

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

'Here for the  
protection of all  
children' | Page 5

Violence against  
Christians escalates in  
Holy Land | Page 7

The Diocese of Ogdensburg Volume 80 Number 5

# NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

APRIL 23, 2025

## HOSANNA, SON OF DAVID!



PHOTO BY MICHELLE BEAGLE

**Students in the religious education program at St. Mary's Church in Constableville led the Palm Sunday procession at the start of Holy Week.**



## IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF ST. PAUL



A group of seminarians, monks, and professors from Saint Vincent Seminary and Archabbey recently spent nine days following in the Footsteps of Saint Paul. The group included Diocese of Ogdensburg seminarians Kevin McCullough and Tyler Fitzgerald. The pilgrimage took them to some of the cities visited by St. Paul during his missionary journeys in the first century AD across Greece and Turkey. Pictured after a morning walk in Greece are, from left, Father Francis, OSB, Seminary Rector Father Edward, OSB, Brother Bede, OSB, McCullough, Fitzgerald, and Brian (Pittsburgh).

FULL STORY, PAGE 3

## Pope makes prison visit on Holy Thursday

By Courtney Mares  
Catholic News Agency

Pope Francis, still recovering after his recent hospitalization for double pneumonia, made a surprise visit to Rome's Regina Coeli prison on Holy Thursday, continuing his tradition of beginning the paschal Triduum with prisoners despite his ongoing health concerns.

The unannounced visit took place shortly before 3 p.m. local time. According to the Vatican, the pope met with approximately 70 inmates who regularly participate in activities and catechesis organized by the prison's chaplaincy.

Though he was unable to per-

form the traditional foot-washing, the 88-year-old pope told the prisoners he still wanted to be close to them.

"I like to do every year what Jesus did on Holy Thursday, the washing of the feet, in prison. This year I cannot do it, but I can, and I want to, be close to you. I pray for you and for your families," Pope Francis said.

The pope spoke briefly, prayed with the inmates, and individually greeted each person present. The visit concluded with a recitation of the Lord's Prayer and a papal blessing. The entire encounter lasted about 30 minutes.

During the visit, the pope was seen breathing on his own with-

out oxygen tubes, a positive sign as he continues to recuperate after his five-week hospitalization. His doctors recommended two months of rest following his March 23 discharge, cautioning that his body still requires time to recover.

Since returning to the Vatican, Francis had largely remained out of the public eye but has made a handful of brief, unscheduled appearances in the past two weeks. He has delegated cardinals to preside over all of the Holy Week liturgies at the Vatican.

The visit to Regina Coeli — a prison just a short drive from St. Peter's Basilica — underscores the pope's determination to be

close to the people during Holy Week, even amid frail health.

During his pontificate, Pope Francis has made it a regular tradition to celebrate Holy Thursday Mass with the imprisoned. In 2013, just 15 days after his election as pope, Francis chose the Casal del Marmo youth detention center as the location of his first Holy Thursday Mass, where he washed the feet of juvenile detainees.

Last year, the pope celebrated the official Holy Thursday liturgy at Rome's Rebibbia women's prison, where he washed the feet of 12 female inmates. Pope Francis previously visited the Regina Coeli prison on Holy Thursday in 2018.

NORTH  
COUNTRY  
CATHOLICPO Box 326  
Ogdensburg, NY 13669  
USPS 0039-3400**Bishop Terry  
R. LaValley**  
President**Rev. Joseph A. Morgan**  
Vice President**James D. Crowley**  
Secretary-Treasurer  
Darcy L. Fargo

Editor &amp;

Communications Director



Publish  
45 issues  
per year:  
Weekly except  
skipping every  
other week be-  
ginning July through August  
and skipping one week in  
December by the  
Diocese of Ogdensburg.  
622 Washington Street,  
Ogdensburg, N.Y. 13669.

**Editorial Office:**622 Washington Street,  
Ogdensburg, N.Y. 13669.**Telephone:**

(315) 608-7556

**E-mail:**news@northcountry  
catholic.org**Entered at the****Post Office:**  
Ogdensburg, NY13669 and additional mailing  
offices as  
Periodical Postage.**Subscription:****For one year:**In-Diocese Rate: \$27  
Outside of Diocese Rate: \$30

Matters for publication  
should be addressed to  
PO Box 326  
Ogdensburg, NY 13669  
and should be received by  
Wednesday prior to  
publication. Paper is  
printed each Friday;  
dateline is Wednesday.  
Member, Catholic  
Press Association.

**POSTMASTER:**

Send address changes to  
North Country Catholic,  
PO Box 326  
Ogdensburg, NY  
13669-0326

# Not the expected reaction

While it was not my favorite moment, Deanna, my twin sister, loved it. She loved it so much that she told both our mom and older sister that they should ask me about my morning.

"I figured I'd spread the joy," Deanna said later.

What made my morning so entertaining for Deanna (and my family and a few friends)?

I was rudely awakened at around 4 a.m. on Good Friday by the younger of my two cats. He was chasing a mouse.

If I were to rank my least favorite things, mice and mornings would both be in the top five.

The house was built in the 1800s and has wood lots on two sides. Mice get in sometimes. It's part of the reason I have cats. Normally, I'd be happy if the cats were getting a mouse.

**Darcy L.  
Fargo**

But this mouse was different. This mouse was in my bed.

I don't think I've ever gotten out of bed that fast. As I jumped out of bed and shouted, my momentary freak-out distracted my cat, and the mouse

got away.

The incident left my heart racing and my adrenaline surging, and it left me sitting downstairs on the couch. I viewed it as an

entirely unpleasant experience. I certainly didn't find it funny.

But Deanna sure did. And when she called a few minutes after I told Deanna, my mother also laughed pretty hard. The more people I told about the mouse in my bed, the less unpleasant the memory became. I started to find it funny, too, even though I'm still freaked out about their being a mouse in my house (yes, I know I'm six feet tall and the mouse can't hurt me; fear is not logical). Sharing the story and bringing laughter to others became a source of joy.

It's amazing how quickly God can turn a minor traumatic event into something joyful and happy, and I think the joy and happi-

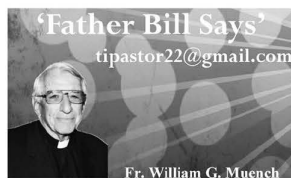
ness feel even better after experiencing extreme fear or some other hard emotion.

How fitting that I was sitting with that idea this week. Now, we enter the joy and celebration of our Lord's resurrection after spending time with the suffering and redemption of the cross and 40 days in the desert of Lent. For me, and I think for a lot of us, it's a different joy and celebration than any other partly because it follows such a long, solemn period. And it's a different type of joy because it celebrates the biggest gift of them all - life eternal with our God.

It's a joy worth spreading.

Happy Easter. Christ is risen!

## The peace of Christ



we need his love and peace if we are to transform a broken world. I have come to realize that I need the Lord's peace desperately. I have discovered that we will find peace in belonging only to God. Peace is not just an absence of war. As followers of Jesus, his peace must be within us, in our hearts and souls. As we find Christ's peace, we can make our Church and our world a place of peace. Peace will give us a state of inner calm. We will find a proper relationship with our God and with others. This peace is God's gift for us all. When we open our hearts, we will discover the Lord's gift of peace.

In the days of the Lord Jesus, people would greet each other by saying, "Shalom." It means peace but even more. In general, this

conveys a sense of universal completeness, nothing is lacking. Only through this peace, we are in perfect communion with our God. Peace is the great gift we can give to one another. But we can't give it if we haven't got it. And we can't give it to someone who doesn't want it or who is unable to receive it.

