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The Diocese of Ogdensburg Volume 79 Number 43

# NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

MARCH 5, 2025

## Follow me: 'Recalculating' for Lent

*Bishop Terry R. LaValley offers his homily for Ash Wednesday.*

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I mean, isn't Lent about taking an honest look at where I am presently, realizing that too often that I'm on the wrong track?

FULL STORY, PAGE 3

## DOORS OPEN ON SMALL CHURCH



PHOTO BY KEITH BENMAN/NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

**James Beckstead points out some of the detail within a model of Sacred Heart Church on display at the Massena Museum. The replica of the church has more than 100 tiny pews, each with kneelers that fold up and boxes for hymn books. Full story on Page 5.**

## GOING ON PILGRIMAGE



As the Year of Hope unfolds, local Catholics are excited about upcoming pilgrimage opportunities in the North Country and beyond. Diocesan passports are available to track the pilgrimage sites visited in our diocese. Several priests are also leading European pilgrimages in honor of the Jubilee Year. Learn more about both the available pilgrimage opportunities.

FULL STORY, PAGE 4

# Hospitalized pope reflects on pilgrims of hope

**By Kristina Millare**  
Catholic News Agency

Pope Francis on Feb. 26 asked Catholics to have the wisdom to look for the presence of God in our midst like the elderly Simeon and Anna in the New Testament.

In his second catechesis since being admitted into Rome's Gemelli Hospital nearly two weeks ago.

Pope Francis showed more signs of recovery on Feb. 27, but more time is needed to determine his medical prognosis.

"Due to the complexity of the clinical picture, further days of

clinical stability are needed to clarify the prognosis," the Vatican said Thursday.

The Holy See Press Office confirmed the pope's health is "improving" as he continues to undergo high-flow oxygen therapy, using a mask, as well as respiratory physiotherapy sessions.

The Vatican said the Holy Father dedicated time Thursday afternoon to "prayer in the chapel of his private apartment on the 10th floor [of Gemelli Hospital], where he received the Eucharist. He then engaged in work activities."

In his weekly catechesis, the

Holy Father reflected on the presentation of Jesus in the Temple and the Lord's encounter with two elderly "pilgrims of hope."

"The song of redemption of two elders thus emits the proclamation of the jubilee for all the people and for the world," the pope shared in his written commentary on St. Luke's Gospel.

"Hope is rekindled in hearts in the Temple of Jerusalem because Christ our hope has entered it," he continued.

The 88-year-old pontiff emphasized that both Simeon and Anna were people of prayer and worship, with "clear eyes" ca-

pable of recognizing God in the child Jesus and welcoming him into their lives.

"Simeon embraces that child who, small and helpless, rests in his arms; but it is he, in fact, who finds consolation and the fullness of his existence by holding him to himself," the pope said.

"Filled with this spiritual consolation, the elderly Simeon sees death not as the end but as fulfillment, fullness; he awaits it like a 'sister' that does not annihilate but introduces to the true life that he has already foretasted and in which he believes," he added.

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USPS 0039-3400**Bishop Terry**  
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# The best product possible

"It doesn't bother you to have people picking apart your work while you sit there?"

A mentor asked me that question after I told her I've discovered that I absolutely love group editing projects.

"I recently wrote a draft of a document, and two other women and I went through it line by line and discussing and editing until we had a document we all thought was exactly how it was supposed to be. It was so much fun!"

**Darcy L. Fargo**

That's when she asked me that question.

Why did she ask me if it bothered me? Because this woman knows me well enough to know that I sometimes don't react the best when someone suggests something I did/said/made/wrote... wasn't good.

"I guess I can put aside my ego at least a little bit for projects like this. I think it's partly that I love discussing language and grammar, and it's partly that I want this project to

be successful, and I want us to put out the best product possible."

It struck me that we had that conversation exactly a week before Ash Wednesday.

I've been dreading Lent. Lent often feels heavy to me. There's so much focus on sinfulness, and, like my mentor noted, I don't really like focusing on the less-than-great parts of myself.

While maybe not as much fun as editing a document, God is calling me to look at the Lent as an opportunity to set aside my ego and go through my life line by line with Him

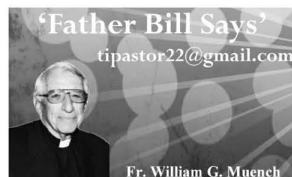
discussing and editing my thoughts and actions until I'm who I'm supposed to be.

It's an opportunity to allow God to move me even the tiniest step closer to being the best person I can possibly be, a person who loves and serves God, and a person who loves and serves others.

God also reminded me that it's often easier to do that - to become who were supposed to be - when we do it together, cooperating and supporting one another.

Maybe Lent doesn't bother me as much as I thought.

## Still practicing



I frequently wander through that YouTube site on the computer. I find it interesting that there is a coverage there of the celebration of the Holy Mass each day. You can find the celebration of the Mass from several different parishes in our country - even other countries.

Today, I settled on the daily Mass from St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City. Cardinal Dolan was the celebrant; he preached the homily. The Gospel reading at the Mass was from Mark 9. A man comes to Jesus seeking a healing for his son. The man says to Jesus, "But if you can do anything have compassion on us and help us." Jesus responds to him, "If you can! Everything is possible to one who has faith." Then the boy's father cried out, "I do believe, help my unbelief." We are told that Jesus healed the boy.

In his homily, Cardinal Dolan says that most of us, Catholics, probably would answer in the same

way as this man - "I do believe, help my unbelief." Cardinal Dolan then reminds us that it is very common for Catholics often describe a "good Catholic" as a "practicing Catholic."

Cardinal goes on to say that following Jesus - living according to his message - is indeed about practicing. I believe that Lent is a perfect time for practicing the living out of our Catholic faith. We know that practicing is an important part of many activities - like, say, basketball. To be a good player a person has to practice and practice and practice. And, as you know, this is true of all the other sports.

Lent offers us so many opportunities for us to practice; we become prac-

ticing Catholics. Lent keeps us on the proper way to becoming saints. Each year, Lent challenges us to spend more time in prayer. It's time to practice being with the Lord in prayer. Lent challenges us to fast - practicing exercising our will power. It's time to exercise control over our life. Lent challenges us to give up something, usually something we really like, but now is the time to practice giving up something for Jesus. And freeing ourselves to do something, reaching out to others in need, making ourselves better Catholics, making our world better, making a gift to the Lord in gratitude for all that Jesus did for us. Lent is about practicing being a faith filled disciple of the Lord.

