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The Diocese of Ogdensburg Volume 80 Number 3

# NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

APRIL 9, 2025

## HONOR SOCIETY REFLECTS



Immaculate Heart Central in Watertown held National Honor Society induction and renewal of members on March 26. Pictured are (front row, from left) new members, Angelina Santos, Parker Richards, Allyson Ladouceur, Julianna Delaney, Stacia Barber, and (back row) Moderator John Montondo and members, Olivia Staib, Abigail Bombard, Samuel Charlebois, Elizabeth Zajac, Piper Gonas and Logan Petersen. Missing from the photo is Isaac Curtis. Full story on Page 4.

## FOOD PANTRIES EYE CUTS



PHOTO BY KEITH BENMAN/NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

Volunteer Alex Larche-Pacific, at left, and Hahlil Rayme load a vehicle at St. Peter's Outreach food pantry with emergency food for delivery to a local family. The food pantry serves food to an average of more than 300 households a month.

St. Peter's Outreach, like other regional food pantries, are preparing for reductions in food supplies from the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

FULL STORY, PAGE 3

# Pope: God searches for those who are lost

By Kristina Millare  
Catholic News Agency

Pope Francis on Wednesday said Jesus continues to go out in search of those who are lost or without hope in a catechesis titled "Jesus Christ Our Hope."

In his written catechesis, released by the Vatican on April 2, the Holy Father described Jesus' encounter with Zacchaeus — a man "who seems irredeemably lost" — as having a "special place" in his own spiritual journey.

"Perhaps we too feel this way at times: without hope," he wrote, reflecting on the scene in St. Luke's Gospel. "Instead, Zacchaeus will discover that

the Lord was already looking for him."

Like Zacchaeus, the pope said Jesus continues to go out in search of those who seek God even when faced with personal limitations, struggles, or uncertain circumstances.

"When he comes to know that Jesus is passing through the city, Zacchaeus feels the desire to see him," he said. "But when you have a strong desire, you do not lose heart. You find a solution."

While commending Zacchaeus' courage and simplicity for not being intimidated by those who excluded him because he was the chief publican "who collects taxes from his fellow citi-

zens for the Roman invaders," the Holy Father noted that it is Jesus who takes the first step to start a conversation with the man "despised by everyone."

"Jesus asks Zacchaeus to come down immediately, almost surprised to see him in the tree, and says to him, 'Today I must stay at your house!' (Lk 19:5)," he wrote. "God does not pass by without looking for those who are lost."

Reflecting on Zacchaeus' reaction to Jesus' openness toward him, the pope said: "It is the joy of one who feels that he has been seen, acknowledged, and above all forgiven."

After welcoming Jesus into his home, the Holy Father re-

marked that it is the merciful gaze of God that inspired Zacchaeus to transform his life and "imitate the One by whom he felt loved."

"He gets up to make a commitment: to return four times what he has stolen," he said. "He does so because he understands that this is his way of loving."

Concluding his catechesis with an invitation to take "practical steps" forward so as to welcome Jesus and his forgiveness into our own lives, the Holy Father said: "Let us allow ourselves to be found by the mercy of God, who always comes in search of us, in whatever situation we may be lost."

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# What kind of question is that?

The question left us both considering how we sharing Jesus with the world.

My friend, Jacques, is a "gym rat." He loves talking about fitness and exercise.

Jacque and I were having a conversation about fasting, a term that's not uncommon in either fitness or faith circles.

Sometime around

2014-15, Jacques was instrumental in my return to the Church after over a decade away, but we hadn't talked about faith or our spiritual lives in a long time.



**Darcy L. Fargo**

Preparing to bring up some element of fasting in the Christian context, I asked the question that left us both thinking:

"Are you still Jesus-y?"

"I must've changed if

you can't tell I'm still Jesus-y," Jacques replied. "I will definitely have to work on that now."

I felt bad. Then, reflecting on the conversation more, it occurred to me that I shouldn't have needed to ask.

I was testing the waters and checking to see if it was acceptable to talk to him about Jesus. I should've been prepared to discuss Jesus even if I wasn't sure if my friend was still a follower.

That realization felt bad, too.

While both Jacques and I follow Christ, we both felt that question showed us how we could live our mission as His disciples better.

While part of me wishes I had never asked that question, another part of me is glad God gave us both that moment to see where we need to do some work.

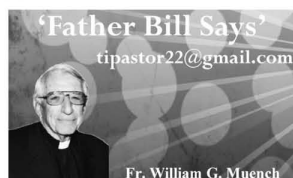
We both want to do better sharing Jesus with the world.

## Following Christ through Holy Week

We call it "Holy Week." For us, it is the holiest week of the Catholic liturgical year. During Holy Week, we celebrate the most sacred events in Jesus' life - his entrance into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, his Last Supper with his apostles on Holy Thursday, his sufferings and crucifixion on Good Friday, his resurrection on Easter Sunday. These are the holiest celebrations of our Catholic faith. Our celebrations during Holy Week reveal to us God's ultimate acts of love and redemption. Pope Benedict has written that the days of Holy Week manifest God's self-giving love in Christ.

The events of Holy Week are not just about the Lord's suffering and death, but rather they're an expression of his divine glory. As we participate in the Masses and services of Holy Week, especially the Sacred Triduum, we participate in Christ's saving work. We make Christ's sacrifice present now.

Today, please join me as we prepare for Holy Week. On Palm Sunday, Jesus en-



ters the city of Jerusalem. The Gospel writers tell us of a spontaneous and joyful celebration that broke out among the people. As you and I celebrate Palm Sunday, we begin with the same joyful celebration. We walk in procession joining those people who walked with Jesus when he entered the city. This is a time for us to fill our hearts with love for our Savior. May we be filled with the same excitement. This Palm Sunday should bring a unique challenge for us, for all in our parish. We are being called to support and stand with our Lord and Savior, Jesus; this is a time to let our world know that Jesus' spirit is new and alive. We are ready to walk with Jesus even now.

On Holy Thursday, we again celebrate the Lord's Last Supper. We now celebrate the unique sacrament of the Holy Eu-

charist, instituted at that Last Supper. So much happened during that Last Supper. Jesus had so much more to teach those apostles and us. He washed their feet. I am certain that at first those apostles were confused. Jesus presented to them a powerful lesson humility and service, and this lesson is for all of us, even so far in the future. St. John's Gospel also tells us of Jesus' discourse at the Last Supper. In this, Jesus teaches us all of God's great love for all of us. He teaches us God loved us first.

Then that Eucharistic moment: Jesus consecrates bread and wine so that he could stay with us, forever present in the Holy Eucharist. Jesus gently and powerfully brings this Eucharist to those apostles and now to us through our Holy Mass in a very humble, yet magnificent, moment. In faith, you and I believe that the Holy Eucharist was instituted at that Last Supper as a wonderful gift for Jesus disciples of all times. What a profound and wonderful time that was!

