

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Funeral Mass held for Sister Louise Marceau | Page 6

Bishop calls for prayer, penance after shooting | Page 7

The Diocese of Ogdensburg Volume 80 Number 40

NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

FEBRUARY 18, 2026

Bishop LaValley's Lenten letter

As we enter into the Lenten season, Bishop Terry R. LaValley provides his reflections on Lent.

Reparation is not a popular word these days. Reparation is making amends for a wrong, an offense, a sin. It is not an attempt to buy forgiveness, but rather an attempt to repair a broken situation or relationship. A special dinner for a spouse may help correct previous inattentiveness. We can offer reparation for sin, offenses against God, for our sin and the sins of all. Offering reparation can enhance the Lenten trifecta of prayer, fasting and almsgiving.

FULL STORY, PAGE 3

THE ROCK ON WHICH THE CHURCH WAS BUILT



PHOTO COURTESY OF MEG BUELL

Fire destroyed St. Peter's Church in New Bremen in the early hours of Feb. 9, but St. Peter remained standing. The church, an oratory, is connected to St. Stephen's Church in Croghan. State fire investigators are working to determine the cause of the fire. More information will be provided in a future edition of the *North Country Catholic*.

THE MISSING ELEMENT



Our Lady of the Sacred Heart in Watertown displays banners highlighting multiple aspects of Lent, including the penitential aspect, including prayer and almsgiving, and the baptismal element. Father Frank T. Natale, pastor, says he feels many miss the baptismal portion of the season.

FULL STORY, PAGE 5

Pope: Fast from hurtful words this Lent

EWTN News

In his message for Lent 2026, Pope Leo XIV urges Catholics to listen more closely to God and others — and to “disarm” their language by fasting from words that wound.

In the message, released Feb. 13, the pope offers a simple definition of Lent as a time when the Church “invites us to place the mystery of God back in the center of our lives, in order to find renewal in our faith and keep our hearts from being consumed by the anxieties and distractions of daily life.”

He encourages Catholics to allow the word of God to touch their hearts with docility so that

Lent may become “a welcome opportunity to heed the voice of the Lord and renew our commitment to following Christ.”

The Holy Father first highlights the importance of listening.

“The willingness to listen is the first way we demonstrate our desire to enter into relationship with someone,” he writes.

Listening to sacred Scripture, he says, teaches believers to recognize and respond to suffering.

Quoting his own apostolic exhortation *Dilexi Te*, he adds that Catholics must recognize that “the condition of the poor is a cry that, throughout human history, constantly challenges our lives, societies, political and economic systems, and, not least,

the Church.”

Turning to the practice of fasting, the pope describes abstaining from food as “an ancient ascetic practice that is essential on the path of conversion.”

“Precisely because it involves the body, fasting makes it easier to recognize what we ‘hunger’ for and what we deem necessary for our sustenance,” he writes. It helps believers to “identify and order our ‘appetites,’ keeping our hunger and thirst for justice alive and freeing us from complacency.”

Quoting St. Augustine, he notes that the human heart expands through desire for God. “Understood in this way, fasting not only permits us to govern

our desire, purifying it and making it freer, but also to expand it, so that it is directed towards God and doing good.”

And fasting must be lived “in faith and humility” and grounded in communion with the Lord.

In this context, the pope proposes a specific Lenten resolution: “a very practical and frequently unappreciated form of abstinence: that of refraining from words that offend and hurt our neighbor.”

“Let us strive to measure our words and cultivate kindness and respect in our families, among our friends, at work, on social media, in political debates, in the media and in Christian communities.”

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 &

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, NY

13669 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

Don't take it away!

I'm generally not excited about fasting.

Part of it, I'm sure, is that I just don't like being told what to do (obedience is not my forte; God's still working on that). Part of it is also that I don't like when things I want, need or enjoy are taken away from me. That's how I've typically viewed fasting; it's someone (the Church or the medical provider who ordered blood work, for example) taking food away from me.

Then, last year, I did a Lenten program that featured "Fasting Fridays." In one of the earliest "Fasting Fridays," the app pre-

senters encouraged fasting from noise and taking time for silence.

At that time, I had just attended a three-day silent retreat. I didn't consider that fasting from noise; I considered it leaning into silence. While I was uneasy about the silence leading up to the retreat, I didn't view it with the same negative feelings I have historically had about fasting. It wasn't about what I was giving up; it was about what I was gaining and the experience I was going to have. I viewed the silence as a gift from God.

God used that concept - leaning into silence as

opposed to fasting from noise - to change how I viewed what I more typically think of as fasting, fasting from food. God showed me that my focus was on the wrong thing. I was focused too much on what I was losing and not enough on what I was gaining.

Now, when I fast from food, instead of missing the food that was taken away from me, I think of it as leaning into longing and emptiness and making room for Jesus. Every time I feel the pangs of hunger, I use it as a cue to pray a simple, "Jesus, I hunger for you." It keeps me focused on Jesus.

Through fasting, God has shown me - and continues to show me - that I'm not

a slave to the whims of my body or my baser instincts, including some of my sinfulness.

God has shown me that fasting for someone else's intentions - a sick friend, my son, the Church, souls in purgatory - is a sacrificial, meaningful way to pray for them, and that I mind fasting even less if I'm doing it for someone else's benefit.

As we enter into this season of Lent, this season marked by prayer, almsgiving and, yes, fasting, I can't say that I'm excited to fast.

I am, however, excited to enter into my longing for Christ and to deepen my relationship with him.

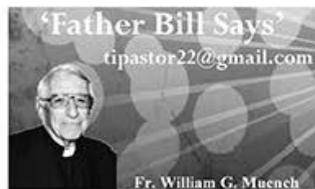
And I pray you have a fruitful Lent.

**Darcy L. Fargo**

God walks with us

Today, I want to remind you to dedicate your Lent - the prayers and the mortifications - for a specific intention. Make your intention be for something that is important and meaningful to you. I believe that offering up your Lent will give a good meaning to this Lenten retreat - a special dedication. This intention - it may be a cause or a person - will bless these days and fill them with the Lord's love. I believe that this will focus your attention on Jesus; this will make this a very meaningful retreat.

Lent is a time for change. This is our time to grow in holiness and in happiness. I encourage you as proper preparation for Lent to turn to the Prophet Isaiah. Isaiah looks ahead in his time and brings his people to pray for the coming of the Messiah. He speaks of the Messiah as a Suffering Servant who will walk with us, as he does during our time of Lent. Isaiah writes: "If I truly believe

**Fr. William G. Muench**

that God is holding my hand and leads me, what might I need to let go of as I begin this Lenten retreat."

Isaiah adds: "God has not forgotten us; God saves not by force, but through faithful, yet costly love." Lent is not what we give up but is about teaching us how God works through hidden faithfulness, patient endurance and love that accepts wounds for the sake of others. As we begin Lent, comforted by God's nearness, and following our Suffering Servant with deeper trust, our faithfulness comes alive.

I want to encourage you also to listen and read over the Sacred Scriptures for the liturgy of the Mass for Ash Wednesday. The first reading on that day

is from the Book of Joel, a fourth century, B.C., prophet. His message for his people and for us is a powerful call to return to God. This is God's call to the total involvement of the whole community: "return to me with your whole heart with fasting and weeping and mourning." This is our challenge as we begin our Lenten retreat.

Joel asks his people and each one of us to dedicate ourselves to God. He writes: "Rend your hearts not your garments and return to the Lord." In those days, a person would profess their contrition and seek reconciliation with God by literally tearing their clothing. Joel says, even better, "rend your hearts and turn to the Lord" in reconciliation seeking forgiveness. Lent is a time for us to "rend our hearts."

In praise of God - Joel prays - reminding us of God's goodness and the love of our God, "Forgiving and merciful is

he, slow to anger, rich in kindness and relenting in punishment." God is our guide throughout Lent.

The Second reading in the Ash Wednesday liturgy is a reading from St. Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians. St. Paul speaks of an apostle as an "ambassador of Christ." We find our reconciliation in the forgiveness of Our God. St. Paul urges us all to be reconciled in love with our God, forming a new and stronger relationship in love with God. "Now is the acceptable time." You and I should recognize Lent as our acceptable time; may we use well our Lenten retreat.