So, practice, but why practice? This practicing during Lent keeps us closer to the Lord, closer than ever before. Practicing during Lent keeps me closer to God than ever before, it keeps being a true

follower of Jesus. Practicing during Lent draws me to be more alive in the Holy Spirit, who gives me the constant power to grow ever stronger. The reason we are practicing Catholics is gratefulness. It's a demonstration of our gratitude to our God all that has been given us, for God's effort to form us. So, I must keep my faith fresh and alive as I practice during Lent.

Recently, I came upon this song, "Practice makes Perfect." Here is one verse:

*Sometimes I fall,  
sometimes I stray,  
But I won't give up,  
I'll kneel and pray,  
Faith is a journey,  
not just a race,  
So, I'll practice kindness,  
mercy, and grace*

*Practice, practice,  
one step at a time,  
With a little patience,  
I'll be just fine.  
God is guiding,  
lighting my way,  
Helping me grow in love  
each day.*



## FOLLOW ME

# 'Recalculating' for Lent

*The following is Bishop Terry R. LaValley's homily for Ash Wednesday.*

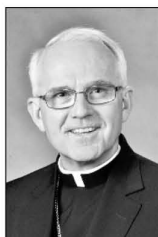
I use my GPS an awful lot when I'm traveling. I used to have a GPS that often barked a word at me that I found increasingly annoying. In fact, eventually I ended up getting a new GPS which never uses that dreaded word, that word being, of course: "recalculating." As I've mentioned before, reflecting on what should be my focus today, Ash Wednesday, "recalculating" came to mind.

I mean, isn't Lent about taking an honest look at where I am presently, realizing that too often that I'm on the wrong track, that I am not following Jesus very closely? I may get lazy, indifferent, or just plain selfish and stubborn and decide to take detours or another route in my life's journey and leave the Lord in the dust. Or I may, in all honesty, just get lost and lose my sense of divine direction.

God knows things happen in our world,

our families, our communities, yes, even in our Church that causes us or maybe our loved ones to veer off God's route to our eternal destination. We lose our bearings. Heaven, eternal life is no longer considered a destination and is wiped off our instrument panel. Some no longer tend to their souls or cultivate a relationship with Jesus.

So, Lent 2025 comes just in time for me to be about the business of recalculating and redirecting where I'm headed. Perhaps, you as well. The Lenten disciplines of prayer, fasting and acts of charity, for centuries, have been tried and true personal means or tools to help us remain faithful as Catholic Christians. My sisters and brothers, I hope you will join me in embracing this graced time provided by the Church to recalculate. Your being here today speaks loudly of your intention to do just that. I am grateful.



Bishop Terry R. LaValley

Every year the Church begins this sacred season by providing for us the truly hopeful words of the prophet Joel who says even now, it's never too late to return to God's ways—even now.

And then, St. Paul, in his letter to the people of Corinth, chimes in with the message: "Now is a very acceptable time. Now is the day of salvation." In addition to more intense prayer, fasting and almsgiving,

we can make a greater effort to participate at more daily Masses, Stations of the Cross, special parish Lenten programs, spend a Holy Hour before the Blessed Sacrament, celebrate the Sacrament of Penance. I encourage you to think about joining some of the parish's social groups such as the Knights of Columbus, Our Lady's Social Outreach, Alpha, Project Rachel, Legion of Mary, Elizabeth Ministry or the Gabriel Project.

May I make one oth-

er suggestion for you this Lent: designate someone to bring along with you on your Lenten journey. Perhaps you can adopt a Lenten companion, someone you know who is struggling with his or her faith, someone for whom Jesus has become a stranger, someone who doesn't appear to have heaven as a destination in their life. Invite him or her to either literally or in your prayer to accompany you through your Lenten journey.

Invite that person to be your Lenten companion as you personally recalculate and try to draw closer to Jesus. For that person, you can become a beacon of hope during this Jubilee Year of Hope. You see, we are all companions on the journey of life and we need the support and sometimes the challenge of our sisters and brothers as fellow pilgrims in faith.

As we calculate the cost of ignoring our mission to growing closer to Jesus and, through Him, one another, we come to understand the fear, confusion, anger and violence so characteristic of today's world. We have lost our bearings.

We will soon be marked with ashes that remind us, in all humility, of where we came from and where we are headed. We are determined, through the grace of God, to get to know, love and follow Jesus more closely. We know the blessings we have received are too many to calculate, and that it's not too late to recalculate and make the three-point turn (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) or make the U-turns we need to take to stay close to Jesus. We have every reason to be Hope-filled because we are Christ-led and Christ-fed. May God be praised...forever may God be praised.

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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](http://vermontcatholic.org)

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

For U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the District of Vermont  
information: visit [vtb.uscourts.gov](http://vtb.uscourts.gov)

For advice about your rights: contact an attorney

# Year of Hope pilgrimages both near and far

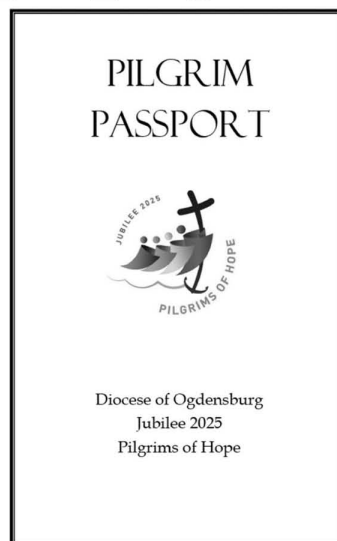
By Mary Beth Bracy, consecrated virgin  
Contributing Writer

As the Year of Hope unfolds, local Catholics are excited about upcoming pilgrimage opportunities in the North Country and beyond. Diocesan passports are available to track the pilgrimage sites visited in our diocese. Several priests are also leading European pilgrimages in honor of the Jubilee Year.

Father Garry B. Giroux, judicial vicar of the Tribunal Office of Canonical Affairs and pastor of St. Mary's, Waddington and St. John the Baptist, Madrid, shared that the diocese recently finished printing and assembling 2,600 Pilgrims' Passports. Of those, 1,800 copies were inserted into the February 19 edition of the North Country Catholic; the remaining 800 copies were distributed to the 12 Pilgrimage sites throughout the diocese. A printable version of the Pilgrims' Passport is also available on the Jubilee Year webpage of the Diocesan Website at <https://www.rcdony.org/newsevents/jubilee-year-2025.html>

"Inside the Pilgrim's Passport is a brief explanation of what is a jubilee year," noted Father Giroux. "The passport also included brief explanations of pilgrimage, an indulgence, temporal punishment and the basic requirements for obtaining a Jubilee Year indulgence. Each of the Pilgrimage Sites is listed with space to inscribe the date of the visit to the Site and, if so desired, space for writing a brief reflection from the pilgrimage experience. Also, on the back page of the passport is found QR Codes for both the diocesan jubilee year webpage and the Holy Father's prayers intentions."

