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The Diocese of Ogdensburg Volume 80 Number 42

NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

MARCH 4, 2026

Deacons donate tech and lifesaving equipment

Using funds raised by selling lapel pins, the St. Lawrence Society, the fraternal organization for deacons of the diocese, has donated technology upgrades to support the Deacon Formation Program at Wadhams Hall as well as defibrillator.

While the society purchased the tech with the formation program in mind, it'll also be available to others who use the facility.

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RITE OF ELECTION AND CALL TO CONTINUING CONVERSION



PHOTO BY JESSE SOVIE/NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

Catechumens, individuals preparing to receive all three Sacraments of Initiation, baptism, confirmation and first Eucharist, participate in the Rite of Election on Feb. 22. Bishop Terry R. LaValley presided over the celebration of the rite at St. Mary's Cathedral in Ogdensburg. Story on Page 3.

Pope Leo: Nationalism tramples the weakest

By Victoria Cardiel
Catholic News Agency

Pope Leo XIV warns in a new essay that “bitter nationalism tramples on the rights of the weakest” and says peace is first “defeated in the human heart” when people give in to selfishness, greed and partisan interests.

The pope’s words come from a new introduction to the English-language edition of the book “Peace Be with You!”, published by HarperCollins, a collection of previously published papal texts.

“We live in a world wounded by too many conflicts and struck by bloody hostilities,” Leo writes. “Bitter nationalism

tramples on the rights of the weakest.”

Calling peace “one of the great issues of our time,” the pontiff describes it as having a “dual dimension,” both vertical and horizontal: “a gift from God built by men and women throughout the ages” and also “a commitment and responsibility for each one of us.”

Leo says peace is a gift given through Christ’s birth in Bethlehem and through the risen Lord’s greeting to the disciples. Citing St. Augustine, he notes that the divine gift “calls into action the responsibility of our answer, of our ‘good will.’”

At the same time, he stresses that peace must be lived concretely. “Peace means teaching

children to respect others and not to bully others when they play,” he writes. “Peace means overcoming our personal pride and making room for the other, in our family, at work, in sports.”

He adds: “Peace is when our heart and our life are inhabited by silence, meditation and listening to God; because God never blesses violence, he never approves of taking advantage of others, or of the frenzied abuse of the one Earth that is disfiguring creation, a caress of the Creator.”

The pope also addresses what he has called the “globalization of powerlessness,” encouraging believers to respond above all with prayer. “Prayer is an ‘unarmed’ force that that seeks

only the common good, without exclusions,” he writes. “By praying, we disarm our ego and become capable of gratuitousness and sincerity.”

Leo insists that the struggle for peace does not begin on battlefields but within each person. “Our heart is the most important battlefield,” he writes. “It is there that we must learn the bloodless but necessary victory over the impulses of death and the tendencies toward domination: Only peaceful hearts can build a world of peace.”

He urges the cultivation of reconciliation in daily life, including “nonviolent workshops, places where suspicion of others can become an opportunity for encounter.”

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Using those brain cells

"The three of them share only three brain cells, and the boys never seem to use them."

When I say that, which is not infrequent, I'm talking about my three cats.

The current feline residents of my house are Jay, my giant older cat, and Gem and Scout, a brother/sister duo I refer to as "the twins."

Gem and Jay enjoy chewing on plastic. Gem enjoys chewing on charging cords, and he'll also pounce on me from

above when I'm lounging on the couch. Scout enjoys removing tissues from trash cans and distributing them all over my house. Jay once put a live mouse in my bed while I was sleeping in it. One of the twins, I haven't figured out which yet, likes to remove the hair I brush out of Jay from the trash and try to eat it.

That is by no means a comprehensive list of the dumb things they do. Such a list would likely fill a couple pages of this newspaper.

**Darcy L. Fargo**

Despite all the things they do that annoy me and destroy my stuff, I love my three feline companions.

I thought about my three stooges when I was recently reflecting on times in my life when I felt like I was outside the love of God. I think a lot of us have felt that.

Though I've been told many times that God is love and I can never be outside that love, and I've reminded others of that fact, sometimes I don't feel it.

There are times when, because of my sinfulness and my many, many char-

acter defects, that I've felt unlovable. I'll think, "God loves other people like that. As awful as I am and as badly as I behave, there's no way God could love me."

God reminded me recently that if I can love three freeloading felines who do dumb and sometimes destructive stuff every single day, it's almost crazy that I sometimes struggle to wrap my head around the fact that our God, the source of all life and love, loves me through and despite my dumb and destructive moments.

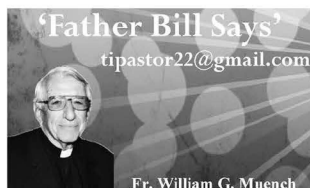
I'm glad he has my brain cells working on that.

The judgment of the nations

During Lent, the Sacred Scripture readings at the daily Masses are like a class in spirituality for each of us. It is a time for personal renewal. This is the Lord's program - the path to becoming a saint. It is also the path for bringing happiness into our lives.

Today, I would like to invite you to consider with me again the Gospel reading for Monday of the First Week of Lent. I am certain that you will remember this reading. This Gospel is a parable of Jesus - Matthew 25 - The Parable of the Judgment of the Nations. It is a perfect Scripture for a Lenten Journey. I believe that this parable in Jesus' day was a surprise for the people, even for the apostles. Even today, many are surprised as Jesus describes the Final Judgment.

So, let me remind you of this parable. The story begins with a separation of the saved from the others. The story involves a king, who we are certain is an image of Jesus. Jesus wel-



comes the righteous to the Kingdom of Heaven. And he tells them why: I was hungry, thirsty, a stranger, naked, ill, in prison, but you cared for me. The chosen ask when they saw Jesus. He tells them - "whatever you did for one of the least brothers of mine, you did for me." Jesus identifies with the needy.

The parable continues that Jesus rejects the others. Why? Jesus says I was hungry, thirsty, a stranger, naked, ill, in prison, but you did not do anything for me. They ask when they saw Jesus in need. Jesus responds, "whatever you did not do for these least brothers and sisters of mine, you did not do for me." Jesus again identifies with the needy.