Lent is a time of joy and happiness, not a time of suffering. We give up something to give ourselves the joy of being more Christian, more alive in the Lord, realizing how blessed and loved we are. God walks with us. May you experience the joy of coming alive as you draw ever closer to the Lord, Our Savior.

FOLLOW ME

Lent is not about despair

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

Our leaders govern with chaos and fear rather than respect for law and human dignity. The economy frightens us as prices rise. AI comes for our jobs and human connections. Addictions run rampant while we create more ways to harm ourselves. Local hospitals struggle to pay staff and provide services. The news leads us to the brink of darkness. And many feel that Lent and the focus on repentance adds to the despair.

But Lent is not about despair. As winter doldrums lead to spring, Lent leads us to Easter joy and prepares us for Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem, the Last Supper, Crucifixion and Resurrection!

Reparation is not a popular word these days. Reparation is

making amends for a wrong, an offense, a sin. It is not an attempt to buy forgiveness, but rather an attempt to repair a broken situation or relationship. A special dinner for a spouse may help correct previous inattentiveness. We can offer reparation for sin, offenses against God, for our sin and the sins of all. Offering reparation can enhance the Lenten trifecta of prayer, fasting and almsgiving.

Out the front door of the bishop's residence and across the intersection is the old Bishop Conroy School occupied by Our Ladies Outreach which sells and donates gently used clothes to those in need; that income to provide emergency food and assistance. Upstairs, Gabriel Project supports pregnant women materially and spiritually. Next door is the

city fire company. A few blocks away are the Ogdensburg Boys and Girls Club and the Knights of Columbus. Turning the other way out the front door, Catholic Charities operates Seaway House supporting those with mental health and substance abuse issues. Further on, the Neighborhood Center feeds the hungry.

It is not really about these organizations or many others. Instead, it is about the real, imperfect people working there, offering moments of humble service, a word of empathy, a bag of groceries and a smile of support. In the hundreds of homes that surround me, a tired mother comforts a hurting child, a grateful son cares for an aging mother, a neighbor helps shovel out a neighbor. This happens in cities, towns, villages and crossroads

across this diocese, state, country and world.

This Lent, I pray you combat the avalanche of despair by opening your eyes and heart to the millions and millions of unreported good news stories that happen at every moment of every day. I encourage you to create or give witness to moments of service and offer them to the Lord in reparation for sin and brokenness in your life and in the lives surrounding you.

May your 2026 Lent help you encounter our Lord anew and prepare your heart for the message and joy of Easter.

In Christ our Hope,



Most Reverend Terry R. LaValley
Bishop of Ogdensburg

2026 Lenten regulation; season begins Feb. 18

Feb. 18 is Ash Wednesday, marking the beginning of the season of Lent.

THE CALL TO DO PENANCE

All of Christ's faithful are obliged by divine law, each in his or her own way, to do penance. However, so that all may be united in a certain common practice of penance, days of penance are prescribed. On these days Christ's faithful are to devote themselves in a special manner to prayer, to engage in works of piety and charity, and to deny themselves, by fulfilling more faithfully their obligations and especially by observing the laws of fast and abstinence.

The season of Lent is observed as a time of penance for the universal Church. Thus, during these 40 days individuals are encouraged to attend daily Mass, set aside increased time for

personal prayer and the study of scripture, give alms to the poor, perform voluntary acts of mortification, as well as show special solicitude for the sick, the discouraged, and the lonely. Likewise, parishes are encouraged to arrange for periods of Eucharistic Adoration and traditional devotions such as making the Way of the Cross and reciting of the Rosary (cf. cc. 1249-1250; USCCB, *Complimentary Norms*).

Ash Wednesday, which solemnly opens the season of Lent, and Good Friday, on which Christ suffered in the flesh and died for our sins, are obligatory days of fasting and abstinence from meat for Catholics. In addition, Fridays during Lent are obligatory days of abstinence from meat. The law of fasting is binding on Catholics from age 18 until age 59. When

fasting, a person is permitted by long tradition to eat not more than one full meal, as well as two light meals that together are not equal to a full meal. The law of abstinence from meat is binding upon Catholics from age 14 onwards. Even those who by reason of age are not bound by these laws are to be taught the true meaning

of penance (cf. cc. 1251-1252).

The ancient Paschal Fast should also be kept sacred. It is celebrated everywhere on Good Friday and, when appropriate, may be prolonged throughout Holy Saturday as a way of coming, with spirit uplifted, to the joys of the Lord's resurrection (cf. *Roman Missal-The Sacred Pas-*

chal Triduum, 1).

EASTER DUTY

Once admitted to the blessed Eucharist, each of the faithful is obliged to receive Holy Communion at least once a year, and to fulfill this precept during the Easter season (cf. c. 920). In 2026, Paschal time extends from Feb. 22 (First Sunday of Lent) until

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



Warm up with a subscription to the *North Country Catholic* and find out what is happening with the Diocese of Ogdensburg.

Warm up with Good News!

Visit our website at www.northcountrycatholic.org to pay by Credit Card for immediate delivery.

OR Send this coupon with payment to:
North Country Catholic
PO Box 106, Canajoharie, New York, 13317

****Please allow 3-4 weeks for delivery when mailing in your renewal****

Inside Diocese \$27 Outside Diocese \$30
I want to be a Patron: \$35 \$50 \$100 \$250
 New Subscription Renewal

Please send my subscription to my e-mail address:

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Parish _____

Lenten regulations

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

May 31 (Trinity Sunday).

Each of Christ's faithful who have reached the age of reason is bound to faithfully confess at least once each year all grave sins, in number and kind, of which after careful examination he or she is aware, and which have not yet been pardoned in the sacrament of Penance. It is recommended to also confess venial sins. This precept has been laid down in light of the previous one, for anyone who is conscious of grave sin may not re-

ceive the Body of the Lord without previously having been absolved in sacramental confession (cf. cc. 916, 988-989).

PARTICULAR CELEBRATIONS & OBSERVANCES

The distribution of ashes on Ash Wednesday should take place according to the rubrics and in keeping with local custom, that is, by tracing a cross of ashes on the forehead (cf. *RM-Ash Wednesday*).

Parishes are highly encouraged to offer increased opportunities for sacramental confes-

sion in preparation for Easter, whether by communal penance services with individual confessions, Days of Mercy (that is, confessions offered throughout the day), or at weekly times in addition to the regular schedule (such as before or after daily Mass, or in the evening during the week). The priests of neighboring parishes are encouraged to cooperate with one another to make these occasions widely possible.

If Marriage is to be celebrated on a day having a penitential

character, especially during Lent, the spouses are to be counseled to take into account the special nature of that day. The celebration of Marriage on Good Friday and Holy Saturday is to be avoided altogether (cf. *Order of Celebrating Matrimony*, 32; *RM-Good Friday*, 1).

The Chrism Mass of the Diocese of Ogdensburg will be celebrated on March 26 at 11 a.m. at St. Mary's Cathedral. All are welcome to attend. Those unable to participate in person may view the Mass via livestream

at <https://www.rcdony.org/livemass>.

Further details will be forthcoming.

A Funeral Mass may not be celebrated at any time on Holy Thursday or during the Paschal Triduum. The rite for a Funeral Liturgy Outside Mass may be used, even within the church, although Holy Communion may not be given (cf. *GIRM*, 380, *Order of Christian Funerals*, 178; *RM-Thursday of the Lord's Supper*, 4; *RM-Friday of the Passion of the Lord*, 2; *RM-Holy Saturday*, 3).



Adoration in the Diocese of Ogdensburg

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

Holy Angels Church, Altona

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

St. Patrick's Church, Brasher Falls

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

St. Mary's Church, Brushton

First Wed. 6 p.m. to 7

St. Mary's Church, Canton

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

St. Vincent of Paul, Cape Vincent

First Friday of the month

St. James Church, Carthage

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

St. Mary's Church, Champlain

First Fri. 9 a.m. Mass followed by Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament
11 a.m. Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament

St. Patrick's Church, Chateaugay

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

All Saints Church, Chaumont

First Thursday of the month 3 p.m.

