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The Diocese of Ogdensburg Volume 79 Number 45

NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

MARCH 19, 2025

Most pastoral care area plans are approved

Bishop Terry R. LaValley has approved the Living Stones pastoral plans of 21 pastoral care areas. These approvals are the result of the Living Stones Planning process that has taken place in all parishes of the diocese to plan for the period 2025-30. In approving the plan, Bishop LaValley expressed his gratitude to the Living Stones Planning Committee, our pastors, and the many parishioners who worked to formulate the plans.

FULL STORY, PAGE 4

RITE OF ELECTION



PHOTO BY JESSE SOVIE

Catechumens, those who will receive all sacraments of initiation at the Easter Vigil, attend the Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion at St. Mary's Cathedral in Ogdensburg on March 9. Full story on Page 3.

COLD ICE, WARM HEARTS



Ottawa Senators Coach Jeff Sparks fires up his team during a break in the action during the Mountain Warrior Sled Hockey Tournament, at SUNY Canton, on March 7. Local Knights of Columbus were instrumental in ensuring the tournament's success.

FULL STORY, PAGE 6

Hospitalized pope marks 12th anniversary

By Courtney Mares
Catholic News Agency

Pope Francis marked the 12th anniversary of his pontificate on March 13 from Rome's Gemelli Hospital, where he has been receiving treatment for pneumonia for nearly a month.

Hospital staff commemorated the occasion by presenting the 88-year-old pope with a cake decorated with candles. Additionally, he received hundreds of drawings, messages, and letters from children and well-wishers worldwide.

The Holy See Press Office told journalists that Pope Francis continued his medica-

tion regimen, motor physiotherapy, and high-flow oxygen therapy on Thursday morning. He participated in spiritual exercises and prayed in the hospital chapel.

In the afternoon, he followed the Roman Curia's spiritual exercises via video link to the Paul VI Hall and continued respiratory therapy. His clinical condition remains stable yet complex, according to the Vatican, with ongoing "noninvasive mechanical ventilation" at night and high-flow oxygenation during the day.

Friday will mark one month since the pope's hospitalization. During his hospital stay, the pope has experienced

multiple episodes of acute respiratory failure in which his situation appeared critical. After weeks of treatment, the pope's doctors indicated on Tuesday that the Holy Father is "no longer in immediate danger from the respiratory infection."

A chest X-ray earlier this week indicated "a slight improvement" in Pope Francis' lungs. The Vatican is currently not providing an estimate for when the pope may be discharged from the hospital.

At the age of 76, Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio was elected the 266th successor of St. Peter on March 13, 2013, taking the name Pope Francis

in honor of St. Francis of Assisi. He is the first Latin American pope and the first from the Jesuit order.

To mark the 12th anniversary of Francis' pontificate, Vatican Secretary of State Cardinal Pietro Parolin will offer a Mass for the pope on Friday morning in the Pauline Chapel of the Apostolic Palace, attended by members of the diplomatic corps accredited to the Holy See. The liturgy will be broadcast live via Vatican Media at 10:30 a.m. local time. Catholics are invited to gather in St. Peter's Square on Friday evening at 7:30 p.m. to pray the rosary for the pope's recovery.

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You just have to be there!

"You spend all that money on travel and tickets, and you could see the game better if you watched it at home."

I've heard some version of that more times than I can count. It's 100 percent correct. With the close-up shots, variety of camera angles and replay, you can definitely see a football game better if you watch it on television.

So, why do my son and I spend so much time, energy and money traveling to football games?

Because it's not just about the game.

There is absolutely nothing in the world like being in Acrisure Stadium - it's still Heinz Field to me - when the giant screens at both ends of the stadium go black, and a heart-beat rhythm starts feeding through the sound system as "Renegade," the song by Styx,

begins. Almost everyone in the building - 60,000 people - jumps to their feet and starts cheering, yelling and waving their "Terrible towel," a

gold-colored towel associated with our beloved Pittsburgh Steelers. It's electric. It makes me feel like I'm part of something big and that I'm somehow connected to tens of thousands of strangers.

I thought of that last week as the vast majority of the people joined together in song during Mass in my small church, St. Mary's in Brushton.

When it crossed my mind, I stopped singing. When I sing, I hear myself most.

My silence gave me an opportunity to hear the unique, varied and beautiful voices around me blending beautifully to

become a singular beautiful song.

Just like when "Renegade" plays, it made me feel like I'm part of something big and that I'm somehow connected to both the people around me and, in a greater sense, with the rest of the Body of Christ, the Church.

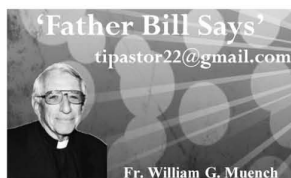
Throughout the rest of that Mass, I felt that sense of community as all of us there worshipping our loving God moved in near unison with our movements, with our songs and with our prayers.

It's an experience you can't get watching it from home.

'As we forgive those'

Last week, I was asked to close the confirmation class's retreat with benediction. As a brief teaching, I decided to talk a bit about the Lord's Prayer. You may remember that the Gospels tell that the apostles asked Jesus to teach them how to pray. Jesus did this by teaching them, what we have come to call, the Lord's Prayer. Jesus begins by telling them to say, "Our Father." He wanted them to realize that God is their father. We are all to be praying by saying "Our Father."

Jesus continues this prayer with praise of God the Father, "who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done." Jesus then told them to turn to our God, our Father, and ask for forgiveness. Jesus knew how loving God is and that he is willing to forgive us for our sins. In the Old Testament, we read often that God is loving and forgiving, always ready to lift us



up and forgive us. As we enter each time of prayer, we must begin by seeking God's forgiveness.

Then they realized that Jesus wanted them and all of us to be like God, a forgiving people. So, in this prayer, Jesus tells us to declare that we must be forgiving. This becomes a challenge to be that kind of forgiving person. So, in the prayer, we are to say, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." We are truly saying to the Lord, "Lord God, you should treat me as I treat others."

So, Jesus often would teach how important forgiveness is for those who would be his disciples. Forgiveness is central to our Catholic faith.

This is our dedication as followers of Jesus. Lent becomes a perfect time for all of us through our prayer and our mortification of Lent to be transformed into forgiving people. Jesus will always be our role model, our paragon. I know that every time I look at the cross of Jesus, I can hear his voice, "Forgive them, Father, they know not what they do." It's such a powerful example for us that the voice from the cross - the voice of suffering and death - forgives. Jesus demonstrates for us that forgiveness, only forgiveness, makes our world what it should be - not violence, revenge or grudges.

Pope Francis, writing in his autobiography, "Hope," tells us "Forgiveness is not betrayal and is not weakness. To imitate the hatred and violence of tyrants is just like joining up with them." St. John Paul II teaches us that forgiveness is a profound act

of love that liberates the offender and the offended.

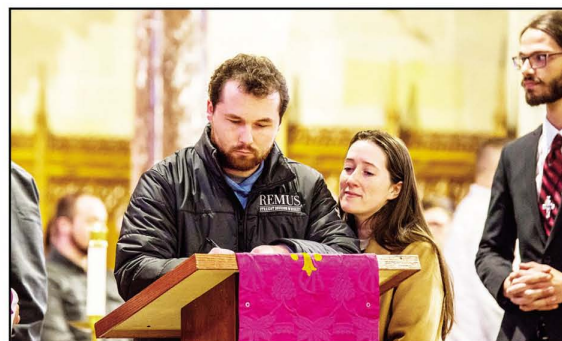
The Church teaches us that Christ entrusted the power of forgiveness to the apostles which continues to us in the sacrament of reconciliation - confession. The first thing we should do as we prepare to go to confession is to offer a long and fervent prayer of gratitude to our God for his forgiveness of sin. God cares about us; God loves us even in our sins, and He always ready to forgive. Each time we experience confession, we must never forget that our loving Lord wants to walk with us, wants to forgive us. God wants us to find conversion to a new life. He wants us always ready to become a saint, always ready to live well.

Forgiveness is first and foremost a gift from God. St. Thomas Aquinas teaches us that God's mercy is His greatest attribute, and that divine forgiveness restores the sinner to grace.



Photos by Jesse Sovie

(Above) Candidates, those who have been baptized but who have not celebrated all sacraments of initiation, participate in the Call to Continuing Conversion on March 9 at St. Mary's Cathedral. (Top right) Bishop Terry R. LaValley gives his homily at the Rite of Election and Call to Conversion. (Bottom right) A catechumen, an individual who is not baptized, signs the Book of the Elect. (Below) Assistant Director of Faith Formation Catherine Russell thanks Order of Christian Initiation of Adults directors.



Rite of Election, Call to Conversion celebrated

The Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion were celebrated March 9 at St. Mary's Cathedral in Ogdensburg. In that rite, the Church "elects" or chooses catechumens who are ready to receive the sacraments of initiation at the Easter Vigil. The Call to Continuing Conversion invites candidates, those who have been baptized but haven't celebrated all sacraments of initiation, to reaffirm their commitment to living out the faith.

The following individuals registered to attend:

CHAMPLAIN
Jamie Besaw

CONSTABLEVILLE
Layla Shay Lake

ELLENBURG CENTER
Gia Gazmin Taylor
Kizzie DeNoyer
Nancy Ann Schnaars

GOUVERNEUR
Martina L. Whitmarsh
Lindsey Fuller
Wyatt F. Holmes

MALONE
Bailey Gravell
Leslie Bourg
Kryan Mosbee
Lee Ann Greenwood
Brian Swan

Liam Maloney
Heather Rolland

MORRISONVILLE
Aaron Fortin
Gabrella Cummings
Eryn Wamer
Destiny Cronkite
Ryder Reyell
Jamie French
Brinley Reyell
Jean Ryan
Amu Martineau
Eric Martineau

**NORTH BANGOR
& BRUSHTON**
Ian Daniel Surface
Addyson Elizabeth Barney
Debora Lee Ducharme

Melissa Sevey

OGDENSBURG
Sharon Patraw
Trent Weston
Debra Hubbard

PLATTSBURGH
Devon Gagnon

WATERTOWN
Franklin Jackson
James Blanchard
Jake Jensen
Paige Porter
Autumn Howitson

WEST LEYDEN
Benjamin Flansurg Jr.

Most pastoral care area plans approved

Bishop Terry R. LaValley has approved the Living Stones pastoral plans of 21 pastoral care areas. These approvals are the result of the Living Stones Planning process that has taken place in all parishes of the diocese to plan for the period 2025-30. In approving the plan, Bishop LaValley expressed his gratitude to the Living Stones Planning Committee, our pastors, and the many parishioners who worked to formulate the plans.

"The Living Stones Planning Committee, led by Mr. Gary West, worked long and hard to guide the parishes in the formulation of their pastoral plans," said Bishop LaValley. "I am also grateful for all who contributed to the plans on the parish level," he added.

The Living Stones Planning Committee submitted a Plan and Report, which was approved by Bishop LaValley on July 5, 2024, to guide parishes in formulating their pastoral plans for the period of 2025-30. Between 2025 and 2030, 14 priests will reach the normal retirement age of 75, and we have five priests over the age of 75 who continue active ministry as pastors and chaplains. While the number of priests will decline between 2025-30, spiritual reports indicate that the number of parishioners regularly participating in the life of their parish has decreased. We do have enough priests to serve the number of people currently participating in parish life, but there is a need to determine an allocation of human and material resources to best accomplish this.

The Living Stones Planning Committee initially recommended 29 pastoral care areas under the 2025-30 plan. The goal was to give pastors and their teams a manageable pastoral care area in terms of size, population, staff, finances, and worship. Consideration also was given to the geographic characteristics of the diocese, distances between parishes, and the rural nature of our diocese.

After consultation and feedback from the deans and priests of the diocese, the following pastoral care areas were accepted and approved by Bishop La-

Valley.

ST. LAWRENCE DEANERY:

1. Ogdensburg (including Heuvelton and Lisbon)
2. Massena - Waddington - Madrid
3. Gouverneur - Star Lake
4. Potsdam - Canton - Colton
5. Norfolk - Norwood - Brasher Falls
6. Morristown - Rossie

JEFFERSON-LEWIS DEANERY:

1. Watertown Blessed Sacrament (St. Patrick, St. Anthony, and Holy Family)
2. Watertown (Our Lady of the Sacred Heart) - Evans Mills - Black River
3. Adams - Henderson - Sackets Harbor - Brownville
4. Clayton - Alexandria Bay - Redwood
5. Carthage - Copenhagen
6. Cape Vincent - Rosiere - Chaumont
7. Lowville - Croghan - Harrisville
8. Port Leyden - West Leyden - Constableville - Lyons Falls

CLINTON-NORTHERN FRANKLIN DEANERY:

1. Malone - Chasm Falls
2. Chateaugay - Constable - Fort Covington
3. Brushton - North Bangor - St. Regis Falls - Hopkinton
4. Plattsburgh
5. Rouses Point - Champlain - Chazy - West Chazy
6. Ellenburg - Mooers Forks - Altona - Lyon Mountain
7. Morrisonville - Cadyville - Redford - Dannemora - Peru - West Peru
8. Au Sable Forks - Keeseville - Willsboro - Essex - Wilmington

ADIRONDACK MOUNTAIN DEANERY:

1. Saranac Lake - Lake Placid - Keene
2. Tupper Lake - Long Lake - Newcomb
3. Port Henry - Elizabethtown - Westport - Mineville
4. Ticonderoga - Schroon Lake - Crown Point
5. Indian Lake - Blue Mountain Lake - Olmstedville
6. Old Forge - Inlet
7. Lake Pleasant - Wells

The goal of diocesan planning is to foster vibrant pastoral care areas that meet the needs of the people of the North Country. Parish vibrancy is measured by the elements of parish life that

must be present for a parish to be effective and enduring, including (a) prayer and worship; (b) faith formation for all ages; (c) stewardship; (d) staffing and leadership; and (e) adequate facilities. Early in the planning process, the need to address stewardship became evident. Pastoral care areas need sufficient and qualified staff, and the ability to provide needed programs and activities. All parishes are addressing the need for increased stewardship and most parishes will conduct stewardship drives with the assistance of professionals to address these needs.