In this parable, Jesus teaches us something im-

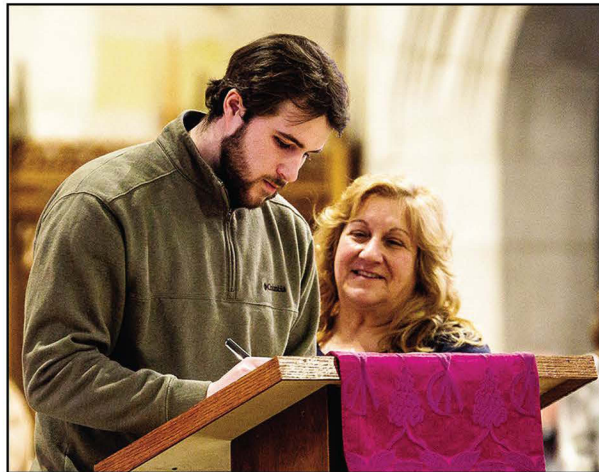
portant about becoming a saint and about finding happiness also. Are you surprised with Jesus' description of the final judgment? It is all about our relationships with others.

Let's consider one of these - welcoming a stranger. What does this mean to you? Let me offer my thoughts. We must remember the great commandment: Love God above all and love your neighbor as yourself. How do I treat others, those strangers that enter my life? Do I welcome people who are different from me politically, culturally, socially? Do I treat them with dignity as we are challenged to do by the Lord? Is prejudice a problem for me?

Remember Jesus entered this world as a stranger. Each of us must decide if Jesus is still a stranger to us. Do I have a good relationship with the Lord Jesus? Do I constantly welcome Jesus into my heart? Is my heart configured to Jesus? Notice that the sin

of the condemned is not violence; it is their omission. They simply failed to act.

Now one more thing: today, as I have shared with you before, my personal guide this Lent is Isaiah, the prophet. This week I have been meditating on Isaiah, Chapter 42. In this chapter, the prophet describes the coming Messiah as the Servant of the Lord. This chapter is one of the chapters of Isaiah called the Song of the Suffering Servant. Our Messiah comes to us as a servant, a suffering servant, to win us salvation. The prophet tells us that the Messiah will bring God's justice, leading us to right judgment but always with tender gentleness. We are called by the Lord to bring God's love, peace and justice in all that we do. Our Messiah's justice is not harsh domination. Rather it is a quiet, patient, healing restoration. He will not cry out or shout. Rather, in gentleness, he comes as a servant.



PHOTOS BY JESSE SOVIE/NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

(Top) Candidates, individuals who have been baptized but who have not completed their remaining Sacraments of Initiation, participate in the Call to Continuing Conversion at St. Mary's Cathedral on Feb 22. **(Bottom left)** Alyssa and April Hernandez of Evans Mills chat with Bishop Terry R. LaValley during the Rite of the Elect. **(Bottom right)** Alexander Otis of Malone signs the Book of the Elect during the Rite of Election. Additional photos from the event will be published in a future edition.

Rite of Election, Call to Conversion celebrated

The Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion were celebrated Feb. 22 at St. Mary's Cathedral in Ogdensburg. In that rite, the Church "elects" or chooses catechumens who are ready to receive the sacraments of initiation at the Easter Vigil. The Call to Continuing Conversion invites candidates, those who have been baptized but haven't celebrated all sacraments of initiation, to reaffirm their commitment to living out the faith.

The following individuals registered to attend:

CATECHUMENS
Individuals preparing to receive all three Sacraments of Initiation, baptism, confirmation and first Eucharist.

Carthage
Edward Eberly

Evans Mills
April Fernandez
Adriel Fernandez
Alyssa Fernandez
Americito Guzman
Jose Guzman

Gouverneur
Seth Shafer

Amy Laba
Amanda Laba

Malone
Alexander Otis
Maxwell Richards
Wendy Frank
Noah King

Ogdensburg
Kaiden Ashley
Brandy Taranto

Potsdam/Canton/Colton
Alayna LaPage
Michelle Chan
Tanya Wright

Saranac Lake

Ben Bracher
Isabella Celeste
Travis Talbert

Watertown
Audry Moore
Blake Ault
Lanie Phelps
Javier Gonzalez

West Leyden
Elie Moore

CANDIDATES
Individuals who have been baptized and are preparing to receive their remaining Sacraments of Initiation

Ellenburg Center
Kaiden Jubert
Trisha Howe

Gouverneur
Audrey Emerson

Malone
Beverly Marsden
Paul Scott
Gabrielle Scott
Mary Lou Lester
Logan Collins
Ian Wilson

Morrisonville
Cherise Bruce
David Coolidge
Jonathan Sibalski

Morristown
Diane Peck
Lewis Bass

Ogdensburg
Rachel Kench
Harold Kench
Sandra Jensen
Danielle Jensen
Aiden Demers

Plattsburgh
Carisa Warren

Potsdam/Canton/Colton
Bennett Bertollini
Jeremy Driggers
Robert Parcell
Samuel Lloyd

Alexander Yaccino

Saranac Lake
Heaton McCormick
Kailee McCormick
Vashti McCormick

Watertown
Angelo Guzman
Carol Wessinger
Carsten Bentley
Colton Dunham
Ginger Pica
Jeremiah Gaberton
Katherine Akkoul
Kristen Phelps
Taylor DeFranco

Deacons donate tech, lifesaving equipment

By Darcy Fargo
Editor

The St. Lawrence Society, the fraternal organization for deacons in our diocese, has turned lapel pins into technology and life-saving equipment for use by the Deacon Formation program and others who use Wadhams Hall.

Using funds derived from the sale of lapel pins, the deacons committed to donating up to \$5,000 for the purchase of large-screen televisions, sound bars and related equipment for Wadhams Hall, which houses the Deacon Formation program classes.

"We started talking probably a year ago now about the needs in the classrooms at Wadhams Hall to have monitors and other equipment that would be helpful to the men in the deacon formation program and for the wives," said Deacon Kevin Mastellon, director of Permanent Deacons for the diocese. "We had funding available because of the largess of people around the country and around the world who purchase our pins, so the society's leadership to dedicate up to \$5,000 for the purchase of monitors, sound bars and other equip-

ment to equip the two classrooms used by the formation program and the area where the ladies meet."

While only one classroom is being used at this time for deacon formation, another classroom will soon be needed.

"We equipped two classrooms because we have concurrently running cohorts of deacon candidates," the deacon said. "Our second class will be starting in the fall, so we'll have two classrooms going at the same time. (Instructors) use the monitors to show videos to the candidates, and Sister (Mary) Eamon Lyng, who teaches in the program, uses PowerPoint presentations, and other faculty use screens to show text or other materials. We were using small monitors, and it wasn't ideal."

Deacon Mastellon noted the purchase and installation of the technology has been a collaborative effort.

"One of the men who was then a deacon candidate and is now an ordained deacon, Deacon Gordon Burdo, had some experience with setting up such classrooms because he did that in his former job in the IT department at SUNY Plattsburgh," said

Deacon Mastellon. "He, along with (diocesan Director of Information Technology) Ian Fawcett and Shawn Shaver, the manager at Wadhams, worked together to plan, purchase and install the technology. Deacon Mark Webster, the society's treasurer, also had some experience in that area and contributed. And there was discussion and planning with the society's leadership, including the president, Deacon Brian Dwyer, and it's vice-president, Deacon Rod Rocca."