The resurrected Jesus offered peace to his apostles. He had found peace himself even after his terrible sufferings through his resurrection. When Jesus appeared to his apostles, he did not scold them or berate them. Rather, he offered his peace to turn despair into hope, their sadness into joy.

At each Mass that we participate in, we remember the peace of Jesus. Just before Holy Communion, a prayer is offered to introduce the Sign of Peace. "Lord, Jesus Christ who said to your apostles: Peace I leave you, my peace I give you, look not on our sins, but on the faith of your Church, and graciously

grant her peace and unity in accordance with your will."

The Christian has a vocation to peace. As we offer peace to others during Mass, we should bring peace to all we meet each day. We are truly to be powerful peacemakers in our homes and in our communities. The challenge is that instead of giving peace to others, we may inflict in this our own unrest and unhappiness. Each time the resurrected Jesus appeared to his apostles he began by saying to them, "Peace be with you." I believe that each time Jesus comes to us in prayer, he will greet us, "Peace be with you."

So, as peacemakers, we are called to open our hearts to the Lord so that we may experience his peace. This is a peace that no one can take away from us, a peace which can truly exist even in a troubled world. Peace leads to a right relationship with God and with others. Peace results when we trust our God.





Photos provided

(Left) Classmates Brother José, OSB, Ogdensburg seminarian Tyler Fitzgerald, Brother Francisco, OSB, and Brian (Pittsburgh) with Stephanos and Panagiota in Athens. (Center) This spot is understood as the traditional site of Lydia's baptism in Philippi, near the modern-day town of Krinides in northern Greece. The river in the background is likely the Gangites (or Angitis) River, which is associated with Lydia's conversion and baptism as recorded in Acts 16:13-15. (Right) Ogdensburg seminarian Kevin McCullough stands before the magnificent Library of Celsus in Ephesus, one of the great centers of learning in the ancient world. This grand structure, built in the 2nd century AD, once housed thousands of scrolls and honored Tiberius Julius Celsus, a Roman governor of Asia. A reminder of Ephesus' rich intellectual and biblical heritage, as St. Paul preached here during his missionary journeys.

## Seminarians travel in 'Footsteps of St. Paul'

A group of seminarians, monks, and professors from Saint Vincent Seminary and Archabbey recently spent nine days following in the Footsteps of Saint Paul.

The pilgrimage took them to some of the cities visited by St. Paul during his missionary journeys in the first century AD across Greece and Turkey. Cities visited included: Neapolis (Acts 16:11, modern day Kav-

ala, where St. Paul first stepped foot on mainland Europe), Philippi (Acts 16:14-15, where Lydia, the first European Christian was baptized), Thessalonica (Acts 17:2-9), Berea (Acts 17:10), Athens, where Paul preached at the Areopagus, (Acts 17:16-34), Corinth (Acts 18), and Ephesus (Acts 19:1).

Diocese of Ogdensburg seminarians Tyler Fitzgerald, third theology,

and Kevin McCullough, second theology, were among the pilgrims.

The pilgrimage's aim was not only for spiritual renewal and cultural experience, but to help the Scriptures come alive and foster vibrant preaching on St. Paul.

The following are the seminarians' reflections:

**TYLER FITZGERALD:**

Flying nine hours from Chicago to Frankfurt was the first time I had

ever been on an airplane. The airports were a little bigger than Watertown and Ogdensburg. After eight or nine (I really lost count) flights over the course of nine days, I have had enough flying for a while.

The ancient city of Ephesus is beautiful. In the United States, we often think of marble as being expensive and reserved for fancy buildings and monuments. It was quite an experience to see so much marble in the ancient city; shops, columns, arches, even the main roads and sidewalks were marble with traction bumps carved out so one doesn't slip. Our tour guide reminded us of Paul's run-in with the silversmiths of Ephesus who made their money selling small statues of the god Artemis. Once Paul brought the Gospel to Ephesus, the sale of these pagan idols decreased...and that's where Paul's troubles began. You can read the

whole account in Acts 19:23-40. Our guide reminded us of this account as we were walking along one of the main streets lined with shops. There are no barriers or ropes preventing pilgrimages from walking around the shops, sitting on broken columns, or climbing broken walls. The most memorable moment in Ephesus was spending a few hours at Mary's house which overlooks the ancient city. Tradition holds that after Jesus gave Mary to John (John 19:27), they eventually made their way to Ephesus and John provided a house for Mary. The scenery was beautiful and moving. It was a breezy, 70 degree afternoon. We were the only group at the holy site and I was able to spend about fifteen minutes in Mary's house with another classmate. I truly felt at home with Jesus, Mary, and John. As the breeze flowed through

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

The Diocese of Ogdensburg

**NORTH COUNTRY  
CATHOLIC**

### Subscription Campaign

Please Check Appropriate Box(es):

☐ New ☐ Renew ☐ Check Enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Annual Subscription Cost/Level

- ☐ Regular Subscription, \$27  
☐ Outside of the Diocese, \$30  
☐ Patron Subscription, \$35  
☐ Special Patron Subscription, \$50  
☐ Sustaining Patron Subscription, \$100  
☐ Extraordinary Patron Subscription, \$250

Place in your parish collection or  
 Mail Payment to:  
 PO Box 106  
 Canajoharie, NY 13317

Parish \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Please e-mail me my copy of the NCC in place of a paper copy

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

If you would like to subscribe by credit card please visit our website: [www.northcountrycatholic.org](http://www.northcountrycatholic.org)



# Footsteps of St. Paul

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

the house, the birds began to chirp, and my heart was moved in a way I shall never forget.

Three classmates and I climbed into a taxi one night in Athens and made for a tiny icon shop in the heart of the city. We met Stephanos and Panagiota who have run the shop for their entire 52 years of marriage. They were so hospitable and wonderful, textbook definition of two grandparents running a small shop. One of my classmates was still in his Benedictine habit and they became very excited when we told them we are to be ordained deacons in the spring. Turns out, all the icons come from the monks on Mount Athos, an ancient and famous mountain of monasteries on a secluded island. They are all handwritten. Real icons are never referred to as painted but written. In the Orthodox tradition, they are not pieces of art, but windows into heaven. I fell in love with two unique icons which I have never seen before - Christ in Prison and the Theotokos (Mother of God) of the Abandoned and Orphans. I cannot find anything like them online, which all the more verifies the fact that these icons are truly one of a kind and hand-written with prayer.

Fun fact: I didn't pay for a single piece of baklava while in Turkey, and I ate a lot!

I wish I could say more, but I could fill this whole edition of North Country Catholic with stories. I am truly looking forward to sharing my experiences with the faithful of the Diocese of Ogdensburg in my future preaching and priestly ministry.

**KEVIN MCCULLOUGH:**

I am incredibly grate-

ful for the opportunity to have traveled with my brother seminarians to Greece over spring break this year, during my second year of theological studies. What made this pilgrimage even more meaningful was its theme, Following the Footsteps of Saint Paul. This journey was particularly significant for me because, this semester, I am studying Pauline Literature. Being physically present in some of the very places Saint Paul traveled and preached allowed me to engage with my studies on a much deeper level. It is one thing to read about Paul's missionary journeys in the Scriptures, but quite another to walk where he walked, to stand in the places where he proclaimed the Gospel. Often, when reading the Bible, it is easy to think of these events as distant stories, especially since Paul's travels took place thousands of miles away from my home in Ogdensburg. But this pilgrimage transformed those stories into lived history, making them more tangible and real.