We must continue to celebrate it. Again, we walk in procession with the Lord.

Good Friday, the mood of our liturgy changes. We remember and participate in the sufferings and death of Jesus, his Passion and crucifixion. In our liturgy, we walk with Jesus as he walked to Golgotha; we walk with Jesus through his Passion and death so that we will realize how powerful was his resurrection. We listen to the Gospel Passion as the evangelist tells us of all the details. We are asked during the Good Friday liturgy to bring our intentions - the needs of our Church - so that we can all pray for them. I believe it is important that we all find an intention, someone in need of our prayer, as we remember the sufferings of Our Lord. Then in our Good Friday liturgy, we venerate the cross of Christ. We reverence a cross in our church. This is an important moment for us. We join the Blessed Mother, St. John and Mary Magdalene at Golgotha at the foot of Jesus' cross. This prepares us for the Lord's Resurrection.



# Cuts worry faith-based food pantries

By Keith Benman  
Contributing Writer

Cuts, halts and pauses in federal food programs have faith-based North Country food pantries bracing for the worst and hoping for the best.

"We don't know what's going to happen," said Elaine LaPage, food pantry manager at St. Peter's Outreach in Massena. "But you never know what's going to happen. That's just the way it is. We have to trust everything will work out for the best."

A good portion of the food St. Peter's Outreach and other food pantries distribute comes in by truck from the warehouses of regional food banks. The supplier for St. Peter's Outreach is the Food Bank of Central New York in Syracuse.

Local food pantries like the one operated by St. Peter's Parish learned what cuts in federal funding could mean in a conference call with the Food Bank of Central New York in late March.

The Syracuse-based food pantry will suffer about a 29 percent cut in food supplied by the United States Department of Agriculture. That's because the USDA, at least for now, has ended shipments of "bonus" foods under an add-on to its emergency food assistance program, according to Brian McManus, Food Bank of Central New York chief operations officer. Last year, the USDA shipped \$943 million in bonus foods to food banks and other agencies nationwide, according to USDA's web site.

The halt in funding has come about under



PHOTOS BY KEITH BENMAN

(Above) Volunteer Alan Peet pulls items from shelves at the St. Peter's Outreach food pantry in late March. Peet is one of about 20 food pantry volunteers helping to feed their "neighbors in need" throughout the greater Massena area. (Right) Food from the United States Department of Agriculture is delivered to St. Peter's Outreach food pantry from the Food Bank of Central New York twice a month. Cuts at the USDA are impacting faith-based and other food pantries across the North Country.



the Trump Administration's drive to cut the size and cost of the federal government.

"It's a setback for sure," said McManus.

In addition to the halt in the bonus foods program, a second USDA program where local farmers grow food for local food programs has been cut. But food banks are hopeful that funding will be replaced by state government, McManus said.

Food banks can still rely on the USDA's Congressional-authorized basic emergency food assistance program.

Those shipments nationwide totalled \$461.5

million last year.

St. Peter's Outreach is one of more than a dozen faith-based food banks within the footprint of the Diocese of Ogdensburg served by the Food Bank of Central New York. McManus said faith-based agencies are critical to food distribution. In part, that is due to their ability to muster volunteers able to sort, store and get the food out the door to their "neighbors in need."

In addition to the food from the Food Bank of Central New York, St. Peter's Outreach food programs are also stocked by local donations from businesses and parish-

ioners.

Its emergency food assistance program supplies five-day meal packages to more than 300 families a month. Its pantry is staffed by about 20 volunteers and operates Monday through Friday. Once-a-month, food distributions aid around 150 families more. And 400 families get food aid through the annual Christmas food box program.

On the conference call, Food Bank of Central New York officials told food pantries they hope donated foods and wholesale purchases can make up for the ex-

pected shortfall.

"It's our job ... to see those agencies stay supplied and get whatever other support they need," McManus said.

So far, that's the case. On a Friday, just two days after their conference call with the food bank, LaPage and five other volunteers were busy getting emergency food assistance out the door at St. Peter's Outreach.

During the food pantry's first open hour, 11 calls had come in for emergency food assistance. Volunteers were boxing up canned and frozen vegetables, cereal, bread, frozen meats and other food supplies. Each family gets the fixings for five days of meals.

"We hope to still be able to serve them, and still provide them with what they need, with our increase in visits, that's always a concern," said LaPage. "But we're hopeful that everything is going to work out well."

LaPage and St. Peter's Outreach program manager Alice Felix both say they were reassured they will be able to serve families in need during the March conference call. LaPage said the motivation for her and other volunteers at faith-based food pantries is simple.

"This is what God calls us to do, is to serve one another," she said.

St. Peter's Outreach food pantry can be utilized by anyone living within the boundaries of the Massena School District or St. Peter's parish. The once-a-month Saturday food distributions are open to anyone in St. Lawrence County.



# IHC Honor Society reflects on group's pillars

By the IHC National Honor Society

On March 26, Immaculate Heart Central in Watertown celebrated the induction and renewal of members of the Immaculate Heart of Mary Chapter of the National Honor Society. That night, eight current senior members welcomed one senior and four juniors as members of the society. Senior members received Miraculous Medals to carry with them as they go on to the next chapter of their lives. These medals were blessed and distributed by Father Frank Natale, M.S.C., pastor of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Parish in Watertown.

Reflections on the four pillars of the National Honor Society – scholarship, leadership, character, and service – were written by the elected officers and presented as part of the ceremony.

## LEADERSHIP

*Reflection by Samuel Charlebois*

Good evening, my name is Samuel Charlebois and I am the president of National Honor Society here at Immaculate Heart Central and my office is leadership.

An effective leader is defined not by how others served him, but by how their actions helped their people. This message is exemplified by Christ in the gospel of Mark where it is written, "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." As leaders, we are all called to serve, not to be served. A good leader cares for their people and puts their needs before their own. Jesus is the perfect model for this unique kind of leadership and is an example that I challenge all of my National Honor Society Members to exemplify.

Caring for others as a leader takes dedication and a love for your people. I learned this through my many years captaining my varsity sports teams over the years. We were never the best on paper and our records were never anything special. In those moments, my teammates needed strong leadership; one that showed them that there was a light at the end

of the tunnel. I, as their captain, needed to show that they had a leader who cared for them and shared in their struggles. I was never above them and I never tried to be better than them. This is how leadership must be practiced. It is meant to show care and support to those in need of it while guiding with strength and reason.

