, dying and our Christian duty to care.

Contact: Registration: <https://www.rcdony.org/livingwithhope> Questions contact Colleen Miner at cminer@rcdony.org

NEIGHBORING DIOCESES

ADVENT DAY RETREAT

Canandaigua – Advent Retreat: "Blessed are they that Hope in the Lord: Advent Meditations on the Virtue of Hope" to be held.

Date: Dec. 13

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

Place: Notre Dame Retreat House

Cost: \$60

Features: As we approach the conclusion of the Holy Year of Hope and prepare for the great Feast of the Nativity, spend a day meditating on this most important spiritual virtue – Hope.

Contact: For more information email Nancy Lynch at info@notredameretreat.org or visit www.notredameretreat.org

Rest in Peace

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

Nov. 19 – Rev. Msgr. Joseph G. Aubin, 2022

Nov. 20 – Rev. Robert Joseph Booth, 1939

Nov. 21 – Msgr. Joseph L. Tierney, 1968

Nov. 22 – Rev. Bernard Caragher, 1893; Rev. James F. Lamitie, 2010

Nov. 23 – Rev. Louis Brisson, 1963

Nov. 24 – Rev. Bernard McCabe, 1857; Rev. G.P. Berneche, 1950; Rev. Norman E. Poupore, 2014

Nov. 25 – Rev. M.C. Dubreuil, O.M.I., 1912

Bishop's Public Schedule

Nov. 19 – 10 a.m. – Lay Employees' Retirement Committee Meeting followed by Lunch at Bishop's Residence

Nov. 20 – 10:15 a.m. – Mass with the students at St. James School in Gouverneur followed by classroom visits

Nov. 21 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Nov. 22 – 4 p.m. – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Nov. 23 – 8 a.m. – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Nov. 24 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Nov. 26 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Environmental Stewardship

Rhythm of the seasons

November is the month when conditions favorable to most forms of life in this region end. Many organisms adapt to the changing seasons by entering a prolonged period of dormancy. Trees and shrubs, grasses, bugs, salamanders and other entities undergo changes prompted by the dwindling daylight. These modifications help them cope with the challenges they face during the months when totally inactive. Migrating creatures also face hardships as they venture to regions populated by unfamiliar predators and often experience shortages of food.

Even creatures that remain active throughout winter tend to experience changes in their daily routines that conserve body heat and energy.

All forms of life in northern regions possess a natural innate responsiveness for dealing with changing seasons. Mystics emphasize these changes are nothing more than responses to the energies emitted by the Holy Spirit as the Spirit cares for God's creation.

Since humans are a fundamental part of nature, we too receive these messages for coping with change, however they are picked up by our heart rather than by our brain. Because God has endowed us with free will, we can choose to ignore God's messages and follow our bodies' desires.

The behaviors counter to the rhythms of the Spirit are impacting life on the planet. We must try to adopt simpler lifestyles and reduce our carbon footprint to help nature, even in unseen ways. Anything that resonates with the heart rather than making sense to the brain should be pursued. Engaging in acts of kindness, generosity and forgiveness goes a long way toward restoring the balance of nature, as all of life is interconnected.

Not only are there seasonal changes, but there are many changes occurring in society, and we have the ability to deal with these changes if we listen to the Holy Spirit with our hearts.

Protecting God's Children

The Diocese of Ogdensburg

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

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; terrianneyanulavich@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

CATHOLIC WORLD AT A GLANCE

Bishops elect new leadership at annual assembly

Bishop Kevin Rhoades of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, Indiana, was elected to serve as secretary of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) at the Fall Plenary Assembly on Nov. 12. The bishops held elections for the secretary position and the leadership of six committees on Wednesday. On Tuesday, they elected Archbishop Paul Coakley of Oklahoma City as president and Bishop Daniel Flores of Brownsville, Texas, as vice president of the conference.

Bishops announce migrant accompaniment initiative

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) is launching an initiative called "You Are Not Alone" to focus on providing accompaniment to migrants who are at risk of being deported. Bishop Mark Seitz, chair of the USCCB Committee on Migration, announced the nationwide initiative during the conference's Fall Plenary Assembly in Baltimore on Nov. 11. The initiative, which was inspired by similar efforts in Catholic dioceses throughout the country, will focus on four key areas: emergency and family support, accompaniment and pastoral care, communication of Church teaching, and solidarity through prayer and public witness. Seitz said the Catholic Church has been "accompanying newcomers to this land since before our country's founding." He said — in addition to spiritual and corporal works of mercy — the Church "cannot abandon our long-standing advocacy for just and meaningful reform to our immigration system." He said clergy will continue "proclaiming the God-given dignity of every person from the moment of conception through every stage of life until natural death," which includes the dignity of those who migrated to the United States.