One of the most profound moments of the trip was visiting Lydia's Baptistry in Philippi. As I reflected on the story of Lydia's baptism by Paul, I found myself contemplating my own baptism and the significance of that sacrament in my life. Standing in that sacred space, where one of the earliest Christian communities in Europe took root, deepened my appreciation for the Church's missionary beginnings. This visit was particularly special because it was the first official stop on our pilgrimage after arriving in Greece, following our long journey - an overnight nine-and-a-half hour flight from the U.S.



**Diocese of Ogdensburg seminarians Kevin McCullough and Tyler Fitzgerald on the Synagogue steps at Berea where St. Paul preached the Gospel (Acts 17:10).**

to Frankfurt and then on to Thessaloniki. To mark the occasion, our group gathered to celebrate Mass at Lydia's Baptistry, forming a small but deeply connected pilgrim community in this remarkable place.

Although much of the trip, we moved in haste to be able to experience as much as we could on our nine-day pilgrimage, one moment of meditative quietness that I experienced was our visit to the Meteora Monasteries in Kalambaka, Greece. Perched atop towering rock pillars, there are seven Eastern Orthodox monasteries, which are among the most breathtaking and historically significant monastic sites in the world. The name Meteora means "suspended in the air," which perfectly describes their dramatic setting. The

monasteries were founded between the 14th and 16th centuries by hermit monks seeking solitude and spiritual refuge.

Beyond its spiritual richness, the pilgrimage also provided an opportunity to immerse ourselves in the cultural life of Greece and Turkey. Witnessing the landscapes, the historical sites, and the living faith of the local Christian communities gave me a fresh perspective on the world in which Saint Paul preached. It was also a time of profound fraternity. Traveling together with my classmates and faculty from Saint Vincent Seminary strengthened our bonds in ways I had not anticipated. The shared experiences, the moments of prayer, and even the humorous travel mishaps became memories we will cherish for a

lifetime.

I was particularly struck by how spread-out Paul's missionary sites truly are. Until experiencing it firsthand, I had not fully appreciated the vast distances he covered to spread the Gospel. We spent considerable time traveling by bus and airplane between locations, but even these long journeys became an opportunity for spiritual and personal growth. Whether engaging in theological discussions, sharing reflections, or simply enjoying each other's company, we made the most of every moment.

Lastly, a particularly memorable highlight of the pilgrimage was celebrating my birthday with the group in Kalambaka and Athens. It was a unique blessing to mark the day while immersed in such a spiritually rich journey. One of the most meaningful parts of this celebration was a morning visit to an icon workshop, where we received a presentation on the sacred art of iconography. Learning how icons are "written" - not merely painted - and how they serve as a form of prayer was a profound experience. I peered over the counter as one older woman, meticulously crafted a sacred image of the Theotokos (Mother of God) without even noticing our presence in the shop.

This pilgrimage was more than just a trip; it was an encounter with the living history of our faith, a renewal of my own vocational journey, and a reminder of the enduring power of the Gospel. I return home with a heart full of gratitude, a renewed zeal for my studies, and a deeper connection to Saint Paul's mission, which continues to inspire us today.



## APRIL IS NATIONAL CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH

**'Here for the protection of all children'**

By Darcy Fargo  
Editor

April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month, and while the diocese hasn't had a claim of recent abuse in years, it's not time to be complacent, said Safe Environment Office & Charter Compliance Coordinator John Morrison.

"We certainly continue to make significant progress and strides in our efforts to create a culture of safety at our parishes, schools and institutions," Morrison said. "We haven't had an allegation in a number of years. It's easy to think the problem has been addressed, but the problem is ongoing. Even if it's not in church, abuse is happening in our communities. It's important to train as many people as possible to spot the warning signs of abuse and to know what to do when they see those warning signs. We're here for the protection of all children, not just children who are in the custody

of the Church."

Morrison said the diocese continues to run background checks and complete abuse prevention training with clergy, employees and volunteers.

"We have background checks, re-checks, training and recertification required every year," he said. "We're hitting those marks. We can look at our database and say 'every single person has a background check and nearly every single one is trained. It gives me a feeling of success in what we've been able to accomplish.'"

And while background checks and VIRTUS trainings continue, Morrison said more work will be done in the coming year and years.

"The Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People is due for revision this year," Morrison said. "My understanding is that it will be voted on (by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops) in November. Once we see the revisions to the Charter, we'll likely



need to revise our policies to be in compliance."

Morrison said the diocesan Review Board works with administration and staff to revise the local Safe Environment protocols.

"We're required to update our policies every five years," he said. "We last updated our policy in 2020, so it's due again this year. Because we need to see the Charter revisions, we may defer our revisions until early 2026 depending on the timing of the Charter revisions and how many changes we need to make."

Morrison said he hopes to see additional clarity and instructions around Safe Environment protocols

for vulnerable adults in the next version of the Charter.

"If you look at the definition of 'vulnerable adult' in the Charter, it's different from a definition Pope Francis has used," Morrison said. "With children, everyone knows what that is - anyone under age 18. It's a bit more ambiguous when you consider the definition of a 'vulnerable adult.' I'm hoping we get more clarity on that."

Also coming later this year, the diocese will be transitioning to a new training program to use with children in Catholic Schools and catechetical/faith formation programs.

"For a number of years, more than a decade, we've been using the Child Lures program," Morrison said. "The operators of that program went out of business at the end of last year. We've been continuing to use the program while we consider a replacement option. I've been reviewing programs working with

the Faith Formation regional assistant director and (Director) Sister Ellen Rose (Coughlin), and we've selected the VIRTUS (youth) program for next year. We use VIRTUS for our training with adults, so many of us are familiar with the platform, but it'll certainly be a big challenge switching."

For the adult training, Morrison said he hopes to identify individuals who would be willing to provide VIRTUS training to others.

"We have a couple trainers on staff, and we'd like to add additional facilitators," he said. "Throughout the pandemic and after, we had a few facilitators step back or cut back. Having people spread around the diocese makes the training more accessible and reduces the amount of travel involved for facilitators."

For more information about the diocesan Safe Environment Office or policies, visit <https://www.rcdony.org/safe-environment.html> or call 315-393-2920.

**POWERFUL IN ANY LOCATION**

Father Ray Diesbourg, a Missionary of the Sacred Heart and pastor of the Catholic Community of Cape Vincent, Rosiere, and Chaumont, and the IHC Mystery Players during a presentation of the "Way of the Cross" held at St Vincent of Paul Church in Cape Vincent on March 14. "I hosted the Mystery Players many years ago when I was pastor in Pennsylvania and had always hoped that I might host them again because they were so well received," Father Diesbourg said. A nearly packed church in Cape Vincent agreed with Father Diesbourg as they were treated to a unique way to experience the "Way of the Cross" performed by the Mystery Players.

**Environmental Stewardship****Easter week celebration**

This year, Easter week coincides with two days that attempt to bring attention to the importance of nature in our society. Earth Day occurs April 22 and Arbor Day is celebrated April 25.

During spring, especially in the weeks after Easter, there is a grand reawakening of life that has been dormant under the frozen soil and beneath ice-covered waterways. It is a time when the landscape gradually begins to acquire a light green color, there is a return of familiar sounds from birds and amphibians, and unique fragrances and odors become present in the air again along with allergy causing agents.

Both Earth Day and Arbor Day remind us that we are part of the natural world and have been fashioned and sustained by the same God. Unlike other creatures, we bear the responsibility to care for those entities with which we share our surroundings.

This year, the theme of Earth Day is to try to incorporate as much clean energy as possible into our life. For many, this may seem to be an unattainable goal; but as humans we tend to thrive in difficult situations and hopefully start to look for ways to confront the challenge.

Arbor Day is dedicated to the need to replenish trees decimated by our desire for open space. Certainly, we do not have to plant trees only on this designated day, but rather when the time is best suited for the transplanting and growing needs of the species that you prefer.

