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The Diocese of Ogdensburg Volume 81 Number 8

NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

MAY 20, 2026

Diocesan men's retreat to be held at Guggenheim

Men 18 and over are invited to share prayer, faith formation and fellowship at the Dorm at Camp Guggenheim from June 12 to 14 at a diocesan Men's Retreat.

Hosted by the diocesan Family Life Office, this retreat will feature Father Leagon Carlin, who will speak about G. K. Chesterton.

The cost of the retreat is \$125. Men can arrive as early as 4 p.m. on June 12 (or later as necessary) and the retreat will end about 1 p.m. on June 14.

FULL STORY, PAGE 9

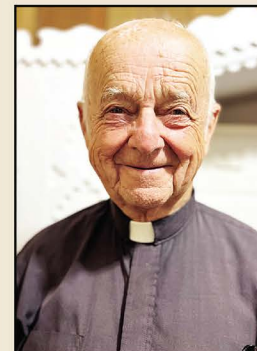
'FATHER FITZ' TO BE YOUNGEST PRIEST



PHOTO COURTESY OF ST. VINCENT'S SEMINARY

Deacon Tyler Fitzgerald, photographed when he won the Diakonia Award at St. Vincent's Seminary, is scheduled to be ordained by Bishop Terry R. LaValley on May 30 at St. Mary's Cathedral along with Deacon Michelet Boncoeur and Deacon Dennis Ombongi. Full story is on Page 8.

ASSIGNMENT CHANGES



Father Philip T. Allen will retire from his role as pastor of St. Mary's and St. Paul's Parish in Indian Lake and St. Joseph's Church in Olmstedville effective July 1. Father Allen's retirement is one of 20 assignment changes announced last week by Bishop Terry R. LaValley.

FULL STORY, PAGE 3

Pope warns against 'great lie' fueling anxiety

By Victoria Cardiel
EWTN News

Pope Leo XIV visited Rome's public La Sapienza University on Thursday, the largest university in Europe and one of Italy's most prestigious academic institutions, where he denounced the "great lie" he said is causing anxiety and depression among young people.

Speaking in the university's Aula Magna after a brief moment of prayer in the "Divina Sapienza" chapel, the pope referred to the "spiritual malaise" affecting many university students and recalled that

"we are not the sum of what we have, nor matter randomly assembled in a mute cosmos."

"We are a desire, not an algorithm!" he stressed.

Leo XIV strongly criticized "the pervasive lie of a distorted system that reduces people to numbers, heightens competitiveness, and abandons us to spirals of anxiety."

"For everyone there are difficult seasons," he added. "Yet some may have the impression that they never end. Today this depends increasingly on the blackmail of expectations and the pressure to perform."

In his address, the Holy Fa-

ther described a world "distorted by wars and by words of war," warning against "a contamination of reason that, from the geopolitical level, invades every social relationship."

"It is a contamination of reason that, from the geopolitical level, invades every social relationship. The simplification that creates enemies must be corrected, especially in the university, through care for complexity and the wise exercise of memory," he said.

"The cry of 'never again war!' of my predecessors, so in tune with the rejection of war enshrined in the Italian Consti-

tution, urges us toward a spiritual alliance with the sense of justice that dwells in the hearts of young people, with their vocation not to close themselves off within ideologies or national borders," he added.

In that context, the pope criticized the rise in military spending, particularly in Europe.

"Let us not call defense a rearmament that increases tensions and insecurity, impoverishes investments in education and health care, contradicts trust in diplomacy, and enriches elites that care nothing for the common good," he said.

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I'm not moving

The last time I moved from one residence to another was 20 years ago, and I'll be thrilled if I never have to do it again.

It needs some work, and it's far from perfect, but I'm comfortable in my home. I have my routines here, and everything is laid out in ways that make sense to me. My son grew up in this house. It's all he's ever known.

Beyond the emotional attachment, I'm the kind of person who's constantly trying to learn new skills or new hobbies. While this attribute makes my

life stimulating and interesting, it means I also accumulate a lot of "stuff." And, again, I've lived in my house for 20 years; even if I didn't have eleven-billion hobbies, that's a long time to accumulate possessions.

**Darcy L. Fargo**

I don't even want to think about how time-consuming it would be to pack everything I own.

But moving doesn't just stop at the packing. It's loading, unloading, unpacking, finding new locations to put everything, buying new items that fit the new home, settling into a new routine, meeting the new

neighbors and new neighborhood.

Nope. Not for me. Not interested.

And that's a choice I can make.

I think about moving - and my disdain it - every year when priest assignments change. I think about what it would be like to have a life in which that choice was taken from me and given to the bishop and the Holy Spirit.

I can't imagine how incredibly hard that is, but that's what's asked of our priests. They give up that control over their lives as a gift to God and His people.

And I know it's hard on the communities they

serve, as well. Many of us love our priests and are attached to our priests. And it's always a bit scary facing a situation that's new and unknown.

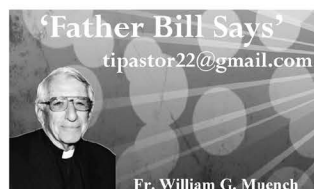
It feels fitting to me that this year's assignment changes are being announced so close to Pentecost, that time when the Holy Spirit descended upon the followers of Christ. I trust that the Holy Spirit is guiding our Church. I pray that all involved in this year's moves - the priests, deacons and parishes - will be open to the movings of that Spirit, and I pray for the vibrancy of Christ's Church here in the North Country.

I don't plan to move from that, either.

Changed by the Holy Spirit

Pentecost, the Holy Spirit descended upon the apostles and they experienced a huge change from anxiety to boldness. These apostles were very much aware that they had a task that Jesus entrusted to them. The Gospels make it clear to us that they felt they did not have the strength nor the ability to even begin.

The picture we get is that these apostles were wounded people; they were experiencing a possible situation. They were wounded by doubt and grief. Such was Judas. He believed in Jesus. He realized that the people loved and supported Jesus. Then everything changed; Jesus was arrested and crucified. Then Judas gave up. He lost faith in Jesus, and he turned against Jesus only to realize how wrong he was, and finally he took his own life. We can only imagine how confusing was this time

**Fr. William G. Muench**

for the other apostles. They also were wounded; they were touched by fear and failure; they felt inadequate to do anything.

Then Pentecost - the Holy Spirit came to them, and the Holy Spirit brought new life to them. The Holy Spirit demanded that they change, now they must be bold and begin to preach the Gospel. Such a great change must have taken time; it was a gradual change. Growth comes slowly, and it probably was painful. Personally, I know well that letting go of bad attitudes is always difficult.

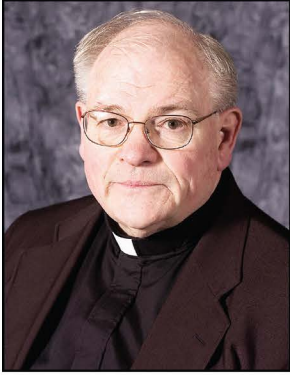
I have discovered that change demands someone to step in to give new hope and more confi-

dence. What those apostles needed was someone to believe in them. They needed to be shown that this task was possible and necessary. They needed someone to wake up all that was inside of them. They needed someone to make them bold and alive. That someone was to be the Holy Spirit. The power and love of the Holy Spirit transformed those first apostles. And now that power of the Holy Spirit continues to change us today. This gentle power of the Holy Spirit comes to transform each of us now, to form us into those bold followers of the Lord Jesus, not afraid to bring Jesus to our world.

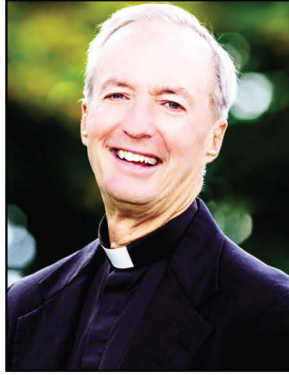
Today, the Holy Spirit awakens us to the mysterious power within each of us. I know well the many changes that were demanded of me when I was ordained a priest through the power of the Holy Spirit. The Holy

Spirit challenged me and continues to do so, that I have much that must be changed to make my ministry better and more successful. That I may be a good priest. Today, that Holy Spirit reaches out to all of us - to each one of you each day - to guide you to be a true disciple of Jesus, always ready to transform our present world with the message of Jesus, acting in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Pentecost is about is today. It must be our story each day. The Holy Spirit wants to change so much. The Holy Spirit wants to transform us. The Holy Spirit wants us to realize that we must change what must be changed. The Holy Spirit has for us the same plan that transformed those first apostles. The Holy Spirit wants us to follow Jesus and change this world of ours to a better and more peaceful place.



Father Donald J. Manfred



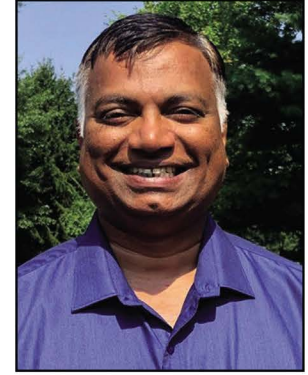
Father John R. Yonkovig, VF



Father Fernando V. Solomon Jr.



Father Todd E. Thibault



Father Jaya Kumar Francis, MSC

Bishop announces assignment changes

After prayerful consideration and consultation with the Committee on Assignments, Bishop Terry R. LaValley made the appointments below. Please pray for the Priests and parishes involved.

EFFECTIVE MAY 22:

• **Father Fernando V. Solomon, Jr.**, administrator of Sacred Heart Church in Chazy and St. Joseph's Church in West Chazy is appointed administrator of St. Mary's Church in Ticonderoga, the Church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in Crown Point and Our Lady of Lourdes Church in Schroom Lake. Father Medenel Angrand remains the pastor in residence but temporally cannot work due to Immigration issues.

• **Father Todd E. Thibault**, pastor of St. James Minor Church in Carthage and St. Mary's Church in Copenhagen, is appointed pastor of Sacred Heart Church in Chazy and St. Joseph's Church in West Chazy.

• **Father Jaya Kumar Francis, MSC**, parochial vicar of The Church of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart in Watertown, is appointed pastor of St. James Minor Church in Carthage and St. Mary's

Church in Copenhagen. **EFFECTIVE JULY 1:**

• **Father Donald J. Manfred** retires as pastor of St. Stephen's Church in Croghan and St. Francis Solanus Church in Harrisville.

• **Father Joseph A. Morgan, VG**, rector of St. Mary's Cathedral in Ogdensburg, is appointed administrator of St. Stephen's Church in Croghan and St. Francis Solanus Church in Harrisville. Father Morgan remains Vicar General.