Sacred Heart Church, Chazy

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

St. Mary's Church, Clayton

First Fridays after 9 a.m. Mass

St. Francis of Assisi, Constable

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

St. Mary's Church, Constableville

First Fridays 6 p.m.

St. Stephen's Church, Croghan

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

St. Joseph's Church, Dannemora

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

St. Elizabeth's Church, Elizabethtown

Fri. after Mass 8:30 a.m. to 9:30

St. Edmund's Church, Ellenburg

Monday after 5:30 p.m. Mass

St. Mary's of the Fort, Fort Covington

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

St. James Church, Gouverneur

9:45 a.m. to 10:45 every second
Sunday

St. Hedwig's Church, Houseville

First Sunday following 11 a.m.
Mass

Immaculate Conception, Keeseville

Sun, 1 p.m. to 4

St. Agnes Church, Lake Placid

Tues 10 a.m. to 5:20 p.m.
Vocations and Divine Renovation
our of our parish are emphasized

St. James Major, Lake Pleasant

7:30 a.m. before 8 a.m. Mass on
the First Sunday.

St. Peter's Church, Lowville

First Friday of the month with
intention to Vocations

St. Bernard's Church, Lyon Mountain

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

St. Peter's Parish, Massena

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

St. Ann's Church, Mooers Forks

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

St. Alexander's Church, Morrisonville

Wed. at 8 a.m. before 9 a.m. Mass

St. Augustine Church, North Bangor

Tues. after 9 a.m. Mass until 10 a.m.

St. Andrew's Church, Norwood

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

St. Mary's Cathedral Parish, Ogdensburg

Entryway for the Deacon Winter Chapel
Thurs. before First Friday from
7 p.m. to 8
Adoration each Wed. 3 p.m. to 6
(No Christmas Eve or New Years Eve)
and Fri. 10:45 a.m. to 11:45 a.m.

St. Augustine's Church, Peru

Every Friday following 8 a.m. Mass
to 7 p.m.

St. John's Church, Plattsburgh

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

St. Patrick's Church, Port Henry

Mon. after Mass 8:30 a.m. to 9:30

St. Martin's Church, Port Leyden

Rectory Chapel Wed. Mornings after
Mass for 30 min.

St. Mary's Church, Potsdam

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

Church of the Assumption, Redford

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

St. Ann's Church, St. Regis Falls

Fridays after 8 a.m. Mass until 9 a.m.

St. Andrews Church, Sackets Harbor

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

Our Lady of Lourdes, Schroon Lake

First Wed. after 9 a.m. Mass

St. Alphonsus-Holy Name of Jesus

Parish, Tupper Lake
Monday 7 p.m. to 8

Holy Family Church, Watertown

Monday's following noon Mass

Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Church, Watertown

1 hour prior to Mass, First Friday of
the Month

St. Anthony's Church, Watertown

First Sun. of the Month 2 p.m. to 3
Tues. 3 p.m. to 6

St. Patrick's Church, Watertown

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

St. Ann's Church, Wells

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

St. Joseph's Church, West Chazy

First Friday after 9 a.m. Mass until
11 a.m.

St. Philip Neri Church, Westport

(Memorial Day - Columbus Day)
Wed. after Mass, 8:30 a.m. to 9:30

St. Philip of Jesus, Willsboro

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

The 'more hidden' element of Lent

By Darcy Fargo
Editor

"Lent doesn't have to be so morbid," said Father Frank T. Natale, a Missionary of the Sacred Heart and pastor of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart in Watertown, St. Paul's Church in Black River and St. Mary's Church in Evans Mills. "It can be an exciting time!"

Father Natale said he feels most people focus on only the penitential aspect of the season, missing the portion focused on rebirth and renewal.

"Lent has two primary elements, but we tend to focus mostly on one of them. Of course, there's the penitential aspect, the aspect we all know too well, but there's this element, this baptismal element, that I think is more hidden," he said. "Lent is also about the baptisms people will receive at the Easter Vigil and the baptisms those of us who are already baptized will renew and remember."

Father Natale pointed to the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy Sacrosanctum Concilium, a document promulgated by Pope Paul VI in 1963.

"The season of Lent has a twofold character: primarily by recalling or preparing for baptism and by penance, it disposes the faithful, who more diligently hear the word of God and devote themselves to prayer, to celebrate the paschal mystery. This twofold character is to be brought into greater prominence both in the liturgy and by liturgical catechesis."

"We have to hang on



LENT = 40 DAYS
BAPTISM TO RECEIVE
OR
BAPTISM TO RENEW
HOW AM I GOING TO
SPEND THE NEXT 40 DAYS
TO PREPARE FOR THIS
MOMENT?
 - Lenten Renewal

to the penitential aspect of Lent. It isn't bad, but I think we're morbidly hung up on it," Father Natale said. "We need to bring it into balance. Instead of focusing on just what we can give up, let's consider what we can do."

Father Natale said he didn't know much about that two-fold character of Lent until he attended a workshop on baptism at a Eucharistic Education Congress in

California while serving in that state.

"Once your eyes are opened to it, you see the baptismal element in nearly everything in Lent," he said. "I think we over-emphasize the penitential. When it's tied to baptism, it's also 40 days to renew and recommit."

Why baptism?

"Baptism is the basis of the whole Christian life, the gateway to life in the Spirit, and the

made sharers in her mission. (According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church,) 'Baptism is the sacrament of regeneration through water and in the word.'

As part of this emphasis on baptism, Father Natale says he encourages the faithful to spend time reflecting on their reception of that sacrament.

"Find out when you were baptized," he encouraged. "See if you can find any photos. Think about who was there - Godparents, parents who loved them enough to bring them to the font, family and friends. Reflect on what it's meant in your life. Go visit the church where you were baptized. Find out what saints' feast days are on your baptismal date and learn about those saints. There are a lot of threads that can connect to baptism."

Lent is also a good opportunity to reflect on and pray with the baptismal vows.

"Joining those who receive baptism for the first time, we all renew our baptismal vows as part of the Easter celebration," Father Natale said. "That renewal takes on additional meaning when we spend the season entering into baptism."

Photo provided
Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Church in Watertown offers displays featuring both elements of Lent, penance, including prayer and almsgiving, and baptism. Father Frank T. Natale, pastor of the Church, says he feels we, as Catholics, sometimes forget the baptismal element of the Lenten seasons.

door which gives access to the other sacraments," Father Natale said. "Through Baptism we are freed from sin and reborn as sons and daughters of God; we become members of Christ, are incorporated into the Church and

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 _____

Environmental Stewardship

Perceive nature

There are many ways to view our surroundings and the world. From a young age, we are taught to use the five senses that connect with the brain to gain information about what is around us. However, we are more than just physical creatures, as we each possess a magnificent soul. This spiritual essence is also capable of detecting aspects of our environment which the heart processes rather than the brain.

For example, watching a young fawn being cleaned or fed by its mom, there may develop a sense of joy and wonder. Encountering an injured baby bird that has recently fallen from its nest may invoke sadness or grief.

Because all people are different, no two humans will have the same experience with nature. While one individual responds to a mouse entering his or her home by setting a snap trap, another may set a have-a-heart device to safely capture the rodent and transport it some distance away from the home. Nature is a complex system in which all the components are so interconnected, it is impossible to say what impact any individual action will have on the whole network of life in that area.

We are, however, Stewards of Creation and must try our best to help the system flourish. This Lent, we are encouraged to view our surroundings and the planet through our spiritual eyes and ears and with an open heart rather than our brain which tends to consider physical comfort and pleasure.

When caring for nature, especially if you become passionate about helping preserve its beauty and grandeur, some individuals can become judgmental on what other people should be doing or not doing. Perhaps the hardest thing to do is to grant forgiveness and extend compassion to others that you see as harming nature. As followers of Jesus, we must show kindness and send loving energy to everyone regardless of what they are doing as they too are part of this web of life.