Easter is a glorious time, as we are reminded that our soul is immortal, and death has no hold over us. But life is not carefree, for while we are here in this physical form, we must care for all life formed by the Creator and any action that can be done to help with this is never a waste of time or effort. And please remember that ever prayer is an activity that can always benefit life. Have a great Easter Week.

**Bishop's Public Schedule**

April 23 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral  
 April 24 – 11 a.m. – Priest Personnel Board Meeting at Bishop's Residence followed by Lunch  
 April 25 – 2 p.m. – Mass Celebrating the Jubilee Year of Hope at the North Country Nursing and Rehabilitation Center in Massena  
 April 26 – Highway to Heaven event, including Eucharistic adoration, at the Eucharistic Miracles of the World Exhibition at St. Agnes Church in Lake Placid  
 April 27 – 11 a.m. – Mass Celebrating the Jubilee Year of Hope at St. Joseph's Home in Ogdensburg  
 April 28 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral  
 April 29 – 10 a.m. – Mass Celebrating the Jubilee Year of Hope at the Samaritan Summit Village in Watertown  
 April 30 – 5 p.m. – Dinner with the Diocesan Review Board followed by a Meeting at Bishop's Residence

**Rest in Peace**

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

**April 23** – Rev. L. Victor Petit, O.M.I., 1898; Most Rev. Henry Gabriels, 1921  
**April 24** – V. Rev. Alfred L. Pelletier, O.M.I., 1978; Rev. Thomas Egan, S.J., 1994  
**April 26** – Rev. Charles M. Mestre, O.M.I., 1870; Msgr. David Stinebrickner, 1998  
**April 27** – Rev. John J. Fedigan, O.S.A., 1908; Rev. Michael F. Ambrose, 1934  
**April 28** – Rev. J. A. Larose, 1967  
**April 29** – Rev. Arthur C. Kenny, 1945; Rev. Peter Mullen, M.M., 1999

**CALLED TO SERVE****The Easter Vigil**

The Easter Vigil Mass is one of my favorite worship events of the year. It is chock full of important moments. We welcome new members as part of the mystical body. We hear the history of man's relationship with God in scripture. We celebrate Jesus' victory over death in his resurrection.

And we welcome the light of Christ into our lives.

The Easter Candle or

**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, Terrienne Yanulavich, Ph.D., LMHC, 5050 Route 374, Merrill, NY 12955; terriennyanulavich@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

Paschal Candle is lit for the first time at the Vigil service.

The candle is lit from a fire set outside the church building. It is sometimes moved inside for pastoral reasons like wind, snow, rain and cold.

One time years ago, in the gathering area of St. Patrick's in Watertown, the fire we set was too hot and the flames too high.

The fire department responded to the alarm we set off. At least we found out, to our embarrassment, the system worked.

From that paschal candle, we light the hand-held candles of our fellow worshippers and listen as the deacon sings the Exsultet, the proclamation of praise and thanksgiving for the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Exsultet means "let them rejoice" and comes right after the blessing of the Easter candle when it is carried to the Sanctuary by a deacon.

He sets the candle, raises the light to God with incense, and prays in song that God will accept this symbol.

"Therefore, O Lord, we pray this candle, hallowed to the honor of your name, may persevere undimmed, to overcome the darkness of this night. Receive it as a pleasing fragrance, and let it mingle with the lights of heaven.

May this flame be found still burning by the Morning Star: the one Morning Star who never sets, Christ your Son, who, coming back

from death's domain, has shed his peaceful light on humanity, and lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen."

The paschal candle remains in the Sanctuary for the 50 days of Easter. It is lit for every Mass, the Liturgy of the Hours and all other liturgical events, like baptisms and funerals.

After Pentecost, the end of the Easter season, the candle is positioned near the baptismal font.

The candle will be lit throughout the year when someone is baptized. It symbolizes the Light of Christ to be followed by the newly baptized on his or her earthly journey.

The candle is repositioned for a funeral. It stands, lit, at the head of the coffin or near the urn of the deceased.

We believe the time on earth will be followed by an eternity with God. The Light of Christ will lead us on that journey.

The Easter Vigil is a transforming service in the Church liturgical year.

I pray you were able to attend in your parish. The Vigil marks the end of our season of remembrance of Jesus' suffering, death, and resurrection.

The Exsultet says it so well, "Our birth would have been no gain, had we not been redeemed."

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



**Deacon Kevin Mastellon**



# Violence against Christians escalates in the Holy Land

By Victoria Cardiel  
Catholic News Agency

The annual report by the Rossing Center, a Jerusalem-based organization dedicated to interfaith coexistence, documented 111 cases of harassment and violence against the Christian community in Israel and East Jerusalem in 2024.

The report revealed a climate of hostility that, according to one of the study's authors, Federica Sasso, only represents "the tip of the iceberg of a much larger phenomenon."

"Many more attacks occur, but they are very difficult to monitor," she told ACI Prensa, CNA's Spanish-language news partner.

She also noted that the Holy Land "has currently been devoid of Christian pilgrims" due to the war unleashed after the Hamas attacks on Oct. 7, 2023, which somewhat mitigates the situation.

"If we were in a normal period of the flow of pilgrims, the number of attacks would probably be much higher," she explained.

Sasso, who attributed the situation in part to the "growing polarization and radicalization within Israeli society," emphasized that, although there is some widespread skepticism regarding the effectiveness of making a report, the center is observing a positive trend as religious "are increasingly willing to report incidents."

Partly due to a "proven track record of dismissing them or releasing suspects without appropriate consequences," they preferred not to make it public, she said.

Of the 111 reported cases of assault, 47 were physical assaults primarily through "spitting," a behavior that has evolved from subtle acts to openly aggressive displays. In several areas, especially in the Old City of Jerusalem, priests, nuns, friars, and monks "being easily identified are exposed to these attacks on a daily basis," Sasso explained.

According to the report, Christians have reported a "further increase in the frequency and aggressiveness of such episodes [spitting], and, according to the testimonies compiled, priests and nuns living in certain areas of Jerusalem ... now face an almost certain risk of experiencing this type of harassment every time they go out."

In addition to harassment and spitting, the Rossing Center has certified

other violations of the right to religious freedom. For example, Christian religious leaders have been told to remove crosses from public spaces.

The identified attacks include incidents of physical aggression such as spitting, direct assaults, and vandalism against churches and monasteries as well as cases of verbal harassment, which has left the Christian community feeling "increasingly threatened in their own homes," Sasso said.

Last year, 35 cases of vandalism and desecration in churches and monasteries were documented, including graffiti on church walls, stone throwing, arson, and defacing Christian imagery. In one particularly serious case, a Catholic retreat house in northern Israel was reported to have been raided, an incident in which "sacred objects were damaged and replaced with Jewish religious objects," according to the report.

The report notes that responsibility for these acts falls exclusively on individuals identified as Jewish, "primarily young men from ultra-Orthodox and national-religious circles."

According to the investigation, the climate of radicalization is motivated by "a mixture of nationalist fervor and religious extremism" that drives these groups, especially within the Haredi movement, the ultra-Orthodox Jewish sector with a nationalist tendency.

The report also cites ignorance of Christianity or prejudice as a reason. In this regard, Sasso pointed out that this is one of the underlying problems in the historical background of Jewish-Christian relations forged over millennia.

"Israel is the only place in the world where Jewish-Christian relations are completely different from those we have in the West; that is, it is the only place where the Jewish population is the majority and Christians are the minority, so it is a completely inverted minority relationship compared to the West," she explained.