• **Father John M. "Mickey" Demo**, pastor of the Blessed Sacrament Parish - the Churches of the Holy Family, St. Anthony's Church, St. Patrick's Church in Watertown, is appointed Rector of St. Mary's Cathedral in Ogdensburg.

• **Father Christopher C. Carrara**, pastor of Our Lady of Grace Parish in Morristown, is appointed pastor of the Blessed Sacrament Parish - the Churches of the Holy Family, St. Anthony's Church, St. Patrick's Church in Watertown. Father Carrara remains Episcopal Vicar for Clergy and diocesan director of Seminarians.

• **Father Leagon J.**

Carlin returns from Canonical Studies and is appointed pastor of Our Lady of Grace Parish in Morristown and diocesan Vice Chancellor/Tribunal.

• **Father John R. Yonkovig, VF**, retires as pastor of St. Agnes Church in Lake Placid and St. Brendan's Church in Keene.

• **Father Jose K. John, HGN**, parochial vicar of Holy Cross Parish in Plattsburgh, is appointed pastor of St. Agnes Church in Lake Placid and St. Brendan's Church in Keene.

• **Father Philip T. Allen** retires as pastor of St. Mary's and St. Paul's Parish in Indian Lake and St. Joseph's Church in Olmstedville.

• **Father Jude Nnadiabuagha**, parochial vicar of the Blessed Sacrament Parish - the Churches of the Holy Family, St. Anthony's Church, St. Patrick's Church in Watertown, is appointed pastor of St. Mary's and St. Paul's Parish in Indian Lake and St. Joseph's Church in Olmstedville.

• **Father Matthew S. Conger**, parochial vicar at St. André Bessette Roman Catholic Parish in Malone, is appointed parochial vicar of St.

Peter's Parish in Massena and diocesan director of Vocations.

• **Deacon Michelet Boncoeur** upon his Ordination to the priesthood is appointed parochial vicar of the Blessed Sacrament Parish - the Churches

of the Holy Family, St. Anthony's Church, St. Patrick's Church in Watertown.

• **Deacon Tyler M. Fitzgerald** upon his Ordination to the Priesthood is appointed parochial vicar of Holy

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

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Bishop announces assignment changes

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

Cross Parish in Plattsburgh.

• **Deacon Dennis M. Ombongi** upon his Ordination to the Priesthood is appointed parochial vicar of St. André Bessette Roman Catholic Parish in Malone.

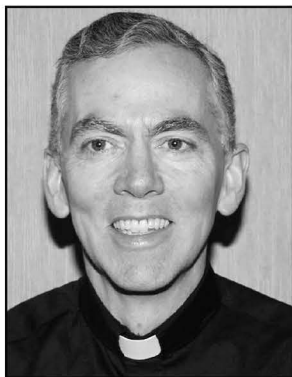
• **Rev. Lukas H. Gruber**, parochial vicar for St. Peter's Parish, Massena, is appointed parochial vicar for St. Mary's Cathedral in Ogdensburg.

• **Father Michael H. Marzan**, parochial vicar of St. Mary's Cathedral in Ogdensburg is appointed parochial vicar of St. Peter's Parish in Massena.

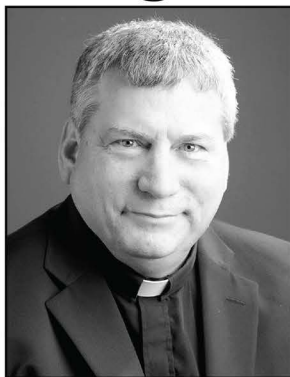
• **Father John Kennedy Ojuok**, parochial vicar for the Catholic Community of St. Peter and St. Mary and St. Hedwig in Lowville, is appointed parochial vicar of The Roman Catholic Community of St. Alexander and St. Joseph in Morrisonville, St. James Church in Cadyville and St. Augustine's Church in Peru.

• **Father Carter G. Pierce**, parochial vicar of The Roman Catholic Community of St. Alexander and St. Joseph in Morrisonville and St. James Church in Cadyville and St. Augustine's Church in Peru, is appointed parochial vicar of the Blessed Sacrament Parish - the Churches of the Holy Family, St. Anthony's Church, St. Patrick's Church in Watertown and Diocesan Associate Director of Vocations.

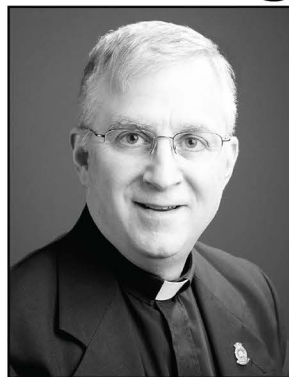
Below are brief biographies of the individuals who are changing assignments.



Father Joseph A. Morgan, VG



Father John M. 'Mickey' Demo



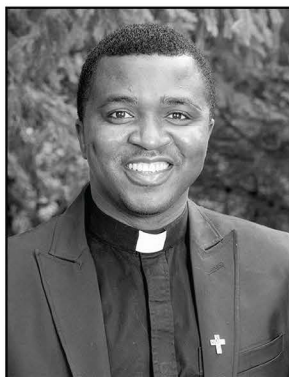
Father Christopher C. Carrara



Father Leagon J. Carlin



Father Jose K. John, HGN



Father Jude Nnadibuagha

FR. FERNANDO V. SOLOMON JR.

Father Solomon was recently appointed as administrator of Sacred Heart Church in Chazy and St. Joseph's Church in West Chazy. Prior to that appointment, he served as parochial vicar at St. Peter's Parish in Massena, a role he also held at St. André Bessette Parish in Malone for a time.

A native of Quezon City, Philippines, Father Solomon earned a bachelor's degree in philosophy and a master's degree in divinity in his home country before coming to the United States.

Father Solomon was introduced to the Diocese of Ogdensburg in 2012 when he toured the diocese while serving with a religious order.

For a period of time, he worked in ministry to the deaf and in prison ministry.

He was later incardinated into the diocese as a deacon and served a pastoral year with the Catholic Communities of Crown Point, Moriah and Port Henry.

Father Solomon is fluent in several languages including English, Tagalog, Spanish and American Sign Language.

He was ordained by Bishop Terry R. LaValley on May 29, 2021, at St. Mary's Cathedral in Ogdensburg.

FR. TODD E. THIBAUT

Father Todd E. Thibault was ordained Oct. 8, 2016, by Bishop Terry R. LaValley at St. Mary's Cathedral.

A Native of Colchester, Vt., he received an

associate's degree in hotel/motel management at Champlain College in Burlington prior to attending seminary, and he worked in that industry for 15 years. He later accepted a role in the Development Office for the Diocese of Burlington.

He studied for the priesthood at the Pontifical College Josephinum and St. John's Seminary.

He served as parochial vicar at St. Mary's in Canton before becoming administrator of St. Edmund's Church in Ellenburg Center and St. Bernard's Church in Lyon Mountain in November of 2017. He became pastor of that community in June 2019.

Effective June 16, 2021, he was appointed pastor of St. James Mi-

nor Church in Carthage and St. Mary's Church in Copenhagen.

FR. JAYA KUMAR FRANCIS, MSC

A Missionary of the Sacred Heart, Father Francis arrived in the Diocese of Ogdensburg in July of 2023. Since that time, he has served as parochial vicar of The Church of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart in Watertown.

Prior to his arrival in the North Country, he was serving in St. Jane Frances de Chantal Parish in Easton, Pennsylvania. He made his first profession with the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart in his native India in 1993 and was ordained on Aug. 22, 1998.

He completed his seminary formation in India and the Philippines.

He has served with the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart in both parish roles and in the order's formation program.

FR. DONALD J. MANFRED

Father Manfred has served as pastor in Croghan and Harrisville since June 2016.

Originally from Somerville, Massachusetts, Father Manfred, 85, grew up in the Potsdam area. He began studies for the priesthood at Wadhams Hall Seminary and also studied at Christ the King Seminary in Olean, New York, and received a master's degree in history from Potsdam State University. He was ordained May 20, 1967, at St. Mary's Cathedral by Bishop Thomas Donnellan.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

Assignment changes

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

Father Manfred served as an assistant pastor at St. Patrick's in Watertown and at St. Alphonsus in Tupper Lake. He also served as administrator in Dannemora and pastor in North Lawrence, Tupper Lake and Massena, a role he held until his assignment in Carthage and Harrisville.

In addition to his parish assignments, in 1971, Father Manfred was appointed executive director of the Bishop's Fund. A year later he was named assistant chancellor with additional responsibilities for the lay retirement fund.

He was appointed director of the newly formed permanent deacon formation program in 1976 and served in that position until 1985. He has also served the diocese as director of deacon personnel and continuing formation, as a member of the Catholic Charities Board of Trustees and dean of St. Lawrence Deanery.

FR. JOSEPH A. MORGAN, VG

Father Morgan has served as rector of St. Mary's Cathedral, Ogdensburg, since 2010, and he was given additional duties as pastor of Notre Dame Church in Ogdensburg in 2016.

He has served as vicar general since 2013.

Born in Olean, New York, Father Morgan moved with his family to Watertown as a child. He studied for the priesthood at Wadhams Hall Seminary College and the North American College at Rome.



Father Matthew S. Conger

He was ordained Sept. 5, 1981, by Bishop Stanislaus J. Brzana.

Early in his priesthood, he served as an associate pastor in Peru and in Ogdensburg; and as an administrator in Ticonderoga, Brownville and at Sacred Heart in Massena; and as pastor in West Chazy, Champlain, Lake Placid and Keene, and Heuvelton.

In addition to his parish roles and his role as vicar general, he previously served the diocese as Episcopal Vicar for Clergy, pastoral Personnel and Seminarians from 2001 to 2005.

Prior to that, from 1997, his title was Director of Priest and pastoral Personnel; two years later was given added responsibilities as Director of Seminarians. In addition, Father Morgan served the diocese as vocation director from 1985 to 1987, served on the Priests' Personnel Committee and has been a Defender of the Bond for the Marriage Tribunal since shortly after his ordination.

FR. JOHN M. (MICKEY) DEMO

Father Demo, 65, will be returning to service to the cathedral, having



Deacon Michelet Boncoeur

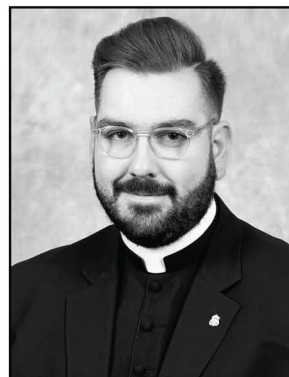
served there as a parochial vicar earlier in his priesthood.