So, as I look at all my fellow members of the National Honors Society and especially to the new inductees to this amazing organization, I am confident that this community is receiving a group of purposeful and loving leaders. This group proves time and again that they have the ability to lead others through caring service, acts of charity and acts of strength. Every one of you has the potential to be amazing leaders, and I know that you will help change the lives of others through that leadership. Thank you.

## SCHOLARSHIP

*Reflection by Isaac Curtis and read at the induction by Allyson Ladouceur*

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen, and congratulations to our inductees. My name is Isaac Curtis, and I have the privilege of talking to you about scholarship. Oxford languages define scholarship as, "academic study or achievement, learning of a high level." While this is true and being a scholar does include academics and studying and learning, I believe that scholarship is more than just a good grade on paper.

When I think of a scholar the first thing I think of isn't how great their grades must be. Mahatma Gandhi said this, "all of your scholarship would be in vain if at the same time you do not build your character and attain mastery over your thoughts and actions." When I read this, I began to ponder on the character of a scholar. A scholar is not an A, or even an A+. A scholar is a hard worker, an overachiever, someone who will work and work until all that can be done is done.

For those who attend a Catholic school, there is more for scholars to do. Pope Benedict XVI (sixteenth) said "a good

school provides a rounded education for the whole person. And a good catholic school, over and above this, should help all its students to become saints." Simply put, Catholic scholars are called to be more than regular scholars. Though they must still work hard and overachieve, scholars from catholic students must also be saint-like, kind, caring, giving. We here at IHC are not only called to be scholars, but to use that knowledge to help others, to spread our knowledge, and to give freely that which we have worked so hard to achieve.

Again, congratulations to the students that have worked so hard to achieve this honor. This is not the end, but the beginning. You have been chosen to herald knowledge to the world, through hard work and perseverance. Thank you.

## SERVICE

*Reflection by Olivia Staib*

Good evening, my name is Olivia Staib, and my pillar is Service.

Service: at IHC the first thing students think of is the Faith Community Service program or Rotary Interact. But service is so much more than the organized events that students can participate in. As Mother Teresa once said, "Do small things with great love." Service doesn't have to be a huge undertaking. It could simply be helping a fellow student who is struggling or picking up garbage that doesn't belong to you. It could also be simply holding the door for someone or choosing to say yes to a request that might not be something you want to do. Yes, the service events for Faith Community Service are great ways to help the community, but what are you choosing to do when no one is watching? As National Honor Society Students, you have given your time in more ways than just planned service events. You have chosen to go out of your way and serve others, even when it is an inconvenience to you. You know that service isn't just a number of hours on a piece of paper or a way to gain recognition. Instead, you have demonstrated that you know service

is the little things you do on a daily basis to help others. When we serve others, we are being a light in a world that so desperately needs it. My hope is that you continue serving others, not only throughout the time you have left in high school, but also as you go through life.

Congratulations to the 2025 inductees to the Immaculate Heart of Mary Chapter of the National Honor Society. This is a great achievement, and you should be proud of your accomplishments. As you become a member of NHS, I charge you with this mission: to continue serving others in small ways with great love, even when it is inconvenient.

Thank you.  
**CHARACTER**

*Reflection by Abigail Bombard*

Good Evening. My name is Abigail Bombard and my pillar is Character. When I think of character, I believe someone can have a good character in many different ways. But what character means to me most is something greater than any achievement, skill, or status we can have. Character is who we are when nobody's around. Character is in no way being the perfect human, but it means always looking to do right even in difficult situations. When I think of character, one person stands out to me. This person demonstrates character because when things do not go as hoped, he always stays positive and perseveres. This person sees the good in everyone, even when they make poor decisions. When he is successful, he always makes sure to stay humble, and he stands up for what is right no matter the circumstances. He will go out of his way to help others and never look for any reward. When I have experienced adversity like losing a game or seeing someone being mistreated, this person has been a model for me to always persevere and treat others as I would want to be treated. One thing he always tells me is to look to God and pray when times get hard. This person is my dad. I am sure we all have personal stories of

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5



# Pro-life advocate, author to speak in Watertown

Lifelight of Watertown will host a presentation by pro-life speaker, author and charity CEO Abby Johnson at Jefferson Community College Auditorium on April 14.

The event begins at 6 p.m.

According to her biography, Johnson went to work for Planned Parenthood believing she would help women.

After working her way up from volunteer to director of one of their facilities and even winning Planned Parenthood's Employee of the Year award, Johnson had a change of heart after witnessing an abortion in 2009.

Johnson said it became clear at that moment that abortion did not provide the freedom she had promised so many women in those counseling rooms and that abortion causes only harm, destruction and devastation.

Upon that realization, Johnson left her job in the abortion industry and has been sharing her experiences ever since, her biography says.

Johnson, working with author Cindy Lambert, chronicled her story in the book,

"Unplanned: The Dramatic True Story of a Former Planned Parenthood Leader's Eye-Opening Journey Across the Life Line," which was later adapted into a film of the same name. She has written several other books, including, "The Walls Are Talking" and "Fierce Mercy."

Johnson is the CEO of two pro-life non-profits, And Then There Were None and LoveLine.

She also hosts her own podcast, Politely Rude.

One of Abby's ministries, Loveline, helps thousands of women each year via a national support line for women who are pregnant and families raising Infants.

According to the LoveLine website, the organization's support line connects women and families in need with resources and case management. When resources aren't available, LoveLine provides those resources.

"Our team is ready to equip you for motherhood with crisis intervention, career support, counseling with licensed therapists, financial coaching,



Abby Johnson

and so much more," the website says. "We are committed to working through your case plan with you as long as you need us. We hope you'll feel confident in raising strong children. Until you're ready to graduate from LoveLine programs, we are here to reclaim motherhood with you."

And Then There Were None seeks to work to end abortions by reaching out to providers.

"And Then There Were None (ATTWN) is a registered non-profit organization that exists to help people in the abortion industry leave their jobs and rediscover the peace and joy they've been missing," the organization's website says. "If you're a current abortion worker reading this, please know that we believe that a clinic worker's life is valuable, too. As former abortion industry workers, we have a different perspective than others may have - we've been in your shoes. And we used those shoes to walk away! ATTWN seeks to end abortion from the inside out. We believe that the end of abortion starts with abortion clinic workers leaving their jobs and finding healing from their past work."

A mother of eight children, Johnson says her greatest blessing is her vocation as a wife and mother. Johnson, along with her husband and family, reside in Texas.

There is no charge to attend the local presentation, but Johnson will be collecting donations for her LoveLine ministry.