'Catholic American Bible' gets green light from U.S. bishops

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) approved a new translation of the Bible, which will be used for personal Bibles, the lectionary at Mass, and the text in the Liturgy of the Hours. Bishop Steven Lopes, chair of the Committee on Divine Worship, announced the translation will be called the "Catholic American Bible." The translation for personal Bibles and the Liturgy of the Hours will be available on Ash Wednesday in 2027. The bishops have not announced when the revised lectionaries will be available. The USCCB also approved a Spanish-language translation of the New Testament, the *Biblia de la Iglesia en América*, which will be available on Ash Wednesday in 2026. Lopes made the announcement during the USCCB's Fall Plenary Assembly in Baltimore on Nov. 11. According to Ascension Press, one of the publishers of the translation, the Catholic American Bible has a modified translation of the Old Testament from the New American Bible Revised Edition. It will replace the current translation of the Book of Psalms with The Abbey Psalms and Canticles, which was translated by monks at Conception Abbey in Missouri. The new translation will also include a revised New Testament.

Young adult numbers down, engagement up

By Amira Abuzeid
Catholic News Agency

According to a new survey, engagement among U.S. adults who identify as Catholic is strong, especially among the youngest adults, and there is growing trust in the Church after the fallout of the clergy sexual abuse crisis of the early 2000s.

In July, Leadership Roundtable commissioned a polling firm to conduct a national survey of Catholics in the U.S. in order to inform Church leaders of problems as well as strengths within the Catholic Church since the sexual abuse crisis came to national attention in 2002 and the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People was composed to address it.

Researchers composed a 72-question survey and divided respondents into three groups: the Faithful (1,541 respondents), the Occasional (472 respondents), and the Disengaged (1,020). The Faithful said they attend Mass at least monthly, the Occasional said they go a few times a year, and the Disengaged said they go "seldom" or "never."

Although the Catholic Church in the U.S. has shrunk from 65 million to 50 million people in the more than two decades since the sexual abuse crisis and engagement is "at an all-time low," the survey's findings are cause for hope, the authors say.

In a reversal from the organization's 2003 survey, adults between the ages of 18-29 are now the most likely group (84%) to attend Mass regularly and to be active in their parishes in addition to Mass (attending Eucharistic adoration, social events, and confession), the survey found.

The group's 2003 survey of 1,004 Catholics found that Mass attendance increased with age. The 2025 survey found the opposite to be true: Two-thirds of young adults (65%) said they attend Mass at least monthly now, compared with 43% of adults aged 45-64 and 42% of those over 65 years old. In 2003, 83% of adults 45-64 and 85% of those over 65 attended monthly.

Trust in the Church

The survey found that Catholics trust their pastor and other parish staff more than they trust the Church

as an institution.

Nearly 80% of respondents said they trust parish staff and volunteers to protect children, and 77% said they trust their pastor and other clergy.

"Building a transparent and accountable leadership culture" was one of the highest priorities across all age groups, according to the survey. For 77% of respondents, it was among their top two priorities, with 45% giving it the highest possible rating of "extremely important."

In 2003, 70% of respondents said they had high confidence in their bishops as doctrinal authorities but low confidence in them (44%) as listeners of the opinions of laity or parish priests.

That low confidence has not changed much in two decades. In the recent survey, just 49% said they think their bishops involve the laity in solving Church issues. Fewer, 47%, believe bishops "lead with financial transparency," and 45% worry that their donations will go to paying legal fees and abuse settlements.

Catholics who donate regularly to their parishes (61%) say they would give more if they thought the Church was more transparent about financial matters. Nearly three-quarters of them (72%) said they would give less if there was a scandal in their parish or diocese.

Of Catholics who go to Mass sometimes, 58% donate financially to their parish at least once a year. Of the 42% who never give, 39% cited a lack of financial transparency as their reason.