He has served as pastor in Watertown since 2019, when he was first assigned to Church of the Holy Family. Father Demo's role later expanded to include St. Anthony's and St. Patrick's, a grouping now known as Blessed Sacrament Parish.

Before arriving in Watertown, Father Demo was pastor in Dannemora and Redford for six years, and he served as administrator in Willsboro and Essex prior to that assignment.

He has previously served as pastor in St. Ann's in St. Regis Falls and Church of the Holy Cross in Hopkinton; as parochial vicar at St. Bernard's in Saranac Lake, Holy Family in Watertown, St. Mary's Cathedral in Ogdensburg and Notre Dame in Ogdensburg, and St. James Minor in Carthage; and administrator in St. Patrick's in Chateaugay and St. George's Church in Burke.

A native of Brasher Falls, he graduated from LeMoyne College in Syracuse before beginning studies for the priesthood at Wadhams



Deacon Tyler M. Fitzgerald

Hall and St. John's Seminary in Brighton, Mass. Father Demo was ordained Sept. 24, 1988, by Bishop Stanislaus J. Brzana.

After ordination, Father Demo continued his education, studying philosophy at Catholic University from 1995 to 1996.

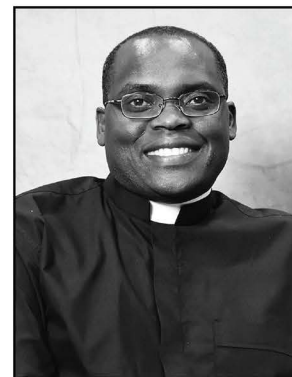
FR. CHRISTOPHER C. CARRARA

In 2017, Father Carrara, 61, was named Episcopal Vicar for pastoral Personnel, and he became pastor of the Roman Catholic Community of Morristown, Hammond and Rossie. In 2019, his diocesan role expanded to include duties as director of Seminarians and director of Vocations, and the title was changed to Episcopal Vicar for Clergy.

Born in Brooklyn, he attended Paul Smith's College and Dowling College before studying for the priesthood at Wadhams Hall Seminary and Christ the King Seminary in East Aurora, New York.

He was ordained May 14, 1994, at St. Mary's Cathedral by Bishop Paul S. Loverde.

After ordination, he served as parochial vicar at Holy Family



Deacon Dennis M. Ombongi

in Watertown, St. Bernard's in Saranac Lake, St. Henry's in Natural Bridge, St. Rita's in Deferiet and St. James Minor in Carthage; and pastor at Holy Name in Tupper Lake, St. John the Evangelist in Lafargeville and St. Mary's in Clayton. He then served as administrator at St. Mary's in Glenfield, St. Peter's in Lowville and St. Hedwig's in Houseville for a year before becoming pastor of those parishes in 2010. He remained in that role until 2017.

Father Carrara also serves as chaplain for a number of law enforcement and emergency services.

FR. LEAGON J. CARLIN

Born in Plattsburgh, Father Carlin, 29, graduated from Peru Central School in 2014 before attending seminary at Pontifical College Josephinum in Ohio and later Mount St. Mary Seminary in Emmitsburg, Maryland.

He was ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Terry R. LaValley on May 21, 2022, in St. Mary's Cathedral.

After his ordination, he was appointed parochial vicar at St. James

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

Assignment changes

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

Church in Cadyville, The Roman Catholic Community of St. Alexander and St. Joseph in Morrisonville and St. Augustine's Church in Peru. He served there until June 28, 2023, when he became parochial vicar at St. Peter's Church in Massena.

In June of 2024, he became in-residence at St. Mary's Cathedral Parish with an assignment to Canon Law School at University of St. Paul in Ottawa.

FR. JOHN R. YONKOVIG, VF

Father John R. Yonkovic, 75, has been pastor in Lake Placid and Keene since 2010. Previously, he was pastor of St. Peter's in Plattsburgh from 1993.

Father Yonkovic served the diocese as Director of the Department of Christian Formation from 1986 until 1993. He has also served as associate director of religious education and as the diocesan youth director.

A native of Watertown, Father Yonkovic studied for the priesthood at Wadhams Hall and St. Mary's Seminary and University in Baltimore before his ordination on April 30, 1977, by Bishop Stanislaus J. Brzana.

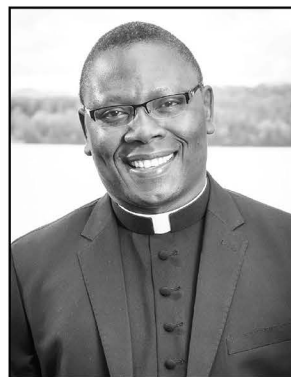
The priest's other pastoral assignments have been as associate pastor at St. Mary's Cathedral and St. Bernard's in Saranac Lake, as canonical pastor in Lisbon and as administrator in Morrisonville and Treadwells Mills for four months in 2002 and later as administrator in Ellen-



Father Lukas H. Gruber



Father Michael H. Marzan



Father John Kennedy Ojuok



Father Carter G. Pierce

burgh for three months in 2005 while remaining as pastor in Plattsburgh.

FR. JOSE K. JOHN, HGN

Father Jose Kaniyankunnel John, a priest of the Heralds of Good News, 46, arrived in the United States from Kerala, India, in September of 2024.

He first served in the Diocese of Ogdensburg as parochial vicar of St. André Bessette Parish in Malone.

In July 2025, he became parochial vicar of Holy Cross Parish in Plattsburgh.

Father John made his first profession with the Heralds of Good News in May of 2001. He made his final profession in July of 2004, and he was ordained in May of the following year.

FR. PHILIP T. ALLEN

This is Father Allen's second time retiring.

Father Allen, 92, first retired in 2009 before coming out of retirement to serve as temporary administrator in Evans Mills, Theresa and Philadelphia and in Port Leyden and Lyons Falls. In 2019, he moved to Indian Lake,

where he served as pastor at St. Mary's and St. Paul's Parish and St. Joseph's Church in Olmstedville.

At the time of his retirement, Father Allen was pastor in AuSable Forks and Black Brook, a role he first assumed in 2001, and as pastor in Wilmington, a position that was added to his duties in 2006.

Father Allen was born in Peru. He studied for the priesthood at Wadhams Hall and St. Bernard's Seminary in Rochester before his ordination May 16, 1959, by Bishop James J. Navagh.

He served as assistant pastor at St. Mary's Cathedral in Ogdensburg, St. Bernard's in Saranac Lake, St. Peter's in Lowville and Holy Name in AuSable Forks. He was a temporary administrator in Chazy for three months in 1971 before being named pastor in Heuvelton. He was also pastor in Lake Placid, rector at St. Mary's Cathedral, and pastor at Redford.

Father Allen has served the diocese in the Marriage Tribunal as secretary, official and presiding judge. He

also directed the Pre-Cana program in the Ogdensburg area.

FR. JUDE NNADIBUAGHA

Father Nnadibuagha, 42, has served as parochial vicar of Blessed Sacrament Parish since July of 2025.

Born in Ideato North Local Government Area, Imo State, Nigeria, Father Jude Nnadibuagha was ordained by Bishop Terry R. LaValley on Aug. 1, 2020, at St. Mary's Cathedral.

Father Nnadibuagha obtained a bachelor's degree in philosophy from Dominican Institute of Philosophy and Theology in Samonda Ibadan, Nigeria in 2013 and a bachelor's degree in theology from Collegio Pontificio Teologico Internazionale in Rome, Italy in 2017.

His first assignment after ordination was as parochial vicar of the Catholic Community of St. Peter and St. Mary and St. Hedwig in Lowville, Glenfield and Houseville. In 2021, he began serving as parochial vicar at St. Mary's Cathedral Parish.

FR. MATTHEW S. CONGER

Originally from Ogdensburg, Father Con-

ger, 34, graduated from Ogdensburg Free Academy before attending St. Charles Borromeo Seminary in Pennsylvania and Christ the King Seminary in the Diocese of Buffalo.

He was ordained at St. Mary's Cathedral, Ogdensburg, by Bishop Terry R. LaValley on May 29, 2021.

His first assignment was as parochial vicar at Blessed Sacrament Parish, Watertown.

In 2022, he became diocesan associate director of Vocations.

In 2025, he became parochial vicar of St. André Bessette Parish in Malone.

Father Conger also serves as chaplain for local law enforcement and emergency services.

DEACON MICHELET BONCOUER

After completing philosophy studies in his native Haiti, the now-deacon continued his education in the United States at Divine Word College, earning an associate degree, and later pursued graduate studies at Catholic Theological Union toward master's degrees in divinity and in

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

MAY 20, 2026

Assignment changes

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

liturgy. His vocational journey included time with the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart and later the Society of the Divine Word, where he professed first vows in 2021 before discerning a deeper call to diocesan priesthood.

He was then introduced to the Diocese of Ogdensburg by Father Medenel Angrand, pastor in Crown Point, Schroon Lake and Ticonderoga. Drawn to the rural character of the Diocese of Ogdensburg, which resonated with his own upbringing, he applied and was accepted on October 26, 2023.

He was ordained to the diaconate on May 24, 2025, by Bishop Terry R. LaValley in Sacred Heart Church, Massena.

Since arriving in the Diocese of Ogdensburg, he has served in pastoral assignments in the Catholic Community of Moriah, Crown Point & Port Henry and Blessed Sacrament Parish, Watertown.

He is preparing to be ordained by Bishop Terry R. LaValley on May 30 in St. Mary's Cathedral, Ogdensburg.

DEACON TYLER M. FITZGERALD

Deacon Fitzgerald grew up in Madrid and attended St. John the Baptist Church there.

He was ordained to the diaconate on May 24, 2025, by Bishop Terry R. LaValley in Sacred Heart Church, Massena.

Earlier this month, he graduated from St. Vincent Seminary in LaTrobe, Pennsylvania. In November, 2025, he was awarded the seminary's Diakonia Award, recog-

nizing his outstanding academic performance, leadership, and contribution to student morale and community service.

He has recently served in pastoral assignments in the Catholic Community of Alexandria and St. Mary's in Clayton, and in the Catholic Community of Cape Vincent, Rosiere, and Chaumont.

He is preparing to be ordained by Bishop Terry R. LaValley on May 30 in St. Mary's Cathedral, Ogdensburg.

DEACON DENNIS M. OMBONGI

Originally from Kenya, Deacon Ombongi began his studies for the priesthood with the Diocese of Ogdensburg at the Pontifical College Josephinum. He completed his studies at St. Vincent's Seminary in LaTrobe, Pennsylvania, graduating earlier this month.