The society also donated funds for the purchase of a defibrillator.

"The (diocesan) chancellor (Deacon James Crowley) told us one day that Wadhams Hall didn't have a defibrillator," Deacon Mastellon said. "He suggested the St. Lawrence Society buy that, too."

The organization saw the need for such equipment, which delivers an electrical shock to the heart to correct life-threatening irregular heart rhythms or cardiac arrest to restore a normal heart rhythm.

"We had an incident a couple months ago in which a deacon candidate attending the formation program became very sick," Deacon Mastellon said. "At first, there was worry it might be a heart attack. Thankfully, it wasn't,

but it occurred to us that a portable defibrillator would be a good idea to have there. Once purchased, it'll be located somewhere central, maybe the office, and we'll get people trained in its use if they're not already. Often, people who are trained in CPR get training on the defibrillators, as well."

The society is planning additional related purchases in the future, too.

"We hope to add cameras to those classrooms so they could be used when inclement weather or some other factor keeps a member of a deacon class from making it to Wadhams for classes," said Deacon Mastellon. "That way, a student who can't make it could still participate in classes."

While the technology was purchased with the deacon formation program in mind, it won't be limited to that purpose.

"(The purchased equipment) becomes property of the diocese," said Deacon Mastellon. "It can be used by anyone who is using those classrooms and spaces."

Deacon Mastellon noted the funds to pay for the technology were derived from the sale of lapel pins that signify a man is a deacon.

"There are no dues for membership in the

St. Lawrence Society, which was formed in the 1980s as sort of a fraternity for newly ordained deacons," he said. "One of the reasons for the founding of the organization was to support deacon formation and continuing education and to take care of each other and the spouses. Somewhere along the line, it was decided that maybe we could augment the (society's) coffers and purpose of the organization through the sale of pins. The lapel pin idea came about because in a lot of dioceses, including our diocese, deacons do not wear Roman collars except in prison ministry or chaplaincy. There was a desire and need for something to indicate a man is clergy. We now sell the pins nationally and internationally."

Deacons and dioceses around the nation and world order the diocese via the society's website, and the society's pin chairman, the individual in charge of pins, maintains the inventory and packages and mails pins as needed.

"There are other places now that make and sell the pins," Deacon Mastellon said. "But we say they're made for deacons by deacons."

Funds derived from the pin sales also help fund the deacon's annual assembly, which is a joint project of the society and the diocese.

"We're continually looking at ways we can contribute that are consistent with the bylaws and constitution of our organization," said Deacon Mastellon.

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Mass of Christian Burial celebrated for Sister Eleanor White, SA

A Mass of Christian Burial for Sister Eleanor White, a Franciscan Sister of the Atonement from Graymoor, was celebrated Feb. 25 in the Motherhouse Chapel at St. Francis Convent, Graymoor.

Sister Eleanor died on February 18, 2026 in the Lurana Health Care Residence of St. Francis Convent, Garrison, New York.

Sister Eleanor was born on October 14, 1937, the youngest child and only daughter of Gwendolyn (LaRose) and William J. White of Potsdam.

She is survived by her Sisters in Community, her cousin Father Steve Yander (who celebrated the funeral Mass), and numerous loving nieces and nephews, the children of her three deceased brothers: Theodore (Ted), Gerald (Jerry) and Thomas (Tom) White.

Sister entered the convent as a Postulant on August 16, 1956. She professed her First Vows on April 16, 1958 and her Final Vows on August 31, 1963. As an Atonement missionary for 68 years, Sister Eleanor taught kindergarten in her early religious life, and served in parish, catechetical, pastoral and retreat ministries in New York (Cobleskill, Canajoharie, Garrison, Stillwater, & Adams); California (Merced); New Jersey (Deal); New Hampshire (Farmington); Oregon (Bandon); Rhode Island (Harrisville); and Washington, D.C. (Washington Retreat House) before returning to Graymoor in 2003 where she continued retreat ministry at

Our Lady of the Atonement Retreat House.

Sister Eleanor wrote, "I have appreciated our various ministries as well as the different parts of the country to which they have brought me. I have a particular interest in retreat ministry."

As a reflection of her deep, inner calling for the love of retreat ministry, Sister Eleanor entered into the Rachel's Vineyard Retreats for healing the hearts of those who are dealing with post-abortion trauma. Believing in the healing power of the Divine Physician, our Lord Jesus, Sister Eleanor embarked on bringing this healing love to those involved in the Rachel's Vineyard Retreats.

Sister Eleanor's life was a marvelous blend of outward joy, humor, and inner contemplation, which called many people, including those sisters who lived with her, to a better appreciation of a living God who "mixes with us" and rejoices in all creation. She had a gift for introducing others to the sunrises and sunsets of God's creation by snowshoeing, recreational walking, noticing the fields of white daisies 'dance' in the sunshine, and for making any 'house' a 'home' - comfortable and beautiful! The title, "Lady Eleanor," which has become familiar to many, was well-deserved and most appropriate for such a gifted, kind and loving Sister of the Atonement! When reminded by anyone of all that we have given up as sisters, Sister Eleanor's favorite response was: "God is never out-

done in generosity. My praise and thanks to Him and my Sisters in our At-One-Ment vocation!"

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Franciscan Sisters

of the Atonement, 41 Old Highland Turnpike, Garrison, NY 10524. Burial will be in the Sisters' Cemetery. Funeral arrangements by Dorsey-Carlone Funeral Home.



Sister Eleanor White, SA

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Environmental Stewardship

Backyard borgo

This past fall, Pope Leo XIV inaugurated "Borgo Laudato Si" in celebration of the 10th anniversary of the encyclical on care for creation. The borgo is 135 acres of gardens, farmlands and archeological sites that are part of the papal residence at Castel Gandolfo, just a day trip away from Rome. As the Vatican News reports, the borgo "is a place to grow in communion with God, one another and with creation." It does this with the help of experts in botany, biology and integral ecology. It provides training and job opportunities for gardeners and landscape workers and provides them opportunities to learn best practices for caring for our earth by promoting integral ecology and sustainability.

Pope Leo XIV, while speaking at the event, described the borgo as "one of the church's initiatives aimed at fulfilling the vocation to be protectors of God's handiwork: a demanding, but beautiful task, which represents a major task of the Christian experience."