Regarding education, of U.S. Catholics whose parishes have a parish school, only 53% said they think the school is thriving. This was the lowest rating of all youth formation activities surveyed.

According to its website, Leadership Roundtable, founded in 2003 in the aftermath of the clergy sexual abuse crisis, is a nonprofit organization composed of clergy, laity, and religious "working together to promote best practices and accountability in the management, finances, communications, and human resource development of the Catholic Church in the U.S., including greater incorporation of the expertise of the laity."

SUNDAY'S SCRIPTURE

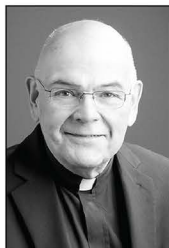
A different kind of king

November 23

Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe

READINGS

2 Samuel 5:1-3
Colossians 1:12-20
Luke 23:35-43



Msgr. Robert
H. Aucoin

We speak about the lion, the king of beasts, the noblest of animals. In fact, there is a movie and a play, *Lion King*. We say that gold is the king of metals, the most precious of metals. If I were to ask: "Who is the king of swing?" some might be able to respond Benny Goodman because he understood that art form better than others. But then we say that Jesus is the King of Kings. How can someone on a cross, mocked by bystanders, whose current companions are two common criminals, without territory, without possessions, without armies be king of anything?

We say that Christ is the King. But what kind

of power and domination does this Christ have? Where is his authority? Who are his people? Where is his kingdom?

The answer is simple. The kingship of Jesus differs from other forms of kingship. His power can transform what is destructive in life into what is constructive.

Two thieves hang next to Jesus. We quickly say that one got it, the one who said "Jesus, remember me;" it is clear the other didn't get it. His words ask Jesus to get him off the cross. In fact, he almost torments Jesus. After all, if you are the anointed one, you should be able to save us.

But look again at what

the good thief, as we call him, says to Jesus. He calls out to his fellow thief and tells him to straighten out his life, to get right with himself and with God. This good thief moves from being a criminal into someone who seeks redemption. He even exhorts his fellow criminal to repent. For himself, he asks for forgiveness and eternal life.

Jesus' death is a redemptive death, transforming humanity. His death demonstrates that evil does not have to be the last word. All is re-

deemable, even a dying thief on a cross.

Faced with adversity in life, we see others and ourselves in a different light. Some, like the tormenting thief on the cross, can only endure suffering through the challenging moments of life and the myriad forms of suffering that life brings. But others, like the good thief, facing the same difficulties, seem able to grow and flourish.

The power of Christ, the kingship of Christ, is not power that forces, but it is power that transforms, that redeems, that changes the ordinary into the extraordinary.

Movie heroes are superheroes in super difficult situations. That's not the way we live our lives. We have many challenges, big and small.

Our manner of facing life's challenges will determine the depth of our relationship with Christ.

The cynical thief saw his difficulty as the end of existence. He wanted salvation so that he could go back to what he was doing. The good thief saw his difficulty as a redemptive moment, an opportunity to change and truly save his life, even if it meant death.

We do not often, if ever, have moments like the two thieves on the cross. But, no matter the issue, we can experience the redeeming love and power of Jesus.

May our incorporation into Christ and our belief in his redeeming power and love allow us to hear those words from him: "Amen, I say to you, you will be with me in Paradise."

CALLED TO SERVE

Why do we do that? Part 2

I first came across the phrase *sotto voce* in a choir. Sister used to tell the high sopranos to drop their volume for a measure or two in a specific place in the piece. "Sing *sotto voce*," she would tell that section of the group because they were drowning out the sopranos, bases, and baritones.

Sotto voce, I understood, was just above a whisper, a hushed effect.

Think of it as opposite the other command we hear from time to time. "Use your school yard voice!"

The Offertory of the Mass is full of soft voice, or *sotto voce* moments. They are prayers said by the priest or deacon.

The Offertory is the beginning of the most sacred part of the Mass, the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

It starts when the gifts to be offered by the congregation to Jesus for His blessing are presented. The bread and wine to be consecrated as well as the proceeds from the collection are brought forward by folks in the congregation. Altar servers are given the bread and wine as gifts to be "offered" to the celebrant. The servers hand the gifts to the deacon at the Altar of Sacrifice.

The deacon represents all the people in church when he hands the gift of bread to the priest. The priest then says in a low

voice: "Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation, for through your goodness we have received the bread we offer you: fruit of the earth and work of human hands, it will become for us the bread of life."