## Honor society

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

someone who stands out to us as exemplifying good character, and if you cannot think of anyone look to the one we all use as an example of character, God. So let us learn from them and be people of strong character. Remember character does not mean you are perfect and can never make mistakes, it means you are willing to stay true to your heart no matter the situation. In the Bible, Romans 5:3-4 says, "We also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces endurance, endurance produces character; and character produces hope." The bible tells us that character is

seeing the good in bad situations and to choose to keep going no matter what you face. God uses trials to strengthen our character and to show us that it is not about what you succeed or fail at, but it is about what you will do in response to this and whether you are willing to act in this way when nobody's watching. To my new inductees, as well as my senior members of the National Honor Society, congratulations on all of your hard work. Remember to do everything with good intentions and stay true to yourself no matter who is watching. Continue to represent our school and work to build character every day.

## What is a Foster Grandparent?

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

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



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

Roy Foote  
age 83  
Foster  
Grandparent



### Am I Qualified to be a Foster Grandparent?

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

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



### Want more info about how to get started?

Contact Melissa Howard,  
Volunteer Coordinator

PHONE:

(518)359-7688

EMAIL:

mhoward@cathcharities.org

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

**Environmental Stewardship****It takes work**

Building or maintaining a structure is rarely easy. Whether you are going to erect a home, establish and tend a garden or create a comfortable living space, time and often a lot of energy are required to allow that space to operate as intended. As a general rule, anything that is worthwhile always takes effort. This is especially true for keeping a clean and vibrant environment.

Talking about recycling, reading articles on how to save energy, and listening to lectures on improving water quality are all good; however, until a fair amount of physical energy goes into implementing some of these ideas, the ecological health of a targeted area will only decline.

It has become common for people to sit back and let someone else do the work that needs to be done. Few individuals pick up trash from the roadside or sidewalk, especially if it's not around their home. Unwanted items are routinely pitched into the garbage rather than examined to see if they could be recycled or repurposed. It may take a minute to two to find the recycling number of a piece of plastic and try to read the small figure to determine if it can be recycled. It also takes time and effort to sort cardboard from paper from magazines and take them to a designated spot in your home. All too often people simply feel they do not have the energy left at the end of the day to deal with environmental clean-up or the reduction of their carbon footprint.

Lent is a time to sacrifice something of ourselves and offer it back to God as a gift of appreciation for what He has done for us. Our way of life is negatively impacting nature and during this season we should dedicate some of our time and expend some energy helping improve the quality of our natural surroundings.

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

**Bishop's Public Schedule**

**April 9** – 6 p.m. – Lenten Soup Supper and Presentation at St. Angela's Cafe in Malone

**April 10** – 11 a.m. – Chrism Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral  
2 p.m. – Pastor's Advisory Committee Meeting at Wadhams Hall

**April 16** – 10 a.m. – Mass Celebrating the Jubilee Year of Hope at the United Helpers Canton Nursing Home in Canton

**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

**Rest in Peace**

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

**April 9** – Msgr. Lawrence M. Deno, 2023

**April 10** – Rev. Maurice Morin, M.S.C., 1976

**April 11** – Rev. John P. Whalen, O.S.A., 1947; Rev. Daniel T. Keefe, 2024

**April 13** – Rev. Callistus Scheid, O.F.M.Conv., 1854; Rev. Emil Krancewicz, O.F.M.Conv., 1974; Deacon Richard Warner Sr., 2018

**April 14** – Msgr. Richard F. Pierce, 1935; Rev. Alfred Valiquette, O.S.A., 1949

**April 15** – Msgr. Peter O. LaRose, 1918; Rev. Alfred J. Chevalier, 1996

**CALLED TO SERVE**

# Why did the chicken cross the road?

Time for more observations from the driver's seat. It is a different trip this time. If you do not know about the last trip, you have not been reading this column with regularity. I will pray for you.

My destination is Lake Placid. Why comes later. Kathy is making the trip with me. Kathy is my wife for those of you joining us for the first time or someone prone to forgetting,

It was a sunny spring day. A blue sky with few clouds welcomed us north and east. It was early spring, so the temperature hovered in the 30s. I guessed it would not get any warmer as we climbed into the trees and the mountains of the Adirondacks. I guessed

correctly. However, the warm sunlight and the lack of a stiff breeze made the air temperature acceptable. Like in the 40s.



**Deacon Kevin Mastellon**

A sign somewhere on Route 3 caught my attention. Moose Crossing: Next Ten Miles.

Admit it. You have wondered the same thing I wondered as we drove into moose crossing territory.

"How do the moose know they are only supposed to cross in this 10-mile stretch?"

And then I wondered how does one become an English As A Second Language teacher in moose school?

Driving with me can sometimes be hazardous.

It occurred to me we have seen similar signs in our travels. ----- Crossing Next ----- Miles. The first blank can be deer, turtle, geese, ducks, horses, even cows. The second blank is a number from one to ten. Clearly all these animals, not just moose, need tutoring too.

Those people that count animal crossings and put up a sign after a requisite number of the same animal have followed the same trail across a highway over a given period are missing a wonderful opportunity.

I say put the signs up first. Anywhere along a highway. Teach the

animals English. Then show them where you placed the signs. The frequency of car/moose; car/turtle, car/duck etc. accidents will go down because the animals can read the signs in their newly learned language and will obey the commandment.

You will always have those rogue creatures. I am thinking of the male deer that ran into the side of my friend's new car recently causing damage that will cost \$10,000 to \$11,000 to repair. My guess, the deer did not cross in a designated area.

It was at about that moment in my musings that Kathy brought me back to reality. We were bound for Lake Placid to finalize plans for the upcoming Deacon Assembly. Each year the deacons and spouses meet for a few days to pray and attend Mass together, renew friendships, discuss topics of mutual interest, hear presentations related to the diaconate, and meet with Bishop Terry R. LaValley. Priests of the diocese will have a similar gathering about two weeks later.

Kathy wanted to prepare for the meeting with the resort representative. Moose teaching is probably not on the agenda. I did not bring the subject up.

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

**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



# Faith leaders: 'Suffering' in mass deportations

By Tessa Gervasini  
Catholic News Agency

Catholic and evangelical leaders are urging Christians to consider the "sobering" effects of mass deportation efforts by the government, arguing that ongoing aggressive immigration enforcement will be felt beyond those who are being deported.

Church leaders with the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, the National Association of Evangelicals, World Relief, and the Center for the Study of Global Christianity in their report "One Part of the Body" highlight the potential impacts of mass deportations on Christian families in the U.S.

"In the United States," the leaders write in the report, "immigrants from various countries form integral parts of the body of Christ. Most, of course, are lawfully present, whether as naturalized citizens, lawful permanent residents, resettled refugees, or others with permanent legal status."

"But," the report argues, "a significant share of the immigrants who are a part of our body are vulnerable to deportation, whether because they have no legal status or their legal protections could be withdrawn."

"That has long been true, but it is of increased urgency given President Trump's repeated pledge to carry out 'the largest deportation in U.S. history,'" they write.