How can we, like His Holiness, celebrate this important occasion and be a part of making a difference? Borgo is an Italian word for village. Perhaps we can create a more modest space that embodies this vision by creating a welcoming wildlife friendly village on our own properties. Size doesn't matter; it could be a small balcony off our apartment, the patio of a community living home, or our backyard garden — even a window box. Like the Borgo Laudato Si, ours would be a place where we could come together with friends and grow in communion with God's creation — a space that welcomes and nurtures songbirds, bees or other small creatures with which we share the earth. This is the time of year when we begin thinking about what to plant. Consider planting pollinator friendly plants and providing sites for water, bee houses, and bird houses.

Rest in Peace

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

March 4 — Rev. Jeremiah S. O'Brien, 1899; Rev. Thomas D. Hurley, 1934

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

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

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

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

March 10 — Rev. Hector Mauriot, O.M.I., 1895

Protecting God's Children

The Diocese of Ogdensburg can schedule 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. To schedule a session, contact Lydia Shoen at 315-393-2920 or lshoen@rcdony.org

To Report Abuse

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

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

CALLED TO SERVE

Thoughts on Baptism

"In Baptism, the Holy Spirit moves us to answer Christ's call to holiness. In Baptism, we are asked to walk by the light of Christ and to trust in his wisdom. We are invited to submit our hearts to Christ with ever deeper love."

That quote is from the Catholic Bishop's website (USCCB.org). It addresses Baptism, a sacrament of the church, the first of the seven sacraments. Baptism is the gateway to the other six.

Parents share their faith with an infant child when that baby is brought to a Catholic Church to be baptized. In some cases, many might be a better adjective, parents wait, sometimes years, to have the "baby" baptized.

Bishop's Public Schedule

March 4 — Noon — Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

March 6 — Noon — Mass at St. March 7 — 7 a.m. — Mass at Wadhams Hall Chapel in Ogdensburg

4 p.m. — Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

March 8 — 10 a.m. — Mass at Holy Cross Parish (Our Lady of Victory Church) in Plattsburgh

March 9-10 — Seminarian visit at Mount St. Mary's Seminary in Emmitsburg, Maryland

March 11 — 9:30 a.m. — 3:15 p.m. — Diocesan Department Head Meeting followed by the Diocesan Staff Lenten Day of Reflection at Wadhams Hall in Ogdensburg

5:30 p.m. — Lenten Soup Supper at Martin Field Club (formerly the Knights of Columbus) in Ogdensburg



Deacon
Kevin Mastellon

I was reminded of baptism by several events recently. One was a baptism I presided at involving two children, a boy of three and his one-year-old sister. The catalyst for this baptism was the grandmothers. Two of them would be in town simultaneously. That rarely happened since the grandmothers

were in distinct parts of the country. With the pastor's permission, we arranged a baptism preparatory class and baptisms on short notice.

A second reminder came when a friend mentioned that his mother had been "churched." My mother was too. Some of our readers may remember when a mother was "churched" about a month after childbirth. It was a practice of the Catholic Church that was all but abandoned in the 1960s and 1970s.

Each parish adapted the ritual to its surroundings. I can recall as an altar boy accompanying a priest from our parish to the altar rail after Mass to "church" a new mother. The priest would read a few prayers in Latin, extend his stole to a shoulder

of the woman, bless her and sprinkle holy water on her. Holding a bucket of water was one of my jobs.

Deacon Harold Burke-Sivers is well known around the United States as a presenter at deacon gatherings. He described the ritual this way. "After a woman gave birth, she would receive a special blessing from a priest — not because she was "unclean" (though sadly that's how some misunderstood it), but as a thanksgiving to God for bringing her safely through the incredibly holy act of bringing life into the world."

It honored the vocational sacrifice of motherhood, allowing the community to support the new mother.

Although "Churching" as a rite has been discontinued, a similar "Blessing of a Woman after Childbirth" is still available in the Book of Blessings. Ask your parish priest or deacon about it.

And say a prayer of thanksgiving for the woman who bore you and had you baptized.

Deacon Kevin Mastellon ministers in Watertown.

He is the director of Permanent Deacons for the Diocese of Ogdensburg.

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Vermont backs off 'gender ideology' mandate for foster families

By Tyler Arnold
EWTN News

The Vermont Department for Children and Families (DCF) officially ended a policy that required foster parents to embrace the state's views about gender identity and sexuality as a condition of fostering children.

Four Christian foster parents who lost their licenses for refusing to sign off on the requirement had sued the department, accusing it of violating their constitutional rights to free speech and freedom of religion and of putting "gender ideology over children's best interests."

On Feb. 18, the DCF finally ended the policy and the parties reached a settlement.

According to the now-defunct policy, any person who wanted a license to foster children had to agree to affirm a child's decision to identify as a gender different from his or her biological sex and a child's sexuality if he or she identified as homosexual.

The guidelines that were previously in place encouraged foster parents to "support children's identities even if it feels uncomfortable" and "bring young people to LGBTQ organizations and events in the community." The guidelines instructed foster parents to use "appropriate pronouns" — which would be inconsistent with the child's biological sex if the child identified as transgender — and "support young people's gender expression."

Prospective and current foster parents were required to agree to that pol-

icy as a condition of fostering children, even if they were not caring for children who identified as either homosexual or transgender.

With that requirement gone, the new policy clearly states DCF will not consider an applicant's "sincerely held personal, cultural, religious, moral, or philosophical beliefs" when determining whether the department will approve a license.

The new policy states that DCF will no longer require the "endorsement or affirmation of specific identities" or the "use of particular vocabulary, prescribed language, or preferred pronouns related to gender identity, sexual orientation, or identity expression."

In a court settlement, DCF also agreed to reinstate the licenses of the four foster parents who filed the lawsuit: Brian Wuoti, a pastor, and his wife, Katy; and Bryan Gantt, who is also a pastor, and his wife, Rebecca. All four were represented by Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF).

"No parent should be forced to lie to a vulnerable child about who they are, much less promote irreversible and life-altering procedures that don't have any proven health benefits," ADF Senior Counsel Johannes Widmalm-Delphonse said in a statement. "And, unfortunately, other loving families have been unable to open their homes to children in need just because of their Christian worldview. We commend Vermont for respecting the religious diversity of foster parents and ending its exclusionary policy that deprived children of opportunities to find loving homes."

CATHOLIC WORLD AT A GLANCE

Pope Leo XIV sends humanitarian aid to Ukraine

Pope Leo XIV has sent a humanitarian shipment to Ukraine containing urgently needed medicines and more than 1,000 electric radiators to assist people affected by the war. According to the Dicastery for the Service of Charity, the shipment responds to a "desperate request" made by several bishops amid the grave situation caused by the latest Russian airstrikes, especially in the Zaporizhzhia region. Through the apostolic almonry, the Holy Father arranged for a truckload of essential pharmaceuticals to address what the office led by Cardinal Konrad Krajewski described as a "disastrous humanitarian emergency." The dicastery said the commercial value of the shipment exceeds 1 million euros (\$1.17 million) and was made possible in large part thanks to the collaboration of the Fondazione Banco Farmaceutico ETS.