The priest has the option to say that prayer aloud. If he does, we respond, "Blessed be God forever."

Then the Deacon pours wine into the chalice and mixes the wine with a drop of water. This mingling of water and wine is symbolic of the water and blood that flowed from Jesus' side when he was jabbed

while on the cross at his Crucifixion.

As he pours the water, the deacon says, "By the mystery of this water and wine may we come to share in the divinity of Christ who humbled himself to share in our humanity."

The instruction for this action includes the phrase "saying quietly,"

The deacon hands the priest the chalice and the priest says in a low voice: "Blessed are you,

Lord God of all creation, for through your goodness we have received the wine we offer you: fruit of the vine and work of human hands, it



Deacon
Kevin Mastellon

will become our spiritual drink."

Should the priest decide to say that prayer aloud, the answer is the same, "Blessed be God forever."

The priest then washes his hands, saying quietly, "Wash me, O Lord, from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin."

These are prayers the priest or deacon offers to God *sotto voce*, in a low voice, saying them quietly. They are prayers that prepare us all for the love of God.

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

Pope Leo XIV's favorite films

By **Walter Sánchez Silva**
Catholic News Agency

The Vatican has revealed the names of Pope Leo XIV's favorite films, including "The Sound of Music" and "It's a Wonderful Life," upon announcing the Holy Father's upcoming meeting with the world of cinema on Saturday, Nov. 15.

In total, the Vatican shared four titles of the "most significant films" for Leo XIV:

'It's a Wonderful Life'
(1946) by **Frank Capra**

The Christmas classic stars James Stewart as George Bailey, a man who has sacrificed his dreams because of his sense of responsibility and generosity but feeling like a failure, he contemplates suicide on Christmas Eve. This prompts the intervention of his guardian angel (Henry Travers), who shows him all the good he has done for many people.

'Life Is Beautiful'
(1997) by **Roberto Benigni**

In this film, Benigni — whose father spent two years in a prisoner-of-war camp — plays Guido Orefice, an Italian Jewish bookstore owner who uses his imagination to protect his young son from the horrors of a Nazi concentration camp during World War II.

'Ordinary People'
(1980) by **Robert Redford**

The film tells the story of the breakdown of a wealthy Illinois family after the death of one son in an accident and the suicide attempt of the other. It stars Donald Sutherland, Mary Tyler Moore, Judd

Hirsch, and Timothy Hutton.

'The Sound of Music'
(1965) by **Robert Wise**

The film tells the story of a postulant at a convent in Austria in 1938. After discerning out, the postulant (Julie Andrews) is sent to the home of Captain Von Trapp, a widowed retired naval officer (Christopher Plummer) to be the governess of his seven children. After bringing love and music to the Von Trapp family, she eventually marries the captain. As Von Trapp refuses to accept a commission in the Nazi navy, the family is forced to leave Austria in a dramatic escape.

Meeting with the world of cinema

The meeting will take place on Saturday, Nov. 15, at 11 a.m. Rome time in the Apostolic Palace of Vatican City, according to a statement from the Dicastero for Culture and Education, in collaboration with the Vatican Museums.

The event follows previous meetings with the world of visual arts (June 2023), comedy (June 2024), and the Jubilee of Artists and the World of Culture in February of this year.

The Vatican statement highlights that Pope Leo XIV "has expressed his desire to deepen the dialogue

with the world of cinema, and in particular with actors and directors, exploring the possibilities that artistic creativity offers to the mission of the Church and the promotion of human values."

Actors and directors

Among those who have already confirmed their participation are the Italian actresses Monica Bellucci, famous for her role as

Mary Magdalene in Mel Gibson's "The Passion of the Christ," and Maria Grazia Cucinotta ("Il Postino" and "The World Is Not Enough.")

Also joining the Holy Father will be, among others, American actress Cate Blanchett ("The Lord of the Rings," "The Aviator"), the African-American director Spike Lee, the director Gus Van Sant ("Good Will Hunting,"

"Elephant"), the Australian director George Miller, creator of the Mad Max saga, and the Italian Giuseppe Tornatore, director of "Cinema Paradiso," for which he won the Oscar for best foreign film in 1989.