Bishop's Public Schedule

Feb. 18 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Feb. 19 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Feb. 20 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Feb. 21 – 4 p.m. – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Feb. 22 – 8 a.m. – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

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

Feb. 23 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Feb. 23 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Feb. 23 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Feb. 23 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Feb. 23 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Feb. 23 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Feb. 23 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Feb. 23 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Feb. 23 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Feb. 23 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Feb. 23 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Feb. 23 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Feb. 23 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Feb. 23 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Feb. 23 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Feb. 23 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Feb. 23 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Feb. 23 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Feb. 23 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Feb. 23 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Feb. 23 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Feb. 23 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Feb. 23 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Feb. 23 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Feb. 23 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Feb. 23 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Feb. 23 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Feb. 23 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Feb. 23 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Feb. 23 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Feb. 23 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Feb. 23 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Feb. 23 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Feb. 23 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Feb. 23 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Feb. 23 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Feb. 23 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Feb. 23 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Feb. 23 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Feb. 23 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Feb. 23 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Feb. 23 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Feb. 23 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Feb. 23 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Feb. 23 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Feb. 23 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Feb. 23 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Feb. 23 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Feb. 23 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Feb. 23 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Feb. 23 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Feb. 23 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Feb. 23 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Feb. 23 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Feb. 23 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Funeral Mass celebrated for Sr. Louissette Marceau

A Funeral Mass for Sister Louissette (Louise) Marceau, a Sister of Charity of Saint Louis, was celebrated Feb. 13 at Maison Louise-Elizabeth in Levis, Quebec.

Sister Louissette (Sister Sainte Françoise-Cabriani), who spent 53 years in the U.S., went to her eternal home on January 31, 2026. She passed away at Maison Louise-Elizabeth in Levis, Quebec, at the age of 92 with 72 years of religious profession.

She was born May 6, 1933.

Her missions in the Diocese of Ogdensburg included teaching in: Redford from 1953-63 and from 1964-65; Keeseville from 1963-64 and from 1975-76; Plattsburgh at Our Lady of Victory Academy from 1974-75,



Sister Louissette (Louise) Marceau, SCSL

from 1981-87, and from 1991-95. Sister Louissette (Louise) was Superior in Plattsburgh from 2000-06 after which she

returned to Canada. She also was missioned in: Brookfield, Connecticut, as teacher, principal, superior; and Oakville, Connecticut, as teacher and principal. Sister Louissette attended the College of Saint Rose in Albany and was assigned to Clifton Park as superior, treasurer and catechist. She had a sabbatical year in Arnprior, Ontario, in 1987-88.

Upon her return to the Mother House in Levis, Quebec, in 2006, Sister Louissette did many community services: translations, superior, receptionist, taught English and ministry of prayers.

Protecting God's Children

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

Feb. 27 – 6 p.m. – St. Peter's Parish, Massena

Rest in Peace

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

Feb. 18 – Rev. Charles Guillot, M.S.C., 1985

Feb. 19 – Rev. Benjamin Desroches, O.M.I., 1908; Rev. William R. Bourbeau, 1954

Feb. 20 – Rev. Lucian Leger, O.M.I., 1874; Rev. Daniel O'Riordan, O.M.I., 1897

Feb. 21 – Rev. Charles A. Paquette O.M.I., 1925; Rev. John J. Kelly, 1944

Feb. 22 – Rev. Edward Tortel, O.M.I., 1901; Rev. Peter H. J. Ryan, 1930

Feb. 23 – Rev. Leo Heinrichs, O.F.M., 1908; Rev. Edward Blanchard, 1922; Rev. André Payette, O.M.I., 1976

Feb. 24 – Rev. George Belanger, 1932; Rev. William J. Murphy, C.S.C.O., 1959

To Report Abuse

If you have a complaint of suspected misconduct involving diocesan clergy, religious, employees or volunteers, contact Victim Assistance Coordinator, Terrienne Yanulavich, Ph.D., LMHC, 5050 Route 374, Merrill, NY 12955; terriannyanulavich@yahoo.com; Phone: 518-569-0612; or Father Christopher Carrara, the Episcopal Vicar for Clergy; ccarrara@rcdony.org Phone: 315-393-2920 ext. 1340.

If you have a complaint of suspected sexual abuse or related misconduct by the bishops, contact the Catholic Bishop Abuse Reporting Service at 800-276-1562 or www.ReportBishopAbuse.org

Visit our website

www.northcountrycatholic.org

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

Find us on Facebook!



MONASTERY CARD SHOP

Cards for All Occasions

Mass Enrollments for your living & deceased loved ones.

Precious Blood Monastery

OPEN: 9 AM - 5 PM

SATURDAY 9 AM - 12 PM

400 PRATT ST., WATERTOWN

315-788-1669

www.sisterspreciousblood.org

BARSTOW

AN AMERICAN REVOLUTION BUICK PONTIAC GMC SUBARU

"Family owned dealership serving the North Country for over 56 years!"

For more information, visit our Website at: www.barstowmotors.com

MARKET ST., POTSDAM, NY • (315) 265-8800

Bishop calls for prayer, penance after shooting

By The B.C. Catholic
Provided by EWTN News

On the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes — the Church's World Day of the Sick — Prince George Bishop Stephen Jensen called people of faith to prayer and penance following Tuesday's mass school shooting in Tumbler Ridge in northern British Columbia, Canada.

"The unimaginable tragedy that struck the community of Tumbler Ridge yesterday has traumatized us all," Jensen said in a statement released Wednesday morning.

At least 10 people were confirmed dead, with dozens injured, after a mass shooting at Tumbler Ridge Secondary School and a nearby residence.

Royal Canadian Mounted Police said the suspected shooter, an 18-year-old whom authorities said was born a biological male but identified as female, was found dead from an apparent self-inflicted wound. Lockdowns and an emergency alert were lifted as officers secured the town and moved students to safety. Investigators continue examining connections between the shooter and victims.

School District 59 announced that Tumbler Ridge Secondary School and Tumbler Ridge Elementary School will remain closed for the rest of the week as the community mourns and recovers.

Tumbler Ridge, a northeastern British Columbia community of about 2,500 people, is located roughly 400 kilometers (249 miles) northeast of Prince George within the Diocese of Prince George. The town has one Catholic parish, Holy Cross Mission, served by Our Lady of Peace Parish in Chetwynd, about an hour northwest. There is no Catholic school.

Messages of prayer and solidarity poured in from across the country to the parish's Facebook page. Father Jeevan Bandanadham, SAC, pastor of Holy Cross Mission in Tumbler Ridge and Our Lady of Peace Parish in Chetwynd, reached out to parishioners Tuesday evening, saying he was "deeply saddened" to hear of the shooting.

"I am very concerned for each of you. I sincerely hope that you and your families are safe and doing well. Please know that you are in my heartfelt thoughts and prayers during this difficult time. May God surround you

with his peace, comfort, and protection. Good night, and may God bless you all."

Jensen said in his statement: "The most effective response we can offer for the intentions of the dead and the survivors, their families, the emergency responders, the parish community and town, is our own prayer and penance, which God has provided that we can use to address suffering and help bring mercy and healing to all."

Other Catholic leaders across British Columbia echoed that call to prayer. In Vancouver, Archbishop Richard Smith expressed solidarity with the Diocese of Prince George and the grieving community.

"I was deeply saddened to learn of yesterday's tragic violence in Tumbler Ridge," he said. "Together with everyone in the Archdiocese of Vancouver, I offer my prayers for all who have lost loved ones and for the entire community in mourning."

His message ended: "In this time of grief, may the Lord draw close to those who suffer and grant strength to all who care for them. Let us join together in prayer for peace and healing in our province."

Bishop Michael Kwiatkowski of the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of New Westminster and state chaplain for the British Columbia and Yukon Knights of Columbus said he had reached out to clergy in his eparchy immediately.

"We are shocked and saddened by the horrific event that took place in the northern community of Tumbler Ridge," he wrote to priests. "Please offer a prayer for this intention in these days in your parish liturgies together with your parishioners."

He added that while there is a Catholic mission parish in Tumbler Ridge, there is no local Knights of Columbus council, though Knights are exploring ways to assist the community.