Bishop Terry R. LaValley approved the Holy Year Calendar of Events, and the calendar is now on the Jubilee Year webpage; it was also included in the North Country Catholic, continued Father Giroux. "If other events are scheduled and



**The diocesan Pilgrim Passport can be used to track visits to Year of Hope pilgrimage sites in our diocese. It was distributed in last week's North Country Catholic, it's available in the pilgrimage churches, and it's available online for download and printing.**

made known to us, they will be added to the Holy Year Calendar."

Local Deans of the four deaneries and pastors, catechetical leaders, and Catholic school principals are encouraged to promote Year of Hope initiatives.

"There are resources available on the Jubilee Year webpage and also on the Faith Formation webpage and on the Catholic Schools webpage of our diocesan website," explained Father. Giroux.

Father John M. Demo, pastor Blessed Sacrament Parish in Watertown, will be leading a pilgrimage to Rome and more from September 10-18.

"As part of the celebration of the Jubilee Year and the theme of Pilgrims of Hope, going to Rome and visiting a lot of our religious sites will hopefully renew our religious faith and (help us) encounter Christ in a unique way on the pilgrimage," said Father Demo. "This is the first pilgrimage that I'll be leading. I think I can share the excitement of the people

## Visit a pilgrimage site in the Diocese of Ogdensburg

For pilgrims who cannot travel to Rome, bishops around the world have designated cathedrals, shrines and churches within their dioceses as special places of prayer for Holy Year pilgrims, offering opportunities for reconciliation, indulgences and other events intended to strengthen and revive faith.

Pilgrimage sites in the Diocese of Ogdensburg by deanery:

### Adirondack Deanery

St. Alphonsus Church in Tupper Lake  
St. Bartholomew's Church in Old Forge  
St. Mary's Church in Ticonderoga

### Jefferson-Lewis Deanery

St. Mary's Church in Clayton  
Holy Family Church in Watertown  
St. Stephen's Church in Croghan

### Clinton-Franklin Deanery

St. Peter's Church in Plattsburgh  
Mother Cabrini Shrine in West Peru  
Notre Dame Church in Malone

### St. Lawrence Deanery

St. Mary's Cathedral in Ogdensburg  
St. Mary's Church in Canton

that are first time in the Holy City. I wanted to have an opportunity to celebrate the Holy Eucharist in some of the sites that are near and dear to our religious tradition. The opportunity presented itself and, after some prayer and reflection, I thought it would be a good experience at this stage of my life."

There are many sites that Father Demo is looking forward to visiting.

"The holy stairs, which our tradition believes are the steps that Christ climbed when he went before Pontius Pilate, (and) Assisi where St. Francis spent most of his life. And of course the Vatican museums," he said. "I can't imagine what it's going to be like to behold the Sistine Chapel. Never having been over there, I am really looking forward to it. I'm really grateful to Mike and Kathy, their travel group Colette puts together a nice tour package. The timing is providential. I am celebrating my (37th) anniversary of priesthood on the 24th of September. It's a very, very special time. Certainly with everything going on in the world, we can really use the prayers and experience of hope. The jubilee year really comes at a good time."

An online brochure describing the trip and reservation link can be found at <https://gateway.gocollette.com/>

link/1282559 and Mike may be contacted at SASS Travel, 315-788-4791 or [sass1@twcnycn.com](mailto:sass1@twcnycn.com)

From September 28-October 8, Father Bryan D. Stitt, director of Worship for the diocese and pastor of St. Mary's in Canton, will lead a pilgrimage to France, including Lisieux, Normandy Beach, Mont St. Michel, Paris, and Lourdes, which is also a Jubilee Year of Hope site.

"I've always wanted to go to Lourdes, ever since hearing about it as a small child; the story of Bernadette has always inspired my heart, but I've never had a chance (to go)," he said. "A friend of mine, Father (John) Hollowell, had a great miracle happen in his life there, and it added all the more hope for why we would make a trip there. People infirmed for the last 167 years have been finding physical healing and all the more spiritual grace at Lourdes. Plus my personal devotion to the Little Flower (were an encouragement for me). Her letters to a young seminarian, (in the book) Maurice and Therese, have always been a source of hope for me as well."

Father Christopher J. Looby will also be leading a pilgrimage from October 15-23.

"The pilgrimage to Italy is an opportunity to journey not only to sacred sites but also

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6





PHOTOS BY KEITH BENMAN/NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

(Left) A view from the back of a scale model of Sacred Heart Church at the Massena Museum shows off some of its stained glass windows. The windows even have leading between the panes like that which would have been used when the actual church on Main Street was built 100 years ago. (Right) Pictured is the exterior of the model of Sacred Heart Church now on display at the Massena Museum. It was put on display there for the second time in its history in time for the 100th anniversary of the church on Main Street last year.

## Doors swing open again on small church

By Keith Benman  
Contributing Writer

A Catholic craftsman's well-traveled labor of love is once again on display for the public to see at the Town of Massena Museum.

A 10-foot replica of Sacred Heart Church, crafted 47 years ago by parishioner Howard J. Premo, is now housed in the museum's new wing.

The replica has intricate features such as a carved marble altar, stained glass, pews with collapsible kneelers, and even tiny confessionals.

It went on display at the museum at 79 Main St. in time for the 100th anniversary of the actual church at 212 Main St. last year.

"To have someone take the time and the patience to make something like this - I thought it should be preserved and displayed," said Sacred Heart Parishioner James Beckstead. "You don't see craftsman-

ship like this hardly anymore."

The efforts of Beckstead and former Town Historian MaryEllen Casselman were crucial in preserving and protecting the model church through the years.

Beckstead first encountered it more than two decades ago, when he was employed by the town highway department and it was stored in the basement of the Massena Museum, then located at 200 East Orvis St. His boss sent him over with another worker to remove it and bring it to the town barn for storage. Years later, when the new Massena Museum opened on Main Street, it was brought there

under the direction of Casselman and put on display in 2017. But space constraints there forced it into storage again. This time it went into the basement at St. Joseph's on Malby Avenue and then to the former convent at Sacred Heart. Before that convent was demolished last year it came back to the museum, which now has room to display it long-term due to a new addition there.

By the time it was displayed for the first time in the new museum its creator had passed away. Premo was well-known in the area for a lawn and garden equipment dealership he operated on S. Raquette St.