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



BUILDING Our Mission to the Missions

The Black and Indian Mission Collection (BIMC) exists to help diocesan communities to build up the Church and preach the Gospel of Jesus among the African American, Native American, and Alaska Native people of God.

Every year, it is the amazing generosity of Catholic faithful, just like you, who enable the Black and Indian Mission Office to support the following important priorities:

Enlivening Parish Life & Catechesis

Grant funds from the BIMC support parish-based catechetical programs, which form and train catechists who form children to be disciples of Jesus in the world and who put bibles and catechisms in kids' hands so they can learn the ways of the Lord and take their place around his altar.



Empowering Evangelizers

BIMC grant funds support African American and Native American ministries to sponsor events and formation that encourage living the Christian life in culturally appropriate ways. The religious sisters shown here, serve Native American Catholic communities across the United States.



Helping Educators Reach Kids

With your contribution to the BIMC, you will help support the placement of good teachers to educate African American and Native American children. In 2024, your generous donations reached over 5,000 students in more than 400 schools and parishes across the United States.



Encouraging Vocations

The church needs men and women to answer the call to the consecrated life and offer their witness as radical disciples of Jesus Christ. We need priests in order to have the Eucharist! Supporting the BIMC enables us to help encourage vocations to the priesthood and religious life in African American and Native American communities across the country.



BLACK AND INDIAN MISSION COLLECTION

www.blackandindianmission.org



Special Collection to be held with Catholic Campaign for Human Development Nov. 22-23, 2025
Combined Collection



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

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

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

Soup kitchens in South Korea

May we all remember those that are struggling to put food on the table in this difficult time. Like our brothers and sisters in Korea, let us provide the support of our money, time, and prayers to those in our community not just this holiday season, but also year-round.

The Italian missionary of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, Father Vincenzo Bordo, describes his extraordinary story and experience of proximity among the poor in Korea. In Seongnam, a suburb of Seoul, the missionary founded and runs Anna's House, a reception center for homeless people and young people without families, as well as a food bank that has been caring for 800 homeless people every day for 30 years.

"There he not only distributes food, but also hugs and prayers," the volunteers who work with him told *Fides*. The meal of the guests at the table takes place in a friendly and bright atmosphere, in which "it is above all the loving care that nourishes every person," says Father Bordo.

The special sensitivity of the Korean Church for the poor was clearly expressed on the "World Day of the Poor" proclaimed by Pope Francis. Archdiocese of Seoul has planned a series of events to celebrate Poor's Day and has announced that these will not be isolated gestures or a single day of the year.

"I hope that this will be an opportunity for all of us to realize that we are all poor and vulnerable before God. As a human family we are called to show solidarity with the poor, to share and to shake hands with those in need," said the Archbishop-elect of Seoul, Msgr. Peter Chung, engaged during the special day, alongside Cardinal Andrew Yeom Soo-jung and other Bishops of Seoul, in serving meals to the homeless at the "Myeongdong Babjib" soup kitchen in the Seoul Cathedral complex.

The bishops expressed their gratitude to the volunteers who prepared the meals since the early hours of the morning. Nearly 900 volunteers signed up for the initiative, including 72 non-Catholics who took turns working in the soup kitchen. Cardinal Yeom said: "On this day we are all invited by the Holy Spirit to come together as sisters and brothers. This special occasion reminds us that we are truly all brothers and sisters who are called to live together as one family."

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

Last weeks' article by Ines San Martin, Vice President of Marketing and Communications at the TPMS national office.

OBITUARIES

Cadyville — Mona "Dawn" (Carpentier) Aubin, 89; Mass of Christian Burial Nov. 22, 2025 at St. James Church.

Clayton — Paul "Gary" Reff, 83; Mass of Christian Burial Nov. 12, 2025 at St. Mary's Church.

Constable — Harold Phillips, 87; Mass of Christian Burial Nov. 14, 2025 at St. Francis of Assisi Church; burial in St. Francis of Assisi Cemetery.

Gouverneur — Joann E. LaRue, 84; Mass of Christian Burial Nov. 20, 2025 at St. James Church.

Heuvelton — Shirley (Cook) Washburn, 95; Mass of Christian Burial Nov. 14, 2025 at St. Raphael's Church; burial in St. Patrick's Cemetery, Chateaugay.

Hogansburg — Lisa M. Gray, 62; Mass of Christian Burial Nov. 15, 2025 at St. Regis Church; burial in Kateri Cemetery.