The report includes what the leaders call "sobering" statistics that reveal how broadly this situation may affect Christians.

Currently, 80% of all individuals at risk of deportation are Christians, according to the report. The majority of this group is Catholic at 61%, greatly surpassing the 13% of evangelicals and 7% of other Christian denominations.

About 1 in 12 Christians are vulnerable to deportation or live with someone who is, specifically immigrants in the U.S. who entered "unlawfully" or "on a temporary nonimmigrant visa," the report says.

The report specifies that of these Christians, 1 in 5 are Catholic.

The leaders state that people in the U.S. who have been granted temporary protected status could have their status "withdrawn by the executive branch, without the need for congressional approval." More than half of those individuals are Catholics.

Those who hold temporary status "are physically present in the U.S. as of a particular date when the conditions in their country of origin make it unsafe for them to return for reasons such as war, conflict, a natural disaster, or a public health epidemic," according to the report.

Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients are also primarily Catholic, making up 73% of the group. The DACA program was originally created to allow deferred deportation for young adults who were brought to the U.S. as children, but the report argues that this program is at risk along with its Christian recipients.

Individuals who have been granted DACA status will be at risk "if the Trump administration (or any subsequent presidential administration) would follow the appropriate processes to terminate DACA or if the U.S. Supreme Court would agree with the lower courts that the program was created illegally and, as a result, invalidate the policy."

Lastly, the statistics reveal that 58% of immigrants who came to the U.S. as asylum seekers are Catholic. These individuals "could be at risk of deportation after the final disposition of their immigration court proceedings, if they are not granted asylum or other relief by an immigration judge."

The report states that "nearly 7 million Christians who are U.S. citizens live in households with someone at risk of deportation," arguing that this issue does not affect only immigrants but also their families and other Christians.

"Our prayer is that the president and his administration as well as the Congress will take these stark realities into consideration as they pursue immigration policies," the religious leaders say.

"Just as importantly," they continue, "we pray that the whole of the American church, including the 11 out of 12 Christian households not at risk of losing a family member to deportation, will recognize that this suffering that is likely to affect many parts of the body of Christ actually impacts them as well." Catholic and evangelical leaders are urging Christians to consider the "sobering" effects of mass deportation efforts by the government, arguing that ongoing aggressive immigration enforcement will be felt beyond those who are being deported.

## CATHOLIC WORLD AT A GLANCE

### Supreme Court considers denial of Catholic tax exemption

Several U.S. Supreme Court justices across ideological lines during oral arguments Monday morning expressed concerns about a Wisconsin agency's refusal to legally recognize a Catholic charity — run by the Diocese of Superior — as a religious organization. The dispute between Catholic Charities Bureau (CCB) and the Wisconsin Labor and Industry Review Commission (LIRC) will determine whether the charity is required to pay taxes into the state's unemployment system or whether the organization can enroll workers in the Church-run unemployment system and avoid the tax. State law allows organizations "operated primarily for religious purposes" to qualify for the tax exemption if it provides its own unemployment system. Yet, the LIRC asserts that CCB is not operated primarily for a religious purpose because it offers charitable services to people of all faiths and does not focus its efforts on converting the people it serves to Catholicism. Religious freedom advocates have warned that the denial of CCB's recognition as a religious entity could have a ripple effect that leads to the denial of other legal rights afforded to religious organizations, such as exemptions from mandates that conflict with an organization's religious beliefs.

### State Department 'monitoring' UK pro-life arrest

A bureau of the United States Department of State announced it is "monitoring" an arrest of a pro-life advocate in the United Kingdom who was charged with violating a "buffer zone" that restricts pro-life speech near abortion clinics. In a post on X, the State Department Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor confirmed that Senior Adviser Sam Samson met with Livia Tossici-Bolt, a pro-life advocate charged with breaching a buffer zone by standing near an abortion clinic and holding a sign that read, "Here to talk, if you want." The verdict for Tossici-Bolt, who was charged with breaching a public spaces protection order, is expected to be handed down on Friday by District Judge Orla Austin — the same judge who delivered a guilty verdict to pro-life advocate Adam Smith-Connor for silently praying outside an abortion clinic in October 2024. "We are monitoring her case," the bureau's post on X read. "It is important that the U.K. respect and protect freedom of expression."

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



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## VIRTUAL EVENTS

## FRIENDSHIP GROUP MEETING

You are invited to our next Friendship Group Meeting, Jesus waits for you!

**Date:** April 24

**Time:** 7 p.m.

**Place:** Zoom

**Features:** The book "Consuming Love" invites you to experience afresh the intensity of the intimacy Christ offers us. Author Father Gregory Cleveland, OMV, expands our understanding of the Eucharist and offers a language of love to express our relationship with Jesus.

**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/sophia institute/friendship-groups>. Questions? Contact Mary Beth Bracy at [mbracy@sophia institute.com](mailto:mbracy@sophia institute.com)

## CLINTON NORTHERN FRANKLIN

## FISH FRY

Plattsburgh — Holy Cross to have Fish Fries during Lent.

**Date:** Fridays through Lent

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

**Place:** Holy Cross Parish Center

**Cost:** \$15 dine in

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

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

## PALM SUNDAY BREAKFAST

Altona — Palm Sunday Breakfast to be held to benefit St. Ann's and Holy Angels.

**Date:** April 13

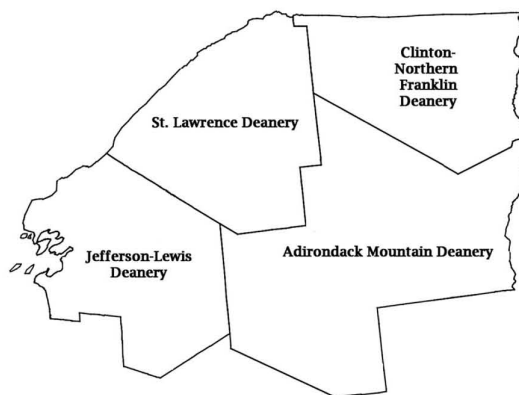
**Time:** 8 a.m. to Noon

**Place:** Holy Angels Hall

**Cost:** Adults, \$15; Children 6 — 12, \$8; 5 and under, Free

**Menu:** Ham, sausage, scrambled eggs, egg cups, real maple syrup, French toast, pancakes, golden fried potatoes, coffee, tea, juice and milk.

**Features:** There will be a bake sale, Gift Basket Raffle and 50/50.



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.

## SPRING STUDY SERIES

Ellenburg Center — Join Our Lady of the Adirondacks for 9 sessions using Father 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 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

## JEFFERSON-LEWIS

## SPAGHETTI &amp; MEATBALL DINNER

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

**Date:** April 12, 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

## PANCAKE BREAKFAST

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

**Date:** April 13

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

**Place:** St. James Community Room

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

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

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

## PRAYER AND REFLECTION

Clayton — All are invited to come to St. Mary's Church for Exposi-

tion, Adoration, Morning Prayer, and the Rosary. Opportunity for Confession is also available.