To prepare the plans, the Living Stones Planning Committee proposed that the process include deanery meetings with clergy, meetings at the pastoral care area level and communication with parishioners. The report and plan of the Living Stones Planning Committee included guidelines and parameters to guide pastoral care areas to address the various elements of parish vibrancy.

Bishop LaValley has approved the pastoral plans for the following pastoral care areas:

1. Ogdensburg, Lisbon, Heuvelton
2. Massena, Waddington, Madrid
3. Gouverneur, Star Lake; 4. Norfolk, Norwood, Brasher Falls
5. Morristown
6. Adams, Henderson, Sackets Harbor, Brownville
7. Clayton, Alexandria Bay
8. Constableville, Port Leyden, West Leyden, Lyons Falls
9. Tupper Lake, Long Lake, Newcomb
10. Old Forge, Inlet
11. Potsdam, Canton, Colton
12. Carthage, Copenhagen
13. Malone
14. Fort Covington, Chateaugay, Constable
15. Brushton, Hopkinton, North Bangor, St. Regis Falls
16. Saranac Lake, Lake Placid, Keene
17. Port Henry, Elizabethtown, Westport, Mineville
18. Ticonderoga, Schroon Lake, Crown Point
19. Indian Lake, Olmstedville
20. Lake Pleasant, Wells
21. Plattsburgh
22. Cape Vincent, Chaumont,

Rosiere.

The Living Stones Planning Committee will continue to work with the six remaining pastoral care areas to complete their pastoral plans and have them approved. Three professional groups have offered their services to the parishes with regard to their stewardship campaigns. These groups are The Cunneen Group, Cathedral Corporation, and Our Sunday Visitor. Each parish has selected the professional it wishes to work with and has determined the timeframe for the campaign to take place in the parish. Generally, the campaigns will take place between spring 2025 and spring 2026.

"The period between 2025-2030 presented challenges to our planning process," commented Bishop LaValley. "In that five-year period, we face 14 priests becoming eligible for retirement and expect four ordinations. Serving the needs of our parishioners in light of such a potential decrease in the number of active priests was a daunting challenge," added Bishop LaValley. Mindful of this challenge, the diocese has recruited seven religious priests and seven foreign priests to work in our diocese to lighten the load. We have benefited greatly from the religious and foreign priests on loan to our diocese. Additionally, a number of our priests have continued to serve as pastors after our normal retirement age of 75. This additional help has been a great benefit to the diocese, and I am most grateful."

Planning is an on-going part of diocesan life. At present, we have a solid plan to meet the needs of our parishes with our human and material resources, but the challenge continues. Bishop LaValley stated that we need to constantly pursue our diocesan goals to assure healthy ministries and parishes in our diocese.

"We need to continue to form our people in the faith, we need to constantly plan for the future, and we need to create a culture of vocations, asking God to send us the priests, deacons, consecrated religious, and consecrated virgins to serve the needs of the Church," he said.

Consecrated participate in prayer encounter

By Mary Beth Bracy,
consecrated virgin
Contributing Writer

On February 2, the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord, members of the consecrated life in our diocese joined over 2,250 nationwide in a virtual prayer encounter to celebrate the World Day of Prayer for the Consecrated Life. (The number in attendance was significantly higher than those registered since hundreds from some religious communities joined in prayer, registering as one.) This evening of prayer was the fruit of the time members of the consecrated life spent together last year in Rome.

The event was sponsored by the Conference of Major Superiors of Men, the Council of Major Superiors of Women Religious, the Leadership Conference of Women Religious, the United States Association of Consecrated Virgins, and the United States Conference of Secular Institutes.

Sister Jackie Sellapan, S.C.C., a Sister of the Cross of Chavanod and pastoral assistant at Holy Cross parish, said she enjoyed gathering with others living in consecrated life.

"It was a beautiful experience to pray together for a great purpose as we journey towards our true home with hope and joy, especially on this day of Consecration," she said. "I was delighted to hear that many people had signed up for this prayer service. In today's world, it doesn't matter whether we can be present in person or not; the media allows us to connect through platforms like Zoom. Prayer has

a profound impact, regardless of whether we are physically near or miles apart. The power of prayer can reach every nook and cranny of the world and touch the hearts of the people."

Sister Jackie attended the event along with Mary Beth Bracy, a consecrated virgin in the Diocese of Ogdensburg.

Sister Anne Catherine Burleigh, of the Dominican Sisters of Nashville, and Sister Carol Linn, of the Sisters of St. Joseph, offered opening remarks and introductions throughout the hour.

Cardinal Christophe Pierre, apostolic nuncio to the United States, led the opening prayer and welcome. "It's good to join you in this celebration and to know there are so many," he said. "You have all consecrated yourselves to Christ . . . people of communion . . . for the common good." His Eminence reflected on our call to be witnesses of hope.

Several other bishops were also in attendance, along with priests from religious communities, and other members of the consecrated life. Those gathered for prayer offered the Glorious mysteries of the Holy Rosary in English and Spanish, under the patronage of Our Lady of Guadalupe and the Immaculate Conception.

A reflection on the Resurrection of our Lord was led by Father Christopher Fadok, a Dominican priest. Throughout the Rosary, members of the various conferences took turns leading the prayers.

Sister Lucia Christi, of the Sisters of Life, provided a moving meditation for the Ascension mystery. Until recent-

ly, when she was diagnosed with stage three cancer, Sister Lucia was a postulant director.

"All that is the same is the ring on my finger and that's all that matters," she said, referencing her role as bride of Christ. "Where there's life there is hope."

The Descent of the Holy Spirit mystery was led by Sister Kathy Brazeda, a Sister of St. Joseph. She spoke of our dependence on the Holy Spirit to embrace our call with all of our being.

Claire Halbur, a consecrated virgin and member of the leadership team for the United States Association of Consecrated Virgins, led the Assumption mystery. She shared that consecrated virgins are called to be a sign of the world to come, in imitation of Our Lady who was the first consecrated virgin. And she sang one of the antiphons from the Rite of Consecration to a Life of Virginity for Women Living in the World: "Now with all our hearts we follow you, we reverence you and seek your presence. Lord, fulfill our hope: show us your loving kindness, the greatness of your mercy."

We have "felt God's call, God's action, and we have responded generously to God's call" he said. "We, too, are to be set apart. We are on a pilgrimage for hope. Thank you for keeping the flame well lit."

At the end of the evening, Cardinal Pierre expressed gratitude to those present at the gathering.

"Thank you," he said. "[It was a] beautiful experience, [I] felt surrounded by your prayers . . . The prayers of consecrated men and

The Coronation of Our Lady as Queen of Heaven and Earth mystery was led by Joan Patten of the Secular Institute of Apostolic Oblates, who related that they strive to live evangelical counsels in the world, prayer and radical discipleship.

Bishop Earl A. Boyea of Lansing, Michigan, the episcopal moderator of the United States Association of Consecrated Virgins and member of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Committee on Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations, offered closing remarks. He spoke of how the Presentation was God's gift of His son to us.

We have "felt God's call, God's action, and we have responded generously to God's call" he said. "We, too, are to be set apart. We are on a pilgrimage for hope. Thank you for keeping the flame well lit."

At the end of the evening, Cardinal Pierre expressed gratitude to those present at the gathering.

"Thank you," he said. "[It was a] beautiful experience, [I] felt surrounded by your prayers . . . The prayers of consecrated men and

women is permanent. We need it in these days when so many are suffering. Continue to pray."

Sister Jackie Sellapan said she enjoyed the event.

"The speakers were very direct in sharing their experiences and ideas about the Pilgrims of Hope," she said. "I particularly appreciated the personal testimony of Sister Lucia Christi, who, despite being in the third stage of cancer, remained joyful and devoted to God. She expressed her desire to serve God joyfully by loving people and being present for them. I was also happy to see so many consecrated virgins actively participating on the platform to pray the rosary. Claire Halbur's testimony [from the United Association of Consecrated Virgins] was truly inspiring. It was great that they also prayed the rosary in Spanish. Overall, I was pleased with the entire online program. May we continue to be the voice of God to others as consecrated religious men and women, as well as consecrated virgins, as we journey together in faith and hope as pilgrims."

The Diocese of Ogdensburg

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Photos by Keith Benman

(Left) Mark Tebo, of Norwood's Knights of Columbus Council 2309, serves Mountain Warrior youth team member Bethany Fenton on March 7, at Canton Council 1059's hall. (Right) The Ottawa Senators change lines during their game against the Buffalo Warrior Vets at the Mt. Warrior Sled Hockey Tournament, at SUNY Canton, on March 7.

Knights' assist boosts sled hockey tourney

By Keith Benman
Contributing Writer

Some play so they can once again feel the thrill of the game they love. Some play to get in shape. A number play to stave off the loneliness and isolation that followed from traumas suffered while serving their nation in conflicts overseas.

But regardless of their reasons for playing, competitors at the Mountain Warrior Sled Hockey Tournament all seem to have this in common: a spirit of gratitude for those who make the three-day tourney happen year after year.

"We couldn't do this without the Knights, without the VFW, a lot of our major sponsors," said U.S. Army veteran and Mountain Warrior team member Dave Pechey. "There's just no way."

The 13th annual tournament hosted by the Fort Drum Mountain Warrior Sled Hockey team featured teams from the United States and Canada. It ran from March 7 to 9 at SUNY Canton.

Pechey was talking while chowing down on spaghetti and meatballs at Canton's Knights of Columbus Sarto Council 1059 after the tournament's first day of games. The spirit of gratitude Pechey and others feel runs the other way as well.

"The cause is just so worthwhile," said Bob Clemmer, a former grand knight at Sarto Council. "So many here, they are our veterans. It gives them a really fantastic environment to not only play sports, but the camaraderie is really fantastic."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

REVEAL Christ's LOVE

For people living in developing countries around the world, lack of access to traditional financial services keeps them from providing for their material needs. A Catholic Relief Services (CRS) program has created Savings and Internal Lending Communities (SILCs) to address this lack by helping poor communities to pool savings, which then can be lent to SILC members to build or grow businesses at low cost. In Chad, Claudine, a mother of six, uses loans from her local SILC to buy large, lower-cost quantities of the ingredients she needs to make the beignets she sells at market. Before the SILC was established, Claudine was barely able to sell enough beignets to live. But now these cost savings allow her to care for her family and pay school fees.

Your support for The Catholic Relief Services Collection helps CRS address the needs of people in developing countries through innovative solutions that strengthen communities and equip them with resources and skills to prosper—and you also support five other Catholic organizations' outreach to other vulnerable people.



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Reveal Christ's love by welcoming suffering refugees . . . through the **USCCB Migration and Refugee Services (MRS)**.

Reveal Christ's love through legal aid to struggling immigrants . . . through the **Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. (CLINIC)**.

Reveal Christ's love in ministry to people on the margins . . . through the pastoral work of the **USCCB Secretariat of Cultural Diversity in the Church**.

And Around the World

Reveal Christ's love to hungry mothers and children in Chad through the humanitarian work of **Catholic Relief Services (CRS)**, the official overseas relief agency of the bishops of the United States.

Reveal Christ's love by working for peace . . . through the public policy and education and outreach work of the **USCCB Secretariat of Justice and Peace**.*

Reveal Christ's love to the victims of natural disaster . . . through the **Holy Father's Relief Fund**.

* In June 2024, the USCCB Department of Justice, Peace and Human Development was renamed the USCCB Secretariat of Justice and Peace.

The Catholic Relief Services Collection 2023

Grants	Amount	Percentage
Catholic Relief Services	\$6,849,470	52.03%
USCCB Migration & Refugee Services	\$2,031,216	15.43%
USCCB Cultural Diversity in the Church*	\$1,775,187	13.49%
USCCB Justice, Peace and Human Development†	\$801,732	6.09%
CLINIC (Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc.)	\$787,866	5.99%
Holy Father's Relief Fund	\$500,000	3.80%
Administration		
Promotion & Education Costs	\$364,098	2.77%
Administrative Expenses	\$53,689	0.41%

* The USCCB Secretariat of Cultural Diversity in the Church includes Pastoral Care of Migrants, Refugees, and Travelers (\$1,150,833) and Asian and Pacific Island Affairs (\$624,354).

† The USCCB Department of Justice, Peace, and Human Development includes International Justice and Peace (\$651,054) and education activities (\$148,678).

In June 2024, the Department of Justice, Peace, and Human Development was renamed the USCCB Secretariat of Justice and Peace.



The Catholic Relief Services Collection

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Special Collection to be held with Peter's Pence March 29 & 30
Combined Collection

Knights' assist

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

The Canton Knights have been a prime sponsor of Mountain Warrior Sled Hockey since the team's inception 15 years ago. They have consistently donated \$1,000 for team and tournament expenses each year, shuttle competitors around town and beyond, and staff the annual spaghetti dinner. That's always followed the next night by a prime rib dinner at Canton's VFW Post 1231, which is one of the tournament's other major sponsors.

"I love it," Pechey said. "I love the camaraderie. I haven't found another thing that I do with such a close-knit group of guys. On the ice, we're enemies. Then we do this: we all sit together and drink and have a merry time."

Pechey's right. On the ice the competition is fierce. Players are seated on sleds with narrow runners and hold a small hockey stick in each hand. It can get rough as sleds and competitors carom off each other and the boards. But the sport is

ideal for amputees and others with disabilities because they can experience the thrill of the game without having to stand on skates.