Hogansburg — Catherine C. (Knopp) Lazore, 74; Mass of Christian Burial Nov. 12, 2025 at St. Regis Church.

Lake Placid — Linda A. (Hosler) Planty, 72; Mass of Christian Burial Nov. 14, 2025 at St. Agnes Church; burial in North Elba Cemetery.

Lyon Mountain — Alan D. Davies, 80; Mass of Christian Burial Nov. 12, 2025 at St. Bernard's Church.

Lyon Mountain — Kathleen (Wilson) Scott, 91; Memorial Mass in spring; burial in St. Bernard's Cemetery.

Malone — Berenice R. (Monique) Carr, 89; Mass of Christian Burial Nov. 14, 2025 at Notre Dame Church; burial in St. Patrick's Cemetery, Chateaugay.

Massena — Jean Marie (Romeo) Bronchetti, 83; Mass of Christian Burial Nov. 17, 2025 at St. Mary's Church.

Mooers Forks — Denise Rosemary (Tarte) Sample, 79; Mass of Christian Burial Nov. 18, 2025 at St. Ann's Church; burial in St. Ann's Cemetery.

Mooers Forks — Larry Wolff, 92; Mass of Christian Burial Nov. 15, 2025 at St. Ann's Church; burial in parish cemetery.

Norwood — Joan Anne (Peterson) Reagan, 85; Mass of Christian Burial Nov. 13, 2025 at St. Andrew's Church.

Ogdensburg — Gary P. Gagnon, 79; Funeral Services Nov. 10, 2025 at Frary Funeral Home; burial in Oswegatchie Mausoleum.

Plattsburgh — Bonnie (McGee) Katz, 79; Mass of Christian Burial Nov. 7, 2025 at Our Lady of Victory Church.

Plattsburgh — Juanita "Marie" (Hendrie) Spooner, 76; Mass of Christian Burial Nov. 18, 2025 at St. Peter's Church; burial in St. Peter's Cemetery.

Potsdam — Mary D. (Morgan) LaBrake, 92; Funeral Services Nov. 14, 2025 at Donaldson-Seymour Funeral Home; burial in Riverside Cemetery, Norwood.

Redford — Ronald J. Lautenschuetz, 92; Mass of Christian

Burial Nov. 13, 2025 at Church of the Assumption; burial in parish cemetery.

Rouses Point — Shirely (Legnard) Bechard, 96; Mass of Christian Burial Nov. 8, 2025 at St. Patrick's Church; burial in St. Patrick's Cemetery.

Rouses Point — Kevin Rooney Gowett, 68; Mass of Christian Burial Nov. 13, 2025 at St. Patrick's Church; burial in parish cemetery.

Ticonderoga — Courtney Rita Rowe, 35; Mass of Christian Burial Nov. 7, 2025 at St. Mary's Church; burial in St. Patrick's Cemetery, Moriah.

Tupper Lake — Gail Marie (Gensel) Carmichael, 74; Mass of Christian Burial Nov. 7, 2025 at St. Alphonsus Church; burial in Gale Cemetery, Childwold.

Tupper Lake — Barbara Ann Yaworski Kavey, 94; Mass of Christian Burial Nov. 21, 2025 at St. Alphonsus church; burial in Holy Name Cemetery.

Watertown — Richard Fezington Curtis, 92; Funeral Services Nov. 17, 2025 at Cummings Funeral Service, Inc.; burial in Glenwood Cemetery.

Watertown — Agnes J. "Aggie" (Crescenzi) Zaremba, 89; Mass of Christian Burial Nov. 9, 2025 at St. Anthony's Church; burial in Glenwood Cemetery.

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Gender surgeries banned at Catholic hospitals

By Daniel Payne
Catholic News Agency

Catholic hospitals in the United States are explicitly forbidden from carrying out transgender-related surgeries on individuals who believe themselves to be the opposite sex, the U.S. bishops said this week.

The prelates, gathered at the plenary of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (US-

CCB) in Baltimore, voted on Nov. 12 to direct hospitals to “preserve the integrity of the human body” when treating individuals with gender dysphoria.

Such individuals often seek surgery to make their bodies conform to that of the opposite sex. But in updated guidance, the bishops said that while Catholic health care providers must employ “all ap-

propriate resources” to mitigate the suffering of such patients, they can use “only those means that respect the fundamental order of the human body.”