Pro-abortion professor declines Notre Dame leadership role

A pro-abortion professor at the University of Notre Dame is turning down a leadership appointment there after weeks of backlash that included more than a dozen U.S. bishops criticizing the school for its decision. Mary Gallagher, the dean of the university's Keough School of Global Affairs, wrote in an email on Feb. 26 that Professor Susan Ostermann "has decided not to move forward as director" of the Liu Institute for Asia and Asian Studies. Gallagher said she was "grateful for [Ostermann's] willingness to serve and for the thoughtfulness with which she approached this decision," according to the email, a copy of which was obtained by EWTN News. Ostermann in the announcement said the "focus on my appointment risks overshadowing the vital work the institute performs, which it should be allowed to pursue without undue distraction." She claimed that it was "clear that there is work to do at Notre Dame to build a community where a variety of voices can flourish."

St. Peter's Basilica unveils new Stations of the Cross

St. Peter's Basilica has inaugurated new Stations of the Cross — 14 large oil paintings by Swiss painter Manuel Dürr — for Lent as part of celebrations marking the 400th anniversary of the church's 1626 consecration. The basilica first built at Emperor Constantine's order in 326 over the tomb of the Apostle Peter stood for 12 centuries. In 1506, Pope Julius II ordered its demolition to raise a new church from the ground up. The St. Peter's Basilica known today was consecrated on Nov. 18, 1626, by Pope Urban VIII, capping a long project that drew on the genius of artists and architects including Michelangelo Buonarroti, Gian Lorenzo Bernini, and Carlo Maderno. Four centuries later, the largest church in Christendom is commemorating the anniversary with a new artistic Stations of the Cross, inaugurated Feb. 20, featuring 14 paintings installed for Lent. The proposal by Dürr, 36, was selected from more than 1,000 submissions representing 80 countries after a competition launched in December 2023.

The Diocese of Ogdensburg

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ADIRONDACK MOUNTAIN

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 to access and manage their 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 abevillacqua@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: March 6 and 20

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

Place: Holy Name School/Parish Center

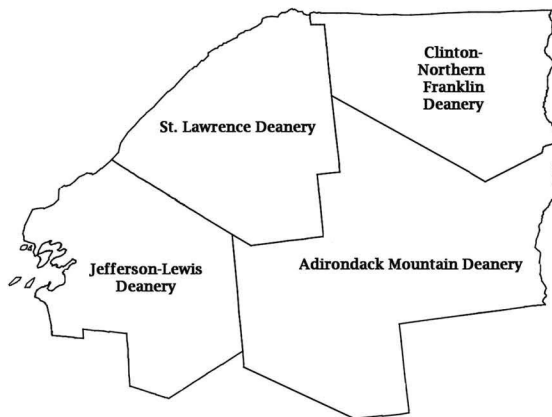
Cost: Adults, \$15; Children under 12, \$10; Take-outs available.

CHICKEN AND BISCUIT DINNER

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

Dates: March 11 and 25

Time: Beginning at 4 p.m.



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

Parishioners are invited to send information about activities to:

North Country Catholic, PO Box 326,

Ogdensburg, NY 13669

e-mail news@northcountrycatholic.org.

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

Place: K of C Home, 41 Elm St.
Cost: \$13 for drive-thru, take-out, or dine in
Features: Proceeds benefit our charitable donations.

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.

BREAKFAST

Peru - St. Augustine's Knights of Columbus will be serving a Pancake Breakfast.

Date: March 8

Time: 8:30 a.m. to noon

Place: St. Augustine's Parish Center

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

Menu: Pancakes, Waffles, Strawberry Sauce, Scrambled Eggs, Bacon, Home Fries, Real Maple Syrup, and much more.

LENTEN SOUP

Morrisonville - The Morrisonville Catholic Daughters invite everyone to a special Lenten Soup for the Soul evening.

Date: March 10

Time: 5:30 p.m.

Place: St. Alexander's Church

Features: A simple soup dinner will be served followed by a special presentation by Shannon Looby and her daughters, Helen, Vivian, and Bernadette, who will share about their experience serving as Catholic missionaries in an orphanage in Honduras. This evening is free and open to all. Donations will be accepted to support the ministry of the Catholic Daughters.

CORNED BEEF DINNER

Fort Covington - St. Mary's of the Fort parish to have their annual corned beef dinner.

Date: March 15

Time: 11 a.m. until sold out

Cost: \$17, take-out only

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

JEFFERSON-LEWIS

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: March 8

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

SPAGHETTI & MEATBALL DINNER

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

Date: March 14

Time: 4 p.m. to 7

Place: St. Mary's Parish Center

Cost: Adults, \$12; Seniors, \$10; Children 12 and under, \$5; under 5, Free; Sauce or meatballs available for \$6 per quart

Contact: For more information call 315-629-4678

CORNED BEEF DINNER

Constableville - St. Mary's Youth Group will be hosting a corned beef and cabbage dinner.

Date: March 15

Time: 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Place: Parish hall, Dine in or take out

Cost: Adults, \$15; Children under 10, \$7.50.

Contact: For questions or to make a donation call the parish office at 315-348-6104

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

FISH FRY

Gouverneur - St. James School to have a fish fry every Friday during Lent.

Date: March 6, 13, 20 & 27

Time: 4:30 p.m. until gone

Cost: \$15

Menu: Dinner includes fried fish, choice of macaroni and cheese or french fries, cole slaw, dinner roll, beverage and your choice of dessert. Dine in or Take Out.

Contact: Local deliveries available 315-287-0130

DIOCESAN EVENTS

IHC MYSTERY PLAYERS

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

Lent 2026 Prayer **Schedule:** 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 mor 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

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9

New font inspired by Michelangelo's writing

By Victoria Cardiel
EWTN News

Writing with the distinctive hand of one of the Renaissance's greatest geniuses is now possible. Marking the 400th anniversary of the consecration of St. Peter's Basilica, the Vatican and Microsoft have introduced "Michelangelus," a new digital typeface faithfully modeled on the handwriting of Michelangelo Buonarroti.

The font, which will be incorporated into the

latest versions of Microsoft Office, is expected to allow millions of users worldwide to draft digital documents in the recognizable handwritten style of the Florentine artist, best known in the Vatican for designing the iconic dome of St. Peter's.