Pechey said it was his service dogs and sled hockey that helped save him from the isolation that came with the PTSD he suffered after service in Afghanistan and Iraq. He also has physical injuries. But he quickly notes they're not as serious as those of some of his fellow soldier-competitors, a number of whom are amputees.

Pechey's spirit of gratefulness was seconded by Justyne Bennett, the 20-year-old goalie for the Kingston Knights. She said the team travels to a number of tournaments, but it's the volunteers that make the Mountain Warrior tourney special.

"Definitely it wouldn't be possible without them," Bennett said. "They put everything together and make sure everything runs smoothly. . . . God bless them."

Bennett is one of a number of non-vet competitors on teams

at the tournament. The teams and tournaments are open to all. She was paralyzed at age 17 from the chest down after being struck by a car while riding her motorcycle. She had been a standout hockey player before her accident. She said sled hockey has been a saving grace. In addition to the Kingston team, she now plays goalie for the Canadian Women's National Para Hockey team.

Knights from Norwood's Monsignor Francis Maguire Council 2309 were also pitching in on the serving line at the Canton Knights' hall. The meatballs came from Sergi's Italian Restaurant and Pizzeria in town.

Sergi's is just one among a large number of area restaurants and eateries that contribute the fixings for both dinners and lunches.

Even the diocese gets in on the action, with Bishop Terry R. LaValley issuing a dispensation for Catholic diners for the meatball dinner served up on a Lenten Friday.

The Mountain Warrior Sled Hockey program was started in 2010 by Mark McKenna, a former Sarto Council grand knight and now a district deputy knight. He works as a civil engineer at Fort Drum and had seen firsthand the difficulties wounded soldiers had in trying to work out at base gyms.

His efforts to give wounded soldiers and vets a chance to compete in sled hockey has since blossomed into something much larger.

There is also now a Mountain Warrior youth sled hockey team. Some of its players were born with spina-bifida, a spinal deformity that can be debilitating. A wheelchair lacrosse team was also started. The Knights have aided both teams. And McKenna and local Knight volunteers were instrumental in the building of an adaptive boat launch for people with disabilities on the Grass River in Canton.

"It takes a lot of hands, but if you dream big and surround yourself with good people, great things happen," McKenna said.



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Funeral Mass celebrated for Bob Seymour

A Funeral Mass for Robert W. "Bob" Seymour was held at 11:00 AM on Saturday, March 8, 2025, at St. Mary's Cathedral, with his son, Father James "Jay" Seymour, and son-in-law, Deacon James Crowley officiating, along with various priests of the diocese concelebrating. Burial will take place in the spring at St. Mary's Cemetery.

Bob passed away surrounded by his loving family on Wednesday, March 5, 2025, at Claxton-Hepburn Medical Center. He was 100.

Bob was born on January 31, 1925, in Ogdensburg, a son of the late Lucien and Mary (Brannen) Seymour. He graduated from St. Mary's Academy in 1942 and continued his education at Canton ATC, where he earned a degree for heating, air conditioning and



Robert W. 'Bob' Seymour

plumbing. He served in the US Navy during WWII on the U.S.S. Guest DD472 in the Pacific. He married Clara A. Seguin on January 10, 1946, at St. Mary's Cathedral with Reverend Clarence Devan presiding. The couple was attended by his brother James Seymour and sister-in-law Rose Seymour.

He worked for 33 years

as a roofer and tinsmith at the St. Lawrence Psychiatric Center before retiring in 1987. In addition to his full-time job, Bob worked tirelessly in roofing, plumbing and heating in the community to support his family.

Bob was a devoted member of St. Mary's Cathedral, serving as a greeter at the church, and was active in the St. Vincent de Paul Society and the Nocturnal Adoration Society. His faith was the anchor of his life and extended into his role as a father, guiding his children with love and a strong moral compass.

Some of his favorite times were spent at his camp on the St. Lawrence River and in his garden trying to grow the perfect tomato. He also enjoyed time spent with cherished friends at the Sovie hunting camp.

Bob is survived by 13 of his children and their spouses, Paul and Joan Seymour of Mechanicville, New York, Mary Elliot of Fulton, New York, Barbara and George Kotz of Ogdensburg, Lawrence and Vilma Seymour of Mechanicsville, Virginia, Father James "Jay" Seymour of Gouverneur, Robert and Judy Seymour of Ogdensburg, John and Renée Seymour of Ogdensburg, Rose and John Gardner of Ogdensburg, Jean and Ronald Bassett of Camillus, New York, Ann Hanna of Baldwinsville, New York, Susan and Paul Duffy of Rouses Point, Rita and James Crowley of Ogdensburg, Andrew and Meloni Seymour of Plainfield, Illinois; 32 grandchildren, 35 great-grandchildren, three great-great-grandchildren; a sister, Ellen Bova; sisters in-law, Jan-

et Seymour and MaryEllen Seymour of Ogdensburg; along with many nieces, nephews and cousins.

He was predeceased by his beloved wife, Clara (Seguin) Seymour; their son, Joseph Seymour and his wife Darlene; sons in-law, John Elliott and Greg Hanna; as well as his sisters, Anna (Tom) DuPré and Marie (Bill) Morley; and his four brothers, James (Rose), Thomas (Barb), Lucien "David" and William Seymour; and brother-in-law, Louis (Sylvia) Seguin.

In lieu of flowers, please make memorial contributions to St. Mary's Cathedral or the Ogdensburg Boys and Girls Club.

Condolences and fond memories can also be shared online at www.foxandmurrayfuneralhome.com.

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Bishop's Public Schedule

March 19-21 – Seminarian Visit at Saint Vincent Seminary in Latrobe, Pennsylvania

March 22 – 11 a.m. – Vocational Discernment Holy Hour for Campus Ministry at St. Mary's Church in Canton
4 p.m. – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral followed by the Knights of Columbus Annual Bishop's Burse Dinner at the Martin Field Club Building Association, Inc. in Ogdensburg

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

11 a.m. – Mass at St. Joseph's Home in Ogdensburg

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

March 25 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

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



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Rest in Peace

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

March 19 – Rev. Andronique Blaignier, 1958; Msgr. Thomas J. Robillard, 2009

March 20 – Most Rev. Joseph H. Conroy, 1939

March 23 – Msgr. Paul T. Joly, 1987; Deacon David L. Clark, 2020

March 24 – Rev. George Rosk-witalski, O.F.M. Conv., 1980

March 25 – Rev. Michael D. Charbonneau, 1909

Protecting God's Children

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

March 24 – 1 p.m. – Diocesan offices, Ogdensburg

March 27 – 3:30 p.m. – St. Agnes School, Lake Placid

To Report Abuse

If you have a complaint of suspected misconduct involving diocesan clergy, religious, employees or volunteers, contact Victim Assistance Coordinator, Terrienne Yanulavich, Ph.D., LMHC, 5050 Route 374, Merrill, NY 12955; terriannyanulavich@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

Environmental Stewardship

Fasting from negative thoughts, actions

In our world, everything is interconnected as the Creator has fashioned a single, elaborate and living tapestry that weaves together all life. Divisiveness in society is rippling across this Divine masterpiece and is adversely impacting His handiwork.

During Lent, we are asked align our lives more closely to that of Jesus. Our thoughts and actions should reflect the understanding, compassion and peace of Our Lord rather than what our culture dictates. By improving our spiritual well-being, it is possible to help all of nature as well. Fasting from ideas and discussions based on fear, anger or ill-will toward another person or group can improve one's outlook on life. This leads to more joy, harmony and peace that radiates outward to all living entities nearby, helping them flourish.

Limiting exposure to news to only a few minutes a day help eliminate those negative ideas and beliefs that can lead to anxiety, hopelessness and depression. Remember that God is ultimately in charge, and fear and hatred can damage a heart that should be harboring love and peace.

At this time of year, people begin to plant seeds indoors. It can be an uplifting experience working in the soil and nurturing the sprouts that emerge. While it may be too early to go outside and begin yard work, it is never too early to work on our frame of mind and attitude toward the people around us. It has been said that "we can't expect peace in the world if there is war within our heart." We also can't expect a vibrant and fruitful environment if our soul is clogged and polluted with negative feelings and emotions. This Lent, we are asked to improve the wellbeing of our natural world by increasing the positive energy that we radiate to our surrounding.

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



Roman Catholic Diocese of Ogdensburg Report on Special Funds

A Letter From The Diocesan Fiscal Officer

A Message from Bishop Terry LaValley

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

I am pleased to provide this introduction to the *Report on Special Funds* for the Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2024. As is our custom, each year this report is published for your review. It completes our accounting of all those funds entrusted to the Diocese of Ogdensburg for the 2023-2024 Fiscal Year. These monies are set aside for special purposes and investments.



Your generous giving provides essential resources for the Diocese of Ogdensburg to proclaim the Gospel and minister faithfully to our sisters and brothers in Christ. Through economic distress and uncertain financial times, the people of the North Country continue to support generously our Church's various ministries. We are truly blessed! I am so grateful.

I especially wish to thank our Diocesan Fiscal Officer, Mark T. Mashaw, as well as our excellent fiscal staff for the careful manner in which they safeguard all the financial resources that have been entrusted to our Diocese, ensuring that they are used for the purposes intended. I am also grateful to the members of the Diocesan Finance Council and Investment Advisory Committee who meet regularly and offer their expert counsel in service to the Church of the North Country.

Please know of my sincere appreciation to all the members of our Diocesan family, particularly during these most challenging times. May Mary, under the title of the Immaculate Conception, our Diocesan Patroness, help us all to follow her Son as a people richly blessed.

Faithfully yours in Christ,

+ Terry R. LaValley

Most Reverend Terry R. LaValley
Bishop of Ogdensburg

The Diocesan Fiscal Office is pleased to present in the *North Country Catholic* the *Report on Special Funds* for the year ended June 30, 2024, along with comparisons to prior years. Special Funds are funds that the diocese holds for special purposes, such as Disability Insurance, Property and Liability Insurance, Missionary Projects, Priests' Retirement and Unemployment Insurance. Also included in Special Funds are funds that belong to diocesan institutions which have been forwarded to the diocese for investment, such as the Diocesan Trust Fund and the Deposit & Loan Fund. Information is included in this report for the Lay Employees' Retirement Trust. All Special Funds statements for 2023-24 presented herein except for the Lay Employees' Retirement Trust have been extracted from the audited financial report that was published in the February 19, 2025, issue of the *North Country Catholic*. The Lay Employees' Retirement Trust is a separate entity with its own audited financial statements and the 2023-24 information contained herein was obtained from those audited statements.

DIOCESAN TRUST FUND

As of June 30, 2024, the Diocesan Trust Fund had principal assets with a cost of \$25,060,984 and a market value of \$26,420,097. The investment portfolio had a positive rate of return of 8.68% in 2023-24. In the first six months of the 2024-25 fiscal year the Diocesan Trust Fund had a positive rate of return of 3.23%, and its market value was \$26,773,244 as of December 31, 2024. The diocese paid dividend distributions from the Fund in the amount of \$875,000 during the fiscal year, a rate of return of 3.39% on investments in the Fund.

DEPOSIT & LOAN FUND

The Deposit & Loan Fund had an increase of \$796,292 in its net assets in 2023-24, bringing its net asset balance to \$3,000,374. The interest rate paid to depositors was 0.5% for the entire fiscal year ending June 30, 2024. The interest rate on loans was 4% for the entire fiscal year. In the first six months of 2024-25 the Deposit & Loan Fund net assets increased by \$274,500. As of June 30, 2024, total deposits in the Fund, including diocesan central office monies, totaled \$12,554,151, and the balance of loan principal due the Fund amounted to \$5,725,348.

PROTECTED SELF-INSURANCE PROGRAM

Revenue exceeded expenses by \$274,261 in the Protected Self-Insurance Program in the fiscal year ended June 30, 2024. The program remains financially sound, as it has reserves for claims in the amount of \$1,096,076 and net assets of \$1,919,993 as of June 30, 2024. The program's reinsurance premium expense saw an increase of 10.8% in 2023-24.

LAY EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT TRUST

The Lay Employees' Retirement Trust had an increase in net assets of \$191,913 during the fiscal year ended June 30, 2024, increasing its total net assets to \$26,142,579. The investment portfolio had a positive rate of return of 10.35% in 2023-24. During the first six months of fiscal year 2024-25, Trust investments saw a

rate of return of 3.51%. On December 31, 2024, the market value of Trust investments was \$24,398,791. The Fund's July 1, 2024, actuarial valuation determined the Fund's funded status increased from 67.5% one year earlier to 69.0%. The Plan is 96.4% funded as it relates to covering obligations to current retirees. Diocesan employers contributed 12.26% of lay employee wages to fund the Plan in 2023-24 and will contribute 14.00% of wages in 2024-25.



UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE FUND

The Unemployment Insurance Fund had an increase in net assets of \$22,805 for the year ended June 30, 2024, bringing total net assets to \$362,023. Claims paid for the years ending June 30, 2024 and 2023 were \$11,508 and \$24,182, respectively.

MISSIONARY PROJECTS FUND

The Missionary Projects Fund had a decrease in net assets in the amount of \$9,697 for the year ended June 30, 2024, bringing its net assets to \$217,395. The Diocese of Ogdensburg continues to provide monthly financial support to its former mission in Mollendo, Peru, as well as other missions in the world as deemed appropriate by Bishop LaValley. Moneys are given to support the U.S. Bishops' annual appeal for Latin America. Additionally, with Bishop LaValley's approval, financial support is given from the Fund to urgent need collections taken at times of global emergency/crisis.