"He thought a lot of

Sacred Heart church and his religion to do such a thing ... to make something like this as a remembrance," Beckstead said.

It's the sheer amount of detail in the model that always struck Beckstead.

"Right down to the little pews, the little kneelers, and they're all actually functioning," Beckstead said. "And those little book holders on the back of each of those pews are

so small and intricate - that would take a lot of time and patience."

The 100-year history of Sacred Heart Church is explained in a display accompanying the model church along with a selection of implements used in church worship.

The Massena Museum is open from 9 a.m. to noon on Mondays and Fridays and from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Tuesday through Thursday. Admission is free.



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## Environmental Stewardship

## Greening of Lent

After the long days of snow, we are only too ready for the warmer breezes of springtime. In the coming weeks, the Church calls us to a springtime for our spiritual lives. The word "lent" literally means spring. As the earth awaits new life, we long for new life in our lives.

Gardeners may already be thinking about what seeds to plant this spring and what tools are needed to prepare the soil. As Lent begins, we may ask ourselves what tools this liturgical season provides for our spiritual growth. What seeds of virtues do we need to plant?

As Catholics, we are blessed with three tools – prayer, fasting and almsgiving. Let's consider how these three tools could bring new life to my spiritual life and, at the same time, bring new life to our hurting earth. We all know from experience that we are willing to make great sacrifices only if we have come to love and appreciate it. To make the sacrifices needed to be good stewards of the earth, we need to grow in our amazement of its incredible beauty as a tiny reflection of the Hand of the Artist. Prayer can help us grow in appreciation of it. Fasting is the second tool offered to us on our Lenten Journey. Fasting from habits that are detrimental to the health of the planet can bring new life to all that share this common home. The third tool for preparing the soil of our souls for new life is almsgiving. Most often we may think of this practice only in contributing money to help our neighbors. What if we thought about almsgiving also as the sharing of our time to do the small inconvenient tasks like recycling, etc. as a way of offering alms to bring new life to the earth community?

During the coming weeks of the Lenten Season, we will consider more fully these three tools as well as the seeds of hope we can we plant for a "springtime" in our own lives and in the life of all creation.

## Rest in Peace

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

**March 5** – Rev. Edward J. Murtaugh, O.S.A., 1951; Rev. Paschal Rys, OFM Conv., 2013

**March 6** – Rev. Louis F. Lussier, 1915; Rev. John G. Craven, 1921

**March 7** – Rev. Alexander K. Klauder, 1934; Rev. Cornelius O'Mahoney, M.S.C., 1940

**March 8** – Rev. William B. Nyhan, 1914; Rev. William J. Reilly, O.S.A., 1925

**March 10** – Rev. Hector Mauriot, O.M.I., 1895

**March 11** – Msgr. Edmund Charles M.J. DePauw, 1911

## Protecting God's Children

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

## To Report Abuse

**If you have a complaint** of suspected misconduct involving diocesan clergy, religious, employees or volunteers, contact Victim Assistance Coordinator, Terrianne Yanulavich, Ph.D., LMHC, 5050 Route 374, Merrill, NY 12955; terrianneyanulavich@yahoo.com; Phone: 518-569-0612; or Father Christopher Carrara, the Episcopal Vicar for Clergy; ccarrara@rcdony.org Phone: 315-393-2920 ext. 1340. **If you have a complaint** of suspected sexual abuse or related misconduct by the bishops, contact the Catholic Bishop Abuse Reporting Service at 800-276-1562 or www.ReportBishopAbuse.org

## On pilgrimage

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

deeper into the theme of the Jubilee Year of Hope," he said. "Visiting places of great faith – Rome, Assisi, and beyond – will allow us to reflect on how hope has been lived out through the saints and how we're called to embrace that same hope in our own lives. It's a chance for renewal, prayer, and growing in communion with one another as we walk in the footsteps of so many who have gone before us in faith."

Father Looby is participating in the jubilee in other ways, as well.

"Beyond the pilgrimage, we're also embracing the Jubilee Year of Hope in our parishes this Lent through several initiatives," he said. "We're offering a special Stations of the Cross se-

ries focused on hope in suffering, a Lenten podcast called 'From Sorrow to Hope' exploring the Sorrowful Mysteries in light of the Jubilee, and a faith-sharing group where parishioners can reflect on scripture and deepen their spiritual journey together. All of these are meant to help people rediscover the hope Christ offers, even in the midst of life's challenges."

Father Andrew J. Amyot will be leading a 15-day pilgrimage, including visits to Venice, Florence, Assisi and Rome, from November 5-15.

"The Year of Hope is the reason why I'm doing the special pilgrimages to go through the Holy Doors in the four basilicas of Rome," he said. "Also to visit the tomb of Carlo Acutis, soon to be canonized, in Assisi. It's all connected. The Jubilee is every 25 years or so. I went to the Jubilee Year in 2000, for 2,000 years of Christ coming into the world. We place all of our hope and trust in Christ who is our joy and the source of our salvation. They expect millions of people to go to Rome for this year. It is also to see Pope Francis. I hope he recuperates so we will be able to see him."

Additionally, Father Amyot reflected that this jubilee year is also (part of) the Eucharistic Revival, (and) Carlo Acutis is known for his great love of the Eucharist and preparing a display of all the places where a Eucharistic miracle has taken place.

"I've been to Rome quite a few times leading pilgrimages," he said. "This is a special year for the Jubilee Year of Hope. They are having a special program at St. Agnes in Lake Placid which is based on Carlo's great love of the Eucharist. I hope to go to that special gathering."

The celebration, featuring the Eucharistic Miracles of the World Exhibition, an inspirational talk, and Holy Hour with Bishop LaValley leading a diocesan wide Consecration to the Holy Eucharist, will take place on April 26, the Eve of Carlo's canonization.

"That should be a very beautiful thing to attend," said Father Amyot. "The Pope is having several canonizations, one is Carlo, for the youth, and the other is Pier Giorgio Frassati, for young adults. Here again is a man who had great devotion and love for the Holy Eucharist. I hope we have time to visit Carlo's tomb."

## Bishop's Public Schedule

**March 5** – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

**March 6** – 9:45 a.m. – Episcopal Council Meeting at Bishop's Residence followed by Lunch

**March 7** – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

6:30 p.m. – Deacon Candidates Class on Canon Law at Wadhams Hall in Ogdensburg

**March 9** – 9:30 a.m. – Mass at Notre Dame Church in Ogdensburg

2:30 p.m. – Rite of Election at St. Mary's Cathedral

**March 10** – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

**March 11** – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

**March 12** – 9:30 a.m. – Diocesan Department Head Meeting at Wadhams Hall in Ogdensburg

Noon – Lunch followed by Lenten Day of Reflection for all Diocesan Staff at Wadhams Hall in Ogdensburg

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# President appeals order to restart foreign aid

By Tyler Arnold  
Catholic News Agency

President Donald Trump's administration is appealing a federal court decision that ordered the government to resume foreign aid grants by late Wednesday evening as many Catholic groups that receive those grants are still without funds.