After high school, he joined a religious order of brothers. He worked in several countries as a brother for nine years, but the desire to be a priest kept coming back. So, he left his order and joined a Dominican order here in the United States. He studied philosophy for two years at Holy Apostles Seminary in Connecticut. When his order was disbanded, Dennis asked to come study for the Diocese of Ogdensburg.

He has been based out of St. Peter's Parish in Massena, and he has served in recent pastoral assignments at Camp Guggenheim and in Catholic Community of Cape Vincent, Rosiere, and Chaumont.

FR. LUKAS H. GRUBER

Originally from Queens, New York, and later Smithtown, New York (on Long Island), Father Gruber, 31, was introduced to the North Country when he attended Crane School of Music at SUNY Potsdam, where he received a bachelor's degree.

He later graduated from the Pontifical College Josephinum in Columbus, Ohio.

He was ordained by Bishop LaValley on May 27, 2023. Father Gruber started his priesthood as parochial vicar at The Roman Catholic Community of St. Alexander and St. Joseph in Morrisonville, St. Augustine's Church in Peru and St. James Church in Cadyville was his first assignment. He was assigned to St. Peter's Parish in Massena in June of 2024.

FR. MICHAEL H. MARZAN

Father Marzan, a priest of the Archdiocese of Caceres in the Philippines, attended Holy Rosary Major Seminary in Naga City, Phillipines, where he obtained his bachelor's degree in philosophy

and sacred theology.

He was ordained to the priesthood March 13, 2000.

His first assignment was at Saint Bernard Abbot Parish, a community of three churches, in Camarines Sur as parochial vicar.

He later started a parish, St. Francis Xavier, in Halawig-Gogon, Goa, Camarines Sur, overseeing the building of the church structure and the parish community.

Prior to arriving in the United States in June of 2022, he was assigned as a parish priest of Our Lady of Miraculous Medal Parish, Santiago, Irga City, a parish in the Archdiocese of Caceres.

In the Diocese of Ogdensburg, he has served as parochial vicar at Holy Cross Parish in Plattsburgh and at St. Mary's Cathedral.

FR. JOHN KENNEDY OJUOK

Father Ojuok, a native of Kenya, came to the Diocese of Ogdensburg as a seminarian in 2016. He completed his seminary studies at Christ the King Seminary in the Diocese of Buffalo.

He was ordained by Bishop LaValley on May

29, 2021, at St. Mary's Cathedral, Ogdensburg.

After his ordination, Father Ojuok served as parochial vicar at Holy Cross Parish in Plattsburgh. Though he had to return to Kenya for a year due to immigration issues, he returned a year later to serve in the parish.

In June of 2024, he became parochial vicar at the Catholic Community of St. Peter and St. Mary and St. Hedwig in Lowville, Glenfield and Houseville.

FR. CARTER G. PIERCE

Father Pierce, 28, is originally from St. Raphael's Parish in Heuvelton and was ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Terry R. LaValley on May 25, 2024, at St. Mary's Cathedral in Ogdensburg.

Father Pierce completed his theology studies at St. Mary's Seminary in Emmitsburg, Maryland.

After his ordination, he was named parochial vicar at The Roman Catholic Community of St. Alexander and St. Joseph in Morrisonville, St. Augustine's Church in Peru and St. James Church in Cadyville.



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'Father Fitz' will be diocese's youngest priest

By Darcy Fargo
Editor

In his final week of classes after years of education and formation, Deacon Tyler M. Fitzgerald said the excitement he and his classmates at St. Vincent's Seminary felt was visible.

"It's been one of the exciting things - going to classes and going to liturgies, we all have count-downs on our phones," he said. "We're all reminded that this is really happening - we've received the call to orders, the seminary faculty and formators have said we're ready to go, ordination plans are happening, first Mass logistics are underway. For me, it's a very, very exciting time. What I'm embarking on, I truly know it's the life I was created for. That's not to say I don't have my fears and worries and anxieties about what the priesthood has in store for me and how my priesthood will unfold. I have those. But I have a deep sense of peace that regardless of that, this is the life I was made for."

Deacon Fitzgerald said he learned through his time with the monastic community at St. Vincent's Seminary that while his ordination is a sacrament of service, it's also a sacrament that's special to him.

"Something I've taken to heart and that's rubbed off on me is that while this is one of the sacraments of service, service of others - to teach, to preach and to sanctify, and that's spot on, the monastic way of life bubbled up this deeper reality that's often not talked about - this is the unique and specific way God wants to get me to heaven. The priesthood exists to celebrate and administer the sacraments, to preach and to

teach and to bring Christ into the world, but it's a sacrament I'm receiving. I'm the one laying on the floor. I'm the one whose hands are being consecrated. It's a sacrament I receive, unworthy though I am. It's something the Lord wants to give me."

With that, Deacon Fitzgerald said he learned the importance of tending to his connection with Christ as he works to bring Him to others.

"Something we were told in seminary was that ministry is a beautiful thing. The priesthood exists for others, and that's beautiful, but you have to have time for yourself, to renew yourself, to rest and re-create - that's where 'recreation' comes from - and you have to have a relationship with the Lord. You can't give what you don't have. I think people think it can come across as being clerical and priest-focused and centered. It's not talked about as much as it used to be, but this is how God wants to get me to heaven - through my ministry and life as a priest. It's how he wants me to unite my life to Him and to be like Christ, as I was called in baptism."

And after eight years of formation starting immediately after high school, Deacon Fitzgerald said he's ready to be out of the classroom and into ministry.

"I know there will be tough days," he said. "By nature, I'm not really an optimist. I know there are going to be hard days. But one of the things I loved at St. Vincent's was they invite the previous ordination class to come talk to us and share what they learned and what they wished they had learned. One of the consistent themes - even the worst day in the year of a priest is nowhere near the worst days of seminary because



Deacon Tyler M. Fitzgerald promises obedience to the bishop and his successors at his ordination to the diaconate on May 24, 2025.

of their priesthood, because they're priests. There are things I will miss about seminary, but that's not my vocation. I'm excited to move on and get done."

Deacon Fitzgerald acknowledged some people may think entering seminary directly after high school is somehow a detriment.

"I don't have the world experience of a career and living on my own," he said. "But that's the situation I was in when God called me. That's where He called me from."

The first priest of our diocese born in the 2000s, Deacon Fitzgerald says he hopes his youth can help him connect to his contemporaries who don't have a relationship with Christ.

"My generation has turned away from the Church," he said. "Kind of the way Father David Michael Moses or Father Mike Schmitz are capturing this next generation and showing them the church is not dead, is not dying, and showing them that there are young, vibrant, passionate priests who understand the culture and embrace it as a means of evangelization."

The deacon said he had outstanding pasto-

ral experiences in our diocese and in his time at the seminary, especially this diaconal year, as well as outstanding seminary formation that have helped him identify and develop his strengths and passions.

"I've fallen in love with preaching and teaching," he said. "My biggest passion is teaching the faith. Homilies are absolutely a way I can do that every single day. In terms of future parish ministry, I'm passionate about ongoing catechesis - helping people learn what the colors of the vestments mean, what we're doing in various parts of the liturgy. But I know you're not going to reach an entire parish community through a Tuesday night class or program, but you have the opportunity to reach them in the Sunday homily."

He said he's also excited to celebrate Mass and the sacraments.

"It feels like a canned, cliched answer to say I'm excited to celebrate Mass, but I'm excited to celebrate Mass," Deacon Fitzgerald said. "The priesthood exists so that the sacraments can be celebrated. The only sacrament that can be celebrated by anyone is bap-

JOIN THE CELEBRATION

Through the laying on of hands and the invocation of the Holy Spirit, Bishop Terry R. LaValley will ordain to the Order of Priesthood Deacon Michelet Boncoeur, Deacon Tyler Martin Fitzgerald and Deacon Dennis Mamwacha Ombongi. You are cordially invited to join in the Ordination Liturgy.

Date: May 30

Place: St. Mary's Cathedral

Time: 11 a.m.

Features: A Reception will immediately follow the Liturgy downstairs in the Brzana Hall.

Stream online: The Ordination Mass may be viewed at www.rcdony.org/ordination. The Ordination Mass program will be available at the same link shortly before the Liturgy.

tism. Priesthood exists to bring Christ to others, especially through the sacraments."

Deacon Fitzgerald said he's also grateful to his family, all the pastors who helped form him, the parishes and organizations who have hosted him, prayed for him and supported him, the diocesan Vocations staff and Bishop Terry R. LaValley.

"It'll be a great blessing to be home for good in our diocese full of such outstanding people," he said. "I'm grateful for the eight years of education and formation, including all the summer assignments and opportunities. And I've been very touched by all the cards and letters I've received from throughout the diocese. It means a lot that people from home - people I don't even know in some cases - are praying for me and supporting me and cheering for me. Knowing people are excited to have you be their priest - there's nothing like it."

Men's retreat planned for June 12-14 at Guggenheim

By Stephen Tartaglia
Diocesan Family Life Director

Men 18 and over are invited to share prayer, faith formation, fellowship and fun at the Dorm at Camp Guggenheim from June 12 to 14 at a diocesan Men's Retreat.

Hosted by the diocesan Family Life Office, this retreat will feature Father Leagon Carlin, who will speak about G. K. Chesterton.

The cost of the retreat is \$125 and men can register at <https://www.rcdony.org/family-life.html> at the bottom of the page. Men can arrive as early as 4 p.m. on June 12 (or later as necessary) and the retreat will end about 1 p.m. on June 14.

WHY WOULD A MAN WANT TO ATTEND A RETREAT AND HEAR ABOUT G. K. CHESTERTON?

It's important for Catholic men to spend time with other Catholic men because, as they say, iron sharpens iron. The retreat gives men a chance to connect with other men who believe the same way and to talk about the things they hold closest to their hearts without feeling uncomfortable or out of place. In this way the retreat fosters friendships and helps in building a sense of community among the men.

The retreat helps the men to move away from the worldly picture of manliness and move closer to God's vision for manliness. Retreats are often key to leading

men to a deeper spirituality and promoting growth in holiness. The experience offers the men a chance to pray together and to celebrate the sacraments of Eucharist and Reconciliation.

Retreats help men to take their knowledge of God from their heads into their hearts, and this allows them to make positive, enduring changes in their lives.