Jensen noted the start of Lent in one week, "a time for more intense prayer and penance — personal sacrifice — to beg God's healing grace for our lives and for the world."

Jensen closed his message by stating: "Today is the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes. In the words of the familiar prayer, we turn to her 'mourning and weeping in this valley of tears.' May we all unite our prayers to Our Lady's intercession to ask for God's presence and mercy in our suffering world."

CATHOLIC WORLD AT A GLANCE

U.S. Religious Liberty commissioner booted from post

Texas Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick announced that Carrie Prejean Boller has been removed from President Donald Trump's Religious Liberty Commission. "No member of the commission has the right to hijack a hearing for their own personal and political agenda on any issue," said Patrick, who serves as chair of the commission, in a post on X. "This is clearly, without question, what happened Monday in our hearing on antisemitism in America." "This was my decision," he added. Boller, a Catholic who is former Miss California USA, sparked a debate Feb. 9 among fellow commissioners and panelists at a hearing focused on the topic of antisemitism when she said her Catholic faith prevents her from embracing Zionism and repeatedly pressed Jewish panelists on whether her views made her an antisemite. The Church recognizes Israel's fundamental right to exist and universally condemns antisemitism. Catholic teaching does not explicitly oppose Zionism, the movement supporting Jewish self-determination in a homeland in Israel.

Pew: Catholic support for Trump agenda is unchanged

A Pew Research Center report found that Catholics' support for President Donald Trump's agenda has not changed significantly over the past year. The analysis examined how U.S. religious groups view Trump, including his plans and policies and his ethics. It focused on Protestants, Catholics, and religiously unaffiliated adults. The report, "White Evangelicals Remain Among Trump's Strongest Supporters, but They're Less Supportive Than a Year Ago," includes information from a survey of 8,512 U.S. adults who are part of the center's American Trends Panel (ATP). The survey was conducted Jan. 20–26 and has an overall margin of error of plus or minus 1.4 percentage points. The report found only a slight change from February 2025 to January 2026 in the number of Catholic participants who said they support all or most of Trump's plans and policies. In 2025, 51% of white Catholics reported supporting all or most of Trump's plans and policies, compared with 46% in 2026. The decrease was less among Hispanic Catholics, which was 20% in 2025 and 18% in 2026.

'I will not forget you' is theme of Day of Grandparents, Elderly

"I will not forget you" (Isaiah 49:15) is the theme chosen by Pope Leo XIV for the sixth World Day of Grandparents and the Elderly, which this year will take place on Sunday, July 26. According to a Feb. 10 statement from the Dicastery for the Laity, the Family, and Life, the verse chosen by the Holy Father "is meant to emphasize how God's love for every person never fails, not even in the frailty of old age." Taken from the book of the prophet Isaiah, the theme also aims to be "a message of comfort and hope for all grandparents and the elderly," especially those who live alone or feel forgotten. The Vatican dicastery emphasized that it is also an invitation to families and ecclesial communities not to forget the elderly and to recognize in them "a precious presence and a blessing."

ADIRONDACK MOUNTAIN

ALPHA

Lake Placid – ALPHA to be held, all are invited no matter your background or beliefs.

Date: Starting Feb. 22 on Sundays for 11 weeks. There are breaks for Spring vacation and Easter.

Time: 11:15 a.m. to 1:15 p.m.

Place: St. Agnes School

Features: Meet new people and unpack the Christian faith together. Alpha is for anyone who's curious. No judgement, no pressure. Each session unpacks a big question of life, faith and purpose and is designed to spark conversation. This is a free event and includes a delicious lunch.

Contact: For more information contact Debra Lennon at lennon-debra26@gmail.com, 518-524-4388

TECH WORKSHOP

Lake Placid - Mercy Care for the Adirondacks will host a Technology Assistance Workshop open to all older adult community members.

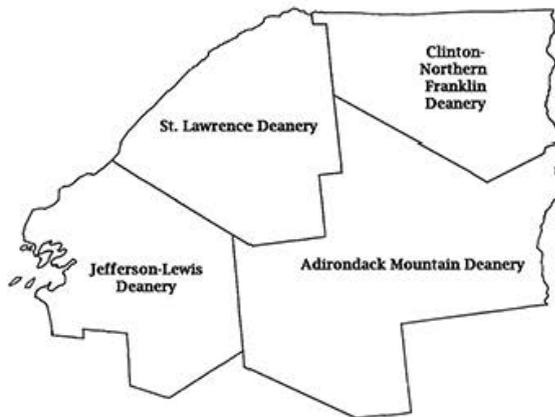
Date: Feb. 26

Time: 9 a.m. to Noon

Place: BOCES Adirondack Educational Center

Features: Mercy Care is scaling up its programs to empower Elder Friends to have access to a digital device and provide instruction on how to use it through its iPad permanent loan program. Roberta Bryson of NBT Bank will offer a presentation about online banking management, navigating the online portal, and fraud protection. There will be an opportunity for personalized one-on-one assistance with cell phones and tablets. Mercy Care's Technology Workshop and iPad Permanent Loan Programs are offered free of charge, on a first-come, first-served basis.

Contact: Registration is required. To request more information or to register, please contact Lexi Bevilacqua, Director of Programs and Mission Integration at abevilacqua@adkmercy.org or at 518-523-5446.



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

Parishioners are invited to send information about activities to:

North Country Catholic, PO Box 326,

Ogdensburg, NY 13669

e-mail news@northcountycatholic.org.

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

MERCY CARE VOLUNTEERS

Lake Placid - Mercy Care for the Adirondacks, sponsored by the Sisters of Mercy, is recruiting new volunteers for their Health Care Companion Volunteer Group.

Date: March 4

Time: 9 a.m.

Place: Heaven Hill Farm

Features: A Mercy Care Health Care Companion Volunteer is a listening presence, a compassionate friend, and is often thought of in terms of what a friend or family might do if they were available to help their loved one access, comply with, and more fully understand their health care. The Health Care Companion Volunteer does not provide hands-on health care or medical advice but assists their Elder Friend access and manage healthcare needs either in-person, virtually, or by telephone. Health Care Companion Volunteers support their Elder Friend by cultivating a connection with them to enhance their fullness of life.

Contact: There is no cost for the training, but registration is required. A complimentary lunch will be served. To register for the training, please visit Mercy Care's website at www.adkmercy.org or contact Lexi Bevilacqua, at abevilacqua@adkmercy.org or call Lexi for more information at 518-523-5446.

CLINTON NORTHERN FRANKLIN

FISH FRIES

AuSable Forks - The Au Sable Knights will be holding three fish fries every other Friday night.

Date: Feb. 20, March 6 and 20

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

Place: Holy Name School/Parish Center

Cost: Adults, \$15; Children under 12, \$10; Take-outs available.

BREAKFAST

Altona - St. Ann's and Holy Angel's parishes to have a breakfast prepared by the ladies of St. Ann.

Date: Feb. 22

Time: 8 a.m. to noon

Place: Holy Angels Hall

Cost: Adults, \$13; Children 5-12, \$7; under 5 Free

Menu: Eggs, Eggcups, Sausage, Bacon, Pancakes, French Toast, Baked Goods, Home Fries, Coffee, Tea and Juice.

CHICKEN AND BISCUIT DINNER

Malone—Knights of Columbus Council 308 will hold their Chicken and Biscuit Dinners.

Dates: Feb. 25, March 11 and 25

Time: Beginning at 4 p.m.

Place: K of C Home, 41 Elm St.

Cost: \$13 for drive-thru, take-out, or dine in

Features: Proceeds benefit our charitable donations.

SOAKING PRAYERS SESSIONS

Plattsburgh – Come enjoy a relaxing prayer opportunity the first Monday of the month.

Date: March 2, April 6, May 4

Time: New time, 1:30 p.m. to 3:30, no more evening sessions.

Place: Newman Center

Features: Session includes a praise and worship segment followed by scripture readings, soaking prayer and healing prayers. Led by Eve McGill, Living Waters Ministry. All are welcome.