The attorney general's office filed an appeal late Tuesday night after U.S. District Judge Amir Ali ordered the administration to supply those funds by 11:59 p.m. on Wednesday. The same judge, who was appointed by former President Joe Biden, had ordered the government to resume its foreign aid funding on Feb. 13. However, the Trump administration has not complied with that order.

Numerous Catholic organizations have lost grant money due to the foreign aid funding freeze, including Catholic Relief Services and Jesuit Relief Services.

Ali ruled in his decision that Trump's blanket freeze on foreign aid funding likely violates the Administrative Procedure Act and violates the separation of powers because Congress approved the money to be used in foreign aid programs.

In its appeal, the administration asserts that the judge's order forces the government to "pay arbitrarily determined expenses on a timeline of the district court's choosing" and claimed the court "creates a payment plan" that is contrary to the president's obligations under Article II of the Constitution and the principles of "federal sovereign immunity."

The court filing also argues that United States Agency for International Development (USAID) leadership has determined that the court's order to resume funding "cannot be accomplished in the time allotted by the [court]."

"The district court has ordered the federal government to pay nearly \$2 billion in taxpayer dollars within 36 hours, without regard to payment-integrity systems that would ensure that the monies claimed are properly owed, without regard to the federal government's meritorious arguments to the contrary, and without so much as addressing the government's sovereign-immunity defense," the court filing states.

Additionally, the administration

claims in its appeal that the judge's order will cause "grave and irreparable harm to the government" because it "has no practical mechanism to recover wrongfully disbursed funds that go out the door to entities that have complained that they are near insolvency."

On his first day in office on Jan. 20, Trump issued an executive order to pause all foreign aid grants for 90 days. He argued in the order that the funding was not aligned with the interests of the United States and worked to "destabilize world peace by promoting ideas in foreign countries that are directly inverse to harmonious and stable relations internal to and among countries."

During Biden's administration, some foreign aid programs were leveraged to promote LGBTQI+ policies in other countries and to pressure governments into ending discrimination based on a person's "gender identity and expression." One priority was to combat so-called "conversion therapy practices," which include therapies that discourage a person from adopting a "gender identity" inconsistent with the person's biological sex.

Some programs also include humanitarian assistance provided by faith-based organizations like Catholic Relief Services and Jesuit Relief Services, which offer food, shelter, health care, and other services to people in foreign countries.

Earlier this month, Secretary of State Marco Rubio said the Department of State would exempt certain programs from the foreign aid funding freeze.

A spokesperson for Jesuit Relief Services (JRS) told CNA that Trump's stated mission to make the world "respect and admire America ... has been obscured by a slapdash ban on foreign assistance carried out by people without the institutional expertise or constitutional authority to do so."

"Making matters worse, these bureaucrats are doing this despite orders from President Trump and Secretary Rubio to grant waivers to restore funding for lifesaving projects," a spokesperson said.

"Weeks later, few, if any, of these are back online, in obvious contradiction to the White House's directives. The result includes things like American-grown food rotting at ports and already-purchased vaccines not being administered — literally hundreds of millions of dollars wasted," the spokesperson said.

## CATHOLIC WORLD AT A GLANCE

### Pew: Yearslong decline in Christianity 'leveling off' in U.S.

A 20-year-long decline in the number of Americans who identify as Christian may be "leveling off," according to data released on Wednesday by Pew Research Center. Pew said its most recent Religious Landscape Study showed 62% of U.S. adults identifying as Christian, a number that has been "relatively stable" since 2019. The number of U.S. adults claiming to be Christian is still significantly lower than when the survey first began, falling 16 points over the course of the poll, from 78% in 2007 to the 62% most recently reported. Yet the last several years of data show the decline has "slowed or perhaps even plateaued," Pew said. The research group noted that the "Catholic share" of Christian respondents has been stable since 2014, considerably earlier than the broader group stability seen since 2019. Catholics constitute 19% of Christians in the U.S., Pew said. Overall, "in 11 Pew Research Center surveys conducted since 2014, all but one have found between 19% and 21% of respondents identifying as Catholic," the group said.

### Brother, priests attacked at Mozambique archdiocesan center

Fear has gripped the Nazaré Training Center in Mozambique's Archdiocese of Beira following a Sunday, Feb. 23, attack at the facility that left two priests and a religious brother injured. The Conference of Religious Institutes of Mozambique told Catholic pontifical and charity foundation Aid to the Church in Need (ACN) International that a group of men armed with pistols, machetes, and irons entered the institution in the early hours of Feb. 23, violently attacking three missionaries who were there. According to a Feb. 25 ACN report, the conference "expressed its concern about the insecurity" in the southern African nation following the attack and appealed for prayers for peace in the country. ACN reported that the two priests and brother were "tied up and tortured by the bandits" at the institution, which engages in various activities, including formation courses for the Mozambican archdiocese. Fortunately, according to the report, all three men "are out of danger" and suffered only "minor pain and injuries."

### Pope Francis creates commission to seek Vatican donations

The Vatican on Feb. 26 announced that Pope Francis has created a fundraising commission to solicit donations from Catholics and bishops' conferences as the Vatican City State and the Roman Curia continue to face budgetary and funding challenges. The "Commissio de Donationibus pro Sancta Sede," Latin for "Commission on Donations for the Holy See," has six members, "whose specific task will be to encourage donations" and find benefactors for special projects within the Vatican, according to a papal decree signed Feb. 11. Pope Francis has been making cost-cutting decisions at the Vatican in recent years as he continues attempts to reverse the institution's struggling financial situation, including a pension fund facing a "serious prospective imbalance."