The new rule makes into explicit USCCB policy what the bishops expressed in a doctrinal note in 2023 when they said Catholic providers must not take part in procedures that “aim to transform the sexual

characteristics of a human body into those of the opposite sex.”

The revised directives were hailed by the Catholic Health Association, which in a Nov. 12 statement said that the rules “reaffirm the Church’s teaching on the dignity of all persons and their right to life from conception to natural death.”

The revisions “clarify and affirm current clinical practices” and “are consistent with Catholic health care practice that does not allow for medical interventions that alter sexual characteristics absent an underlying condition,” the group said.

The organization said Catholic health care providers would continue to treat those who identify as transgender “with dignity and respect.”

In their guidelines the bishops noted that it can be “morally permissible” to “remove or to suppress the function of one part of the body for the sake of the body as a whole,” though only in very limited circumstances, such as when a body part is diseased.

In forbidding medical practices that “aim to transform sexual characteristics of a human body into those of the opposite sex,” the bishops cited the Vat-

ican’s 2024 document *Dignitas Infinita*, which in part disallows “all attempts to obscure reference to the ineliminable sexual difference between man and woman.”

The USCCB’s guidance comes several months after the Trump administration moved to prohibit transgender procedures performed on children at U.S. hospitals.

Multiple U.S. hospitals earlier this year ended their child transgender programs under pressure from the Trump administration. One watchdog group determined that doctors in the U.S. performed around 14,000 “gender transitions” on underage children between 2019 and 2023.

In January, President Donald Trump signed an executive order to prohibit hospitals that receive Medicare and Medicaid reimbursements from performing transgender operations or providing transgender drugs to anyone under the age of 19.

An EWTN News analysis in 2024, meanwhile, showed that nearly 150 Catholic hospitals across the United States provided children with transgender drugs or performed gender-transition surgeries on them between 2019 and 2023.



CATHOLIC CAMPAIGN FOR HUMAN DEVELOPMENT WORKING ON THE MARGINS

The Catholic Church has always taught us, through the words of Sacred Scripture and the witness of saints like Francis of Assisi, that the natural world is created by God, that it is good, and that humans have a special duty to care for creation so that it benefits not only themselves but also future generations. Today we live in a time where pollution, climate change, and poor agricultural practices harm creation and place us all in danger.

In 2015, Pope Francis responded to this environmental crisis by issuing the encyclical *Laudato Si' (On Care for Our Common Home)*, in which he emphasizes the connection between humanity and nature and calls for “the whole human family together to seek a sustainable and integral development” (no. 13).

This spirit of cooperation, sustainability, and human dignity animates the work of organizations like La Cosecha Community Supported Agriculture, a cooperative farm network in Albuquerque, New Mexico, which makes

locally grown, sustainable, and nutritious foods available to low-income people. With support from the Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD), La Cosecha has expanded its outreach beyond Albuquerque to 11 rural New Mexico counties, increased year-round accessibility to healthy produce and other food products, and obtained a US Department of Agriculture Good Agricultural Practices food-safety certification for its cooperative farm partners.

CCHD-funded organizations show how we can care for the environment, address the needs of the poor, and support responsible and sustainable local businesses at the same time. When you participate in the CCHD collection, you help not only other communities but also your own, because 25% of your contribution remains in your diocese to create local solutions to poverty.

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2023 GRANTS

Category	Dollars	Number of Grants
Community Development Grants	\$5,229,000	100
Economic Development Grants	\$1,830,000	34
Technical Assistance Grants	\$289,250	10
Total	\$7,348,250	144

2023 EXPENSES

Category	Dollars	Percent
Grants and Donations	\$15,603,370	83.45%
Allocations-Internal Grants*	\$2,582,765	13.81%
Promotions and Fundraising Expenses	\$456,640	2.44%
Program Costs	\$54,128	0.29%
Total Expenses	\$18,696,903	
Total Expenses Excluding Internal Grants	\$16,114,138	
Total Grants and Donations Including Internal Grants	\$18,186,135	

*Internal grants include a distribution from the CCHD collection for CCHD operations and for the education and outreach program of the Office of Justice, Peace, and Human Development of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, which engages Catholics in our faith-filled call to address the root causes of poverty.

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