Contact: evemcgill16@charter.net

FIRST FRIDAY

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

Date: March 6

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

JEFFERSON-LEWIS

HOLY HOUR AND DIVINE MERCY

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

Date: March 1

Time: Following 11 a.m. Mass

Place: St. Hedwig's Church

Contact: 315-348-6260

LENTEN RETREAT

Watertown – All are welcome to attend the annual Sisters of St. Joseph Lenten Retreat.

Date: March 15

Time: 2 p.m. to 4

Place: Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Dostie Hall

Features: Join us for an afternoon of prayer as we reflect on Christ's call to move from our blind sights to a deeper insight into His life, death and resurrection presented to us by Father Leagon Carlin who is studying at St. Paul's University, Ottawa. His theme is: "Lead Kindly Light". There will be an opportunity for prayer and for the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Contact: Register with Sister Mary Eamon (smelyngssj@yahoo.com)

or with Sister Bethany Fitzgerald (srbethssj@gmail.com) by March 10.

ST. LAWRENCE

THE MASS EXPLAINED

Hammond - Have you ever wondered where the prayers of the Mass came from? Or wondered why the stand, kneel, sit, stand again routine happens? Come learn why we do what we do and when.

Date: Five Saturdays beginning Feb. 21

Time: 8:45 a.m. coffee and donuts, programs begins at 9 a.m. and will last 45-60 mins.

Place: St. Peter's Church

Features: The program is FREE. Pre-registration is not required but suggested (need to have enough donuts!)

Contact: Please call Gene Kleinhans, 315-486-3813 or Chris McRoberts, 315-323-7784 to provide your name and a good phone number to call or text.

ROSARY WITH DEVOTIONS

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

Date: March 7

Time: 8 a.m.

Place: Notre Dame Church, Ogdensburg

Features: Rosary with devotions

FIRST SATURDAY ROSARY

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

Date: March 7

Time: 3:15 p.m.

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

MENS GROUP

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

Date: March 7

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

Place: Sacred Heart Church

SUNDAY'S SCRIPTURE

Time for spring training

As we still trudge through snow, slush and some mud, we think about the warm south where spring training has begun. Spring training features getting back to the basics of the game, what is most fundamental, what is most necessary, what are the best moves. Those tried and tested methods of the games don't change.

Well, as Catholics: Welcome to Lent, to spring training. The first week of Lent: the ashes will wear off from our foreheads, but hopefully they have not worn off from our spirits. In church, we hear readings that, just like spring training, relive for us the basics of our faith. The story of the fall of Adam and

Eve, the temptations of Christ in the desert, and Paul's words about sin, condemnation, disobedience and righteousness all bring us back into the core realities of our faith and of our human condition and tell us the truth about human reality and the value of divine intervention into the history of humanity in the person of Jesus Christ.

The garden story of Adam and Eve portrays not so much an event as much as an attitude. This attitude existed in them and continues to pervade humanity today. In a nutshell: I do what I want; I am a better judge of right and wrong than anyone else; I decide the best route to follow.

The story of Adam and



Msgr. Robert H. Aucoin

Feb. 22

First Sunday of Lent

READINGS

Genesis 2:7-9; 3:1-7

Romans 5:12-19 or 5:12, 17-19

Matthew 4:1-11

Eve clearly tells us the wrong of Adam and Eve because they wanted to be so right. In discovering their nakedness they revealed their sin. Covering their bodies, they try to cover their guilt. We sometimes do the same when we are guilty of doing wrong. We cover our guilt or blame someone else as they blamed the serpent.

Adam and Eve fell victim to temptation. Then, in the Gospel, Jesus faces three different temptations. All three contain a common core: misusing power for one's own purposes rather than God's

purposes. Adam and Eve fell into that trap. They wanted the power that could come to them from the forbidden tree. Jesus does not give in to the temptations.

All three temptations of Jesus involve the misuse of power. Bread symbolizes the misuse of ordinary human power for food, shelter and clothing. The second temptation focuses on the misuse of religious power. Jesus can have all the nations of the world. The third temptation revolves around the political power Jesus could have if he worshipped the devil.

In all three temptations: human, political and religious, Jesus says no. One word characterizes Jesus' reaction: fidelity. Adam and Eve displayed infidelity to God. Jesus responds to all three temptations with

fidelity, commitment to the Father, commitment to truth and integrity.

So, in Lent, we begin our spring training by returning to the basics of our humanity and our faithfulness to God. We must never imitate Adam and Eve and pretend that our will supersedes God's will. We need to imitate the same level of commitment as did Jesus. Like Jesus, our strength is not situated in power and control. We find our strength in commitment and fidelity to the basics of our faith in God.

In this Lenten season we can imitate the words of Jesus: "Get behind me, Satan. I do not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God. I can listen only to the word of God. I shall worship only the Lord God and serve him alone." AMEN.

Around the diocese

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

DIOCESAN EVENTS

RITE OF ELECTION

Ogdensburg - The Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion to be held.

Date: Feb. 22

Time: 2:30 p.m.

Place: St. Mary's Cathedral

Contact: RSVP deadline: Feb 11 to Asoltero@rcdony.org

IHC MYSTERY PLAYERS

The IHC Mystery Players will present the Way of the Cross around the Diocese and beyond.

Lent 2026 Prayer Schedule:

February 22, 2 p.m. at Summit Village, Watertown; Feb. 27, 7:30 p.m. at St. Elizabeth Seton, Baldwinsville; March 8, 7:30 p.m. at First Presbyterian, Watertown;

March 12, 7:30 p.m. at Corpus Christi, Round Lake; March 13, 7:30 p.m. at St. Michael's, South Glens Falls; March 14, 7:30 p.m. at St. Bernard's, Saranac Lake; March 20, 7:30 p.m. at Holy Family, Little Falls; March 22, 7:30 p.m. at St. Cecilia's, Adams; March 27, 7:30 p.m. at Pope John XXIII, Liverpool; March 29, 7:30 p.m. at St. James, Carthage; April 2, 8 p.m. at IHC, Watertown; April 3, 7:30 p.m. at St. Patrick's, Watertown

Contact: For more information go to <https://www.ihcschool.org/mystery-players>

SURVIVING DIVORCE

Canton - The Family Life Office will be offering the Surviving Divorce program again starting in late February.

Time: Meeting dates and

times will be determined by the needs of the participants.

Cost: The program is free but we happily accept \$25 donations to offset the cost of materials.

Features: Surviving Divorce features twelve video presentations that cover topics such as shock and grief, anger and forgiveness, money issues, dealing with children and a former spouse, and annulment and remarriage. This program is for the newly separated and divorced and those still struggling with issues many years later. It will help them find answers to their questions, restore their hope, and begin authentic healing.

Contact: To register, go to <https://www.rcdony.org/survivingdivorce>. For more information, contact Steve Tartaglia at

315-393-2920.

GUGGENHEIM REGISTRATION

Camp Guggenheim registration and new staff application season is now open.

Dates: July 5 - July 10 for 11-13 year olds; July 12 - July 17 for 12-15 year olds; July 19 - July 24 for 12-15 year olds; July 26 - July 31 for 12-15 year olds; Aug 2 - Aug 7 for 16-18 year olds

Cost: \$450 per week, but if you register by March 1 with a deposit or scholarship application it will be \$425.

Contact: Register for camp at <https://www.rcdony.org/youth/camp/registration> Register for a staff position at <https://www.rcdony.org/youth/camp/new-staff-application> by Feb. 25

DAY OF REFLECTION

Norfolk - All Catechists, Catechetical Leaders, Commissioned Lay Ministers, Youth Leaders and Candidates in Formation for Ministry are invited to a Day of Reflection.

Date: March 21

Time: 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Mass will be at 9 a.m.

Place: Norfolk Parish Center

Cost: \$15 includes lunch (soup and sandwich)

Features: Presented by Sr. Janet Schaeffler, OP. The theme will be "In Step with Christ: Embracing Discipleship and Accompaniment."

Contact: Register by March 12 at [rcdony.org/dayofreflection](https://www.rcdony.org/dayofreflection)

CALLED TO SERVE

Forty days plus the six Sundays of Lent

Lent means 40 days of fasting. Fasting equals one full meal a day and two smaller meals that together do not equal a full meal. In addition to fasting, Catholics do not include meat products in those meals on the Fridays of Lent, Ash Wednesday or Good Friday. The self-denial of meat is called abstinence.