**Date:** Each Sat. March 8 to April 12

**Time:** 10 a.m.

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

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

## SSJ LENTEN RETREAT

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

**Date:** April 13

**Time:** 2 p.m. to 4

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

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

## ABBY JOHNSON SPEAKING

Watertown — Liferight of Watertown will be hosting Abby Johnson, a past employee of Planned Parenthood, share her story about what changed her and talks about the harm of abortion.

**Date:** April 14

**Time:** 6 p.m.

**Place:** Jefferson Community College Auditorium.

**Features:** Abby talks about leaving her job at Planned Parenthood and sharing her experiences. She is well known for her best selling book "Unplanned" which later turned into a motion picture. She is now the CEO for two successful pro-life non-profits, And Then There Were None and LoveLine. There is no cost to attend the event, Abby will

be asking for donations for her LoveLine Ministry.

## DIVINE MERCY NOVENA

Watertown — 9 Day Novena to begin Good Friday by praying the Divine Mercy Chaplet.

**Date:** April 18

**Time:** 3 p.m.

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

**Features:** Brief background of Divine Mercy Sunday and then the praying of the Chaplet in the church. The Chaplet is prayed everyday at home for the following 8 days until the Divine Mercy Sunday Celebration on April 27.

**Contact:** For more information call Judy Boulton 315-783-7349 or Kim Tyler at 315-486-4542 [www.thedivinemercy.org](http://www.thedivinemercy.org)

## 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. All are welcome.

**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 Divine 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 cel-



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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

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. 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)

### LIVING STONES EVENT FOR CLM

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

### 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

### ULTREYA

Massena — All Cursillistas and guests are invited to join our next Ultreya.

**Date:** April 11

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

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

**Features:** Ultreya is a monthly

gathering for current cursillistas and those who are interested in learning more about cursillo. It is an opportunity to participate in small group sharing, listen to a witness talk and summation. Mike Rabideau will give the witness talk and Father Mark Reilly will do the spiritual talk.

**Contact:** RSVP always appreciated by emailing Marika Donders at [mdonders@rcdony.org](mailto:mdonders@rcdony.org)

### MONTHLY BRUNCH

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

**Date:** April 13 (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 Gonther 315-212-5166.

### DIOCESAN EVENTS

### CHRISM MASS

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

**Date:** April 10

**Time:** 11 a.m.

**Place:** St. Mary's Cathedral

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

### JUBILEE YEAR OF HOPE EVENT

Lake Placid — 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. We can now take part in his handiwork.

**Date:** April 26

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

**Place:** St. Agnes Church and School

**Features:** Explore an exhibit of Eucharistic miracles, and join Bishop LaValley for a Holy Hour of Hope, including a procession and consecration of the Diocese of Ogdensburg to the Eucharist. There will be Mass, inspiring talks, all day Adoration and confession.

**Contact:** The event schedule, prayer resources, bulletin blurbs, and more information may be found at <https://www.rcdony.org/jubileeh2h>.

### 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 per person; Double, \$190 pp; Suite (double bed), \$220 pp; Suite, \$340 pp; Commuter, \$100. All costs include meals.

**Speaker:** Father Leagon Carlin

**Contact:** Register at [www.rcdony.org/ffmretreat](http://www.rcdony.org/ffmretreat)

### 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, 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://LGWsy.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

### 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 [cmminer@rcdony.org](mailto:cmminer@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)

### FAMILY GUGGENHEIM

Saranac Lake — Registration for Family Guggenheim is now open.

**Date:** Session 1: Aug. 14-17; Session 2: Aug. 21-24; Session 3: Oct. 10-12

**Features:** Family Guggenheim welcomes families to come enjoy a special weekend in the beauty of the Adirondacks. Expect fun family workshops and activities that will have you working and laughing together. Celebrate Christ's presence in your lives through liturgy and special prayer services. Take time for great outdoor activities like paddle boat rides, beach volleyball, and hiking. You are never too young or too old to enjoy being family at Camp Guggenheim!

**Contact:** Registration is open now at <https://www.rcdony.org/fg> Financial assistance is available. For more information, contact Steve Tartaglia at 315-393-2920 or [startaglia@rcdony.org](mailto:startaglia@rcdony.org).



## SUNDAY'S SCRIPTURE

## Entering Holy Week

This Sunday marks the beginning of Holy Week. Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion begins with the blessing of Palms and the proclamation of Luke's narrative of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem. In this week, we have the opportunity to reflect on the saving actions of Christ, sufferings endured for our benefit. In our homilies we often consider how the teachings, parables, and stories affect our lives. This week we come face to face with Christ and the core moments of Christ's salvific act.

As we hear the Gospel read during the blessing of palms, we may see ourselves among the participants along

the roadway, cheering as they "began to praise God aloud for all the mighty deeds they had seen." In our own

hearts, we, too, should praise God for the mighty deeds that Christ has done for us. After all, we were washed clean from our sins with the saving waters of baptism; our failures after baptism are forgiven in reconciliation;

we nourish our spiritual lives with the Eucharist; our initiation into Christ and his Church is completed with confirmation; the union of husband and wife is blessed in matrimony as two become one; the ordained ministers guide us along the path of life; the anointing of



Msgr. Robert H. Aucoin

April 13

### Palm Sunday

#### READINGS

Luke 19:28-40

Isaiah 50:4-7

Philippians 2:6-11

Luke 22:14-23:56

the sick strengthens us when we are sick and when our lives are coming to an end. Yes, this Jesus gives us lots to cheer about.

The Pharisees asked Jesus to rebuke the crowd, settle them down, and keep them quiet. Jesus responded that the cheering crowds are justified. After all, if he told his followers to keep still, the stones would morph into a cheering chorus.

The reading from Isaiah foreshadows Christ's suffering: "I gave my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who plucked my beard...the Lord God is my help...I shall not be put to shame." These haunting words speak volumes about the upcoming sufferings of Christ.

In the second reading Paul praises Christ's willingness to suffer for humanity but adds that this death on a cross

ultimately leads to the resurrection, transforming the suffering of Christ on the cross into the exaltation of the cross.

Our participation in the reading of the passion of Christ certainly brings home the reality of Christ's life. To imitate Christ, we must emphasize our true Christian identity and what our mission is: We are children of God destined to live life to the fullest. We are his disciples called to spread the Good News of his love and mercy.

In Holy Week, we can reflect on what Christ did and what His deed mean for our lives. It may mean putting the needs of others before our own or being more welcoming to those we don't know well. It may mean emptying ourselves of pride or resentment to heal broken relationships, including forgiving others even if we have suffered because of their actions.