Father Carlin explains why Chesterton is an appropriate choice for a men's retreat: "*Chesterton demonstrates how we can be authentically devoted to the truth and grow in Christian Virtue while remaining approachable, affable, and generous members of a society and culture, which doesn't always promote that same truth or foster the Christian life.*"

Chesterton is often known as a master of paradox, not because he brings confusion, but because he had an immense gift for making the paradoxes of the faith, those things which seem contradictory at first glance, more clearly make sense with one another. He did so both out of a profound spiritual understanding, alongside a prophetic grounding in reality as it is, and this union allowed him to dialogue with those with whom he was in agreement, and to those with whom he had substantial differences. In a world of great division, it seems no great leap to imagine that a figure who

was courageous yet also likeable, and steadfast while remaining open to others, would prove an eminently valuable guide as we spend time seeking the Lord more closely and listening for His voice."

Please consider joining us for this retreat. For more information, contact Steve Tartaglia at 315-393-2920 or startaglia@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

Protecting God's Children

The Diocese of Ogdensburg

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

Bishop's Public Schedule

May 20-22 – Presbyteral Assembly at the Cambria Hotel Lake Placid in Lake Placid

May 23 – 4 p.m. – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

May 24 – 8 a.m. – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

11 a.m. – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

May 25 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

4 p.m. – Confirmation at St. Mary's Church in Ticonderoga

along with the Church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in Crown Point and Our Lady of Lourdes Church in Schroom Lake

May 26 – 6 p.m. – Confirmation at St. James Minor Church in Carthage along with St. Mary's Church in Copenhagen

May 27 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

6 p.m. – Confirmation at St. Alphonsus-Holy Name of Jesus Parish in Tupper Lake along with St. Agnes Church in Lake Placid and St. Bernard's Church in Saranac Lake

Rest in Peace

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

May 20 – Rev. Eugene Noury, O.M.I., 1961; Rev. P. Andrew L'Esperance, M.S.C., 1962

May 21 – Msgr. John Pendergast, 1998; Rev. Leo A. Wiley, 2024

May 22 – Msgr. Claudius Gobet, 1961

May 23 – Msgr. Harry K. Snow, 2021

May 24 – Rev. Francois X. Therien, O.M.I., 1902; Rev. Antoine A. Amyot, 1927; Rev. Julien Racette, O.M.I., 1937; Rev. Joseph O. Levesque, 1938; Msgr. George L. Murray, 1942

May 25 – Rev. J. Hector Migneron, 1958; Deacon Gerald Gilner, 2023

May 26 – Rev. Thomas J. Keller, 1889; Rev. Steven H. Gratto, 2012

Environmental Stewardship

A closer look at 'solidarity'

Solidarity is one of the core principles of Catholic Social Teaching and reminds us that we belong to one human family. It is more than compassion; it is a commitment to stand with others, especially those who are suffering or marginalized. St. John Paul II describes solidarity as a firm and persevering determination to work for the common good.

The Gospel image that best illustrates solidarity is the Parable of the Good Samaritan. While others passed by a wounded man, the Samaritan stopped, cared for him and took responsibility for his well-being. Solidarity requires action not just concern.

In *Fratelli Tutti*, Pope Francis calls the world to rediscover that we are truly "brothers and sisters all." Although deeply connected through technology and economics, society is also marked by polarization and indifference. The antidote, he says, is a "culture of encounter," where people genuinely recognize the dignity of every person.

Living solidarity begins in everyday choices – welcoming strangers, helping those in need and refusing to ignore suffering. When Christians live this way, they reflect the Gospel vision of a world where every person is treated as a brother or sister.

Catholic teachings on solidarity stress the interconnectedness of all people and the need to work together. It calls for a commitment to social justice and the welfare of others, particularly the marginalized and oppressed. It means assisting an individual or group oppressed by political, social or economic forces. Helping others is more than a charitable undertaking. Because of our interconnectedness, raising the lifestyle of others positively impacts our own.

The interconnectedness with all life extends to earth as well as people. While we enjoy the beauties of the earth, in Genesis, God commands us to be its stewards. Failure to do so affects ALL life, especially the weakest and most vulnerable. What is one concrete act can I do this week today to fulfill my responsibility as a caretaker?

VIRTUAL EVENTS

GOSPEL JUSTICE

The Sisters of St. Joseph Justice Promoter/Faith and Ecology Committees are sponsoring an online series, "Putting on the Lens of Gospel Justice."

Date: Wednesdays until May 27

Time: 7 p.m. to 8

Place: online via Zoom

Features: Seven-week series on Gospel Justice as a lens to view our current reality and to consider ways to act in light of them in our daily lives, based on the Beatitudes, Matthew 25:31-46 and the Catholic Social Teachings concluding with Laudato Si. Remaining presenters include John Ferry and Sister Bethany Fitzgerald.

Contact: Series is FREE; just need to register. To register contact: srbethssj@gmail.com or call 315-212-6592.

ADIRONDACK MOUNTAIN

FRIENDSHIP VOLUNTEERS

Lake Placid - Mercy Care for the Adirondacks is recruiting new volunteers to help their elder neighbors age in place more successfully.

Date: May 27

Place: Heaven Hill Farm

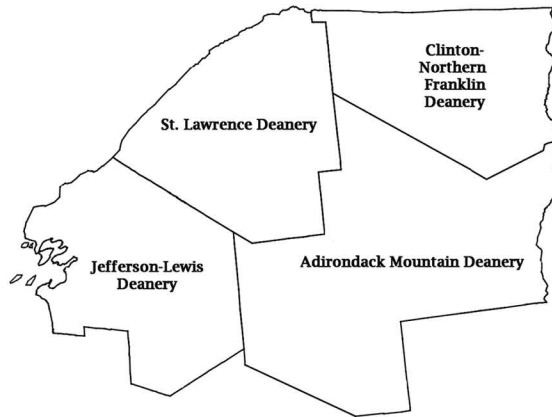
Features: New Volunteers will join Mercy Care's more than 100 Friendship Volunteers from Lake Placid, Saranac Lake, and Tupper Lake and surrounding areas who are helping their elder neighbors stay connected to their communities while helping to make their lives a little easier and happier. Lunch will be provided.

Contact: There is no cost for the training, but registration is required. To register for the training, please visit Mercy Care's website at www.adkmercy.org or contact Lexi Bevilacqua, Mercy Care's Director of Programs and Mission Integration, at abevilacqua@adkmercy.org or call Lexi for more information at 518-523-5446.

CLINTON NORTHERN FRANKLIN

SOAKING PRAYERS SESSIONS

Come enjoy a relaxing prayer opportunity at two different locations.



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.

Plattsburgh: Newman Center, 1:30 p.m. to 3:30; June 1, July 6 Aug. 3 Sept. 14, Oct. 5, Nov. 2 and Dec. 7

Ellenburg Center: Our Lady of the Adirondacks House of Prayer, 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. (please bring a bag lunch); June 11, July 9, Aug. 13, Sept. 10, Oct. 8; session includes recitation of the rosary.

Features: Soaking Prayer is done in a relaxed spiritual atmosphere wherein you surrender yourself to receive an outpouring and infilling of the Holy Spirit enabling you to be immersed in God's love, mercy, healing, compassion and peace. Each session begins with a short introduction followed by praise, worship and soaking prayer for an extended period of time as guided by the Holy Spirit. Remainder of time is spent listening to scripture readings and remaining receptive to receive healing at any level: emotional, psychological, mental, physical, spiritual or generational.

Contact: All sessions are facilitated by Eve McGill, Living Waters Healing Ministry 518-645-2648, evemcgill16@charter.net

CHARISMATIC MASS

Malone - Join us for a Charismatic Mass on Pentecost Sunday.

Date: May 24

Time: 2 p.m.

Place: Notre Dame Church

CAR SHOW

Mooers Forks - St. Ann's to have their 8th annual Festival of Cars.

Date: May 31

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

Place: St. Ann's Grounds

Cost: Vehicle Pre-Register \$15 or \$20 day of the show between 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Hot Wheels entry fee, Kids \$5, Adults, \$10 (includes car). Kids Power Wheels show entry fee, \$10

Features: There will be a craft fair, theme baskets, lottery tree, food and entertainment. In addition to the car show there will also be a Kids Power Wheels show and Hot Wheel races for kids and adults. Garden tractor pullers on display. The top 40 picks and special awards will be at 3 p.m.

Contact: For more information or to pre-register your vehicle please call 518-236-5632 or 518-236-7200 or 518-565-6754

FIRST FRIDAY

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

Date: June 5

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

BENEFIT CONCERT

Peru - Mark your calendars for the 20th anniversary for the Benefit

Concert for the North Country Mission of Hope, Towne Meeting Band will be performing.

Date: June 7

Time: 7 p.m.

Place: Augustine's Church

Cost: Donation

Features: For the 13th year Town Meeting will be performing. They are known for their innovative blend of Folk, Soft Rock, and Americana. This concert will include special guests as well. Donations from the concert have provided support to people in Nicaragua, the North Country, and to the yearly mission to Appalachian Kentucky.

Contact: For more information visit www.townemeeting.com or www.ncmissionofhope.org

GOLF TOURNAMENT

Peru - The Peru Knights of Columbus Council #7273 will have the Bill McBride Jr. Memorial Charity Golf Tournament.

Date: June 19

Time: Shotgun start at 10 a.m.

Place: Adirondack Golf and Country Club

Cost: \$300 for a 4 person team

Contact: Obtain entry forms and information from Greg Lombard at 518-593-2652, or email zeroturn364@gmail.com or Scarlett McBride at 518-572-8790 or email scar6064@charter.net

JEFFERSON-LEWIS

SPAGHETTI DINNER

Lyons Falls - A drive thru spaghetti dinner to be held.

Date: May 26

Time: 4:30 p.m. to 6

Place: St. John's Church

Cost: \$13

Menu: spaghetti with Dino's sausage and meatballs, tossed salad, Italian bread, and dessert.

Contact: Pre-orders can be made by calling 315-348-8945 or 315-348-8577. The day of the dinner call 315-348-6599. Any questions, call Christine Chaufty at 315-766-6897.

RUMMAGE SALE

Port Leyden - St. Martin's will be hosting a three day rummage sale

to help raise funds to cover church heating costs and important renovations.

Schedule: Jun 5 and 6, 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. and June 7, 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Features: Shoppers can expect a wide variety of items, including clothing, toys, household goods, and many unique finds. By continuing the tradition established by St. Mary's, St. Martin's is embracing the same spirit of generosity and stewardship—bringing the community together to support the needs of the parish. Proceeds from the sale will help ensure the church remains a warm, welcoming place of worship and that the rectory continues to serve parish life for years to come. All are invited to attend, shop, and be part of this meaningful mission. Your support truly makes a difference.

Contact: For more information, please contact: The Port Leyden Food Pantry at 315-348-5575.