Fasting applies to all able-bodied Catholics between the ages of 18 and 59. It is a type of penance through self-discipline.

Abstinence applies to anyone over 14 years. Excluding meat from our diet is a form of self-denial. I don't know what vegetarians deny themselves. Fish, eggs and dairy products are not considered "meat."

Here is a Lenten anecdote.

My grandmother was aller-

gic to fish. We were not to use the word "fish" in her earshot. Lent meant our Friday night fare would be macaroni and cheese, lettuce salad or scrambled eggs.



Deacon
Kevin Mastellon

We lived with my grandparents for most of my formative years. I recall with fondness on a Tuesday or Wednesday night during Lent at the dinner table when my grandfather would announce, "Helen, (that was Nana's given name) we will not be home for dinner this Friday."

Nana nodded, and we moved on to the next topic.

Everyone, including Nana, knew that Dad (that's what we called my grandfather) has announced the family, sans Nana, was going out to eat fish on Friday, and Nana could be happy with her egg any way she want-

ed it.

At school, Sister used to distribute little cardboard cans to the students to help "the Missions." Each student was supposed to place a donation each day in the "mite box" instead of buying a pack of baseball cards or a stick of candy or something.

We returned the mite boxes to Sister on the last day of school during Holy Week. My recollection is that at my house, we spent the night before searching pockets, purses and cushions for pennies, nickels and dimes to fill the box with the appropriate weight.

But enough of my reminiscence. Lent begins with Ash Wednesday.

Ashes are placed on foreheads by a priest or deacon in the form of cross. The ashes mark the start of the period of prayer, fasting and charity (almsgiving) that we call Lent.

A few of the practices and sacramentals of Lent have changed a little since I was a kid; a lot since AD 601 when Pope Gregory moved the start of Lent to 46 days before Easter, and established Ash Wednesday at the same time.

The Museum of the Bible tells us, "As for where the ashes come from, they are made from burning the blessed palms from the Palm Sunday celebration the year prior, which commemorates the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem the week of his death. Making the sign of the cross with these ashes ties the beginning of Lent, 46 days earlier, to the commencement of holy week the Sunday before Easter."

Happy Lent!

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

'Seeking Beauty' series points to the divine

By Francesca Pollio Fenton
EWTN News

EWTN+ recently launched "Seeking Beauty," a first-of-its-kind adventure documentary series that explores culture, architecture, food, art, and music, and aims to point viewers to the beautiful — and ultimately to the divine.

The show's host, David Henrie, who is best known for his role as Justin Russo on Disney's "Wizards of Waverly Place," believes a show like this is needed right now as more and more people are searching for

authentic, human experiences.

"We live in such a fast-paced society. Things are moving at 24, 30 frames a second. And then AI is on the horizon. We're just getting inundated with so much," Henrie told EWTN News on the red carpet at the premiere of the series on Jan. 16. "I think there's this deep craving for the human, for the real, for the natural."

The Catholic actor explained he believes that in order to provide authentic experiences, "you should go back and revisit cultures who have done well in a magnificent way — and there's always a theological component to it."

He added: "Beauty to me is the language of the divine. It's a fingerprint of God. And I think it'll continue to be more and more attractive the more society gets sucked into our devices. I think you're

seeing a big rejection of that, so I think the timing is perfect for a show on beauty."

Peter Gagnon, president of EWTN Studios, and EWTN CEO Michael Warsaw highlighted EWTN's desire to offer content portraying beauty through the faith and God's creation.

"EWTN has always wanted to present beauty. God is beautiful. His creation is beautiful, and there are many areas that you can see the divine in beauty," Gagnon shared. "So this series, when the concept was brought to us, fit in exactly with our new content strategy because it leads the viewer in that journey along with David. It's not David telling you. You're journeying with David to find beauty."

Warsaw added: "For us, with all we do at EWTN, it's really about introducing people to the beauty,

the truth, the goodness of our faith as Catholics. So clearly this series about beauty that engages people with understanding, and being exposed to beauty in various forms — through the arts, through music, through culture — all of these things that really the Church has always been a patron of though the centuries and to bring that into this current moment so that people can really develop a deeper relationship with Our Lord, a deeper connection to the faith, a deeper connection to the Church."

Henrie said he hopes viewers will be left "curious about beauty and invite it into your life more."

"I think that even if you have a strong faith, especially growing up in America, beauty is not a part of the conversation. It's something superflu-

ous, it's a cost that can be cut, but God never cut beauty," he said. "Learning about the old world and how they saw beauty will hopefully inspire you to bring it into your soul most importantly."

Gagnon echoed Henrie's sentiments in that he said he hopes viewers will be led to reflect on what they see in the show and to "not just see the beauty that they're watching on the screen but to then go back home and to see the beauty around them in their lives, a beauty they may not have seen or not realized it was there, and through seeing that and being inspired by that, be led to the divine."

"Seeking Beauty" is available to watch exclusively on EWTN+, a free digital streaming platform. EWTN+ is available on RokuTV, GoogleTV, AppleTV, AmazonFireTV, and on EWTN.com.





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

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

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

Seeds of hope in Ukraine

Temperatures range from -10 to -20 degrees, there's a lack of electricity, heating and, in some cases, running water. From Borodjanka, near Kiev, Father Luca Bovio, Consolata missionary and director of the Pontifical Mission Societies (PMS) in Ukraine, shows in a video one of the many refreshment points where people can find respite from the cold, hot meals are distributed and play areas have been set up for children.

The massive attacks on the energy infrastructure across the country are putting a strain on a population exhausted by almost four years of war.

The current ecclesial reality in Ukraine has been shaped by a rich and complex history linked to the events of Orthodox Christianity in those lands. "As Pontifical Mission Societies," explains Father Bovio, "we work mainly within the Latin Rite Catholic Church, which accounts for about 1% of Christianity in Ukraine. But even at this early stage, our Direction is expanding its field of work with Catholics of both the Latin and Greek Byzantine rites. In the near future, we would also like to collaborate with a small community of Armenian Catholics."...

"With surprise and amazement," adds the missionary, "I have also witnessed the formation of missionary children's groups in recent months. Especially during Christmas, there were many moments of missionary animation by these children and adolescents, who showed the joy and generosity typical of children and cultivated by the PMS for the benefit of the most distant children." "I think it is a sign of great hope," he adds, "to find children who, despite living in situations of constant precariousness, bring the Gospel with their hearts turned to their peers who are most in need."

Looking to the future, Father Luca Bovio states: "I believe that the PMS in Ukraine are called to an important commitment in missionary and vocational animation. In this initial phase, I believe that the urgency of proclaiming Christ beyond one's own borders, to the whole world, is not yet widely perceived; here, Christianity is lived with an emphasis on other aspects that are undoubtedly important—there is, for example, great attention to the liturgy. "In this land blessed by God, rich in so many stories of saints and so many beautiful examples of Christian life, we will also seek to work so that vocations may arise which embrace the beauty of proclaiming Christ to the ends of the world."

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

Venerable Fulton Sheen to be beatified

By Tessa Gervasini
EWTN News

The Holy See has officially informed Bishop Louis Tylka of the Diocese of Peoria, Illinois, that the cause for the Venerable Servant of God Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen can proceed to beatification, according to an announcement from the diocese.

"The next step in the process is the celebration of the beatification, in which Fulton Sheen would be declared Blessed," Tylka said. "Archbishop Fulton Sheen was one of the greatest voices of evangelization in the Church and the world in the 20th century. I have long admired his lifelong commitment to serve the Church as a priest, rooted in his deep devotion to the Blessed Mother and the Eucharist."

"As he journeyed through the different stages of his life, his ability to share the Gospel and truly relate to people drew countless souls into an encounter with Jesus — one that transformed not only his life, but more importantly, the lives of those he touched."

"In his later years, particularly through his work for the Missions, Archbishop Sheen helped us recognize that the Church is meant for all people. He reminded us that as members of the Church, we are called to serve everyone, especially those most in need and those longing to hear and experience the Gospel, wherever they may be in the world," he said.