This context contributes to the continued perception of Christianity among Israeli Jews, which is characterized by "certain stereotypes that have been perpetuated even in school curricula."

That's why the report's recommendations make it clear that education is truly essential. "It's necessary to explain that Christianity is, above all, a religious identity, which must be separated from the historical memory of the Shoah [Holocaust]," Sasso added.

## CATHOLIC WORLD AT A GLANCE

### Bishops call for protecting safety net for 'basic human needs'

As work on budget reconciliation proceeds in Congress, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) is urging lawmakers to protect programs that serve those most in need. "The Church's closeness to the poor informs our advocacy. We know firsthand that families are struggling," the bishops said in an April 15 statement. "We implore [Congress] to protect programs such as Medicaid and SNAP and to expand the Child Tax Credit (CTC) to the most vulnerable children." "This Lent," the bishops continued, "we read the call to turn back to the Lord from the Prophet Isaiah: 'Make justice your aim.' (Is 1:17). It is for the sake of justice that the Catholic Church is committed to providing comfort, hope, and relief to those who are poor and suffering." The bishops call for the funding of Catholic Charities agencies, Catholic hospitals, and long-term care facilities and clinics. The bishops said these programs and organizations are necessary to "provide food, shelter, counseling, health care, education, training, and other services."

### Lourdes announces 72nd miracle: Italian pilgrim cured

The Sanctuary of Our Lady of Lourdes in France on Wednesday announced the recognition of the 72nd miracle at the Catholic pilgrimage site, one involving an Italian woman who was cured of a rare neuromuscular condition more than 15 years ago. Father Michel Daubanes, the rector of the sanctuary, made the announcement on Wednesday following the completion of a rosary at the French shrine, according to a tweet issued by the directors of the holy site. The pilgrim who received the miracle was identified as Italian woman Antonietta Raco, who "suffered from primary lateral sclerosis" and who was "cured in 2009 during her pilgrimage to Lourdes," the tweet said. Bishop Vincenzo Carmine Orofino of Tursi-Lagonegro in Italy, where Raco lives, likewise announced the recognition of the miracle on Wednesday. After bathing in the waters at Lourdes in 2009, Raco "began to move independently" after which "the effects of the infamous illness immediately and definitively disappeared," the Italian diocese said.

### Senator introduces bill to make Easter Monday a holiday

U.S. Sen. Eric Schmitt, R-Missouri, announced that he is introducing new legislation to make Easter a federal holiday so families are able to spend "the holiest day in Christianity" together. In a thread of posts on X, Schmitt explained why the day should be federally recognized, starting with the fact that "81% of Americans celebrate Easter." "But," he continued, "our current holiday schedule makes it way too difficult for families to celebrate together." The new bill is in the earliest stage of the legislation process but states its intent is "to designate Easter Monday as a legal public holiday," which Schmitt said "isn't a radical idea." "It's a federal recognition of a tradition that is central to Western civilization — a tradition that's already recognized as a public holiday in nations across (and beyond!) the West, including Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and most of Western Europe," Schmitt said.

## VIRTUAL EVENTS

## FRIENDSHIP GROUP MEETING

You are invited to our next Friendship Group meeting.

**Date:** April 24

**Time:** 7 p.m.

**Place:** Zoom

**Features:** Even if you have received our Lord thousands of times in the Eucharist, the book "Consuming Love" invites you to experience afresh the intensity of the intimacy Christ offers us. Author Father Gregory Cleveland, OMV opens new horizons in our understanding of the Eucharist and offers a language of love to express our relationship with Jesus as a divine romance.

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

## CLINTON NORTHERN FRANKLIN

## SPRING STUDY SERIES

Ellenburg Center — Join Our Lady of the Adirondacks for 9 sessions using Fr. Michael Gaitley's Guidebook "Divine Mercy in the Second Greatest Story Ever Told"

**Date:** April 25 to May 16 and resuming May 30 to June 27

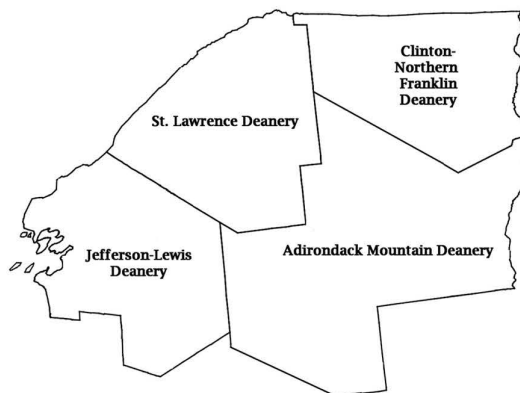
**Time:** 6:30 p.m. to 8

**Features:** Video presentations of the material and discussion encourage participants to enter a fuller understanding of God's astounding love and forgiveness available to every person. What hope and joy this brings, allowing us to trust our God absolutely in all circumstances and to become merciful ourselves in response to difficult challenges. Light refreshments included. While donations are always appreciated, all materials for this series are free.

**Contact:** Sarah Anderson at 518-534-9976 to register for classes.

## DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY

Plattsburgh — Chaplet of Divine



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

Parishioners are invited to send information about activities to:

North Country Catholic, PO Box 326,

Ogdensburg, NY 13669

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

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

Mercy Sunday to be held.

**Date:** April 27

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

**Schedule:** 2 p.m. Exposition begins, Divine Mercy Chaplet will be sung, 3 p.m. Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.

**Contact:** For more information call 518-563-0730

## FIRST FRIDAY

Champlain — St. Mary's to have Mass, Exposition and Benediction every first Friday of the month.

**Date:** May 2

**Schedule:** 9 a.m. Mass followed by Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. 11 a.m. Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.

## SETON GALA

Plattsburgh — Join us for the 3rd annual Gala for Seton Catholic with the theme "Run for the Roses."

**Date:** May 3

**Time:** 5 p.m.

**Place:** West Side Ballroom

**Cost:** \$80 per person

**Features:** Dinner, Dancing, Live Auctions, Experience made baskets/Mystery items for Concerts and Baseball team tickets. So much more as the school host a Fund a Need event for the Drama and Arts Departments. Come dressed in your best Derby Attire.

**Contact:** Please contact Sue

Pellerin for more information at [spellerin@setonknights.org](mailto:spellerin@setonknights.org)

## UNDERSTANDING MENTAL ILLNESS

Plattsburgh — The Interfaith Council of Plattsburgh, Clinton County and NAMI Champlain Valley will be holding a free event, "Understanding and Welcoming those with Mental Illness into our Faith Communities."

**Date:** May 4

**Time:** 1 p.m. to 3

**Place:** Plattsburgh United Methodist church

## THE RESCUE PROJECT

Brushton — Have you ever wondered Why there is something rather than nothing? Why is the world so obviously messed up? What if anything has God done about it? And how should I respond? Join us for a 9-week experience to discover how AWESOME the Good News that is the Gospel really is!

**Date:** May 14 and continues for 9 weeks

**Time:** 6 p.m.

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

**Cost:** \$10 donation to cover the cost of the books would be greatly appreciated but is not required.

**Features:** Come and hear the Gospel in a new and compelling way: How God CREATED every-

thing good and how we were CAPTURED. How Jesus came and RESCUED us and how we can RESPOND to this amazingly Hope-filled GOOD NEWS! Each Session consists of a video, a short snack break and small group discussion facilitated by Deacon Lee Trudeau and Marika Donders. Participant guides will be provided.

**Contact:** For more information contact Marika Donders at [mdonders@rcdony.org](mailto:mdonders@rcdony.org)

## JEFFERSON-LEWIS

## SPAGHETTI DINNER

Watertown — St. Anthony's Altar and Rosary Society is sponsoring a spaghetti dinner.