## 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.

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

## ADIRONDACK MOUNTAIN

## SPIRITUAL CARE COMPANION TRAINING

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

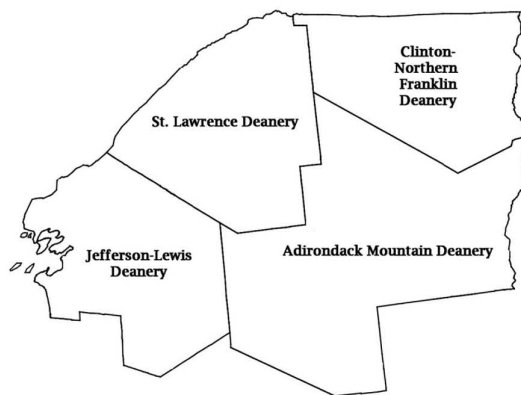
**Date:** March 19

**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 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 to the elder 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



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

Parishioners are invited to send information about activities to:

North Country Catholic, PO Box 326,

Ogdensburg, NY 13669

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

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

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](mailto:abevilacqua@adkmercy.org) or call Lexi for more information at 518-523-5446.

## CLINTON NORTHERN FRANKLIN

## LENTEN FISH FRIES

AuSable Forks — Come join the Au Sable Forks Knights for the best fried fish in the North Country.

**Date:** March 7, 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.

## 'PANCAKE PLUS' BREAKFAST

Peru — St. Augustine's Knights of Columbus will serve a "Pancakes Plus" Breakfast.

**Date:** March 9

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

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

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

**Menu:** Pancakes, Waffles, French Toast, Fruit Sauce, Scrambled Eggs, Sausage, Bacon, Home Fries, Real Maple Syrup, Coffee,

Orange Juice, and Milk.

## CHICKEN AND BISCUIT DINNER

North Bangor — The parishes of St Augustine's and St Mary's are hosting a Chicken and Biscuit Dinner.

**Date:** March 9

**Time:** Noon to 3 p.m.

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

**Cost:** \$15

**Menu:** Chicken and biscuits, gravy, mashed potatoes, stuffing, vegetable, cranberry and a dessert.

## BREAKFAST

Altona — St. Ann's and Holy Angels to have an all you can you eat breakfast prepared by the Ladies of St. Ann.

**Date:** March 16

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

**Place:** Holy Angels Hall

**Cost:** Adults, \$12; Children

5-12, \$7; under 5, Free

**Menu:** Eggs, Egg Cups, Sausage, Bacon, Pancakes, French Toast, Cinnamon Rolls, Home Fries, Coffee, Tea, Juice and 50/50.

## CORNED BEEF DINNER

Fort Covington — The parish of St. Mary's of the Fort is hosting a Corned Beef Dinner.

**Date:** March 16

**Time:** 11:00 a.m. until sold out

**Place:** Fort Covington Adult Center, 2526 Chateaugay St

**Cost:** per meal - \$15. Take-out only.

**Menu:** Corned Beef, Cabbage, Potatoes, Carrots & Dessert

## JEFFERSON-LEWIS

## SPAGHETTI &amp; MEATBALL DINNER

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

**Date:** March 8

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

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

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

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

## CORNED BEEF &amp; 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 a delicious dinner 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.

## 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 personal prayer, and an opportunity for the Sacrament of

Reconciliation.

**Contact:** register by emailing Sister Mary Eamon Lyng, [smelyngssj@yahoo.com](mailto:smelyngssj@yahoo.com) or Sister Bethany Fitzgerald [srbethssj@gmail.com](mailto: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

## MONTHLY BRUNCH

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

**Date:** March 9 (Second Sunday of each month)

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

**Place:** Father Amyot Parish Center

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

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

## 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.massenacatholics.com](http://www.massenacatholics.com)

## LENTEN DAY OF MERCY

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

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9



MARCH 5, 2025

# Judge viral for kindness faces cancer battle

By Diego López Marina  
Catholic News Agency

Judge Frank Caprio has become one of the most recognizable faces in the U.S. judicial system for his acts of kindness and compassion.

For nearly 40 years, he listened to people who came to the main municipal courthouse in Rhode Island and went out of his way to show them mercy.

His work was featured in the four-time Emmy-nominated show "Caught in Providence" and in 2017 videos of his court cases went viral, reaching more than 15 million views.

Today, at 88, the retired judge, a Catholic, asks for prayers after being diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. "EWTN News In Depth" correspondent Colm Flynn recently traveled to Florida to meet the man who is known as "the kindest judge in the world."

## A JUDGE WITH A HEART

"I had the most privileged childhood I could imagine... I had the privilege of being brought up poor," the judge recalled. His father, Antonio Caprio, was an Italian immigrant who worked as a milkman.

"Some mornings he would wake my older brother and I up at 4 in the morning to work

with him on the truck. I learned one of the most valuable lessons working with my dad on the truck: I learned how to treat people. I learned understanding. I learned compassion," he said.

Inspired by his father's words, Caprio studied law, passed the bar in 1965, and in 1985 became a judge on the Providence Municipal Court. Many of the deliberations he presided over were televised for more than 20 years on a local television station.

From his first day on the bench, he understood that his role was not only to enforce the law but also to understand the circumstances of those who appeared before him.

"One of the first people who appeared before me was a woman with a number of parking tickets," he said. "She was obstinate, insulting... finally, in an act of desperation, I said to her: 'I'm charging you the full amount and your car's gonna get booted.' I was pretty strong with her. But my father, when he heard about it, said to me, 'She was scared. She has three kids. How's she gonna to feed them? You probably took her money for dinner tonight.' I learned a great lesson that day."

For Caprio, that was a wake-up call. Being in a position of power didn't mean he had to wield it

against those who didn't have it. He understood that most of the people who came to his courtroom were ordinary, hardworking people just trying to get by.

## JUSTICE WITH MERCY

Over the years, Caprio won the hearts of the public with his humane and empathetic approach. "It's very simple: I just place myself in their shoes, of the person in front of me. Compassion is a very, very strong trait."

One of the cases that touched him most was that of a 96-year-old man who was charged with speeding. "He told me, 'I drive slowly and I only drive when I have to. I was going to the blood work for my boy.' Then I asked him, 'How old is your son?' And he replied, 'Sixty-three, he's got cancer.' It was an unforgettable moment. His love and dedication as a father was touching."

He also remembers a single mother who came to his court with her young daughter. "She told me, 'I'm doing everything I can, but I can't pay this fine.' I saw the little girl looking at me with concern and I knew I had to help her. It wasn't just about enforcing the law but about being fair in the truest sense of the word."

## A BATTLE AGAINST CANCER

Retired in 2023 and facing what is possibly his most dif-

ficult trial, Caprio has not lost faith. His story, marked by empathy and service, continues to inspire millions and is captured in his book "Compassion in the Court: Life-Changing Stories from America's Nicest Judge."

Regarding his diagnosis, he said: "When they told me, my first reaction was disbelief. But then I thought: I have lived a life full of blessings. I'm not going to let this define my later years."