The project grew out of an ongoing collaboration between the Fabric of St. Peter — the Vatican body responsible for the basilica's upkeep and conservation — and the technology compa-

ny, which has previously participated in other initiatives connected to the basilica.

To develop Michelangelus, Microsoft engineers closely studied documents preserved in the Vatican archives, including letters and personal and technical notes, as well as detailed architectural plans from the period when the basilica was still under construction — many written in Michelangelo's own hand.

The artist's harmoni-

ous calligraphy, recognizable for its elongated strokes, was reproduced after a lengthy paleographic study of the parchments Michelangelo regularly sent to papal officials to share new ideas, request funding, or report on the progress of the work.

Cardinal Mauro Gambetti, archpriest of St. Peter's Basilica, said the new font helps "the writing of the Renaissance genius" meet the digital age.

"Beyond the letters,

the numbers handwritten by Michelangelo were represented in an impressive way: Each number seemed like a work of art," the cardinal said during a Vatican presentation of activities planned to commemorate the basilica's 1626 consecration by Pope Urban VIII.

This story was first published by ACI Prensa, the Spanish-language sister service of EWTN News, and has been translated and adapted by EWTN News English.

Around the diocese

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

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.

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>

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

Place: Sacred Heart Church

Features: Featuring the Shroud of Turin replica exhibit, Father Jonathan Meyer, National Preacher of the Eucharistic Revival, Award-winning musician Sarah Kroger. The event will include Holy Mass, Confessions, Eucharistic Adoration, a Eucharistic Procession with Bishop LaValley, the Eucharistic Miracles exhibit, films, vendors and more. There will be time for fellowship and service. It will be an awesome day for the whole family!

Contact: Space is limited and registration is required. To view the schedule and register, please visit: <https://www.rcdony.org/h2h> For more information contact, Mary Beth Bracy at marybethbracy@gmail.com

DYING WITH CHRIST, LIVING WITH HOPE

Plattsburgh - When we make a commitment to die with Christ, we can truly live with hope. Learn about NYS Assisted Suicide Legislation and Canada's MAID.

Date: May 30

Time: 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Place: St. John Newman Center

Cost: \$10 donation, includes lunch

Features: Discussions feature theologians and healthcare professionals giving perspectives on suffering, grief, dying and our Christian duty to care.

Contact: Registration online at: <https://www.rcdony.org/living-withhope>

LIFE GIVING WOUNDS RETREAT

Utica - The Life-Giving Wounds retreat, for adults whose parents separated or divorced to be held.

Date: June 26-28

Place: Good News Center

Cost: \$80-150 for commuter, shared room or single room. Retreat price includes overnight lodging, meals, and all retreat materials.

Contact: Register now at <https://solgw26.eventbrite.com/> If you have any questions, contact Steve Tartaglia at startaglia@rcdony.org or 315-393-2920.

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 serving 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. To volunteer in this program, you can live in one of the following counties. Franklin, Essex County, Clinton County, St. Lawrence County or Jefferson County

Contact: Melissa Howard, Volunteer Coordinator at (518) 359-7688 or E-mail: mhoward@catholiccharities.org



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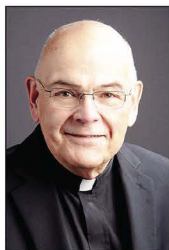
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SUNDAY'S SCRIPTURE

Satisfying our thirst

When was the last time you had a drink... of water that is? We drink water to satisfy our thirst, knowing full well that we will be thirsty again, sooner or later. Then, there are those who in some way are addicted to alcohol or drugs or sex or whatever else it might be. We often speak about those who thirst for knowl-



Msgr. Robert H. Aucoin

edge or who thirst for just the right answer. We can easily relate to the words of Jesus in today's Gospel: "whoever drinks this water (meaning the water in the well) will get thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again." Listen to what some of the Old

March 8

Third Sunday of Lent

READINGS

Exodus 17:3-7

Romans 5:1-2, 5-8

John 4:5-42

Testament writers have said. Psalm 42: "As a deer longs for a stream of cool water, so I thirst for you, the living God." Isaiah: "Come, everyone who is thirsty ... come to me." Jeremiah compares God to a spring of

fresh water. The great Father of the Church, St. Augustine, added: "Our hearts are made for God, and they will not rest, until they rest in God." A more modern author has said: "Our hearts have a God-shaped hole in them, that only God can fill."

Our great tragedy is that we have tried to fill that thirst with so many replacements. Unfortunately, so many people, including ourselves on occasion, are trying to fill that God-shaped hole in our hearts with something other than God.

When a baby starts crying, we often try to distract the baby with a gadget or toy to amuse the child to assist him to stop crying. We sometimes treat our spiritual thirst in the same way. We try to satisfy that thirst with distractions.

Trying to satisfy a spiritual thirst with material things is like trying to satisfy thirst with salt water. The more we drink, the thirstier we get.

We have all heard stories about successful people never satisfied, always looking for more. Often those successes were not in the spiritual realm but were rather material successes. In the human heart there is a restlessness


that no success can satisfy; there is a void that no material object can fill.

Jesus makes is eminently clear in today's Gospel that only he can satisfy the thirst in our hearts. In speaking to the Samaritan woman, he says: "Whoever drinks the water that I will give will never be thirsty again."

I know that this sounds so simple... It is simple but so very profound. Looking for happiness and success is very natural. The danger comes in when we replace true spiritual satisfaction with material satisfactions, when we take temporary pleasure to replace permanent pleasure.

This search for pleasure in life is not bad in itself. The search becomes bad when these momentary pleasures take the place of the living water, take the place of Christ.

This little prayer expresses today's teaching and our response: "Lord Jesus, you are the life-giving water for which we thirst. You are the happiness and success for which we strive. You are the peace and joy for which we search. Lord Jesus, our hearts were made for you, and they will not rest until they rest in you."



Support the Works of the Holy Father through the

Peter's Pence Collection

Be a sign of hope.

From his first appearance after his election in May 2025, Pope Leo XIV has called upon Catholics to live in peace and unity with one another within the Church and to share this invitation to peace and unity with the whole world. Throughout history, Catholics have shared Christ's mission with the world by proclaiming the Gospel and performing works of mercy that bring comfort to the poor and vulnerable. For centuries, Catholics have joined in these works by supporting the Peter's Pence Collection, which helps to fund the Holy Father's mission to proclaim Christ's message in the world. Our gifts to the collection are "concrete signs of hope" that fulfill the two aims of Peter's Pence: "1) **To support the Holy Father's mission**, which extends throughout the entire world, from the proclamation of the Gospel to the promotion of integral human development, education, peace, and brotherhood among peoples; thanks also to the many activities of service carried out by the dicasteries, bodies and organs of the Holy See that assist him every day; and 2) **To support the numerous charitable works** in aid of people and families in difficulty, populations afflicted by natural disasters and wars, or who are in need of humanitarian assistance or support for development."