**Date:** April 24

**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

## DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY

Houseville — The Feast of the Divine Mercy Sunday will be celebrated with celebrants Fr. Douglas Decker and Fr. John Ojuok as homilist.

**Date:** April 27

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

**Schedule:** The Exposition of the Most Blessed Sacrament will take place at 2 p.m., followed by the Sacrament of Reconciliation until 3 p.m. Adoration will continue at 3 p.m., followed by the Homily, the Divine Mercy Chaplet, Benediction, the Blessing of Holy Cards and Petitions, and Veneration of the Divine Mercy Image. The program concludes with a reception in the church hall. **Contact:** Call 315-348-6260 for more information.

## DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY

Watertown — Divine Mercy Sunday will be celebrated.

**Date:** April 27

**Time:** 3 p.m.

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

**Features:** According to the Di-

vine Mercy message from Jesus to Saint Faustina, to fittingly observe the Feast, always be merciful to others, go to confession during Lent and receive communion on the Feast of Mercy. Publicly celebrate the Feast of Mercy. There will be Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, singing of the Chaplet of Divine Mercy, brief confessions, and a procession. Please note that the celebration is not a Mass.

**Contact:** For more info on how to prepare call Judy Boulton 315-783-7349 or Kim Tyler 315-486-4542 [www.thedivine-mercy.org](http://www.thedivine-mercy.org)

## RUMMAGE SALE

Constableville — St. Mary's will be hosting their annual rummage sale.

**Schedule:** May 2, 3 p.m. to 8; May 3 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; May 4, Bag sale after 10 a.m. Mass

**Features:** Like previous years, we will be collecting gently used clothes/shoes, toys, household items, sports gear, holiday decorations, etc. As you do your spring cleaning consider donating those items to St. Mary's. Funds from this sale are used for the yearly heating costs of the church, parish house and hall. Donations may be left on the ramp of the hall from now until the day of the sale.

## SPAGHETTI &amp; MEATBALL DINNER

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

**Date:** May 3

**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

## 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.



APRIL 23, 2025

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

**Date:** May 4  
**Time:** Following 11 a.m. Mass  
**Place:** St. Hedwig's Church  
**Contact:** 315-348-6260

### LIVING STONES EVENT FOR CLM

Watertown — The Commissioned Lay Ministry Association of the Jefferson-Lewis Deanery presents Living Stones: "Jubilee Year-Re-discover Hope."

**Date:** May 8  
**Schedule:** Welcoming remarks, 5:15 p.m.; Mass at 5:30, dinner immediately following and concluding with the program.

**Cost:** \$10 per person if attending dinner, no charge if only coming to the program.

**Features:** The program will be led by Fr. Garry Giroux with his presentation "As we await the Blessed Hope."

**Contact:** Register at: [www.rcdony.org/clm-event](http://www.rcdony.org/clm-event)

### ST. LAWRENCE

### ROSARY WITH DEVOTIONS

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

**Date:** May 3  
**Time:** 8 a.m.  
**Place:** Notre Dame Church, Ogdensburg  
**Features:** Rosary with devotions

### ACIES

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

**Date:** June 1  
**Time:** After the 11 a.m. Mass  
**Place:** St. Mary's Cathedral  
**Features:** Catholics are invited to renew their devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary. 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 will be followed by refreshments. Anyone who loves our Blessed Mother is invited to

attend.

### DIOCESAN EVENTS

### 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. His devotion to the Eucharist led him to create a website to track Eucharistic Miracles.

**Date:** April 26  
**Time:** 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.  
**Place:** St. Agnes Church and School

**Features:** you are invited to pray with our Eucharistic Lord with Catholics from around our diocese, explore an exhibit of Eucharistic miracles, and join Bishop 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 Holy Mass, talks, adoration and confession. This event is for whole families and includes an interactive exhibit, prayer, fellowship, and an opportunity to serve.

**Contact:** The event schedule, prayer resources and more information may be found on the Jubilee page of the Diocesan website at <https://www.rcdony.org/jubileeh2h>.

### DOMESTIC MISSION OPPORTUNITY

The North Country Mission of Hope is offering a domestic mission opportunity for anyone 14 years and older.

**Date:** Aug. 9 — 15  
**Place:** The mission will take place in the Appalachian Region of Southeast Kentucky.

**Contact:** Please contact Deacon James Carlin for more information, costs and an application. The deadline for application is May 30.

### PRIESTHOOD DISCERNMENT

Are you a single Catholic man,

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

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

### 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](http://www.rcdony.org/ffmretreat)

### GUGGENHEIM CLEAN-UP WEEKEND

Saranac Lake — Help wanted in cleaning up the Guggenheim Center to get it ready for the summer.

**Date:** Start at 11 a.m. May 16 and wrap up around 4 p.m. May 17

**Features:** It takes hours of vacuuming, mopping, dusting, window washing, scrubbing and so on to get The Guggenheim Center ready for summer. Can you share an hour, a day or a couple of days to join us at Guggenheim Clean-Up Weekend?

**Contact:** Please register to help at <https://forms.office.com/r/PPDMGsTZGJ>. For more information contact Deacon Jim Crowley at 315-393-2920 or [jcrowley@rcdony.org](mailto:jcrowley@rcdony.org)

### SURVIVING DIVORCE

Plattsburgh — 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 in Plattsburgh.

**Date:** Beginning May 13 on Tuesdays  
**Time:** 6 p.m.  
**Place:** St. John XXIII Newman Center  
**Cost:** \$25 to cover material costs.

**Contact:** To register go to <https://www.rcdony.org/survivingdivorce>. For more information or help with registering, please contact Steve Tartaglia at 315-393-2920 [startaglia@rcdony.org](mailto:startaglia@rcdony.org).

### LIFE-GIVING WOUNDS RETREAT

Utica — Healing retreat for adult children of divorce or separation.

**Date:** May 16-18  
**Place:** Good News Center  
**Cost:** \$100-\$150 per person (shared or single rooms) Scholarships are available.

**Features:** Come for a greater understanding of the wounds left by your parents' divorce or separation, for advice concerning love and trust of others, and for an experience of Christ and community that will lead to deeper self-understanding and healing. The retreat is cosponsored by the Dioceses of Ogdensburg and Syracuse.

**Contact:** To register, please go to <https://LGWsyrr.eventbrite.com>. If you have any questions, please direct them to Erin Miller at [emiller@syrodio.org](mailto:emiller@syrodio.org) or 315-472-6754 opt. 1 or Steve Tartaglia at [startaglia@rcdony.org](mailto:startaglia@rcdony.org) or 315-393-2920

### ORDINATION TO THE ORDER OF THE DIACONATE

Massena — Through the laying on of hands and the invocation of the Holy Spirit, the Most Bishop

Terry R. LaValley will Ordain to the Order of Deacon Mr. Michelet Boncoeur, Mr. Tyler Martin Fitzgerald and Mr. Dennis Mamwaha Ombongi. You are cordially invited to join in the Ordination Liturgy.

**Date:** May 24  
**Time:** 11 a.m.  
**Place:** Sacred Heart Church  
**Features:** A Reception will immediately follow the Liturgy at Trinity Catholic School, 188 Main Street, Massena, NY 13662. The Ordination Mass may be viewed at [www.rcdony.org/ordination](http://www.rcdony.org/ordination). The Ordination Mass program will be available at the same link shortly before the Liturgy.

### RACHEL'S VINEYARD

Saranac Lake — After-Abortion Healing retreat to be held.

**Date:** May 23-25  
**Place:** Guggenheim Lodge  
**Features:** If you are suffering after an abortion, you're not alone. Join others on a weekend retreat of hope and healing.