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: June 7

Time: Following 11 a.m. Mass

Place: St. Hedwig's Church

Contact: 315-348-6260

MASS AND SOCIAL

Highmarket - St. Patrick's will celebrate its annual Mass and social.

Date: June 14

Time: Mass will be at noon with events to follow after

Features: Celebrating the Mass will be Father Lawrence Marullo, Father Daniel Chapin and Deacon James Chaufty. Following Mass, the Butler-Sheehan Academy traditional Irish dancers will perform. Food, Bake Sale, Crafts, Children's Games, Basket Raffle, Silent Auction, Door Prizes, 50/50, 250 Club Raffle - only 250 tickets sold - available now for a donation of \$20. Drawings begin at 3 p.m. All proceeds benefit St. Patrick's Restoration Society for upkeep of

CALLED TO SERVE

A Change of Venue

Any business leader will tell you people issues consume most of her or his time. Retention, particularly at the senior management level, is important. So is succession planning.

I heard someone refer to the changes at the top of any organization as the “goings and comings.” Change is likely; some say it is inevitable. We have learned, over time, to deal with change as it happens.

Consider the life changes that occurred to the apostles and disciples when they decided to follow Jesus as he walked among the folks in Galilee, and then when they received the Holy Spirit and the direction to “make disciples of all nations.”

Off they went to parts of the world new to them, among unfamiliar people who spoke foreign languages. And what of the family and friends they had developed over the years? They also felt the impact of this move.

But, off the first eleven went.

Pentecost Sunday came to mind as Bishop Terry R. LaValley announced the parish assignments and retirements of priests in the diocese last week. Pentecost is the birthday of the Church. It marks the beginning of the Church’s mission to spread the Gospel. It is the day associated with the first public preaching of the apostles.

Since then, men who have heard the Lord’s call and have been ordained to ministry have realized preaching the Gospel will take them to many places.

Three men, Father Allen, Father Manfred, and Father Yonkovic are retiring. They have each served God and the people of this diocese with distinction. Thank you, Fathers.

Seventeen other priests re-

ceived assignments from Bishop LaValley who acted on recommendations from the Committee on Assignments.

They will all go to the new assignments much like the first apostles did way back when. They are excited by the new challenges. Each is looking forward to sharing his unique view of the world. Each is melancholy about leaving the people and places that have become dear.

They each take on the new assignment with Jesus’ task in front of him; “make disciples of all nations.”

As a practical matter, the new assignment will not require much packing. Priests, especially those recently or newly ordained, know they are going to be reassigned several times in the years following ordination. As a pastor, the priest can

expect to stay in one place for a longer period, but changing needs within the diocese or personnel issues may impact the call from the bishop.

There are some logistical issues for the men who will leave one parish for another, but those can be dealt with. The parishioners will get used to and befriend the new clergy. The newly assigned clergy can lean on the deacons and lay leaders of the parish for the who, what, and when of the community.

After all, we are driven by the same Creed. That’s what makes this transition easier. I recall a passage from the Acts of the Apostles, “all who believed were together and had all things in common.” Good luck, Fathers. God be with you.

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



Deacon
Kevin Mastellon

Around the diocese

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

this once thriving historic Catholic Church. Come celebrate 250 years of democracy, Jubilee year of the Restoration Society, and the immigrants that settled on Tug Hill and built a beautiful testament to God.

Contact: Julie Hutchins (315) 397-2708 for information or to volunteer.

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: June 14

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 DINNER

Watertown – St. Anthony’s Altar and Rosary Society is sponsoring a spaghetti dinner.

Date: June 25

Time: 4 p.m. to 7

Place: Downstairs in St. Anthony’s church in Msgr. Sechi Hall

Cost: Adult, \$12; Child, \$8

Features: Take-outs available, please bring your own container.

Contact: For more information contact the Parish Center at 315-782-1190

MOUNT. CARMEL FEST

Watertown – St. Anthony’s to have their 108th Mount Carmel Festival.

Schedule: June 26, 5 p.m. to 10; June 27 1 p.m. to 10; June 28, 1 p.m. to 10. Religious Procession at 5 p.m. and giant fireworks at 9:30 p.m.

ST. JAMES FAIR

Carthage – St. James to have their 52nd annual fair.

Date: June 25 & 26, 5 p.m. to 9; June 27, noon to 9 p.m.

Features: Games of Chance, Black Jack, Big Six Wheel, Pull Tabs, Raffle Tickets, Raffle Ticket Prizes: 1st Place - \$1000, 2nd Place (5) - \$200; Seller of 1st place winning ticket - \$100; Ticket price: 1 for \$5 or 5 for \$20; Drawing Saturday June 27th. Entertainment: Reptiles Forever, Forest City Farms Petting Zoo, DJ’s, Fire Department and much more! Rides provided by Ontario Amusement Rides, purchase a wrist band for \$20 and get unlimited rides for 4 hours, Thurs and Fri 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. and Sat. 12 p.m. to 4 or 5 p.m. to 9. Food will include: Italian, American, Specialty, Bob’s Burgers, Clams, Salt Potatoes, Fried Dough, Ice Cream and a Beer & Wine Tent.

HEALING WORKSHOP

Cape Vincent – Save the date for a breakthrough healing workshop. Schedule: Aug. 6-7, 5:30 p.m. to 9; Aug. 8, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Place: St. Vincent of Paul

Features: Are you longing for deeper healing, freedom, and

peace in your life? Join Patrick and Joy Campbell, Benedictine Oblates, from the Cross of St. Benedict Society and Joyful Hope. The Breakthrough Healing Workshop is a powerful time of testimony, teaching, and prayer ministry to help you overcome spiritual obstacles. Heals past wounds and encounter God’s restoring love. Feel free to invite a friend and seek healing and hope.

Contact: For more information contact bhwhjdioogd@gmail.com 315-486-7967

DIOCESAN EVENTS

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

Contact: Register for camp at

<https://www.rcdony.org/youth/camp/registration>

ORDINATION TO THE ORDER OF THE PRIESTHOOD

Ogdensburg - Through the laying on of hands and the invocation of the Holy Spirit, the Most Reverend Terry R. LaValley, Bishop of Ogdensburg, will Ordain to the Order of Priesthood Deacon Michelet Boncoeur, Deacon Tyler Martin Fitzgerald and Deacon Dennis Mamwacha Ombongi. You are cordially invited to join in the Ordination Liturgy.

Date: May 30

Place: St. Mary’s Cathedral

Time: 11 a.m.

Features: A Reception will immediately follow the Liturgy downstairs in the Brzana Hall. The Ordination Mass may be viewed at www.rcdony.org/ordination. The Ordination Mass program will be available at the same link shortly before the Liturgy.

SUNDAY'S SCRIPTURE

'Come, Holy Spirit'

May 24

Pentecost Sunday

READINGS

Acts 2:1-11

1 Corinthians 1

John 20:19-23 2:3b-7, 12-13

How do you do it? Tell me your secret. You don't look a day over. Now here's the real ringer: you look good for your age. Tell me: "What I am supposed to look like for my age?"

Well, in any case those are expressions that older people might hear. They are expressions that younger people might use because they truly mean it, or perhaps they don't know what else to say.

Hidden in all of those expressions is the unstated statement: "It's always good to look young, refreshed, vibrant, full of life, perhaps bubbly, filled with vim and vigor." Just saying all that makes me tired. I guess I'm feeling my age.

Now, before I sound like the beginning of an infomercial, let's figure out how this applies to today's Feast of Pentecost. Here, we have the Church. You...we are the

Church. How well do we look for being 2,000 years old?

Traditionally, Pentecost is observed as the Church's birthday. This is the day that God the Holy Spirit took up residence, so to speak, here in our midst. It is God the Holy Spirit who gives life to the Church today. So, just like anyone celebrating a birthday, we have the right to say: "Where has the

time gone? Are we any worse for the wear?"

Over the centuries, as an institution, the Church has had its ups and downs. Each generation that experienced the "downs" has probably said it could not get worse. Each generation that experienced the "ups" probably wondered if it could get any better than this.

History shows us that the Church faced persecutions and suffered; history likewise will show

that the Church was involved in persecutions. However, history also will demonstrate that the Church preserved the best of human culture, philosophy, wisdom, science and mathematics over the centuries. But history will also show that the Church was not always the best example of the finest of human culture.

Yes, there were, have been, and probably will be high and low moments in the way that the Church has manifested the Holy Spirit. But, before we point any fingers, should we not also look at the history, no matter how long or how brief, of each one of us? Each one of us has had high moments in life when we were living examples of

all goodness, not ready to sprout angel's wings, but really doing quite well. Then, there were perhaps the down years when our faith was weak, when hope was lacking and we loved only ourselves.

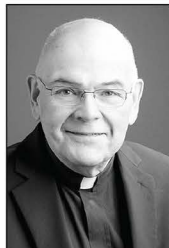
Eventually, in those low moments, we realized that the more we relied on ourselves and our own strength, the less we would succeed in virtue. The more we relied on God the Holy Spirit leading us, the more we would succeed. Faith in God leads to hope beyond measure and makes love the turning point of our daily lives. Reliance on ourselves leads only to ourselves. Reliance on the Holy Spirit brings us way beyond ourselves.

But how do we get there? If we keep our eyes closed all the time, we will never appreciate the gift, the sense, of sight. If we never touch anything, we deprive ourselves of that gift. If we hold our noses, we will never enjoy the rich aromas emanating from a kitchen or

a warm burning scented candle.

So, too, it is with the Holy Spirit. If we remain closed to the Holy Spirit, we will never experience the richness of God in our lives. If we rely on our own gifts, pretending that we are the authors, we will never experience the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit: wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord. Those gifts do not come from a jewelry store. They come from an openness to the human spirit to the divine Holy Spirit.

So, our prayer today is a simple, but profound one, that the Holy Spirit will fill and enrich our lives and that we can open ourselves up to being enriched by this Holy Spirit. Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your spirit, and you will renew the face of the earth. Happy Birthday to our Church. May it be a day of spiritual rebirth for each one of us.



Msgr. Robert
H. Aucoin

Around the diocese

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

ORDINATION TO THE ORDER OF THE DIACONATE

Watertown - Through the laying on of hands and the invocation of the Holy Spirit, the Most Reverend Terry R. LaValley, Bishop of Ogdensburg, will Ordain to the Order of Deacon Mr. Kevin Patrick McCullough. You are cordially invited to join in the Ordination Liturgy.

Date: June 6

Time: 11 a.m.