DISABILITY INSURANCE FUND

The Disability Insurance Fund had a deficit in the amount of \$8,717 for the year ended June 30, 2024. Claims paid were \$32,075 and \$13,596 for the years ended June 30, 2024 and 2023, respectively. Net assets of this Fund as of June 30, 2024, were \$284,418.

PRIESTS' RETIREMENT FUND

Net assets of the Priests' Retirement Fund decreased by \$316,613 during the year ended June 30, 2024. The Fund recorded investment income of \$232,511 and net gains on investments in the amount of \$494,001 in the fiscal year ended June 30, 2024. Support from Christmas collections was \$192,122, as compared to \$144,839 from the prior year. The Christmas collection contribution rate was 75% for the years ended June 30, 2024 and 2023.

The Diocesan Fiscal Office is available to answer any questions regarding the Report of Special Funds. Please feel free to call the Diocesan Fiscal Office at (315) 605-1031, email at mmashaw@rcdony.org or visit the Fiscal Office at 604 Washington Street in Ogdensburg during normal office hours.

Mark T. Mashaw

Mark T. Mashaw
Diocesan Fiscal Officer

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF OGDENSBURG

Diocesan Trust Fund Principal

January 1, 1977 - June 30, 2024

STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN PRINCIPAL

	January 1, 1977 - June 30, 2022	July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023	July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024	January 1, 1977 - June 30, 2024
Opening Book Balance	\$ -	\$ 26,334,866	\$ 25,231,938	\$ -
Net Deposits	10,793,571	(238,308)	91,917	10,647,180
Net Realized Gain on Sales	31,043,104	(161,218)	124,262	31,006,148
Fees [Custody/Management]	(3,836,628)	(247,247)	(257,175)	(4,341,050)
Transfers to Pay Dividends	(15,753,027)	(875,000)	(875,000)	(17,503,027)
Net Adjustments*	4,087,846	418,845	745,042	5,251,733
Closing Book Balance	\$ 26,334,866	\$ 25,231,938	\$ 25,060,984	\$ 25,060,984
Market Value	\$ 24,978,769	\$ 25,198,221	\$ 26,420,097	\$ 26,420,097

* Includes income reinvested for fund, funds in transit, etc.

	06/30/24 Book Value	06/30/24 Market Value
NBT BANK INVESTMENTS		
Bonds & U.S. Government Agencies & Bond Funds	\$ 8,768,882	\$ 8,161,028
Equities & Equity Funds	7,499,416	9,397,665
Real Estate and Real Estate Trusts	665,572	700,185
Money Market	412,217	412,217
TOTAL NBT BANK INVESTMENTS	17,346,087	18,671,095
CHRISTIAN BROTHERS INVESTMENT SERVICES		
Bond Funds	2,013,427	1,766,545
Equity Funds	4,972,122	5,318,095
TOTAL CHRISTIAN BROTHERS INVESTMENT SERVICES	6,985,549	7,084,640
DIMENSIONAL FUND ADVISORS	626,000	605,665
THE INVESTMENT FUND FOR FOUNDATIONS	103,348	58,697
TOTAL INVESTMENTS	\$ 25,060,984	\$ 26,420,097

Deposit & Loan Fund
For the Years Ending June 30, 2024 and 2023

BALANCE SHEET

	June 30, 2024	June 30, 2023
ASSETS		
Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$ 489,615	\$ 19,990
Interest Receivable	75,620	63,948
Notes Receivable - Borrowers	5,725,348	2,946,757
Reserve	(480,000)	(590,000)
Investments	11,194,651	15,382,859
Investment - Collateral Account	898,091	860,844
Due From Operating Fund	-	-
TOTAL ASSETS	\$ 17,903,325	\$ 18,684,398
LIABILITIES AND FUND BALANCE		
Notes Payable - Depositors	\$ 12,554,151	\$ 14,990,466
Accrued Interest Payable	4,401	6,910
Due to Operating Fund	2,344,399	1,482,940
Fund Balance	3,000,374	2,204,082
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND FUND BALANCE	\$ 17,903,325	\$ 18,684,398

STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENSE

	July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024	July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023
INCOME		
Interest on Notes Receivable	\$ 89,495	\$ 97,561
Investment Income	411,271	469,183
Unrealized Gain (Loss) On Investments	15,980	492,111
Realized Gain (Loss) On Investments	382,318	(308,352)
TOTAL INCOME	899,064	750,503
EXPENSES		
Interest on Notes Payable	64,717	127,236
Investment Management Fees	88,843	103,412
Fiscal Office Administration	58,807	79,094
Office Supplies	405	231
Increase (Decrease) in Reserves	(110,000)	(110,567)
Departmental Grant	-	-
TOTAL EXPENSES	102,772	199,406
EXCESS (DEFICIT)	\$ 796,292	\$ 551,097

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF OGDENSBURG

Diocesan Protected Self-Insurance Program

July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2024

BALANCE SHEET

	June 30, 2021	June 30, 2022	June 30, 2023	June 30, 2024
ASSETS				
Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$ 14,625	\$ 16,519	\$ 20,127	\$ 19,492
Investments	892,072	968,178	972,799	1,014,889
Accounts Receivable	256,044	313,377	388,282	561,824
Due From Operating Fund	1,175,093	875,547	771,437	816,948
BPIC Member Share	405,474	443,028	389,818	470,868
Stock in NCRRG	132,248	132,248	132,248	132,248
TOTAL ASSETS	\$ 2,875,556	\$ 2,748,897	\$ 2,674,711	\$ 3,016,069
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS				
Unearned Insurance Premium	\$ 900	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Reserves For Claims	1,117,487	1,074,031	1,028,979	1,096,076
Net Assets	1,757,169	1,674,866	1,645,732	1,919,993
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	\$ 2,875,556	\$ 2,748,897	\$ 2,674,711	\$ 3,016,069

STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN NET ASSETS

	July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021	July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2022	July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023	July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024
INCOME				
Earned Premiums	\$ 2,005,894	\$ 2,176,614	\$ 2,295,865	\$ 2,445,163
Net Gain (Loss) On Investments	119,911	(2,990)	(48,589)	122,941
Department Grant	725,000	100,000	-	-
Investment Income	15,278	-	-	-
TOTAL INCOME	2,866,083	2,273,624	2,247,276	2,568,104
EXPENSES				
Reinsurance Premiums and Bonds	1,127,332	1,215,779	1,365,787	1,512,777
Professional Services	113,050	32,483	79,507	70,929
Gallagher Bassett Service Fee	30,425	35,888	43,588	26,672
Adjustment in Reserves	30,177	(43,456)	(45,052)	67,097
Self-Insured Claims	1,308,321	713,813	503,625	283,671
NYS Compensation Board Assessments	33,128	31,965	27,540	26,598
Department Grants	104,938	115,689	117,404	114,351
Grants	-	80,000	-	-
Diocesan Administration	162,764	173,766	184,011	191,748
TOTAL EXPENSES	2,910,135	2,355,927	2,276,410	2,293,843
EXCESS (DEFICIT)	\$ (44,052)	\$ (82,303)	\$ (29,134)	\$ 274,261

Diocesan Protected Self-Insurance Program -Claim Payment and Reserve Experience

As of June 30, 2024

Policy Year	Claims	Reserves	Total	Losses In Excess of Specific Retention	Losses In Excess of Aggregate Retention	Net Claims	Maximum Amount Single Claim	Maximum Amount Aggregate Claims
2023-24	\$ 127,332	\$ 49,497	\$ 176,829	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 176,829	\$ 250,000	\$ -
2022-23	331,505	82,276	413,781	-	-	413,781	250,000	-
2021-22	471,299	36,908	508,207	-	-	508,207	250,000	-
2020-21	151,243	31,846	183,089	-	-	183,089	250,000	-
2019-20	163,265	2,029	165,294	-	-	165,294	250,000	-
2018-19	183,820	58,221	242,041	-	-	242,041	250,000	-
2017-18	523,780	-	523,780	-	-	523,780	250,000	-
2016-17	159,622	-	159,622	-	-	159,622	250,000	-
2015-16	291,154	-	291,154	-	-	291,154	250,000	-
2014-15	6,030,681	-	6,030,681	5,286,008	-	744,673	250,000	-
2013-14	492,859	-	492,859	-	-	492,859	250,000	-
2012-13	379,292	-	379,292	-	-	379,292	250,000	-
2011-12	371,607	-	371,607	-	-	371,607	250,000	-
2010-11	787,328	-	787,328	242,768	-	544,560	250,000	-
2009-10	176,267	182,113	358,380	96,712	-	261,668	250,000	-
2008-09	605,358	-	605,358	-	-	605,358	250,000	850,000
2007-08	321,690	-	321,690	-	-	321,690	250,000	850,000
2006-07	192,555	-	192,555	-	-	192,555	250,000	815,000
2005-06	554,178	26,202	580,380	118,000	-	462,380	250,000	815,000
2004-05	726,961	-	726,961	92,090	-	634,871	250,000	815,000
2003-04	759,922	-	759,922	199,816	-	560,106	250,000	780,000
2002-03	802,835	138,053	940,888	446,294	-	494,594	250,000	750,000
2001-02	275,460	-	275,460	22,193	-	253,267	125,000	525,000
2000-01	299,143	-	299,143	-	-	299,143	125,000	500,000
1999-00	302,681	-	302,681	-	-	302,681	125,000	500,000
1998-99	329,654	-	329,654	-	-	329,654	125,000	500,000
1997-98	551,728	-	551,728	105,085	-	446,643	125,000	500,500
1996-97	478,202	-	478,202	98,570	-	379,632	125,000	583,500
1995-96	301,341	-	301,341	-	-	301,341	125,000	550,000
1994-95	779,580	10,289	789,869	290,902	9,497	489,470	125,000	475,000
1993-94	1,210,293	102,464	1,312,757	681,080	-	631,677	125,000	450,000
1992-93	326,553	-	326,553	-	-	326,553	75,000	355,000
1991-92	233,464	-	233,464	-	-	233,464	75,000	355,000
1990-91	92,322	-	92,322	-	-	92,322	75,000	355,000
1989-90	190,546	-	190,546	-	-	190,546	75,000	330,000
1988-89	175,616	-	175,616	-	-	175,616	75,000	330,000
1987-88	217,604	-	217,604	38,762	-	178,842	75,000	300,000
1986-87	189,446	-	189,446	-	-	189,446	75,000	300,000
1985-86	56,965	-	56,965	-	-	56,965	75,000	260,000
1984-85	160,034	-	160,034	-	-	160,034	75,000	260,000
1983-84	109,584	-	109,584	-	-	109,584	75,000	260,000
1982-83	184,852	-	184,852	18,990	-	165,862	75,000	260,000
1981-82	103,136	-	103,136	-	-	103,136	75,000	260,000
1980-81	323,071	-	323,071	112,199	-	210,872	75,000	225,000
1979-80	1,106,650	376,178	1,482,828	1,138,968	61,207	282,653	75,000	212,000
1978-79	40,498	-	40,498	-	-	40,498	75,000	212,000
1977-78	153,930	-	153,930	36,879	-	117,051	50,000	150,000
1976-77	61,217	-	61,217	-	-	61,217	50,000	150,000
1975-76	63,403	-	63,403	-	-	63,403	50,000	150,000
	\$ 22,921,526	\$ 1,096,076	\$ 24,017,602	\$ 9,025,316	\$ 70,704	\$ 14,921,582		

MARCH 19, 2025

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF OGDENSBURG

Diocesan Lay Employees' Retirement Trust

July 1, 2022- June 30, 2024

BALANCE SHEET

	June 30, 2024	June 30, 2023	June 30, 2022	June 30, 2021
ASSETS				
Cash & Investments	\$ 25,758,048	\$ 25,742,890	\$ 25,943,250	\$ 32,003,511
Receivables	384,531	221,176	127,070	19,389
TOTAL ASSETS	\$ 26,142,579	\$ 25,964,066	\$ 26,070,320	\$ 32,022,900
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS				
Accounts Payable	\$ 4,300	\$ 17,700	\$ -	\$ 24,646
Deferred Revenue	-	-	19,286	-
Net Assets Available for Benefits	26,138,279	25,946,366	26,051,034	31,998,254
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	\$ 26,142,579	\$ 25,964,066	\$ 26,070,320	\$ 32,022,900

STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN NET ASSETS

	July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024	July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023	Sept. 1, 1967 - June 30, 2023	Sept. 1, 1967 - June 30, 2024
ADDITIONS				
Employer Contributions	\$ 1,520,290	\$ 1,326,476	\$ 32,022,514	\$ 33,542,804
Department Grants	-	-	500,000	500,000
Net Gain (Loss) on Investments	1,834,311	1,654,822	29,668,994	31,503,305
Investment Income	688,679	659,084	21,818,390	22,507,069
TOTAL ADDITIONS	4,043,280	3,640,382	84,009,898	88,053,178
DEDUCTIONS				
Benefit Payments	3,529,916	3,473,271	50,760,811	54,290,727
Administrative Expense	321,451	271,779	7,302,721	7,624,172
TOTAL DEDUCTIONS	3,851,367	3,745,050	58,063,532	61,914,899
NET ADDITIONS (DEDUCTIONS)	\$ 191,913	\$ (104,668)	\$ 25,946,366	\$ 26,138,279
CASH & INVESTMENTS			<u>Book Value</u>	<u>Market Value</u>
Money Market Funds			\$ 1,074,900	\$ 1,074,900
United States Treasury Notes and Bonds			1,230,738	1,173,190
Fixed Income Bond Funds			5,398,639	4,823,098
Stocks			8,316,459	9,706,438
Equity Funds			7,755,711	8,501,548
Real Estate Investment Trusts			536,874	478,874
TOTAL CASH & INVESTMENTS - JUNE 30, 2024			\$ 24,313,421	\$ 25,758,048