**Contact:** For more information call Colleen 518-524-0774, email [cminer@rcdony.org](mailto:cminer@rcdony.org) or register online: [rcdony.org/pro-life/rv-retreat](http://rcdony.org/pro-life/rv-retreat)

### CAMP GUGGENHEIM

Saranac Lake — Camp Guggenheim registration is now open. Dates: Session 1 - (11-14 yrs old) - July 6 to July 11; Session 2 - (12-15 yrs old) - July 13 to July 18; Session 3 - (12-15 yrs old) - July 20 to July 25; Session 4 - (12-15 yrs old) - July 27 to Aug. 1; Session 5 - (16-18 yrs old) - Aug. 3 to Aug. 8

**Cost:** \$425, scholarships are available  
**Features:** Don't miss this opportunity to grow in your faith while enjoying a full camp experience in beautiful Saranac Lake!

**Contact:** To register go to: [www.rcdony.org/youth/camp](http://www.rcdony.org/youth/camp). To inquire about financial aid please email Jeannie Grizzuto at [jgrizzuto@rcdony.org](mailto:jgrizzuto@rcdony.org)

## SUNDAY'S SCRIPTURE

## Who is looking for whom?

One day, a person comes up to me and says: "Monsignor, I want you to be the first to know. I have found Jesus." Perhaps,

I was in a bit of a "mood." My quick response was: "Oh my, I did not know that he was lost. Where did you find him?" In retrospect, of course, I know that was not the proper or expected response. But, giving it more thought, the better I like it. The context of Easter and today's Gospel can provide an explanation.

We know that Jesus dying on the cross and rising from the dead proved his divinity because these events demonstrated his control over life and death.

But then, what happens after the crucifixion and resurrection?

The disciples do not look for him because they figured it was all over. The opposite happens. Jesus rises from the dead and starts all over again. He does not wait for the disciples to find him. Rather, he goes after them. He once again calls people to himself just as he did at the beginning of his public ministry.

In today's Gospel, Thomas is a special case. He was not there when Jesus appeared to the other disciples and declared quite clearly that he would not believe unless his conditions – touching the wounds with his own hand – were met, 100%. Rightfully, our first reaction to Thomas might be: "Isn't he awfully bold?" or "Who does he think he is?"



Msgr. Robert H. Aucoin

April 27

Second Sunday of Easter

READINGS

Acts 5:12-16

Revelation 1:9-11a, 12-13, 17-19

John 20:19-31

Jesus does reappear. Is Jesus condescending to Thomas or what?

Not at all. Rather Jesus is being consistent in searching out those who are lost, those without a solid foundation, those who doubt.

You see, Jesus is still inviting Thomas. He did not say to Thomas something like: "Ok, your wish is my command." Rather, "Here I am. Start believing."

Here is the crux of the issue. Does our spirituality consist in God coming after us or in our going after God? Well, the answer is "both."

Biblical spirituality

portrays God seeking out humanity and our responding. Some contemporary forms of "spirituality" portray the issue as us going after God. Is there a difference? You bet there is.

In the Bible, God pursues humanity. He offers a covenant; he offers forgiveness; he calls disciples; he gives them himself in the Eucharist and especially, as the Holy Spirit, he gives a Church so that those who have responded to his invitation can gather as a body to celebrate and praise his call to us.

Contemporary society has a much different approach to spirituality. In this approach, we call upon God; we define who God is; we determine what shape the relationship will take; individuals define what is to be believed; the center of the relationship is the person, not God.

Some contemporary forms of spirituality seek to enhance the person. In biblical spirituality, the person is to praise God. In contemporary spirituality, we define who God is; in biblical spirituality, God calls upon us.

When Jesus appeared to Thomas, he was not a genie appearing on demand. Rather, he was calling Thomas to a deeper spirituality, beyond mere touching, but rather one based on faith and commitment to him.

So, what are we supposed to do? Just sit back and relax?

Not at all. You see God calls us. Our responsibility is to respond. That call and our response constitute the essence of spirituality.

The man I mentioned at the beginning did not find Jesus. Rather, Jesus found him, and the man finally responded. Our response to God's invitation is a liberating response, so liberating that it will help us find the answers to all our questions, hopes, and desires.

So, it is clear. Our response to God's invitation should resemble: "Speak, Lord, your servant is listening" or that of Thomas: "My Lord, and my God."

## What is a Foster Grandparent?

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

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



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

Ray Foote  
age 82  
Foster  
Grandparent

Want more info about how to get started?

Contact Melissa Howard,  
Volunteer Coordinator

PHONE:  
(518)359-7688

EMAIL:  
mhoward@cathcharities.org

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



## Am I Qualified to be a Foster Grandparent?

All you need to join is the ability to give the kind of comfort and love that sets a child on the path toward a successful future. If you're 55 or older and want to share your experience and compassion, you have what it takes to be a Foster Grandparent.

You'll also receive a small bi-weekly, non-taxable stipend that cannot be held against any current benefits you may already have as well as paid mileage for your travel. Additionally, you receive paid holidays, vacations, sick and personal leave.



Support And Pray  
For Vocations

## North Country Catholic has Green option

Our E-paper is now easier to read online. You can receive your North Country Catholic in your e-mail rather than in the mail. Fill in your information and send this form to:

☐ Please switch my current NCC subscription to E-mail  
Name \_\_\_\_\_ PO Box 326  
Ogdensburg,  
NY 13669  
OR Call  
Christine at  
315-608-7556  
to make the  
change

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail \_\_\_\_\_



# Pontifical Mission Society visits leper colony

By Kate Quiñones  
Catholic News Agency



## 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@rcdonry.org

In the Vietnamese highlands lives a colony of people suffering from a chronic infectious disease that often leads to a loss of sense of touch and pain, physical deformities, and life-altering social prejudice — leprosy.

But when Monsignor Roger Landry — director of the Pontifical Mission Societies USA — visited the colony this week, he said it was an honor.

At a leper colony in the Kon Tum area in Vietnam, Landry celebrated Mass, brought Communion to people, and distributed food and sandals, working with St. Joseph's Mission Charity.

In one striking video he shared on social media, Landry helped create a cast of one man's foot so that it could be

made into a perfectly fitting sandal.

"Jesus anointed the feet of his beloved Apostles at the upper room, and he sent us out to do the same," Landry said. "It's one of the great honors of my life to be able to do this."

"Each sandal needs to be sculpted to each foot," he explained in the April 7 post. "They are so grateful. If their feet bleed, the[y] could pass on the disease to others."

Despite being relatively treatable now, at least 250,000 people suffer from leprosy across the world — and many still experience social isolation,

as they did in the time of Christ.

Landry was visibly touched by the "great faith" of the people of the leper colony.

After Mass at "a beautifully packed" church at 5 in the morning, Landry recalled Communion visits to various people with leprosy who were physically unable to come to Mass.

"The first leper whom we visited with great hunger looked up to the Lord through watery eyes and received the Lord on his tongue because he no longer had hands," Landry said.

Another woman, unable to walk, crawled forward to receive Jesus



At a leper colony in the Kon Tum area in Vietnam, Pontifical Missions Society USA President Monsignor Roger Landry celebrated Mass, brought Communion to people, and distributed food and sandals. | Credit: The Pontifical Mission Societies/Margaret Murray

"and then received him with great love," Landry said.

"She was so excited to be able to receive the Lord Jesus," Landry recalled.

The purpose of the Pontifical Mission Societies, Landry added, is this: "bringing Jesus,

the light of the world, to people — no matter what they're suffering."

The Pontifical Mission Societies of the Diocese of Ogdensburg, INC. would like to wish everyone and their families a very Blessed and Happy Easter!