Place: Church of the Holy Family

Features: An outdoor reception will immediately follow the Liturgy behind the Greystone Building (across from Holy Fam-

ily Church). If there is inclement weather, the reception will be held inside the Greystone Building. The Ordination Mass may be viewed at www.rcdony.org/ordination. The Ordination Mass program will be available at the same link shortly before the Liturgy.

MEN'S RETREAT

Saranac Lake - The Diocesan Catholic Men's Retreat to be held.

Date: June 12 to 14

Place: Guggenheim Dorm

Cost: \$125 and includes meals and lodging

Features: This year Father Leagon Carlin will speak about G. K. Chesterton. The retreat is open to

men 18 years of age or older. Outdoor activities will include canoeing and hiking.

Contact: To register go to <https://www.rcdony.org/family-life.html> and then the bottom of the page. For more information, contact Stephen Tartaglia at startaglia@rcdony.org

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.

HEALING RETREAT

Ogdensburg - This year's Annual Our Lady of the Rosary Healing Retreat will have the theme of Love Heals.

Date: Oct. 8 - 11

Place: Wadhams Hall

Features: The Presenter will be Sonja Corbitt. Do not waste another day. Stop the pain. Love heals. John Paul the Great said, "Suffering

unleashes love," because we only ever find Jesus and His love in our wounds. Sonja Corbitt has been teaching people how to acknowledge and open their woundedness to God's love for over 17 years as a leader in the Catholic Church and Scripture teaching space. You may know her as the Catholic Evangelista through her speaking, writing, and podcasting.

Contact: Space is limited and Register today: <https://www.rcdony.org/ourlady>. For more information contact Kathleen Nichols kmsnichols1163@gmail.com

Pew report eyes religion's influence on government

By Tessa Gervasini
EWTN News

A Pew Research Center survey found a growing minority of U.S. adults believe religion is gaining influence in American life, and more than half of adults have a positive view of religion.

The May 14 report found that 61% of U.S. adults said religion is losing influence in American life. In contrast, 37% said it is gaining influence, a figure that has risen 19 percentage points in the past two years.

The data in the report, "How Americans Feel About Religion's Influence in Government and Public Life," was based on Pew's survey conducted April 6-12 that included more than 3,500 U.S. adults with questions about religion's influence in society, Christian nationalism, and the relationship of church and state.

The survey has an overall margin of error of plus or minus 1.9 percentage points. Pew's studies on the public's views about religion's role in public life are an ongoing effort of the center's research and therefore included past data for comparison with the 2026 findings.

The research found that 65% of Catholics reported they have a positive view of religion, 12% said they have a negative view, and 22% they have a neutral or unclear view.

Overall, 55% of U.S. adults expressed a positive view of religion's role in American life and either said religion's influence is growing and this is a good thing (21%) or that its influence is declining and this is a bad thing (34%).

The survey found a small increase in the percentage of Americans who said they want the government to declare Christianity the nation's official religion. Overall, 17% of U.S. adults express this view, up from 13% in 2024.

Most Americans said the government should promote Christian moral values without making Christianity the official religion (43%) or that the government should not establish an official religion or promote Christian values (38%).

Of adults, 28% said the Bible should have influence on U.S. law. The majority of Catholics surveyed (55%) also

reported it should have influence, compared with the 43% who said it should not.

The survey also found that the public's familiarity with the term "Christian nationalism" has grown since Pew last asked about the topic. There has been a 14 percentage point increase in the share of U.S. adults who reported they have heard or read about Christian nationalism, from 45% about two years ago to 59% in 2026.

Overall there is more of a negative view of Christian nationalism than positive with 31% of U.S. adults who reported they have an unfavorable view of it and 10% who view it favorably.

The survey also asked about the separation of church and state and found there has been a decline from 19% in 2021 to 13% in 2026 in the share of Americans who want the government to stop enforcing separation of church and state, but the percentage of Americans who said the government should enforce it has remained at 54%.

Nearly half of Catholics (49%) reported that the federal government should enforce separation of church and state, and 16% said it should stop enforcing it.

Most people (79%) reported they do not think churches and other houses of worship should endorse candidates during elections. Similarly, 66% also said churches should keep out of political matters.

The survey found a large difference in respondents' perspectives based on their political affiliation.

Of Republicans and independents who lean toward the Republican Party, 75% expressed a positive view of religion's influence in American life compared with 38% of Democrats and Democratic leaners who do so (38%).

Similarly, 45% of Republicans and Republican leaners said the Bible should have influence on U.S. laws, whereas 13% of Democrats and Democratic leaners said the same. Most Republicans (74%) and Democrats (84%) agree that churches should not endorse political candidates.

Most Democrats (68%) said the federal government should enforce the separation of church and state, compared with 42% of Republicans.

CATHOLIC WORLD AT A GLANCE

FDA acting commissioner promises pro-life agenda

Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Acting Commissioner Kyle Diamantas called pro-life organizations to offer reassurance about his commitment to life after some people in the movement raised concerns. "Acting Commissioner Kyle Diamantas is personally committed to delivering on President Trump's pro-life and pro-family agenda at the FDA," Andrew Nixon, deputy assistant secretary for media relations at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, told EWTN News. "Both he and other administration officials will continue regularly interacting with stakeholders in this community to inform FDA decision-making," he said. Diamantas is serving as acting commissioner after the May 12 resignation of Commissioner Marty Makary, who faced criticism from within the pro-life movement for failure to impose stricter regulations on the abortion drug mifepristone.

Government moves to seize land from diocese for border wall

A New Mexico Catholic diocese is facing the potential seizure of some of its land by the U.S. government in order to facilitate the construction of a border wall between the United States and Mexico. A civil action filed by the federal government in U.S. District Court for the District of New Mexico on May 7 names the Diocese of Las Cruces in the eminent domain request. The filing was made at the request of the Department of Homeland Security. It says it seeks the land "to construct, install, operate, and maintain roads, fencing, vehicle barriers, security lighting, cameras, sensors, and related structures designed to help secure the United States/Mexico border within the state of New Mexico." The disputed land is located northwest of El Paso, Texas. Government schematics show an extensive border wall planned for the site.

Vatican: SSPX faces excommunications for consecrations

The Vatican's doctrine chief warned May 13 that the plan of the traditionalist Society of St. Pius X (SSPX) to consecrate new bishops without papal mandate will represent a schismatic act resulting in excommunication. "This act will constitute 'a schismatic act,' and 'formal adherence to schism constitutes a grave offense against God and entails the excommunication established by the law of the Church,'" said Cardinal Víctor Manuel Fernández, prefect of the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith. The cardinal's brief statement quoted from St. John Paul II's letter *Ecclesia Dei*, which the late pope wrote shortly after the society's unlawful ordination of four bishops conferred by SSPX founder Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre in June 1988. Fernández went on to say that the Holy Father "continues in his prayers to ask the Holy Spirit to enlighten the leaders of the Priestly Fraternity of St. Pius X so that they may reconsider the very grave decision they have made." Under canon law, a bishop who consecrates another bishop without a papal mandate and the person who receives that consecration incur automatic excommunication.

Illustrator of pope stamp reflects on AI

By **Andrés Henríquez**
EWTN News

On May 8, the Vatican issued a commemorative stamp marking the first anniversary of the election of Pope Leo XIV.

The stamp, issued by the Vatican City Postal and Philatelic Service, features a portrait of the Holy Father set against an image of Our Lady of the Rosary of Pompeii, whose feast the Church celebrates on May 8. In the portrait, the Blessed Virgin looks down toward Pope Leo “as a sign of maternal protection,” Raúl Berzosa, the artist, explained.

In a statement to ACI Prensa, the Spanish-language sister service of EWTN News, Berzosa reflected on this work and also delved into the creative implications of artificial intelligence.

This new philatelic series marks another collaboration between Berzosa, who is from Málaga, Spain, and the Vatican, notable among which are his painting created for the commemorative stamp marking Pope Francis’ 80th birthday in 2016 and the stamp dedicated to the golden jubilee of the pontiff’s priestly ordination, produced in 2019.

Berzosa’s work includes the stamps for Easter released by the Vatican Philatelic Of-

fice in 2020, 2022, and 2024. In addition is the recent stamp dedicated to the composer Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina, issued during the pontificate of Leo XIV.

The latest stamp will be priced at 1.35 euros (\$1.59) and will have a limited print run of 45,000 copies. The stamps were printed by Bpost (Belgium) using four-color offset lithography.

AI ‘DOESN’T LIVE WHAT IT DEPICTS’

“I believe that sacred art is not merely the final result we see; it’s the product of reflection. The time and effort invested are what give it the artist’s personal imprint,” Berzosa noted when asked about the value and appropriateness of AI-generated Catholic imagery.

“I’ve seen AI-generated images that are very beautiful or striking, yet they convey the sensation of being images seen before. AI, of course, does not feel or experience what it depicts. The artist, by contrast, leaves something of himself in every work,” he pointed out.

The Spanish painter noted that we are witnessing “a flood” of AI-generated images and videos, some in fact created using the works of human artists. “I have seen my own paintings ‘come to life and move,’ and seeing them gave me a bittersweet feeling,” Berzosa shared.



PHOTO COURTESY OF RAÚL BERZOSA FOR EWTN NEWS

Raúl Berzosa paints the new commemorative stamp of Pope Leo XIV.

“From what I’ve seen, AI typically generates whatever grabs the most attention: perfect faces, highly dramatic lighting, or visually stunning scenes, yet they all tend to look alike,” he commented.

The artist also noted that throughout centuries of Christian art history, “an infinite number of distinct artworks and styles” have emerged, something that today “stands in contrast to images created with AI.”

‘HUMAN DISCERNMENT REMAINS FUNDAMENTAL’

Berzosa explained that religious images “are not merely decorative” but also serve as “a tool for evangelization.” This has been the historical function of im-

ages within Catholicism: to help the faithful draw closer to God and to the message of the Gospel.

“With AI, there is a risk of creating images that are overly artificial or hollow, where the sacred is transformed almost into fantastical imagery. I believe that, here and now, human discernment remains fundamental,” he noted.

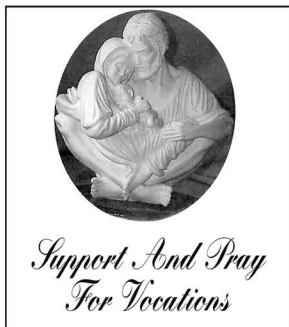
“Technology can help, but human sensibility is needed to know which image is appropriate,” he added.

However, Berzosa clarified that AI can serve as a complementary tool for artists. “I don’t believe that technology is the enemy of art,” he said. “I think that artists have always used new tools,” he remarked.