Diocesan Lay Employees' Retirement Trust

Annual Amounts (Book and Market Value) of Investments

	Book Value	Market Value
August 31, 1968	\$ 32,855	\$ 33,344
August 31, 1969	105,040	97,828
August 31, 1970	167,236	144,704
August 31, 1971	244,322	248,784
August 31, 1972	328,375	341,430
August 31, 1973	397,979	357,121
August 31, 1974	442,091	374,519
August 31, 1975	485,652	502,393
August 31, 1976	651,402	661,536
August 31, 1977	746,759	758,276
June 30, 1978	907,676	873,290
June 30, 1979	1,091,077	1,066,747
June 30, 1980	1,333,304	1,240,533
June 30, 1981	1,637,330	1,468,851
June 30, 1982	1,966,375	1,685,948
June 30, 1983	2,332,800	2,766,951
June 30, 1984	2,866,861	2,832,430
June 30, 1985	3,314,597	3,748,256
June 30, 1986	4,200,610	5,189,275
June 30, 1987	5,686,447	6,363,937
June 30, 1988	6,280,104	6,713,049
June 30, 1989	6,849,652	7,569,606
June 30, 1990	7,716,476	8,434,613
June 30, 1991	8,285,622	8,951,313
June 30, 1992	9,025,501	10,401,337
June 30, 1993	11,107,406	11,674,275
June 30, 1994	11,653,168	12,127,575
June 30, 1995	12,338,738	13,734,082
June 30, 1996	13,031,227	15,645,877
June 30, 1997	14,013,279	18,380,013
June 30, 1998	15,646,840	21,676,585
June 30, 1999	16,243,415	24,534,082
June 30, 2000	19,524,488	27,831,969
June 30, 2001	21,013,619	23,928,041
June 30, 2002	21,362,600	20,539,549
June 30, 2003	19,524,488	20,622,313
June 30, 2004	22,017,665	22,691,214
June 30, 2005	22,914,541	24,896,701
June 30, 2006	24,356,734	27,020,395
June 30, 2007	25,561,685	30,677,000
June 30, 2008	27,564,499	28,332,067
June 30, 2009	23,030,416	20,674,813
June 30, 2010	21,625,470	21,322,358
June 30, 2011	22,640,200	25,259,933
June 30, 2012	23,074,757	24,490,221
June 30, 2013	23,845,778	26,396,267
June 30, 2014	25,462,694	29,928,554
June 30, 2015	26,826,022	28,222,277
June 30, 2016	25,720,923	26,053,449
June 30, 2017	25,237,149	27,056,268
June 30, 2018	25,528,622	27,862,188
June 30, 2019	25,317,161	27,946,496
June 30, 2020	23,751,808	26,961,397
June 30, 2021	24,452,357	31,966,518
June 30, 2022	27,441,964	25,918,815
June 30, 2023	25,694,597	25,742,890
June 30, 2024	24,313,421	25,758,048

Diocesan Unemployment Insurance Fund

For the years ending June 30, 2024 and 2023

BALANCE SHEET

	June 30, 2024	June 30, 2023
ASSETS		
Due From Operating Fund	\$ 358,888	\$ 336,083
Prepaid Expenses	3,135	3,135
TOTAL ASSETS	\$ 362,023	\$ 339,218
LIABILITIES AND FUND BALANCE		
Fund Balance	\$ 362,023	\$ 339,218
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND FUND BALANCE	\$ 362,023	\$ 339,218

STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENSE

	July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024	July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023
INCOME		
Unemployment Premiums	\$ 61,144	\$ 65,136
Net Gain (Loss) on Investments	-	3,245
Investment Income	-	4,509
TOTAL INCOME	61,144	72,890
EXPENDITURES		
Claims Paid	11,508	24,182
Consultant	6,270	6,270
Diocesan Administration	20,561	19,406
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	38,339	49,858
EXCESS (DEFICIT)	\$ 22,805	\$ 23,032

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF OGDENSBURG

Missionary Projects/Ogdensburg

For the Years Ending June 30, 2024 and 2023

STATEMENTS OF RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS

	July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024	July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023
RECEIPTS		
Diocesan OPA Collection	\$ 44,618	\$ 20,350
Interest	1,564	2,066
TOTAL RECEIPTS	<u>46,182</u>	<u>22,416</u>
EXPENDITURES		
Administrative	25	110
Grants and Donations	55,854	34,973
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	<u>55,879</u>	<u>35,083</u>
EXCESS (DEFICIT)	(9,697)	(12,667)
FUND BALANCE - BEGINNING OF YEAR	<u>227,092</u>	<u>239,759</u>
FUND BALANCE - END OF YEAR	<u>\$ 217,395</u>	<u>\$ 227,092</u>

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF OGDENSBURG

Diocesan Disability Benefits Program

For the Years Ending June 30, 2024 and 2023

BALANCE SHEET

STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENSES

	June 30, 2024	June 30, 2023
ASSETS		
Cash & Money Market Funds	\$ 4,804	\$ 5,255
Due From Operating Funds	279,614	287,880
TOTAL ASSETS	<u>\$ 284,418</u>	<u>\$ 293,135</u>
LIABILITIES AND FUND BALANCE		
Fund Balance	\$ 284,418	\$ 293,135
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND FUND BALANCE	<u>\$ 284,418</u>	<u>\$ 293,135</u>

	July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024	July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023
INCOME		
Premiums	\$ 67,892	\$ 71,397
TOTAL INCOME	<u>67,892</u>	<u>71,397</u>
EXPENSES		
Claims Paid	32,075	13,596
Fiscal Office Administration	44,534	40,224
TOTAL EXPENSES	<u>76,609</u>	<u>53,820</u>
EXCESS (DEFICIT)	<u>\$ (8,717)</u>	<u>\$ 17,577</u>

MARCH 19, 2025

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF OGDENSBURG

Priests' Retirement Fund

For the Years Ending June 30, 2024 and 2023

STATEMENTS OF INCOME AND EXPENSE

	July 1 2023 - June 30, 2024	July 1 2022 - June 30, 2023
INCOME		
Share of Christmas Collection	\$ 192,122	\$ 144,839
Diocesan Assessment	67,507	68,517
Bequests and Donations	24,926	13,330
Investment Income	232,511	221,700
Net Gain (Loss) on Investments	494,001	400,678
TOTAL INCOME	<u>1,011,067</u>	<u>849,064</u>
EXPENSES		
Payments to Retired Priests	974,375	978,628
Retired Priests' Health Insurance	246,201	255,066
Diocesan Administration	107,104	169,937
TOTAL EXPENSES	<u>1,327,680</u>	<u>1,403,631</u>
NET INCOME (LOSS)	(316,613)	(554,567)
FUND BALANCE - BEGINNING OF YEAR	<u>8,520,680</u>	<u>9,075,247</u>
FUND BALANCE - END OF YEAR	<u>\$ 8,204,067</u>	<u>\$ 8,520,680</u>

FIFTY-SIX YEAR SUMMARY
JUNE 30, 2024

	1968-2024	
ADDITIONS		
Share of Christmas Collection	\$ 9,433,392	
Assessment Per Priest	1,487,280	
Diocesan Assessment	954,208	
Donations in Lieu of Christmas Collection	417,891	
Bequests and Donations	3,096,760	
Investment Income	8,513,626	
Net Realized & Unrealized Gains on Investments	15,027,348	
Self-Insurance Fund Grant	90,000	
Loan Account Interest	119,839	
Loan Account Grant	30,000	
TOTAL ADDITIONS		\$ 39,170,344
DEDUCTIONS		
Payments to Retired Priests	23,561,197	
Retired Priests Health Insurance	4,449,469	
Diocesan Administration	2,955,611	
TOTAL DEDUCTIONS		<u>30,966,277</u>
FUND BALANCE - June 30, 2024		<u>\$ 8,204,067</u>

PRIESTS' RETIREMENT FUND ASSETS

	Book Value	Market Value
Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$ 218,707	\$ 218,707
Accounts Receivable	7,749	7,749
Due from (to) Operating Fund	(258,818)	(258,818)
Interest Receivable	14,551	14,551
Equities	1,257,867	1,567,270
Equity Funds	2,895,168	3,103,247
Government Bonds	1,664,411	1,494,304
Corporate Bonds	588,227	564,224
Bond Funds	1,463,153	1,317,741
Real Estate Funds	190,834	175,092
TOTAL ASSETS - June 30, 2024	<u>\$ 8,041,849</u>	<u>\$ 8,204,067</u>

Priests' Retirement Fund

The Fund Balance has Accumulated as Follows:

The Fund Balance Has Accumulated As Follows:

1968	\$ 17,501
1969	10,330
1970	20,579
1971	19,266
1972	27,915
1972-1973	5,071
1973-1974	18,329
1974-1975	55,741
1975-1976	44,466
1976-1977	36,976
1977-1978	54,046
1978-1979	66,582
1979-1980	133,680
1980-1981	113,243
1981-1982	22,235
1982-1983	99,794
1983-1984	173,959
1984-1985	30,889
1985-1986	153,453
1986-1987	111,359
1987-1988	204,215
1988-1989	188,567
1989-1990	226,549
1990-1991	143,441
1991-1992	445,497
1992-1993	272,881
1993-1994	463,490
1994-1995	491,107
1995-1996	960,060
1996-1997	1,021,061
1997-1998	408,417
1998-1999	829,004
1999-2000	719,110
2000-2001	660,810
2001-2002	(1,184,839)
2002-2003	330,281
2003-2004	1,009,257
2004-2005	693,493
2005-2006	722,134
2006-2007	1,178,509
2007-2008	(1,037,245)
2008-2009	(1,814,311)
2009-2010	92,957
2010-2011	1,351,135
2011-2012	(403,955)
2012-2013	632,958
2013-2014	1,249,004
2014-2015	(400,661)
2015-2016	(1,078,531)
2016-2017	610,631
2017-2018	4,466
2018-2019	(268,245)
2019-2020	58,453
2020-2021	1,397,322
2021-2022	(2,317,189)
2022-2023	(554,567)
2023-2024	<u>(316,613)</u>

FUND BALANCE - JUNE 30, 2024

\$ 8,204,067

CALLED TO SERVE

Joseph, the father of Jesus

The feast of St. Joseph is March 19.

St. Joseph has always fascinated me. We know so little about him.

Joseph was living and working in Nazareth according to one of the Gospels and was betrothed to Mary. I gather they made a nice couple.

Then one day an angel told Mary she was pregnant. She and Joseph have not consummated their marriage, so she finds the announcement suspect. The pregnancy was willed by God according to the angel. Mary has faith in God and His messenger. She says, "Be it done to me according to your word."

"Don't worry, be happy!" Apologies to lyricist Bobby McFerrin.

Joseph's initial reaction was not "happy." He sees the possibility of scandal in that village of Nazareth, indeed in all of southern Galilee where he works. How can he and Mary not worry? He thinks about divorcing Mary even before their wedding ceremony.

That's when he has his own Annunciation. Joseph believes in God too, but the angel's suggestion that he accept Mary as she is, pregnant by the Holy Spirit, and get on with life is a bit much to ask.

Joseph is a craftsman with a reputation to consider. How much work will there be for a guy considered gullible enough to buy the pregnancy story his fiancée is offering?

He swallows hard and accepts the news offered by God's messenger.

I imagine Joseph thinking, "no one is going to

believe this!"

That is part of my fascination with Joseph. We imagine his reaction to circumstances. We imagine the most plausible narrative for the earthly father of the Savior of the World. We put together our best possible character design for Joseph.

Frankly, we are not smart enough to guess what God is thinking.

If Joseph was that important, why weren't the four Gospel writers inspired to attribute

any dialogue to Joseph?

We do not know what motivated him to take Mary with him 90 miles to Bethlehem when she was due to deliver the child. We do not know how he reacts to Jesus' birth in a barn. We have no idea what family life was like for Joseph, Mary and Jesus for almost 20 years of Jesus' life.

It is safe to assume Joseph died at some point during the formative years of Jesus' life. I don't think we know how, or where or



Deacon
Kevin Mastellon

when.

But we do know that Joseph was a good man, a good husband, a good father. Otherwise, God would not have chosen Joseph to protect and love his family and help Mary raise their child, our Lord.

In 2020, Bishop Terry LaValley presided as the Diocese of Ogdensburg was consecrated to St. Joseph's protection. At that time, Bishop said, "We place before him

some urgent needs of our Church, our families and marriages, our communities, our country, nations of the world, and all our hurting sisters and brothers. We will put St. Joseph to work for us."

He did then; we pray he does today.

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

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**United States Bankruptcy Court
for the District of Vermont
In re Roman Catholic Diocese
of Burlington, Vermont, Case No. 24-10205-HZC**

**Claims Notice for Survivors of Sexual Abuse and Others
With Claims Against the Roman Catholic Diocese of
Burlington, Vermont**

If you were sexually abused by any person connected with the Diocese, a Catholic parish, or Catholic school within the geographic area of the Diocese, or have any claim against the Diocese, you must file a claim by **April 4, 2025**.

For more diocesan information: visit vermontcatholic.org

For the bankruptcy docket: visit <https://case.stretto.com/diocesefofburlington>

For U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the District of Vermont information: visit vtb.uscourts.gov

For advice about your rights: contact an attorney

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Special Olympics World Winter Games held

By Francesca Pollio Fenton
Catholic News Agency

More than 1,500 athletes from 100 global delegations competed in Turin, Italy, in the Special Olympics World Winter Games 2025, which ran from March 8-15. One of the largest inclusive sports events of the year, the games mark the first World Winter Games since 2017.