Most assuredly, living Holy Week should prompt us to being humbly obedient to God, trusting that he will sustain us in the sacrifices we make and the actions we take to

share his love with others.

In the coming week, may we walk with Christ each day to grow in our ability to imitate him in love and humility. And as we prepare to come to the table where Jesus offers himself again and again, we pray for the grace that will strengthen and sustain us on that path.

Celebrate Holy Thursday Mass and spend some time in adoration after the Mass with the Blessed Sacrament in the repository.

Focus on the suffering of Christ on Good Friday. The petitions in that celebration call to mind that Christ's suffering happened to benefit all humanity.

Holy Saturday's readings center our attention on the History of Salvation from the creation of the world to its re-creation in Christ. Many parishes will celebrate the Baptism of new Christians and the welcoming of people from other Christian traditions into the Catholic Church.

Don't pass up the beautiful ceremonies of Holy Week. After all, Holy Week is for us, the holy people of God.

## ST. JAMES ELEMENTARY SCHOOL Gouverneur, New York

Is seeking applicants for the position of

### PRINCIPAL

For the School Year 2025-26

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- Be a practicing Catholic;
- Have experience as a successful Catholic School administrator;
- Give evidence of administrative leadership skills in the areas of Catholic identity, instructional evaluation, management, promotion and maintenance of an effective learning environment and public relations.

A comprehensive salary and benefits package consistent with experience is provided.

To apply, please send cover letter, application, resume, copies of transcripts and letters of recommendation, no later than April 15, 2025 to:

Sister Ellen Rose Coughlin, SSJ,  
Superintendent of Schools  
100 Elizabeth Street  
PO Box 369  
Ogdensburg, NY 13669

Application on line: [www.rcdony.org](http://www.rcdony.org) Directory / Ministries & Offices / Education / Principal Application

The Diocese of Ogdensburg

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# Working to provide aid after earthquake

"There is a lack of medicine and emergency shelter, as many are injured and thousands are homeless on the streets," reads a statement from Karuna Myanmar (Caritas Burma).

"Local groups, volunteers, and civil society organizations on the ground are working to assess the full extent of the damage and provide initial emergency assistance. The destruction is widespread, and the civilian population has been severely affected. The earthquake has caused power outages and disrupted communications. Myanmar's National Disaster Management Committee has declared a state of emergency in many regions. Thousands of people in Mandalay remain on the streets," reads the statement from the Catholic Church's charitable organization, which has activated its network of diocesan offices to

monitor the situation and organize humanitarian aid.

Numerous buildings, including residential buildings, monasteries, mosques, pagodas, seminaries and churches, schools, hospitals, bridges, and highways, suffered significant damage. Cities worst affected include Yangon, Mandalay, Naypyidaw, Sagaing, Aungpan, Bago, Kalay, Magway, Kyaukse, Muse, Yinmabin, Taunggyi, and some areas in Shan State.

The national Karuna office and diocesan offices have mobilized their volunteer teams to assist the worst-affected Diocese of Mandalay, which has initiated coordination with local authorities, other religious leaders, and local charities.

"Under the current conditions, it is difficult to provide an accurate picture with data and figures due to the lack of telecommunications



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

The Society for the Propagation of the Faith  
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and restricted access to various areas. Karuna volunteer teams are still unable to travel to the affected areas due to disruptions or lack of security," the Mandalay-based relief agency said. Instead, Karuna's national office is coordinating with Caritas Internationalis, UNHCR, OCHA, and other aid organizations to seek channels for humanitarian resources and assistance.

In the Mandalay, Magway, Sagaing, Bago, and Shan regions, the death toll from the earthquake that struck the country on March 28 continues to rise: more than 2,000 dead, 3,400 injured, and more than 300 missing have

been confirmed, but for organizations involved in humanitarian assistance, the number is sure to rise.

Myanmar's ruling military junta declared a week of national mourning from March 31 to April 6. As the civil war continues, the Catholic Church in the country is calling for "an urgent ceasefire to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid," according to an appeal issued by the Bishops' Conference of Myanmar.

The bishops say the earthquake made an already bad situation in the country worse.

"According to UN estimates, nearly 20 million people, including 6.3 million children,

are in urgent need of assistance," the Burmese bishops wrote. "The Catholic Church reaffirms its unwavering support for those who have died in places of worship, pagodas, and mosques.

With a view to mobilizing the international community, the bishops assure that "the Catholic Church will participate in the support to help the people with food, medicine, and shelter."

"This humanitarian crisis requires an urgent cessation of hostilities," the bishops wrote. "We urgently call for an immediate and complete ceasefire by all parties involved in the conflict to ensure the safe and unhindered delivery of essential humanitarian aid from local and international donors."

## OBITUARIES

**Brownville** — Anthony DeCilles Jr., 73; Mass of Christian Burial April 5, 2025 at Immaculate Conception Church; burial in Dexter Cemetery.

**Carthage** — Wilbur W Millard, 92; Mass of Christian Burial April 3, 2025 at St. James Church; burial in St. James Cemetery.

**Chaumont** — Sally A. (Smith) Countryman, 91; Graveside services to be held a later date.

**Colton** — Mary Ann (Leary) Murphy, 87; Mass of Christian Burial April 5, 2025 at St. Patrick's Church; burial in St. Patrick's Cemetery.

**Keeseville** — Gerald H. "Jerry" Morrow, 76; Mass of Christian

Burial May 10, 2025 at St. John's Church; burial in Immaculate Conception Cemetery.

**Lyon Mountain** — Barbara Bird Ryan, 91; Private services to be held.

**Malone** — Audrey A. Mills, 77; Funeral Services April 3, 2025 at Bruso-Desnoyers Funeral Home; burial in Notre Dame Cemetery.

**Malone** — Patricia A. (Bonner) O'Donnell, 79; Funeral Services May 16, 2025 at Frary Funeral Home; burial in Notre Dame Cemetery.

**Mineville** — Theresa (Makvitis) Rodrigues, 85; Mass of Christian Burial May 5, 2025 at All Saints Church.

**Moers Forks** — Steven A. LaPierre, 77; Mass of Christian Burial April 12, 2025 at St. Ann's Church.

**Morristown** — Boyd Foster Sr., 76; Mass of Christian Burial April 5, 2025 at St. John's Church.

**Plattsburgh** — Janice L. (Yott) Boyea, 80; Mass of Christian Burial May 10, 2025 at St. Peter's Church.

**Plattsburgh** — Joseph F. Geer, 71; Mass of Christian Burial April 3, 2025 at St. Peter's Church; burial in St. Peter's Cemetery.