Today, the judge who brought mercy to justice asks for something in return: prayers. "I just try to be strong. I'm grateful for all the love and support I've received," he said.

Before ending the interview, Caprio left a message for all those who have followed him over the years: "If there's one thing I want you to remember about me, it's that we all deserve a little compassion. In life, kindness always finds its way back."

In his book, he also seeks to leave a simple but concise message: "Be kind to others, be slow to judge, and always show mercy."

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

## Around the diocese

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

**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 [cantoncatholics.com](http://cantoncatholics.com)

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

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

### 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 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 at each of the church locations.

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

#### 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](mailto: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](http://www.rcdony.org/leadevent). For more

information contact Cathy Russell at 315-393-2920 or [crussell@rcdony.org](mailto:crussell@rcdony.org)



## SUNDAY'S SCRIPTURE

# Why do we have temptations?

When was the last time you were tempted to shovel snow or tempted to make a donation or tempted to give of your time. We do not use the word tempted when we speak of these kinds of activities. When the activity is a matter of something good or something beneficial to others, our intellect helps us to realize the good, and our will moves us into action.

Look at the last time you were tempted to something: the extra piece of pie, the urge for another drink, to get even, to take control of someone else's life, to surrender to any one of a long list of sins. What

is at work in us when we are tempted?

William Shakespeare defined temptation as the "fire that brings us the scum of the heart." Temptations bring out the worst in us. We resist temptations because yielding does not benefit us either as children of God or as people of the earth. We should never think like Mae West who said: "I generally avoid temptation unless I can't resist it."

All of us are subject to temptations, desires to do what we should not do. But why do we have temptations? Why doesn't God just wipe out the devil so that temptations can be an-



**Msgr. Robert H. Aucoin**

March 9

**First Sunday of Lent**

READINGS

Deuteronomy 26:4-10

Romans 10:8-13

Luke 4:1-13

nihilated?

Well, temptation does help us recognize our true selves. How many times have we said: "I can't believe I said that" or "I can't believe I did that." Well, like it or not, submitting to temptations forces us to recognize ourselves with all our warts, bumps and bruises.

The second lesson learned from temptations is humility, that we cannot be totally dependent on ourselves or as Jesus puts it: "We do not live on bread alone." We need more

than what we have. We need our God to carry us through the many life situations that we face each day.

In giving in to temptations, we are really saying to God: "I don't need you. I can do this alone." It takes humility to ask for God's help. It takes strength of character to recognize that we cannot go it alone. A true person recognizes his limitations and recognizes the great need for God.

The third lesson we learn from temptations is that we gain strength by resisting. Each time we resist, we build up our ability to say no. Each time we acknowledge our need for God, we understand how much we need to grow. Another insidious part of temptation is that

when we surrender to one temptation in one area of our lives, we open the doors to surrendering to other temptations.

Concerning temptation, the great author C.S. Lewis said: "bad people know very little about badness. They have lived a sheltered life by always giving in."

Jesus resisted these temptations at the beginning of his public ministry. That resistance gave him strength to accomplish his ministry.

We pray today for the humility to recognize our deficiencies, for the ability to trust in our God, and for the strength to take power from temptation in order to empower our lives.

## CALLED TO SERVE

## Welcome to Lent 2025

We are encouraged to pray more, fast more, and to focus more intently on "almsgiving," which means donating money or goods to the poor and performing other acts of charity. It is Lent.

Of course we pray, fast and give to the poor and charities the rest of the year. Good for us.

Now, during Lent, we are asked to focus our attention even more on those three activities.

Those are great goals, and I follow them. In my research for this column, I found this explanation of Lent on-line that I liked:

"Lent has come to refer to the time set aside (in the spring) for reflection and preparation for the Easter season. It is a

time to consider the human condition and the goodness of God. And it is a time to examine our hearts in light of the amazing love and grace demonstrated on the cross where Jesus laid down His life for ours. At the end of the season, Lent also gives us hope as we look beyond the cross and to the resurrection, a promise of a bright future for those that believe in Jesus. In essence, a 'spiritual spring.'"

That summarizes the liturgical season well.

When I was a kid, Lent meant fasting and mite boxes.

There were special days of fasting during Lent in addition to every Friday, since we did not eat meat on Fridays any-

way. It was a Catholic thing to do.

Fish are not considered meat. That has always confused me. It has something to do with warm-blooded versus cold-blooded.

It did not make any difference to me when I was a kid. My grandmother, who lived in the same house, was allergic to fish. We could not even say the word "fish" when she was in the room.

I never considered eating fish instead of beef, poultry, or lamb at a meal as fasting. Frankly, fish on the plate was a treat. Once I left the nest, fish be-

came part of my regular diet. Unless Nana was a dinner guest, of course.

Then there was the mite box. Sister would give these little cans to each student when Lent was upon us. She would charge us to fill the can with pennies from our wealth and return the can Holy Week. It was a form of almsgiving. The accumulated proceeds would eventually feed starving children in some distant place or help missionaries.

Some kids were conscientious about dropping coins in the can every day throughout Lent. My heart was in

the right place, but honestly, I would hit my parents up for change once a week or so to make my can heavy.

I remember admitting that work-around on the Saturdays of Lent in the Confessional.

Lent for me now is not so much denying myself things that I enjoy or like but instead taking the extra step doing something, being charitable.

Lent for me is a time to focus on Christ's call to love God and my neighbor and consider how I measure up. Happy Lent!

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



**Deacon Kevin Mastellon**



# Hope and hardships

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



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

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

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"My faith is a gift from the people I serve," says Bishop Cannavo

The Hogar de Cristo in Bajo Flores provides crucial support to those battling addiction.

"We see children as young as eight consuming paco," Bishop Pedro explains. The parish also runs a maternal school, a kindergarten, and primary and secondary schools, serving hundreds of children and providing a safe haven from the dangers of the streets. The parish's soup kitchens feed thousands daily, a lifeline for many struggling families.

Among the many hats Bishop Pedro wears is that of chief fireman of the neighborhood: the streets are too narrow for the firetrucks, yet the precarious conditions of the homes made with repurposed bricks, woods and corrugated

tin, with no running water nor natural gas, one stacked on top of each other and attached to each other to save on construction materials, make this slum, and all others in Buenos Aires, a fire hazard. So much so that in their senior year, children learn how to combat fire with no truck and little to no protective gear.

There doesn't seem to be a single person who doesn't know who Bishop Cannavo is, and he is often stopped in the street by people asking for a blessing, a visit or food. Here and there, he is also asked about Pope Francis and when he will visit Argentina. The Pope hasn't returned home since being elected in 2013, but the hopes for seeing The Pope celebrate Mass in the San Lorenzo Stadium, serving as a backdrop for the slums, are high...