Eight sports were included in this year's Special Olympics World Winter Games: alpine skiing, cross-country skiing, dance sport, figure skating, floorball, short track speed skating, snowboarding, and snowshoeing.

Under the theme of "The

Strength of Kindness," the opening ceremony took place on March 8 with four athletes carrying the Special Olympics flag into the arena: Luca De Pierie, snowboarder from Special Olympics Italy; Meena Almazrouei, snowboarder from Special Olympics United Arab Emirates; Shirnel Swarts, speed skater from Special Olympics South Africa; and Yueming Dong, cross country skier from Special Olympics China.

One notable figure in attendance was Usha Vance, wife of U.S. Vice President JD Vance, who flew into Turin with the American delegation.

The Special Olympics Flame of Hope was brought into the

arena by seven athletes, each representing one of the seven regions of the Special Olympics. The Flame of Hope was lit in a ceremony in Athens, Greece, on Feb. 25 and from there went on a journey, passing through several Italian cities before arriving at the opening ceremony in Turin.

Along its journey, the Flame of Hope made a stop at the Vatican, where it was blessed by Monsignor Orazio Pepe, secretary of the Fabric of St. Peter, the office that deals with renovations and monuments in the famous basilica.

During the opening ceremony, Tim Shriver, Special Olympics Board chairman, said:

"These athletes want to change your life and make you more joyful, tougher, and more brave than you ever imagined. Let them rub off on you! They will not fail."

Special Olympics Europe Eurasia Sargent Shriver Global Messenger Gilmour Borg added: "We will not leave these competitions just as athletes but as champions ready for the next challenge — to show everyone outside of Special Olympics that they should believe in us too."

In the United States, the Special Olympics World Winter Games was shown on ESPN, ESPN+, ESPN3, and on ESPN Sports Center.

'The Last Supper' film depicts Jesus' last days

By Francesca Pollio Fenton
Catholic News Agency

"The Last Supper" is a new movie depicting the ultimate act of divine love and sacrifice told through the eyes of those who walked alongside Jesus Christ. Mauro Borrelli, a Catholic, served as the film's writer and director and award-winning Christian artist Chris Tomlin was the film's executive producer, marking Tomlin's first time stepping into theatrical filmmaking.

The film will be released on March 14 in theaters across the United States.

Borrelli and Tomlin spoke to CNA about the inspiration behind the film and what they hope viewers will take away from it, especially given its release during Lent.

The inspiration for the film came from Leonardo Da Vinci's famous painting of the Last Supper. Borrelli had the idea to shoot an entire movie in one room depicting

this historical moment; however, as he began to write the script, the story quickly began to expand.

"I was really passionate about the idea of expanding such an important moment of the Eucharist," Borrelli told CNA. "People go to church all the time, they receive Communion, and they hear those words, 'This is my body,' and it's such an important moment but they don't have many images to connect [to it]. So I said, 'I want to expand that.'"

The Catholic director pointed out how important he felt it was to make the movie "as plausible and accurate" as possible. In order to do this, he did a great amount of research and delved into the Gospels and the Torah.

After watching the film himself, Tomlin felt inspired to get involved in any way he could and use his platform to help spread the word about the movie.

"It's so well done, it's so beautifully done, and it's so biblically right on the money. It just brings God's word to life and it's not Hollywood," Tomlin told CNA. "I was really moved by the way it was done."

Not only does Tomlin serve as executive producer, but also his new song, "No Greater Love," will also be featured in the film. He shared that he wrote the song before getting involved with the film, but once he was working on it he was asked if he had any songs that might work to include. He told them he had just written a song he hadn't played for anyone yet. After playing them a demo they all thought "it was spot on ... It was like I'd watched the movie and wrote the song."

Another aspect that both Borrelli and Tomlin touched on is the portrayal of Judas in "The Last Supper." In many films, Judas is typically not shown too much up until the point of be-

trayal. However, in "The Last Supper" Judas has a more prominent role and viewers get to know him better.

Borrelli explained that he wanted to show that "Judas was not the evil guy."

"Judas, for me, is not a bad guy. He's just a guy that was taken by Satan and was not strong enough to step out from that. But also, he was part of a divine prophecy. So, he's needed," he said.

Tomlin touched on the point that "Jesus loved him [Judas] even though he knew he'd betray him and I just think people are going to find that there's something powerful about seeing it brought to life this way."

To this point, Borrelli added that he felt that there is a "metaphorical representation of people today" in the representations of Peter and Judas.

"So, two people that at a certain point reach a moment where their

direction can be lost but one goes the wrong direction and doesn't find a way to come out from that — that's Judas — and the other one finds a way to step out. So there is hope," he explained.

Borrelli said he hopes this representation is something viewers take away from the film and that "we're all human beings and we can all fail, but we have to keep our faith burning and [not] lose hope."

"I hope people are reminded that Jesus invites you to the table," Tomlin shared. "He invites you to come and he wants a relationship with you, and that's powerful."



CATHOLIC WORLD AT A GLANCE

Holy See's UN delegation to address scourge of pornography

The Holy See's delegation to the United Nations is organizing a March 19 event in conjunction with the 69th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women titled "The Scourge of Pornography in the Digital Age." This event will address the social impact resulting from the widespread availability of pornographic content on the internet and will take place at the U.N. headquarters in New York. The conference will feature experts in law, psychology, and pastoral care who will analyze the social consequences of pornography, especially for women and children. Speakers will include Archbishop Gabriele Caccia, permanent observer of the Holy See to the United Nations; Julia Dezeliski, associate director for marriage and family life at the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' (USCCB) Secretariat of Laity, Marriage, Family Life, and Youth; Maria Parker, assistant director for the laity at the secretariat; and Eleanor Kennelly Gaetan, vice president and director of public policy at the National Center on Sexual Exploitation. Also participating will be Teresa Gerns Jiménez-Villarejo, representative of the Federation of Catholic Family Associations in Europe; and Marissa Eckelkamp, policy adviser on marriage and family at the USCCB. The event coincides with the 30th anniversary of the publication of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, a resolution adopted by the United Nations on Sept. 15, 1995, at the conclusion of the Fourth World Conference on Women. The document recognized the harmful effects of pornography on women and girls: fostering violence and reinforcing degrading portrayals.

Wyoming governor signs bill to bolster religious freedom

Wyoming Gov. Mark Gordon, a Republican, signed legislation late last week to bolster religious freedom from state-level rules and regulations. The Wyoming Religious Freedom Restoration Act, which mirrors the federal law with the same name, prohibits the state government and local governments from enacting any policies that "substantially burden a person's right to the exercise of religion" in most cases. It also creates a framework for people to sue government entities that violate this policy. With the adoption of this law, Wyoming becomes the 29th state to enact these protections at the state level. Most Republicans in the state Legislature supported the bill, and Democrats were split on the legislation. Under the bill, which goes into effect July 1, a "burden" is defined as any action that directly or indirectly "constrains, inhibits, curtails, or denies the exercise of religion." A "burden" includes, but is not limited to, withholding benefits, assessing administrative penalties, exclusion from government programs, or the denial of access to government facilities. This protection applies to all state and local laws, ordinances, rules, regulations, and policies even if they are already in place. It applies to rules that are generally applicable to the public, which grants more assurances for religious freedom exemptions when universal rules could threaten a person's exercise of his or her religion.

Trump NIH nominee calls for alternative to aborted fetal tissue research

By Kate Quiñones

Catholic News Agency

President Donald Trump's nominee for director of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) said in his confirmation hearing last week that he was "absolutely committed" to finding alternatives to vaccines developed using aborted fetal cell lines.

When asked whether he would prohibit the use of aborted fetal tissue in NIH-funded research, Stanford University medical school professor and health economist Dr. Jay Bhattacharya said he would follow the lead of President Trump and Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. on the issue.

Bhattacharya then said he would seek ethical alternatives to using medical research based on cell lines taken from fetal tissue harvested from aborted babies decades ago, earning him praise from Catholic bioethicists.

Trump's pick for NIH director said the issue came up during the development of the COVID-19 vaccines when many pro-life advocates were concerned that abortion-derived cell lines were being used in developing the vaccines.

"In public health, we need to make sure the products of science are ethically acceptable to everybody," Bhattacharya said. "And so having alternatives that are not ethically conflicted with fetal cell lines is not just an ethical issue, but it's a public health issue. We need to make sure that everyone is willing to take the kinds of progress we make, and so I'm absolutely committed to that."

Many research labs use pre-established cell lines that were made from aborted fetal tissue. The original cell lines were designed to replicate themselves, meaning that cell lines are no longer made up of fetal tissue. Because aborted fetal tissue was used to create them, bioethicists and Catholic leaders have voiced ethical concerns about fetal cell lines.

COVID-19 vaccines were made using these pre-established cell lines. While scientists didn't directly use aborted fetal tissue, they used a cell line created from it.

The U.S. bishops and the Vatican at the time encouraged alternatives that were not related to abortion where possible, while noting that if no other options were available, it could be morally

justified to receive a vaccine made by the pre-established fetal cell lines.

In 2019, the Trump-Pence administration effectively banned federally-funded research conducted on aborted fetal tissue — a move that the Biden administration quickly undid.

The first Trump administration also established an NIH Fetal Tissue Research Ethics Advisory Board which was lauded by the U.S. bishops in 2020 after the board recommended against federal funding of 13 research proposals using fetal tissue.

Father Tad Pacholczyk, a Catholic priest, neuroscientist, and senior ethicist at the National Catholic Bioethics Center, shared his hopes that the current Trump administration would resume and strengthen its previous efforts to eliminate the use of aborted fetal tissue.

Pacholczyk, who served on the NIH's Fetal Tissue Research Ethics Advisory Board during the first Trump administration in 2020, recalled that members of the board offered "almost unanimous recommendations to decline funding for research proposals that relied on cell lines and tissues derived from abortions."

"Most of the grant proposals that sought to use fetal tissues from abortions were not approved by the committee," Pacholczyk noted, largely because of ethical concerns, informed consent procedures, and the availability of ethical alternatives.

"As far as I am aware, no prior administration has ever taken such intentional steps to restrict the use of fetal cells derived from direct abortions in research," Pacholczyk said. "These important efforts to eliminate their use in research need to continue, and it is my hope that the returning administration will strengthen these efforts."

However, Pacholczyk also expressed his concern about the Trump administration's handling of COVID-19, noting that taxpayer dollars went into the development of COVID-19 vaccines "that relied upon abortion-derived cells for their production or testing, without employing its own ethics advisory board."

The use of fetal cell lines was controversial, with the U.S. bishops clarifying that it could be morally acceptable to use a vaccine with a connection to aborted fetal tissue if there were no alternatives.

Bishops call for donations to CRS

By Tessa Gervasini
Catholic News Agency

The U.S. bishops are highlighting what they describe as the "very urgent significance" of this year's annual Catholic Relief Services (CRS) collection due to the loss earlier this year of federal aid for refugees and migrants.

"Each year the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) comforts and assists people worldwide who suffer from war, natural disasters, violent persecution, or extreme poverty," the bishops said in a Monday statement.

"That work is possible because of contributions to the Catholic Relief Services Collection," they said.

Bishop Daniel Mueggenborg, the chairman of the USCCB's Committee on National Collections, noted that the U.S. government earlier this year "abruptly suspended funding for its refugee resettlement program and then terminated cooperative agreements for such work, impacting thousands of refugees that the government has placed in charge of the USCCB for resettlement assistance."

CRS has been scrambling for funding since the Trump administra-

tion in January ordered major cuts to foreign aid and refugee programs. The USCCB previously urged Catholics to take action by asking members of Congress to halt the cuts.

"And with similarly abrupt stop-work orders on foreign humanitarian relief work, aid organizations such as Catholic Relief Services are unable to sustain their work overseas, bringing food, lifesaving medicine, and daily necessities to people in need," Mueggenborg said.

CRS said in January that U.S. foreign aid "provides lifesaving assistance in emergencies and supports long-term development programs that help families and communities build resilience, reducing the need for humanitarian aid in the future."

As well, "because of the funding suspension, the USCCB and its local partner organizations have begun laying off dozens of employees, and this has irreparably damaged the USCCB's partnerships with local groups and its ability to provide refugee assistance in the future," the bishops said.

The USCCB said the funds from the collection will help Catho-

lic Relief Services to "provide disaster relief and economic development initiatives among the developing world's poorest people."

In addition, the collection will help the pastoral needs of Catholics across cultures

and fuel advocacy and outreach on behalf of the poor. The bishops said the collection will also assist victims of war and persecution who are fleeing to the U.S. and will provide legal aid to refugees and migrants.

"Donations to this year's collection will be vital to the Catholic initiatives to reveal Christ's love to those in need," the statement concluded.

The collection will be taken up on the weekend of March 29-30.

The Diocese of Ogdensburg

NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

WEEKLY NEWSPAPER FOR THE DIOCESE OF OGDENBURG

Bringing you
Hints of Hope
during this Jubilee Year of Hope



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VIRTUAL EVENTS

LENTEN PODCAST

Join Father Chris Looby for a special Lenten podcast series titled From Sorrow to Hope.

Date: The series will begin on March 10 and conclude on March 14.

Features: This five-part series will focus on the Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary and reflect on how Christ's Passion leads us to the ultimate hope of the Resurrection. Each episode will include scripture, prayer, and powerful reflections to guide listeners in deepening their faith during this sacred season. New episodes will be available daily on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, and Amazon Music/Podcasts. Join Father Chris as we walk the Lenten journey together from the sorrow of the cross to the joy of new life in Christ.

Contact: For more info visit <https://sites.google.com/view/from-sorrow-to-hope>

FRIENDSHIP GROUP MEETING

You are invited to our next Friendship Group Meeting, How to Experience Life-Changing Conversations.