“Often, viewing images — works of art as well as images created by AI — can be beneficial when seeking ideas; they can help in studying lighting or preparing compositions before beginning a work,” he noted.

The greatest obstacle, he continued, arises when technology completely supplants human skill and talent, the artist’s unique vision: “AI can create viable images, but ones that require subsequent interpretation by the artist. When used well, AI can be an important complement, a tool of its time,” he noted.

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



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(315) 393-2920; fax 1-866-314-7296
info@rcdony.org

A new church

The new Catholic Church of St. Remigius, located in the village of Taungyagone, in the Diocese of Pathein, in central-western Myanmar, is “a gift of the Holy Spirit, a sign of God’s work that continues despite uncertainty and insecurity,” said Bishop Henry Eikhlein of Pathein, who presided over a Eucharistic celebration for the consecration and official opening of the church building.

Pathein is the fourth largest city in Myanmar and the capital of the Ayeyarwady region... local sources tell Fides, the security situation in the Pathein area has deteriorated since the beginning of 2026, as the civil conflict has reached this region, which is controlled by the central government and was previously considered stable... Violent clashes continue in the municipalities surrounding Pathein, and the rebels are attempting to seize control of the main communication routes. The fighting has had serious consequences for the civilian population, displacing thousands of people in the last six months.

Out of a population of over 7.5 million, there are 65,000 Catholics in the territory of Pathein.

During the Mass, celebrated on May 3 in the presence of priests, men and women religious, catechists, and numerous faithful, 70 young people also received the sacrament of Confirmation. “The Spirit renews the face of the earth. The Lord sends his Spirit; he does not abandon us,” Bishop Henry emphasized, urging those present “to always hope, in every circumstance,” continually remembering and acknowledging God’s works.

The Spirit of God, he said, addressing the confirmands in particular, “makes you missionaries, so that you may reach the most distant places and those who are alone, displaced, or marginalized, bringing a word of gentleness and the consolation of God’s love.” “Your heart, transformed by the Holy Spirit,” he added, “is filled with love and generosity, and thus becomes nourishment for your neighbor.”

Giving thanks to God for the gift of the new church, Bishop Henry noted that “God has blessed the parish of Taungyagone and will continue to do so, with the abundance of his gifts.” He expressed confidence that, despite the current difficulties, “young people will continue to bear witness to the faith and spread love and reconciliation throughout society and the region marked by conflict and suffering.”

According to Father Peter Saw Ngwe, parish priest of Taungyagone, the celebration represented “a significant moment for the local Catholic community” and is “testimony to the growth and vitality of the Church in the Diocese of Pathein, which looks to the future with hope and confidence in the renewing power of the Holy Spirit.”

OBITUARIES

Brownville – Shirley A. (Van Brocklin) Vincent, 93; Graveside Services May 14, 2026 at Brownville Cemetery.

Champlain – Margaret S. Gaudette, 83; Mass of Christian Burial May 11, 2026 at St. Mary’s Church; burial in St. Mary’s Cemetery.

Champlain – Rita E. (Racine) Monette, 82; Mass of Christian Burial May 13, 2026 at St. Mary’s Church.

Lake Placid – Alice Marion (Dears) Day, 87; Graveside Services May 12, 2026 at North Elba Cemetery.

Malone – Captain Richard C. Day, 96; Mass of Christian Burial May 19, 2026 at Notre Dame Church.

North Bangor – Irene (Martin) Eldridge, 76; Mass of Christian Burial May 16, 2026 at St. Augustine’s Church.

Ogdensburg – Gerard (Gary) Guimond, 82; Mass of Christian Burial May 11, 2026 at St. Mary’s Cathedral; burial in Oswegatchie Mausoleum.

Peru – Lucille T. (Martin) Davidon, 93; Graveside Services May 15, 2026 at St. Augustine’s Cemetery.

Rouses Point – Richard Weierstall, 83; Mass of Christian Burial May 14, 2026 at St. Patrick’s Church; burial in parish cemetery.

Saranac Lake – Jean (Drutz) Nesbitt, 78; Mass of Christian Burial May 22, 2026 at St. Ber-

nard’s Church; burial in Pine Ridge Cemetery.

Star Lake – Shirley Anne (Caulfield) Meek, 90; Mass of Christian Burial May 14, 2026 at St. Hubert’s Church; burial in Oswegatchie Cemetery.

Theresa – Kathy L. (Mack) Verne, 75; Funeral Services May 17, 2026 at Frederick Bros. Funeral Home.

Tupper Lake – Hubert Joseph Boudreau, 87; Mass of Christian Burial May 17, 2026 at St. Alphonsus Church; burial in Holy Name Cemetery.

Watertown – Rebecca P. Marlowe, 83; Mass of Christian Burial May 18, 2026 at Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Church.

Thousands rally at Canada’s March for Life in Ottawa

By Anna Farrow
Via EWTN News

It took almost 25 minutes for a crowd in the thousands to inch its way from Parliament Hill down Wellington Street to Elgin Street during the National March for Life in Ottawa on March 14.

Members of every ethnic background, young and elderly, priests, families and church groups carried pro-life signs and walked the streets of the Canadian capital to press for an end to abortion and euthanasia in Canada.

The day began with liturgies celebrated at Notre Dame Cathedral, St. Patrick’s Basilica, and St. Clement. Ottawa-Cornwall Archbishop Marcel Dampousse was the main celebrant at the cathedral, joined by papal nuncio Archbishop Ivan Jurkovic, Ukrainian Catholic Bishop Bryan Bayda, and some 30 priests and deacons.

At a midday rally before the march, organizer Debbie Duval told the crowd, “We march on a Thursday, in Ottawa, because that’s when our legislators are sitting in the House of Commons. We want them to hear us. We want them to know we’re here.”

Matthew Wojciechoski, Project Manager at Campaign Life Coalition (CLC),

which organizes the annual event, told the crowd, “We are here to call upon the members of Parliament to enact legal protections for all human beings from conception up to natural death. To remind Parliament of four simple words, ‘Thou shalt not kill.’”

The March for Life takes place in May to mark the month in 1969 when the omnibus bill that decriminalized abortion in Canada was passed.

This year’s march fell on the very anniversary of the vote and adopted as its theme Jesus’ command, “Follow me.”

The featured speaker was Aleš Primc, co-founder of the Slovenian political party Voice for Children and Families that recently forced a referendum to overturn the country’s assisted suicide law. He led pro-lifers in a series of loud “hellos” to people of all ages, from unborn children to “people with gray hair like me.”

“Saying ‘hello’ is the start of recognizing our shared humanity,” he said.

The Parliament Hill speeches and the march through Ottawa are the centerpiece of four days of events, from a candlelight vigil the night before to pray and remember babies lost to abortion, a banquet Thursday evening, and a youth summit on Friday.

COLLECTION TO BE HELD THE WEEKEND OF
MAY 23 & 24, 2026

STRENGTHENING THE CHURCH AT HOME



In nearly 75 dioceses in the United States and its territories, funds from Catholic Home Missions are a lifeline for churches in rural areas where small Catholic populations are unable to sustain basic pastoral ministries without outside assistance.

In southern Illinois, the challenges facing the Diocese of Belleville are particularly acute. Most of the diocese's 28 counties are rural and have small Catholic populations, while the cities within the diocese are among the poorest in the entire country. Although the diocese lacks necessary material resources, it is blessed with dedicated men and women who faithfully carry out their mission to share the Gospel in ministries including catechesis, Hispanic/Latino ministry among the area's growing Spanish-speaking population, and campus ministry for the students at Southern Illinois

University (SIU) in Carbondale and other college campuses in the area.

The Newman Center campus ministry located on the SIU campus strengthens the faith of Catholic young adults with faith formation programs, fellowship, and prayer, as well as community service opportunities beyond campus. By participating at Sunday and weekday Masses and in student-led retreats, weekly dinners, and outreach to families in need, these students grow in their faith and prepare to be church leaders. Working with the diocesan vocation director, the campus ministry program helps nurture priestly vocations—a record of success made possible through support received from the Catholic Home Missions Appeal, which funds the full-time campus minister's position. For more information about Catholic Home Missions, visit www.usccb.org/home-missions.

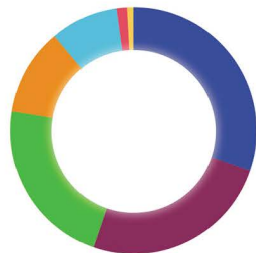
If you prefer to donate online, see QR code.



What Is a "Home Mission" Diocese?

Home mission dioceses are those Catholic dioceses in the United States, its territories, and its former territories that cannot provide basic pastoral services without outside help. Basic pastoral services include Mass, the sacraments, religious education, and ministry training for priests, deacons, religious sisters, and lay people. Nearly 40% of dioceses in the United States and its current and former territories are considered home mission dioceses.

CHMA FINANCIALS 2024



Totals by Program Area

• Diocesan and Parish Assistance	\$2,485,000
• Faith Formation	\$2,045,000
• Vocations and Formation of Deacons, Priests, and Religious	\$1,810,000
• Special Grants*	\$938,475
• Cultural Ministries**	\$725,000
• Strengthening Marriage and Family Life	\$125,000
• Life and Dignity of the Human Person†	\$50,000

Total: \$8,178,475

*Special Grants include the following:

• Support for the Installation of a New Home Mission Bishop	\$90,000
• Support for USCCB Initiatives (Eucharistic Revival, Synodal Journey)	\$740,000
• Diocesan Professional Development Opportunities	\$108,475
	\$938,475

** Including Hispanic/Latino, Black, Asian, and Native American ministries.

† Including ministries for persons with disabilities.



United States
Conference of
Catholic Bishops

Catholic Home Missions Appeal

Office of National Collections

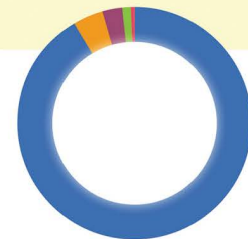
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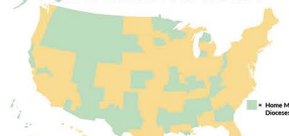


• Grants and Donations	\$8,076,036
• Program Costs	\$478,207
• Promotions and Fundraising Expenses	\$389,274
• Administrative Expenses	\$98,290
• Allocations – Internal Grants	\$29,825

Total Expenses: \$9,071,632

SUPPORT THE CATHOLIC HOME MISSIONS APPEAL

STRENGTHENING THE CHURCH AT HOME



Nearly 40% of dioceses in the United States and its current and former territories struggle to meet basic pastoral needs.

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