Father Andrés Toccalini, from the Marianist congregation at

the Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima, also in Bajo Flores, echoes the same dedication and challenges. Today, the parish runs the School of Fatima, which educates over 3,000 people yearly between kindergarten, primary and secondary, and trade schools, as well as a tertiary nursing school that had its groundbreaking done by then-Cardinal Jorge.

"To this day, I will never forget one of the first confessions I heard when I moved here," Father Andrés said, visibly emotional. "It was that of a 15-year-old who admitted he prays every day not to become like his brothers because his brothers are all criminals. Can you imagine going to bed every night praying, 'I don't want to be like my family'?"

He also highlights the vibrant faith practiced in the slums: "Faith here in the slums is lived through what we call popular piety, and



The villa miseria 31 (slums of misery) in Buenos Aires, Argentina

coming here is that you understand what Pope Francis means by a Church that goes out and encounters people where they are. We have many communities here, of people who come not only from various countries but diverse regions from each, with each having their Marian advocacy. When I first arrived here, they would

celebrate their feasts in a home, or a street, but it was mostly about eating and drinking. Now, we still have the feast, but every celebration begins with the Mass, and in most cases, they're now doing a novena as well. I found that the more I go to encounter them, the more they then come to encounter Christ in the Eucharist."

## OBITUARIES

**AuSable Forks** — Beverly Jane (Garrow) Duprey, 84; Mass of Christian Burial May 3, 2025 at Holy Name Church.

**Chateaugay** — Peggy A. (Manor) Cameron, 71; Mass of Christian Burial Feb. 28, 2025 at St. Patrick's Church;

**Chazy** — Ann (Wood) Ryan, 90; Mass of Christian Burial Feb. 26,

2025 at Sacred Heart Church; burial in parish cemetery.

Colton — **Robert L. Dunning, 81;** Mass of Christian Burial Feb. 28, 2025 at St. Patrick's Church; burial in St. Patrick's Cemetery.

**Lowville** — Mary Ann P. (Waligorry) Becker, 87; Mass of Christian Burial Feb. 28, 2025 at St. Peter's Church; burial in St. Peter's Ceme-

tery, New Bremen.

**Malone** — G. Catherine "Kaye" (Bean) Eppler, 96; Memorial Mass to be held at a later date.

**Massena** — John J. Agati, 103; Mass of Christian Burial in spring at Church of the Sacred Heart; burial in Calvary Cemetery.

**Massena** — Mary Alice (Barbour)

Demo, 93; Funeral Services March 6, 2025 at Phillips Memorial Home; burial in Calvary Cemetery.

**Morrisonville** — Laurie J. (Myers) Bell, 67; Mass of Christian Burial Feb. 28, 2025 at St. Alexander's Church.

**Norfolk** — Joyce (Dupuis) Dewey, 82; Graveside Services in spring at Visitation Cemetery.

**Plattsburgh** — Tyler Guay, 39; Memorial Mass March 27, 2025 at St. John's Church.

**West Chazy** — Harriet (Martin) Taylor, 93; Memorial Mass March 15, 2025 at St. Joseph's Church; burial in St. Joseph's Cemetery.

# Grant looks to boost parish leadership

Parishes have recently been engaged in planning for the day when more parish linkages must occur.

With fewer priests, there is a greater need than ever for the lay faithful to step up into

leadership roles in parishes. Pope Francis, on June 17, 2016 spoke about this need:

"We need well-formed lay people, animated by a sincere and clear faith, whose life has been touched by the person-

al and merciful love of Christ ... we need lay people who take risks, who get their hands dirty, who are not afraid to make mistakes, who have a vision of the future ..."

There is an opportunity

for parishes to support this need. The Sisters of St. Joseph of Watertown established a foundation to support the development of lay leaders willing to "get their hands dirty." The Sisters' charism is one of unity, reconciliation and the living of the corporal and spiritual works of mercy for the "dear neighbor."

Grants of up to \$4,000 can be awarded to sponsoring organizations that support leadership training, existing programs as well as new programming.

Grants have been awarded to parishes to help support the formation of deacons and candidates in the Formation For Ministry program. Another grant allowed a Catholic school prin-

icipal to attend an Executive Leadership Academy at Boston College. North Country Cursillo received a grant as did the diocesan office of the New Evangelization. The Faith Formation office received a grant to support training of catechists in parish programs.

If you or someone you know is currently active in a leadership role in a diocesan parish, school or established program or is in training for such, requests for applications may be obtained by contacting Sister Ellen Rose Coughlin, SSJ at 315-778-9679 or by email at SSJFoundationChairperson@gmail.com.

Applications must be submitted no later than May 16, 2025. Recipients will be notified in June.

## Now is the perfect time to volunteer.

With everything that has happened in our community this year, it is more important than ever for volunteers to stand up and support their friends and neighbors. When joining **RSVP**, not only are you helping your community, but you're joining a family who cares as much as you.



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

### Upcoming opportunities

There are so many ways you can help your community out that you might not even know about! Here are some examples of what you can do!



#### Be a Friend

Check on friends, share a meal, help around the house, go for a walk or just stop by to catch up.



#### Give a Ride

Drive your neighbors to their appointments, to pick up prescriptions or to the store.



#### Help at School

Volunteer at local elementary schools, tutor students, or be a mentor to those in need.



#### Give a Meal

Support the local food pantry by shopping, organizing, cooking, or anything else.



#### Meals On Wheels

Donate your time to your local Meals on Wheels program and prepare or deliver meals.

Not only do you get the benefit of feeling amazing after helping someone, RSVP will help pay some of your mileage (.56 cents/mile) and honor your efforts at a yearly recognition event.

## Opportunities available in Franklin and Hamilton County Want more info about how to get started?

### Hamilton and Franklin County:

Melissa Howard  
518-359-7688

mhoward@cathcharities.org

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

### Clinton and Essex County:

Kate Gardner  
518-566-0944

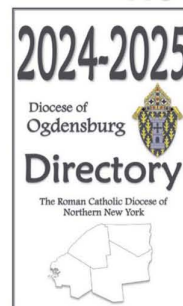
kgardner@cathcharities.org



Catholic  
Charities  
Diocese of Ogdensburg



## Diocesan Directories now available!



The Official 2024-2025 Directory of the Diocese of Ogdensburg includes detailed information about parishes, schools and other Catholic organizations.

2024-2025 Directories now available!  
Online at [www.northcountrycatholic.org](http://www.northcountrycatholic.org)  
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