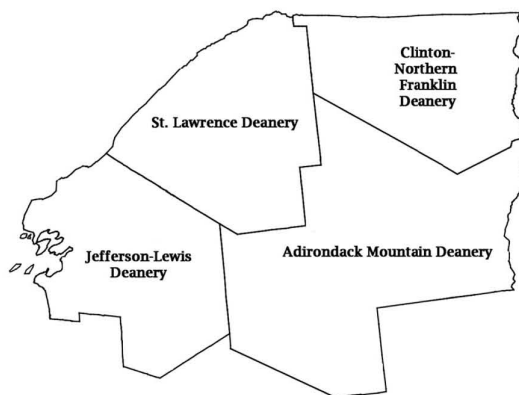
Date: March 27

Time: 7 p.m.

Place: Zoom

Features: In our final discussion on "Sacred Conversations," Father Craig MacMahon, OMV will guide us through chapter six to the end, and break open "how-to" tools for application, including the "Rules of the Road," and conversation starters to help you use these to improve your life and help people in need.

Contact: The book "Sacred Conversations" may be ordered at sophiainstitute.com. Enter Friendship25 at the checkout to receive 25% off. 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



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

Parishioners are invited to send information about activities to:

North Country Catholic, PO Box 326,

Ogdensburg, NY 13669

e-mail news@northcountrycatholic.org.

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

ADIRONDACK MOUNTAIN

SPIRITUAL CARE COMPANION TRAINING

Lake Placid – Mercy Care for the Adirondacks is holding training for its new Spiritual Care Companion Volunteer Program.

Date: March 19

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

Features: Mercy Care is launching its new Spiritual Care Companion Volunteer Program, in collaboration with Jane Stratton, parish nurse educator, and Christine Voce, St. Agnes Church outreach coordinator. A Mercy Care Spiritual Care Companion Volunteer will receive training to accompany an elder on their spiritual journey who may be experiencing loss, grief, distress, transitions in living circumstances, joys or blessings. The Spiritual Care Companion Volunteer serves as a caring presence and compassionate listener to issues of concern by being fully present in mind, heart, and soul to the elder's experience of loneliness, pain, struggle, or joy in telling their story. Lunch will be provided.

Cost: There is no cost, but registration is required.

Contact: To register, please visit Mercy Care's website by clicking on this link <https://www.adkmercy.org/event/spiritual-volunteer-training-march19/>

or contact Lexi Bevilacqua, Mercy Care's Program and Mission Integration Director, at abevilacqua@adkmercy.org or call Lexi for more information at 518-523-5446.

EUCHARTISTIC HOLY HOUR

Ticonderoga – St. Mary's Church will be holding a Eucharistic Holy Hour for Vocations.

Date: April 3

Time: 5 p.m.

Features: St. Mary's Church has been designated as a pilgrimage location for the Jubilee Year of 2025. All are welcome to attend this Holy Hour and visit our church as a Pilgrim of Hope.

CLINTON NORTHERN FRANKLIN

FISH FRY

Plattsburgh – Holy Cross to have Fish Fry's during Lent.

Date: Starting March 7

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

Place: Holy Cross Parish Center

Cost: \$15 dine in

Menu: Haddock, fries, mac & cheese, coleslaw, roll with butter, beverage & dessert.

Contact: For more information call the parish office at 518-563-0730

LENTEN FISH FRIES

AuSable Forks – Come join the AuSable Forks Knights for the best fried fish in the North Country.

Date: March 21 and April 4

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

Place: Holy Name Parish Center

Cost: Adults, \$15, Children under 12, \$10

Features: Take-outs Available.

TAIZE PRAYER

Plattsburgh – Taize prayer service to be held.

Date: March 27

Time: 7 p.m.

Place: Our Lady of Victory Church

Features: Gather around the Cross for prayer this Lent.

JEFFERSON-LEWIS

CORNED BEEF & CABBAGE

Constableville – St. Mary's Youth Group will host a St. Patrick's Day corned beef and cabbage dinner.

Date: March 17

Time: 4 p.m. to 7

Place: Parish hall on James Street, Constableville

Features: Dine in or take out. Be served by members of the youth group as they raise funds for their activities, including monthly family fun nights.

Cost: \$12 for adults, \$6 for kids under 10.

Contact: For more information or to make a donation, call Jean Lieber at the parish office, 315-348-6104.

FRANCISCAN RETREAT

Watertown – The St. Joseph of Cupertino Fraternity will be hosting a prayerful and spiritual Franciscan Retreat.

Date: March 23

Time: 2 p.m.

Place: St. Patrick's Church

Features: Guest Speaker will be Sr. Pat Larkin, OFS – Regional Spiritual Assistant at the Kateri Tekakwitha Region OFS. Refreshments will be served following the meeting. All are welcome!

Contact: Any questions for more information, contact Marcia Rittenhouse: 315-788-7573

SPAGHETTI DINNER

Watertown – St. Anthony's Altar and Rosary Society is sponsoring

a spaghetti dinner.

Date: March 27

Time: 4 p.m. to 7

Place: Downstairs in St. Anthony's church in Msgr. Sechi Hall

Cost: Adult, \$12; Child, \$8

Features: Take-outs available, please bring your own container.

Contact: For more information contact the Parish Center at 315-782-1190

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: April 6

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: April 12

Time: 4 p.m. to 7

Place: St. Mary's Parish Center

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

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

Contact: For more information call 315-629-4678

PANCAKE BREAKFAST

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: April 13

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

PRAYER AND REFLECTION

Clayton - All are invited to come

MARCH 19, 2025

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 20

to St. Mary's Church for Exposition, Adoration, Morning Prayer, and the Rosary. Opportunity for Confession is also available.

Date: Each Sat. March 8 to April 12

Time: 10 a.m.

Features: In addition to our own intentions, we will pray for Seminarian Tyler Fitzgerald who will be ordained to the Diaconate this May.

Contact: For more information contact the parish office at 315-686-3398.

SSJ LENTEN RETREAT

Watertown — Register now for the annual Sisters of St. Joseph Lenten Retreat.

Date: April 13

Time: 2 p.m. to 4

Place: St. Anthony's Church

Features: Join us for an afternoon of prayer as we reflect on our call to be "Witnesses of Hope" Sister Ellen Rose Coughlin, SSJ, Diocesan Director of Catholic Education. There will also be Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, time for prayer, and an opportunity for the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Contact: register by emailing Sister Mary Eamon Lyng, smelyngssj@yahoo.com or Sister Bethany Fitzgerald srbethssj@gmail.com.

ST. LAWRENCE

FISH FRY

Gouverneur — Every Friday during Lent St. James School will have a Fish Fry.

Date: March 7 and every Friday through Lent.

Time: 4:30 p.m. until gone

Cost: \$15, Eat in or take-out

Features: Dinner includes fried fish, choice of macaroni and cheese or french fries, cole slaw, dinner roll, beverage and your choice of dessert.

Contact: Gouverneur area delivery available. Call 315-287-0130

ALPHA

Massena — You are invited to Alpha.

Date: March 25

Time: 6 p.m. to 8:30

Place: St. Mary's Social Hall

Features: Join us for a free meal and great conversations as we explore life and faith.

Contact: For more information contact the Parish office 315-769-2469 or www.massencatholics.com

LENTEN DAY OF MERCY

Canton — St. Mary's Church will be hosting a Lenten Day of Mercy.

Date: March 26

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

Features: Confessions will be heard in the Divine Mercy Chapel. A schedule of confessors will be made available closer to the date at cantonicatholics.com

Contact: For more information email cantonsec@rcdony.org or (315)386-2543

ACIES

Ogdensburg — The Legion of Mary will present the ACIES ceremony.

Date: March 30

Time: After the 11 a.m. Mass

Place: St. Mary's Cathedral

Features: ACIES means ARMY DRESSED IN BATTLE OF ARRAY in Latin and demonstrates the Legion mission to unite with the Blessed Virgin and stand against evil. Prayers, music and hymns in the sanctuary followed by refreshments. Anyone who loves our Blessed Mother is invited.

MONTHLY BRUNCH

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

Date: April 13

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.

DIOCESAN EVENTS

WOMENS DISCERNMENT

Canton — Come and join Bishop

LaValley and the Campus Ministers to learn more about "The Call to Holiness and Mission."

Date: March 22

Time: 11 a.m.

Place: St. Mary's Church

Features: It is a call to "Let Go, Let God" fill our lives with His love, joy, peace as Pilgrims of Hope in this Jubilee Year. Any young woman 18-30 years old are welcome to attend. Holy Hour and Luncheon after presentation. Sponsored by the Vocation Office.

Contact: If you are interested in attending, register at <https://www.rcdony.org/womensluncheon>.

PRIESTHOOD DISCERNMENT

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

Place: St. Mary's Church, Canton

Dates: 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. For more information, contact Father Howard Venette — hvenette@rcdony.org

CONSECRATION OF DIOCESE

Bishop LaValley is inviting those from across the Diocese and beyond to prepare for the diocesan Consecration to the Eucharist by reflecting on the book 33 Days to Eucharistic Glory. Many parishes are making copies of this book available.

Date: The countdown to the Consecration begins on March 24. Take home your free copy today and invite others to participate!

Features: Several parishes across the diocese will be holding small-group discussions on the book. If you have questions about

starting a small group, please contact Deacon Bill O'Brien at billob315@gmail.com or (315) 528-0461.

Contact: For more information about The Holy Eucharist: "Highway to Hope" event on April 26 at St. Agnes Church and School and Lake Placid, where Bishop LaValley will lead the faithful in the diocesan Consecration to the Holy Eucharist, visit <https://www.rcdony.org/jubilee2h>.

SURVIVING DIVORCE

Watertown — If you or someone you know is separated or divorced and looking for hope and healing, please consider joining us for the Surviving Divorce Program. We are now accepting registrations for sessions held at the Watertown location.

Date: Tuesdays starting March 18

Time: 6:30 p.m.

Place: In school behind St. Anthony's Church

Cost: \$25

Contact: For more information or help with registering, please contact Steve Tartaglia at 315-393-2920 startaglia@rcdony.org.

ENGAGING FAMILIES

Massena — Spring LEAD event to be held for Parishioners already engaged in or who would like to be trained in how to engage families, how to engage in adult faith formation and the OCIA process.

Date: April 5

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

Place: St. Mary's Social Hall
Contact: Register at www.rcdony.org/leadevent. For more information contact Cathy Russell at 315-393-2920 or crussell@rcdony.org

CHRISM MASS

Ogdensburg — All the faithful of the Diocese of Ogdensburg are invited to join Bishop LaValley in the annual Renewal of Priestly Commitment, the Blessing of the Holy Oils, and the consecration of the Sacred Chrism for use in all the churches of our Diocese.

Date: April 10

Time: 11 a.m.

Place: St. Mary's Cathedral

Features: This ritual symbolizes that we are one family in Christ. All are welcome to attend. Those unable to participate in person may view the Mass via livestream at <https://www.rcdony.org/livemass>.

JUBILEE YEAR OF HOPE EVENT

Lake Placid — "The Eucharist is my highway to heaven." In honor of Carlo Acutis, the soon-to-be canonized teenager of Italy, the Diocese of Ogdensburg is hosting a day of Miracles, Prayer, and Hope.

Date: April 26

Time: 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Place: St. Agnes Church and School

Features: Pray with our Eucharistic Lord with Catholics from around our diocese, explore an exhibit of Eucharistic miracles, and join Bishop Terry R. LaValley for a special Holy Hour of Hope, including a procession with Jesus among the faithful and consecration of the Diocese of Ogdensburg to the Eucharist. There will also be opportunities for attending Mass, talks, all-day Adoration and confession. This event is for whole families.

Contact: The event schedule, prayer resources, bulletin blurbs, and more information may be found on the Jubilee page of the Diocesan website at <https://www.rcdony.org/jubilee2h>.

CLM RETREAT

Ogdensburg — All Commissioned Lay Ministers and Candidates are invited to register for the CLM retreat.

Date: May 2 — 4

Place: Wadhams Hall

Cost: Single, \$240.00 pp; Double, \$190.00 pp; Suite (double bed), \$220.00 pp; Suite, \$340.00 pp; Commuter, \$100. All costs include all meals.

Speaker: Father Leagon Carlin

Contact: Register at www.rcdony.org/ffmretreat

SUNDAY'S SCRIPTURE

How we approach God

Shoes are an interesting phenomenon. We need the right shoes to do the right things. We have everyday shoes, basketball shoes, golf shoes, fishing boots, winter boots, hiking boots, and be-on-your-feet-all-day shoes. You wouldn't wear bowling shoes to play lacrosse, of course not. We pick the best shoes for the best purpose so that we can do what we want when we want and master our game. Shoes give us the freedom to do what we want. If I took off my shoes right now, I would be limited in what I could do.

The first reading, the story of the burning bush, is one of the most familiar stories in the Old Testament. Moses approaches the burning bush, and the voice tells him to take off his shoes. WHY? Commentators tell us that removing shoes demonstrates respect. There is more. Having no shoes makes us vulnerable, limits our motion, restricts what we can do. In a way, without shoes, we lose control. Moses is about to learn that in the presence of God, he is now subject to God, and shoes are not needed.

That is exactly how we should approach God. He is in control. Faced with God, we listen as did Moses in the story of the burning bush. Sure, as did Moses, we can ask questions and seek answers, but, again, as with Moses, without our shoes, we are not really in control.

God wanted Moses to do two things. God wanted to show forth his mercy, and God wanted Moses to be an instrument of God's mercy.

God wanted to save his people and wanted Moses to lead in that saving act. The people needed saving since they lived in oppression and slavery. God wanted a human mediator to bring his mercy to his people.

God offers us this mercy whenever we ask for it. Even though mercy is free for the asking, but asking is the key.