Tylka thanked the Holy See, his brother bishops, clergy, and laypeople for the collaboration and prayers that led to Sheen's beatification, which will be "a special blessing for the Church in the United States, where he was a powerful evangelist on radio, television, and in personal appearances."

The Diocese of Peoria is working with the Dicastery for the Causes of Saints at the Vatican to determine the details for the upcoming beatification.

FULTON SHEEN

Peter John Sheen was born in El Paso, Illinois, on May 8, 1895, and was called "Fulton" in honor of his mother's maiden name. Sheen was ordained a priest of the Peoria Diocese on Sept. 20, 1919. On June 11, 1951, he was consecrated as an auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of New York and remained in the position until 1966. He was then named the bishop of Rochester, New York, until his retirement in 1969 at the age of 74.

Tylka has previously called Sheen a "trailblazer" due to his Emmy-winning television show "Life Is Worth Living." The show aired on television from 1952 until 1957, discussing morality and Catholicism.

Sheen "reached millions of people because of [the show]," Tylka said. "He was so far ahead of his time in that reality that we take for granted today."

Sheen died due to heart disease on Dec. 9, 1979, the feast of St. Juan Diego. **ROAD TO BEATIFICATION**

Although Sheen is to be beatified, the process leading to the milestone has been marked by many challenges and delays.

The televangelist's cause for canonization was first opened in 2002 under the leadership of the Diocese of Peoria, and from then on he was referred to as a servant of God. Pope Benedict XVI declared him venerable in June 2012.

On March 6, 2014, the board of medical experts who advise the then-Congregation for the Causes of Saints unanimously approved a reported miracle attributed to his intercession. Parents of a stillborn baby, James Fulton, prayed through the intercession of Sheen and their son miraculously recovered.

On June 17, 2014, the seven-member theological commission that advises the congregation unanimously agreed with the medical team's finding.

Pope Francis approved of the miracle attributed to the intercession of Sheen on July 5, 2019. Sheen was set to be beatified on Dec. 21, 2019, but the beatification experienced a delay.

Bishop Salvatore Matano of Rochester reportedly requested the delay of Sheen's beatification due to concerns that he could be named in the final report of an ongoing investigation into clergy sex abuse in New York.

The situation was later cleared up and it was reported the delay was not related to the 2007 allegation that Sheen witnessed and covered up an act of clerical sexual abuse. The Diocese of Peoria issued an announcement that said "it has been demonstrated definitively that [Sheen] was an exemplary model of Christian conduct and a model of leadership in the Church. At no time has his life of virtue ever been called into question."

Despite delays, proponents of the beatification continued to work to advance the cause. In May 2025 Tylka reiterated his intention to advocate for the beatification process with Pope Leo XIV.

OBITUARIES

Lowville – Mary Sally (Souls) Brennan, 94; Mass of Christian Burial Feb. 13, 2026 at St. Peter's Church.

Malone – Rejean M. (Allen) Simmons, 82; Services to be held at a later date.

Massena – Carl Douglas Randall, 90; Private Services.

North Bangor – William R. Delarm, 92; Mass of Christian Burial Feb. 19, 2026 at

St. Augustine's Church; burial in St. Mary's Cemetery, Brushton.

Peru – Ronald J. Testa, 87; Mass of Christian Burial March 13, 2026 at St. Augustine's Church.

Sackets Harbor – Bonita "Bonnie" Yvonne Phillips, 82; Mass of Christian Burial Feb. 11, 2026 at St. Andrew's Church.

Saranac Lake – Kenneth J. Casler, 73;

Funeral Services Feb. 8, 2026 at the Fortune-Keough Funeral Home; burial in St. Bernard's Cemetery.

Watertown – Michael Dennis Fitzgerald, 84; Graveside services in spring at Glenwood Cemetery.

Watertown – Richard T. Hammond, 84; Funeral Services Feb. 14, 2026 at Cummings Funeral Home; burial in Glenwood Cemetery.

Watertown – Peter Liberatos, 76; Graveside services at a later date.

Watertown – William Corcoran Stage, 79; Mass of Christian Burial Feb. 20, 2026 at Holy Family Church; burial in St. Mary's Cemetery, Clayton.

Willsboro – Ronald J. Barnaby, 85; Private services.

NY advocates: 'Reexamine your consciences'

Patient advocates weigh in on passage of state assisted suicide bill

By Kate Quiñones
EWTN News

In spite of opposition from Catholic bishops and patient advocate groups, New York Gov. Kathy Hochul on Feb. 6 signed a bill to legalize physician-assisted suicide in the Empire State.

Assisted suicide is already legal in California, Colorado, Delaware, Hawaii, Illinois, Maine, New Jersey, New Mexico, Oregon, Vermont, Washington, and Washington, D.C.

Hochul, a Catholic, had already announced she would sign the bill once "guardrails" were added — specifically, laws to allow faith-based hospice providers to opt out of offering assisted suicide.

The Catholic bishops had urged Hochul not to pass the bill, saying that it undermined her own work on anti-suicide programs.

"How can any society have credibility to tell young people or people with depression that suicide is never the an-

swer, while at the same time telling elderly and sick people that it is a compassionate choice to be celebrated?" the bishops said in a recent statement.

The Catholic Church is outspokenly opposed to euthanasia and assisted suicide. In the Catechism of the Catholic Church, the Church condemns assisted suicide and euthanasia, instead encouraging palliative care, which means supporting patients with pain management and care as the end of their lives approaches. Additionally, the Church advocates for a "special respect" for anyone with a disability or serious health condition (CCC, 2276).

Any action or lack of action that intentionally "causes death in order to eliminate suffering constitutes a murder gravely contrary to the dignity of the human person and to the respect due to the living God, his Creator" (CCC, 2277).

"We call on Catholics and all New Yorkers to

reject physician-assisted suicide for themselves, their loved ones, and those in their care," the bishops continued. "And we pray that our state turn away from its promotion of a culture of death and invest instead in life-affirming, compassionate hospice and palliative care, which is seriously underutilized."

"While physician-assisted suicide will soon be legal here in New York, we must clearly reiterate that it is in direct conflict with Catholic teaching on the sacredness and dignity of all human life from conception until natural death and is a grave moral evil on par with other direct attacks on human life," the New York bishops said.

Hochul said the law, which goes into effect 180 days after its signing, gives New Yorkers "the choice to endure less suffering."

"Our state will always stand firm in safeguarding New Yorkers' freedoms and right to bodily autonomy, which includes the right for the terminally ill to peacefully and comfortably end their

lives with dignity and compassion," Hochul said in the Feb. 6 statement.

"I firmly believe we made the right decision," she concluded.

A national disability rights group, the Patients' Rights Action Fund, along with the New York Alliance Against Assisted Suicide, advocated against the law.

Jessica Rodgers, a spokeswoman for the Patients Rights Action Fund, urged those behind the new law "to reexamine your consciences."

"New York's assisted suicide law will turn some doctors and pharmacists into executioners," Rodgers said in a statement shared with EWTN News. "It will turn coroners into liars by requiring them to provide false information about the cause of death for each person who chooses assisted suicide."

Rodgers noted that the bill "will do nothing to address New York's low rates of hospice care use."

"Instead of doing the difficult work of making hospice care more

accessible and helping to ease the pain of terminal illnesses, the governor has chosen to enact a law that will, likely, result in some New Yorkers' premature deaths," she said.

"It will stigmatize and endanger the terminally ill, whose lives are deemed of so little worth by our governor that other New Yorkers will now be allowed to help them expedite their own deaths," Rodgers continued.

"It will encourage vulnerable people to view suicide as a legitimate response to suffering of all kinds; it could even raise the overall suicide rate," she said. "It opens the door to future expansions of doctor-assisted death, like those we have seen in Canada in recent years."

"Finally, it willfully ignores the fact that physicians' estimates of their patients' life expectancies can be mistaken, and that such mistakes could lead people to choose assisted suicide when they could otherwise have gone on living for years," Rodgers concluded.