**Plattsburgh** — Jason W. Hutchins, 46; Mass of Christian Burial April 25, 2025 at St. Peter's Church.

**Port Henry** — Joseph Martin

Kordziel, 72; Mass of Christian Burial April 9, 2025 at St. Patrick's Church.

**St. Regis Falls** — Carol Ann (Moose) Farmer, 86; Mass of Christian Burial April 4, 2025 at St. Ann's Church; burial in parish cemetery.

**Waddington** — Mary Miller Dalton, 72; Mass of Christian Burial April 12, 2025 at St. Mary's Church; burial in parish cemetery.

**Watertown** — Joseph W. Gerstenschlager, 61; Mass of Christian Burial April 4, 2025 at Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Church; burial in North Watertown Cemetery.

**Watertown** — Robert M. Kowalik, 88; Mass of Christian Burial April 26, 2025 at Holy Family Church.



*Support And Pray  
For Vocations*

## APRIL IS NATIONAL CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH

# When boundaries abound, lives can flourish

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Imagine a world without boundaries. The survival of all depends on healthy boundaries with land, water, animals and one another.

Without boundaries established clearly and firmly, everyone is left vulnerable, especially our children in this “anything goes” society today.

Children, increasingly, are not aware of appropriate or healthy boundaries. We can empower children and youth in boundaries by first clearly defining and strengthening our own boundaries. Children watch our every move and absorb some of our habits, healthy and unhealthy, like a sponge. Appropriate boundaries set the foundation for happier lives, which is why it is so important to be mindful of modeling healthy boundaries for the children and youth.

## BOUNDARIES 101

As the VIRTUS “Protecting God’s Children” Program states, boundaries are limits, or lines that separate our personal space, emotions, and behaviors from others. When we have a “let it begin with me” approach, intentional reflection upon our boundaries with ourselves (self-control) and others (human agency) can have a positive influence. Building a foundation for your boundaries begins with clarity around who you are amidst what God is calling you to do.

Teach adults and children around you that “No.” is a complete sentence and perfectly acceptable in setting a boundary. This natural process of individuality provides a pathway for becoming our authentic selves. It is completely acceptable for children and adults to say “No” when something makes them feel uncomfortable, scared or unsafe.

We don’t just teach others that they are allowed to say, “No,” we also accept their responses when it comes to their boundaries. Learning to accept others’ “No” can create mutual respect.

For children, we may say things like “listen to her words,” or “respect his no,” while they are playing together. Providing several age-appropriate choices within a situation can provide opportunities for them to practice saying “No” to one thing and “Yes” to another. Encouraging personal autonomy can safely happen by providing choices that fit within their developmental stage which can include saying “No” to unsafe touches, like hitting, or even safe touches, like hugs.

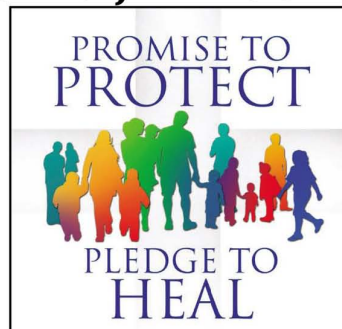
Providing clear and explicit direction regarding boundaries for children and youth may include guidance regarding behavior that could be dangerous, disrespectful or dishonest. Even when using directives to create a safe environment for children, this approach also builds in choice by defining “out of bounds” behaviors to avoid confusion and frustration for all.

## SAFE ENVIRONMENT TIPS

Clarifying expectations within an organization is key. Ensuring everyone is aware of the organization’s Code of Conduct or expected behavior can empower children, youth, parents, caregivers, employees, and volunteers to know what to expect. This may include:

1. Remain in public sight while avoiding any isolated one-on-one conversations and situations.
2. Ensure there are always at least two adults supervising children.
3. Appropriate physical interactions may include side hugs, handshakes, and high-fives.
4. Interact with children through ministry or program emails or group social media accounts (that are monitored), and not via private email or personal social media accounts.
5. Ensure the safety procedures for drop off and pick up are followed.
6. Be the type of bystander who follows the rules and communicates any concerns to leadership.
7. Encourage random status checks by others, when you are ministering to youth.

It is also helpful to conduct walk-throughs of the ministry or program location while identifying



isolated or vulnerable physical spaces that may cause risk for children and youth. Designing a physically safe space by roping off certain areas, such as a bathroom located too far away from the group, can lower the risk of a questionable encounter for everyone.

As leaders, taking a supportive approach while modeling healthy interactions can instill a safe foundation for all. We all have various backgrounds, cultures, and family upbringings—what is “normal” among families can vary greatly. When everyone is working toward maintaining a clearly defined safe environment, team morale, teachable moments, and opportunities to thrive can abound!

## WHAT CAN YOU DO?

As the author of the Say “NO!” and TELL! books teaching body boundaries and safety for children, I advocate beginning prevention education early and often to help prevent child sexual abuse. Take the lead and set the stage for discussing, implementing, and modeling general day-to-day boundaries with the children and youth in your life, which includes body safety. Notice, highlight, and role-play real-life boundary scenarios throughout a young person’s life to sew a beautiful tapestry of healthy interaction within your family, organization, and community.

Here are a few tips to help model and implement appropriate boundaries:

- Build a bridge for positive communication with warmth by talking about healthy boundaries and behaviors with children and youth. Give clear examples of healthy and appropriate

boundaries, such as giving their teacher a high five instead of a hug.

- Use teachable moments! For example, if a child or youth asks to follow you on social media, let them know you cannot share your personal information or interact with them directly on social media, but that you can refer them to the school or parish social media accounts.

- Explain the difference between safe vs. unsafe behaviors such as secrets vs. surprises, and safe vs. unsafe games.

- Use age-appropriate body safety language pre-approved by your organization with a focus on security and self-protection by using positive statements rather than fear-based ones (positive statements include: “private parts stay private and have special rules,” “notice the uh-oh feeling,” “telling is not tattling,” etc.)

- Teach the difference between safe (respects boundaries) and unsafe (crosses or violates boundaries) behavior and people. Let children and youth know that if anyone—whether an adult or another child—has ever made them feel uncomfortable, or unsafe, or has violated their boundaries, they should immediately tell a safe adult. And keep telling, even to someone else, until it stops!

## CONCLUSION

As you put on these new boundary glasses, what do you see through this new lens? Taking a fresh view of yourself and your role as an employee, volunteer, leader, and caregiver can help fortify strong boundaries and healthy relationships in your own life, which can overflow into your professional and spiritual relationships with others. Empowering yourself can set the stage for empowering everyone—it is never too late to begin today.

From your overflow can spring forth health, healing, and hope while positively impacting a world full of trauma, addictions, and codependency with your inspiration and wholeness. Thank you for all you do to help model and implement appropriate boundaries.