Some have a hard time asking for God's mercy because they don't experience a need for God's mercy. Mercy makes no sense unless we recognize our need for mercy, that need for God in our lives.

If we neglect to reach out for God's mercy, then we neglect to make ourselves into his true sons and daughters. If we have shied away from God's mercy because we feel as if we're doing the same things over and over again, all the more need for God's healing touch of mercy. Remember the story of the unproductive tree in the gospel. The caretaker wanted to make sure that the tree was given another chance. We are like that tree. We can always be given another chance. We just need to reach out for God's mercy.

God's mercy does not end there. God asked Moses to act as an instrument of that mercy among his people. So, too, we are called upon to be instruments of God's mercy to those around us: the ones we like and the ones we don't like. We find it difficult to give someone a break if we, ourselves, have not been the recipients of mercy, especially God's mercy.

The season of Lent is

March 23

Third Sunday of Lent

READINGS

Exodus 3:1-8a, 13-15

1 Corinthians 10:1-6, 10-12

Luke 13:1-9

an excellent opportunity to search into our lives and realize our need for God's mercy. Once rec-

ognizing the need, then approach God, especially in the sacrament of Reconciliation and ask for that forgiveness. In life, when we have been given another chance, we experience great relief and overall calm. So, too, when we reach out for God's mercy, our lives will be filled with peace beyond all understand-

ing. Experience mercy so that in turn you may become beacons of mercy to others.

Remember the shoes, we do not have to remove them physically, but it helps to remove them spiritually and emotionally. After all, face to face with God without shoes, there is very little chance of running away.



Msgr. Robert H. Aucoin



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"Let us hasten to pursue paths of peace and fraternity. Let us rejoice at the concrete signs of hope that reach us from so many countries."—Pope Francis, "Urbi et Orbi" Message, April 9, 2023

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How You Can Help

PRAY

Pray for the Holy Father, for those he serves in compassion, and for the ongoing activities of the Holy See, all of which benefit from the Peter's Pence Collection.

SHARE

Share this bulletin insert with anyone who might be interested.

GIVE

Give generously to this collection as a sign of mercy to those who suffer around the globe and of your support for the ongoing work of the Holy See. By doing so, you help build up the Church so that it can minister to all for generations to come.



Peter's Pence Collection | Office of National Collections | www.usccb.org/nationalcollections
3211 Fourth Street NE | Washington, DC 20017-1194 | (202) 541-3346 | Fax (202) 541-3460

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**Special Collection to be held with CRS March 29 & 30
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

'We are also the sheep'

This is part four of our series covering the lives of those living in the slums of Argentina. This article is written by Ines San Martin, the vice president of Marketing and Communications in the Pontifical Mission Societies' national office in New York City. She is a native of Argentina.

In Monte Quemado, ministers of the Eucharist like Jorge and Roberto play a crucial role in supporting the elderly and disabled.

"I know that what I do is important, and I am honored to be able to do it," said Roberto. "It is time-consuming, yes. But I cannot think of a better thing for me to do with my 'free time.' I still remember Monsignor Gotteau bringing the Eucharist to my mother when she was bedridden and the joy this caused in her. To know that today I get to do that for others makes the sacrifices worth it." Inspired by Gotteau's example, they work tirelessly, knowing that, like him, they are building more than a community – they are building the Church.

Theirs was supposed to be a three-year assignment, renewable for another three. They have brought the Feast to people's homes for over 15 years, and Father Juan has already told them that they should plan on helping until they cannot physically do it anymore.

"And I'm fine with that," said Jorge. "It's often said that only women go to Church, but we are proof that this is not true!"

In the nearby community of Los Tigres, Hilda Catan considers herself blessed: Along with her husband, in the home where they raised nine children and today raise two of their 17 grandchildren, they have no running water, no one in this community does, but they do have electricity. They are one of five families, among the 300 that live in this conglomerate of homes, that can say the same.

Father Juan, along with a lay missionary woman, visits this community every Tuesday. They have a WhatsApp group through which the missionary shares the Sunday Gospel with them and then they discuss what it means for them.

When we visited them, they discussed the Parable of the Lost Sheep. In the words of one of the women, it is important to remember that "yes, we're called to be shepherds and evangelize. But we cannot forget that we are also the sheep. Sometimes, we're one more of the flock, others we are the sheep leading the flock, and other times we are the lost sheep, the one that has to be found, and this is okay. We need to remember that God does not leave us just because we might fall or sin. He chooses to be by our side, even when we get lost, and if he gave his life because he loved us, how could he not forgive our sins?"

MASS WITH THE CLASS



On March 2, a Community Mass for Special Religious Education was held at St. Anthony's Church in Watertown. Bishop Terry R. LaValley celebrated Mass with program participants. The liturgy featured two lectors, Chip Yott and Anderson Stenard (not pictured), as well as two servers, catechist Beverly Williams and Jeffrey Deline. A group of 11 students from the Special Religious Education on-site programs attended the Mass. A reception followed.

OBITUARIES

Alexandria Bay – Anne Maura McAloon, 63; Mass of Christian Burial March 11, 2025 at St. Cyril's Church.

Cape Vincent – Alton Anthony Germain Jr., 79; Memorial Mass at St. Vincent de Paul Church March 14, 2025.

Cape Vincent – Doris (Cornwell) Wiley, 96; Mass of Christian Burial March 8, 2025 at St. Vincent of Paul Church.

Clayton – Lillian "Lee" (Bowes) Perkins, 94; Mass of Christian Burial; March 13, 2025 at St. Mary's Church; burial in St. Mary's Cemetery.

Dannemora – George Jones, 56; Mass of Christian Burial March 14, 2025 at St. Joseph's Church.

Gabriels – Thomas John Buckley, 85; Mass of Christian Burial May 24, 2025 at Church of the Assumption; burial in Mountain View Cemetery.

Hogansburg – Dorothy Ann Lazore Karihwenhawe, 77; Mass of

Christian Burial March 12, 2025 at St. Regis Church.

Hogansburg – Richard H. "Resis" Phillips, 80; Mass of Christian Burial March 10, 2025 at St. Regis Church; burial in St. Joseph's Cemetery.

Lake Placid – Donna Marie (Fox) Sullivan; Mass of Christian Burial March 28, 2025 of St. Agnes Church.

Massena – Elli K. (Drews) Weinrich, 90; Mass of Christian Burial March 7, 2025 at Church of the Sacred Heart; burial in Calvary Cemetery.

Ogdensburg – Mary "June" (Peters) Farrell, 91; Mass of Christian Burial March 15, 2025 at Notre Dame Church; burial in Notre Dame Cemetery.

Ogdensburg – Martha A. Halpin, 83; Mass of Christian Burial March 13, 2025 at St. Mary's Cathedral; burial in St. Mary's Cemetery.

Ogdensburg – Ola A. (Larose) King, 96; Memorial Mass May 9,

2025 at St. Mary's Cathedral; burial in St. Mary's Cemetery.

Plattsburgh – Carolyn (Kelly) Harding, 89; Mass of Christian Burial March 22, 2025 at St. Peter's Church; burial in Holy Name Cemetery, AuSable Forks.

Rouses Point – Louise Irene (Bouchard) Perry, 87; Mass of Christian Burial March 7, 2025 at St. Patrick's Church.

Rouses Point – Emma Irene (Decosse) Savage, 91; Mass of Christian Burial March 14, 2025 at St. Patrick's Church.

Ticonderoga – Carol J. (Delaney) Cring, 87; Mass of Christian Burial June 14, 2025 at St. Mary's Church; burial in St. Mary's Cemetery.

Tupper Lake – Anne Marie (Disotell) Whittum, 95; A Mass of Christian Burial March 21, 2025 at St. Alphonsus Church.

Watertown – Robert G. Osier, 90; Mass of Christian Burial March 15, 2025 at St. Patrick's Church.



Adoration in the Diocese of Ogdensburg

The following is a list of Adoration hours and sites across the Diocese of Ogdensburg. If your parish offers Eucharistic Adoration or if this information is incorrect email news@rcdony.org

Holy Angels Church, Altona

After 8 a.m. Mass
Dedicated to Vocations and the church

St. Patrick's Church, Brasher Falls

Wed. & Fri. 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

St. Mary's Church, Canton

Tues. 4:10 p.m. to 5:10
Fri. 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. ending with Divine Mercy Chaplet

St. Vincent of Paul, Cape Vincent

First Friday of the month

St. James Church, Carthage

Wed., 3 p.m. to 6
Thurs., 10 a.m. to 11
First Friday, 10:15 a.m. to
7 a.m. Saturday morning

St. Patrick's Church, Chateaugay

Wed. 5 p.m. to 6, Adoration
First Friday 8:30 a.m., Communion
Service followed by Adoration for
Vocations

All Saints Church, Chaumont

First Thursday of the month 3 p.m.

Sacred Heart Church, Chazy

At various times as needed, please
contact parish 518-846-7650 for more
information

St. Mary's Church, Clayton

First Fridays after 9 a.m. Mass

St. Francis of Assisi, Constable

Second Friday of the Month, 5 p.m. to 6

St. Mary's Church, Constableville

First Fridays 6 p.m.

St. Stephen's Church, Croghan

First Friday, 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 including
prayer for Vocations

St. Joseph's Church, Dannemora

Wed. & Fri. 11 a.m. before noon Mass

St. Elizabeth's Church, Elizabethtown

Summer 9 a.m. to 10
Winter 11 a.m. to 12 p.m.

St. Edmund's Church, Ellenburg

Monday after 5:30 p.m. Mass

St. Mary's of the Fort, Fort Covington

Tues. 5 p.m. to 6, Sat. 9 a.m. to 10
except when it's a First Saturday

St. Hedwig's Church, Houseville

First Sunday following 11 a.m. Mass

Immaculate Conception, Keeseville

Sun, 1 p.m. to 4

St. Agnes Church, Lake Placid

Tues 1 p.m. to 5:30,
Vocations Emphasized

St. Peter's Church, Lowville

First Friday of the month with
intention to Vocations

St. Bernard's Church, Lyon Mountain

First Friday of the month after 9 a.m. Mass

St. Peter's Parish, Massena

Held at Sacred Heart Church
Thursday 12:45 p.m. to 1:45
First Friday 2 p.m. to 6

St. Ann's Church, Mooers Forks

after 8 a.m. Mass
Dedicated to Vocations and the church

St. Augustine Church, North Bangor

Thurs. 10 a.m. to 11 a.m.

St. Andrew's Church, Norwood

Fri after 8:30 a.m. Mass until noon

St. Mary's Cathedral Parish, Ogdensburg

Entryway for the Deacon Winter Chapel
Thurs. before First Friday from 7 p.m. to 8
Adoration each Wed. 3 p.m. to 6 and
Fri. 10:45 a.m. to 11:45 a.m.

St. John's Church, Plattsburgh

Holy Family Basement
Wed., Thurs., Fri., 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.

St. Martin's Church, Port Leyden

Rectory Chapel
Wed. Mornings after Mass for 30 minutes

St. Mary's Church, Potsdam

Tues. 12:45 p.m. to 4:30
First Friday 8:30 a.m. to 9:30

Church of the Assumption, Redford

Tues. & Thurs. 11 a.m. before noon Mass

St. Ann's Church, St. Regis Falls

First Saturday, following 4:30 anticipated
Mass

St. Andrews Church, Sackets Harbor

Fri. 3:30 p.m. to 4:30

St. Alphonsus-Holy Name of Jesus

Parish, Tupper Lake

Monday 7 p.m. to 8

Holy Family Church, Watertown

Monday's following noon Mass

Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Church, Watertown

1 hour prior to Mass, First Friday of the
Month

St. Anthony's Church, Watertown

First Sunday of the Month 2 p.m. to 3

St. Patrick's Church, Watertown

Every Thurs. after Noon Mass until 7 p.m.

St. Ann's Church, Wells

Half an hour after Sunday Mass every
Third Sunday of the month.

St. Philip Neri Church, Westport

Half Hour every other Fri. (before Mass
Winter/after Mass Summer)

St. Philip of Jesus, Willsboro

Full Holy Hour on First Fridays (before
Mass Winter/after Mass Summer)

'Lord, I am not worthy'



FROM WONDERING TO WONDER IN WORSHIP

With Father Bryan Stitt, Diocesan Director of Worship

Editor's Note: In celebration of the Eucharistic Revival, Father Bryan D. Stitt, director of Worship for the Diocese of Ogdensburg, will answer questions about worship, the Eucharist and related topics. To submit a question, email bstitt@rcdony.org.

At each Mass we say, "Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed." Can you explain why we say this?

Great question. Thanks for asking. I have three answers:

1. This phrase from the Mass is almost an exact quote of the Roman centurion who asked for the Lord to heal his servant. When Jesus offers to come and heal the boy, the soldier responds he is not worthy to have Jesus enter his home. Instead, please "say the word and my servant shall be healed." It's always good to remember that almost every line of the Mass comes from the scriptures. We are invited to make these words our own.

2. With the phrase of "under my roof" we are not advocating for wooden headgear! Instead, we are reminding ourselves that each of us is a living structure – a temple of the Holy Spirit. (cf. 1 Corinthians 6:19). We are to be dwelling places for the Lord in the world. What a wonderful world it would be if each of us could remember this. "How lovely is your dwelling place, Lord God of Hosts" (Psalm 84:2).

3. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, this line from the Mass is a call for us to reflect on an essential truth of the spiritual life: we are not worthy of the Lord. That goes right in the face of the Stuart Smalley-like world view that "I'm good enough. I'm smart enough. And doggone it, people like me." In the Christian life, it's not all about me. It's about what the Lord does in me; it's His Word that gives me worth, dignity and value. And doggone it, that's great news!

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