For more information on Peter's Pence, please visit the Vatican's Peter's Pence website:
www.obolodisanpietro.va/en.html (English) or
www.obolodisanpietro.va/es.html (español).

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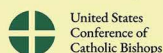
PRAY
 Pray for the Holy Father, for those he serves in compassion, and for the ongoing activities of the Holy See, all of which benefit from the Peter's Pence Collection.

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 Share this bulletin insert with anyone who might be interested.

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

Special Collection to be held with Catholic Relief Services March 14 & 15 Combined Collection

"Together, as one people, as brothers and sisters, let us walk towards God and love one another."—Pope Leo XIV, Homily at Mass for the Beginning of the Pontificate of Pope Leo XIV, May 18, 2025



United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

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Sister Mary Ellen Brett, SSJ, Director

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Program for the practice of charity

Fasting and other forms of penance Catholics practice during Lent are not self-imposed deprivations for the sake of self-satisfaction, but arise from gratitude for the gift of true peace and authentic happiness. With this spirit, the parish of Lucheng, in the Diocese of Wenzhou (Zhejiang Province), continues its Lenten journey, which began with the celebrations of Ash Wednesday on February 18.

Prayer, fasting, abstaining from meat, penitential prayers and vows, and above all, works of charity characterize the six weeks of Lent, during which the faithful follow in the footsteps of Jesus, who endured suffering and death to reach Resurrection. The focus of this time is St. Paul's Cathedral and other churches, chapels, and prayer rooms. The parish has developed a program to support all the faithful in observing the Lenten practices—both individually and communally—and to use them as opportunities for inner transformation through charity.

By following the “Program for the Practice of Charity,” which was distributed to parishioners in advance on the previous Sunday, each member of the Catholic community can be gradually guided on a path of charity and sharing through acts of kindness and acts of charity, leading up to Easter Eve.

The theme of the first week is “Awakening Love for God;” the second week focuses on “Practicing Self-Love;” the third week invites us to “Live Love for Our Families;” the fourth week broadens our horizons and encourages us to “Practice Love for others;” the fifth week is dedicated to “Renewal;” and the sixth and final week invites us, in the spirit of Jesus, to “Walk with Him” toward the mystery of the Resurrection.

The “Program for the Practice of Charity” aims to offer believers concrete and practical spiritual guidance, helping them to live and bear witness to their faith in everyday life during Lent, which prepares them for the coming of the risen Christ. During the solemn celebration of Ash Wednesday, participants received the ashes – a sign reminding each individual that they are a creature accepted, desired, and embraced by the love of God the Father, and called to move toward the peace and joy that Christ brings at Easter.

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

Syracuse exits Chapter 11

By Daniel Payne
EWTN News

The Diocese of Syracuse, New York, will exit bankruptcy proceedings after the final approval of a massive nine-figure abuse settlement, the diocese said this week.

U.S. Bankruptcy Judge Wendy Kinsella gave the green light for the \$176 million settlement, the diocese said in a press release on Feb. 25, marking the “official conclusion” of the diocese’s effort to provide “reparation and compensation to survivors of sexual abuse.”

The diocese had announced the terms of the settlement in August 2025, with Bishop Douglas Lucia revealing that the diocese itself would contribute \$50 million of the settlement, while parishes and “other Catholic entities” would contribute an additional \$50 million.

The remainder will come from diocesan insurance providers, the diocese said.

“I again offer my most heartfelt apology to those who have suffered such

harm and for any past neglect in addressing it,” Lucia said on Feb. 25.

The news comes amid a wave of recent abuse settlements in the Northeast.

The Archdiocese of New York announced in December 2025 that it would pursue a \$300 million payout as part of a “global settlement” with victims.

Then-archbishop Cardinal Timothy Dolan said at the time that the archdiocese would partly fund the settlement by the sale of “significant real estate assets.”

In February, meanwhile, the Diocese of Brooklyn said it would pursue a settlement with more than 1,000 alleged victims of Church abuse. Both Brooklyn and New York said they would use retired Judge Daniel Buckley as a mediator.

Also in February, the Diocese of Camden, New Jersey, said it would fund a \$180 million settlement for abuse victims, an amount that more than doubled an earlier proposal by the diocese.

OBITUARIES

Edwards – Natalie (Dean) Hart, 61; Mass of Christian Burial Feb. 28, 2026 at Sacred Heart Church.

Ellenburg – David E. LaBombard, 77; Mass of Christian Burial Feb. 21, 2026 at St. Edmund’s Church; burial in parish cemetery.

Evans Mills – Mary Jane (Dewey) Bertrand, 94; Mass of Christian Burial April 18, 2026 at St. Mary’s Church; burial in Omar Cemetery.

Evans Mills – Veronica (West) Petranchuk, 94; Mass of Christian Burial in the spring.

Hogansburg – Wayne T. Stehlin, 72; Mass of Christian Burial Feb. 25, 2026 at St. Regis Church.

Massena – Clarence “Fred” Brush, 70; Service to be held in the spring.

Malone – Gladys M. Trombly, 71; Funeral Services Feb. 23, 2026 at Frary Funeral Home.

Mooers Forks – Florence

(Dauphinais) Gadway, 82; Mass of Christian Burial Feb. 25, 2026 at St. Ann’s Church.

Mooers Forks – Carol A. (Rabideau) Watts, 81; Mass of Christian Burial Feb. 28, 2026 at St. Ann’s Church; burial in Town of Ellenburg Mausoleum.

Morrisonville – Robert Wayne Butler, 80; Mass of Christian Burial Feb. 28, 2026 at St. Alexander’s Church.

Morrisonville – Geri-Lynn (Brewer) Martinez, 67; Mass of Christian Burial Feb. 27, 2026 at St. Alexander’s Church; burial in St. Alexander’s Cemetery.

Ogdensburg – Donna L. (Rupert) Bowden, 86; Funeral Services Feb. 27, 2026 at the Fox & Murray Funeral Home; burial in Campbell/Flackville Cemetery.

Plattsburgh – Leeward G. Ashline, Funeral Services Feb. 27, 2026 at the R.W. Walker Funeral Home;

burial in Independence Cemetery, Saranac.

Potsdam – Genevieve Rose (Henry) Hafer, 95; Funeral Services Feb. 24, 2026 at Garner Funeral Service; burial in St. Mary’s Cemetery.

Sackets Harbor – Grover H. Brenon Jr., 93; Mass of Christian Burial Feb. 25, 2026 at St. Andrew’s Church; burial in Glenwood Cemetery, Watertown.