## OBITUARIES

**Adams** — David Francis Stamps, 73; Mass of Christian Burial April 16, 2025 at St. Ceceila's Church; burial in Sulphur Springs Cemetery.

**AuSable Forks** — Carol F. (Wright) Wisher, 85; Memorial Mass April 15, 2025 at Holy Name Church.

**Champlain** — Gloria J. (LaCount) Hart, 81; Mass of Christian Burial April 16, 2025 at St. Mary's Church.

**Clayton** — James F. Bates, 93; Mass of Christian Burial at a later date at St. Mary's Church.

**Croghan** — Mary Ann (Cameau) Lyndaker, 67; Mass of Christian Burial April 21, 2025 at St.

Stephen's Church; burial in St. Stephen's Cemetery.

**Hogansburg** — Brenda L. "Olive" (Herne) Johnston, 62; Mass of Christian Burial April 16, 2025 at St. Regis Church.

**Lyon Mountain** — Robert Pageau, 86; Mass of Christian Burial April 14, 2025 at St. Bernard's Church; burial in St. Bernard's Cemetery.

**Madrid** — William Glenn Trombley, 47; Funeral Services April 27, 2025 at Phillips Memorial Home; burial in St. Mary's Cemetery, Canton.

**Malone** — Donna M. (LaFlesh) Raville, 71; Mass of Christian Burial

April 14, 2025 at Notre Dame Church; burial in Morningside Cemetery.

**Malone** — Barbara M. Young, 86; Graveside Services at a later date at St. John Bosco Cemetery.

**Morrisonville** — Phyllis C. (Peets) Duval, 81; Mass of Christian Burial April 22, 2025 at St. Alexander's Church.

**Ogdensburg** — Margaret E. "Peggy" (Marshall) Gooshaw, 88; Mass of Christian Burial June 30, 2025 at Notre Dame Church; burial in parish cemetery.

**Peru** — Barbara June (Senecal) Tatreaux, 90; Mass of Christian Burial April 16, 2025 at St. Au-

gustine's Church; burial in parish cemetery.

**Plattsburgh** — Scott D. Peck, 56; Funeral Services April 16, 2025 at Brown Funeral Home.

**Port Henry** — Norma G. Fernandez, 91; Mass of Christian Burial April 18, 2025 at St. Patrick's Church; burial in St. Peter and Paul Cemetery, Moriah.

**Port Henry** — Jeffery Richard Ross, 42; Mass of Christian Burial April 12, 2025 at St. Patrick's Church; burial in Ironville Cemetery.

**Schroon Lake** — Madeline (Cervini) Colleary, 91; Mass of Christian Burial April 28, 2025 at

Our Lady of Lourdes Church.

**Ticonderoga** — John C. McDonald, 94; Mass of Christian Burial April 26, 2025 at St. Mary's Church; burial in Valley View Cemetery.

**Ticonderoga** — Donald Allen Olcott, 95; Graveside Services May 17, 2025 at St. Mary's Cemetery.

**Tupper Lake** — Bruce Michael LaVoy, 77; Mass of Christian Burial April 24, 2025 at St. Alphonsus Church.

**BARSTOW**  
AN AMERICAN  
R-**EVOLUTION** GMC SUBARU  
For More Information, Visit Our Web Page  
at: [www.barstowmotors.com](http://www.barstowmotors.com)  
MARKET ST., POTSDAM, NY # (315) 265-8800  
Your NNY Regional GM & Subaru SuperCenter



# 'The Chosen' hits box office milestone

By Francesca Pollio Fenton  
Catholic News Agency

The popular Christian series "The Chosen" continues to do well at the box office, holding its own against recent Hollywood blockbusters such as "Snow White" and "A Minecraft Movie."

Now in its fifth season, Part 1 of "The Chosen: Last Supper" - the first two episodes - has become the highest-grossing installment of the series, raking in a little over \$19 million in theaters at the time of publishing.

Part 2 - episodes 3 through 5 - of the fifth season recently hit the \$10 million mark, and Part 3, which is episodes 6 through 8, was released April 11 and grossed \$5.8 million during its opening weekend.

In an interview with CNA, Dallas Jenkins - creator, writer and director of "The Chosen" - shared what inspired his vision of the Last Supper depicted in Season 5, given many different presentations of this historic event.

"We do it 'The Chosen' way, which is we take stories that are famous... maybe they have been portrayed in stained-glass windows or as paintings in the case of the Last Supper, one of the most famous paintings of all time ... and we're going to reveal the humanity of it,"



PHOTO COURTESY OF 5&2 STUDIOS

Now in its fifth season, Part 1 of "The Chosen: Last Supper" — the first two episodes — has become the highest-grossing installment of the series, raking in a little over \$19 million.

he said.

"At the beginning of the Last Supper, it was 13 brothers who were very, very close to each other and who loved each other deeply being told by one of them 'I'm not going to be with you much longer' and saying some extraordinarily important things that they don't quite understand and so they're trying to make sense of it," Jenkins said. "So the humanization of a story that actually was human but that we don't often look at it that way is an important part of how we portrayed it and one that, almost because of the fame of this part of the story, the fame of the Last Supper, it's easy to distance yourself

from it emotionally. And so, I think we're trying to bring you back into what it would've been like to be in that room."

One of the disciples who begins to understand what Jesus is telling them in Season 5 is John. Actor George Xanthis, who portrays John the Apostle, told CNA how he has seen his character go from "thunder to love" and how viewers are "following him on this journey" from "Son of Thunder," as Jesus jokingly calls John and his brother James, to becoming "the beloved disciple."

Xanthis shared that at the beginning of Season 5, John is "ready to listen" but "he doesn't know what he's sup-

posed to be listening for."

He added that while Mary Magdalene catches the "bug" of understanding what Jesus is telling them in Season 4, "what Season 5 shows is John catches that bug and he catches it off Mary, which is a lovely moment because it's a foreshadowing of where they're both going to end up.

"I would say that he's starting to pay attention and he's sticking very, very close to Jesus as he does," he said.

The actor pointed out how Jenkins frequently reminded the cast that while they may personally know what happens in the end, at the time, the disciples didn't know how things were going to end.

Raised in a Greek Orthodox family knowing the Gospels, Xanthis said he had to "wrestle with that - because I knew what was happening, [so] I'm like, 'How could the disciples not

see this?'"

"So, even as John is beginning to catch on to it, it's also that he doesn't believe that it's going to happen at the end of the week," he added.

In terms of what he hopes viewers will take away from this season as they themselves are experiencing Holy Week, Jenkins said: "I'm hoping viewers watch this going, 'When I don't understand something or someone, can I still trust and follow? Can I still have faith?'"

"Judas didn't understand and rejected," Xanthis explained. "The religious leaders didn't understand and rejected. We have a tendency to still do that today - things I don't understand, people I don't understand, I'm going to reject and I'm going to be secure in my own rightness because confusion is not something I can handle. And I think we see in Season 5, more than ever, what it's like to follow and trust even when you don't fully understand."

Actor Paras Patel, who portrays Matthew, also shared his hopes for viewers this season.

"A recurring theme with the show is that there is light after darkness and so we are heading into the darkness but know that there is light coming after," Patel shared.

"This is going to be a hard season to watch just because we know what's to come and what's happening, but I think at the end of the day I just feel like people leave feeling a little bit of hope...you'll feel a lot, but also just feel rejuvenated and have some strength and hope."

Visit our website

[www.northcountrycatholic.org](http://www.northcountrycatholic.org)

- Read local stories and commentaries
- Search archived papers
- View diocesan events and much more

Find us on Facebook!