Sackets Harbor – Mark J. Phillips, 78; Mass of Christian Burial March 2, 2026 at St. Andrew’s Church; burial in Lakeside Cemetery.

Watertown – Beverly J. Dalton, 82; Private Services; burial in Glenwood Mausoleum.

Watertown – Timothy E. Kelly, 85; Mass of Christian Burial Feb. 28, 2026 at Our Lady of the Sacred Heart; burial in St. Mary’s Cemetery, Ogdensburg.

Contact lawmakers on behalf of Catholic schools

The New York State Catholic Conference is urging Catholics across the state to urge Gov. Kathy Hochul and state representatives to act on behalf of Catholic schools on two separate matters. **OVERDUE REIMBURSEMENTS**

According to the Catholic Action Network, the political action center for the state Catholic Conference, for more than 50 years, state lawmakers have been required to reimburse Catholic

and other nonpublic schools for the full cost of complying with administrative mandates such as collecting and reporting student data on attendance, tests, and immunization records.

The state, however, owes more than \$30 million in overdue reimbursement to our schools, including more than \$11 million for complying with the state's student immunization program (SSIP). As lawmakers negotiate a state budget, please

add your voice to help secure these needed funds for our Catholic schools!

For help contacting the governor and/or your representatives on this matter, visit <https://www.nyscatholic.org/action-center>.

SCHOOL TUITION ASSISTANCE

The network urges Catholics to urge Gov. Hochul to opt into a federal program that would provide tuition assistance for students in Catholic schools.

According to the Catholic Action Network, Starting in 2027, the new Federal Scholarship Tax Credit will let taxpayers redirect up to \$1,700 of their federal income taxes to nonprofit scholarship organizations that provide tuition assistance for students in Catholic schools.

For example, a taxpayer owing \$10,000 could direct \$1,700 to scholarships instead of sending it to the federal government—directly helping families afford a Catho-

lic education, and even additional services at public schools.

But New York families will miss out unless the governor opts in. Governor Hochul's participation would bring new scholarship dollars to Catholic schools, easing financial pressure on families and expanding access to faith-based education.

For assistance sending a letter to the governor, visit <https://www.nyscatholic.org/action-center>.

Bishops end lawsuit over refugee funds

EWTN News

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) recovered money that it says the U.S. Department of State owed the conference for refugee resettlement and voluntarily ended its lawsuit against the department.

According to court records, Judge Trevor N. McFadden dismissed the lawsuit on Jan. 23, one day after the bishops requested the federal District Court for the District of Columbia to dismiss it.

"The government has reimbursed the USCCB for all services and costs associated with the programs, and the conference has no remaining monetary losses related to the activities at issue in the lawsuit," USCCB spokesperson Chieko Noguchi told EWTN News, without stating the exact dollar amount paid.

President Donald Trump's administration froze State Department payments for refugee resettlement services in January 2025. The following month, the State Department sent "notice of termination" letters, which instructed the USCCB, its affiliates, and other organizations participating in the programs to halt all work.

The bishops then sued the State Department, asking the court to force the department to honor those contracts.

At the time, the USCCB had contracts worth about \$65 million. The bishops said in April that the government still owed them more than \$24 million for work that was already finished. In July, the USCCB asked the court to pause the lawsuit after both parties reached an agreement on winding down the refugee resettlement work.

The contracts were never reinstated.

The lawsuit was dismissed without prejudice, which means the bishops could try to bring another case against the State Department if they wanted to do so.






Around noon on April 25, 2015, a powerful 7.8 magnitude earthquake struck Nepal. Strong aftershocks continued for days afterward. Not only did about 9,000 people lose their lives, but 23,000 others were injured, and more than 750,000 homes were destroyed or damaged. Families displaced by the disaster suffered the loss of loved ones and homes. They also confronted the poverty of lost livelihoods.

A grandmother named KunMaya not only lost her home but also suffered the loss of her son. For more than eight years following the earthquake, she and her husband lived in a temporary wooden shelter that offered little protection against weather. Catholic Relief Services (CRS), working with local partners, assisted KunMaya and more than 6,200 other families affected by the earthquake through the Resilient Communities through Vulnerable Earthquake Recovery (ReCoVER) project. Through this program, CRS-trained masons built an earthquake-resilient home for KunMaya and her husband. At the same time, ReCoVER offered KunMaya training in raising poultry and managing financial savings—training that helped her establish a growing poultry business that has allowed her to sustain her family while also saving and building for the future.

CRS relies on the support it receives through The Catholic Relief Services Collection to reveal Christ's love to victims of wars and natural disasters throughout the world. CRS carries out this work in ways that address immediate needs and provide long-term solutions to help build a stable, hopeful future.

Your donations help our brothers and sisters through grants to these agencies:

- In the United States**
 - Reveal Christ's love by welcoming suffering refugees . . . through the USCCB Migration and Refugee Services (MRS).
 - Reveal Christ's love through legal aid to struggling immigrants . . . through the Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. (CLINIC).
 - Reveal Christ's love in ministry to people on the margins . . . through the pastoral work of the USCCB Secretariat of Cultural Diversity in the Church.
- And Around the World**
 - Reveal Christ's love to hungry mothers and children in Nepal and elsewhere . . . through the humanitarian work of Catholic Relief Services (CRS), the official overseas relief agency of the bishops of the United States.
 - Reveal Christ's love by working for peace . . . through the public policy and education and communication work of the USCCB Secretariat of Justice and Peace.
 - Reveal Christ's love to the victims of natural disaster . . . through the Holy Father's Relief Fund.

Help with an online donation 

Funded Organization	Grant Amount	Percentage
 Catholic Relief Services	\$7,939,217	57.62%
 USCCB Migration & Refugee Services	\$1,832,127	13.30%
 CLINIC (Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc.)	\$1,221,418	8.86%
 USCCB Cultural Diversity in the Church*	\$1,221,418	8.86%
 USCCB Justice and Peace†	\$755,629	5.48%
 Holy Father's Relief Fund	\$500,000	3.63%
Administration		
 Promotion & Education Costs	\$291,423	2.12%
 Administrative Expenses	\$17,185	0.12%

* The USCCB Secretariat of Cultural Diversity in the Church includes Pastoral Care of Migrants, Refugees, and Travelers (\$854,992) and Asian and Pacific Island Affairs (\$366,426).
† The USCCB Secretariat of Justice and Peace includes International Justice and Peace (\$671,427) and education and communication activities (\$84,202).

The Catholic Relief Services Collection 2024

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

The Catholic Relief Services Collection
Office of National Collections • 3211 Fourth Street NE • Washington, DC 20017-1194
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Special Collection to be held with Peter's Pence March 14 & 15
Combined Collection