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The Diocese of Ogdensburg Volume 81 Number 15

NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

JULY 29, 2026

No NCC next week

The *North Country Catholic* is on summer schedule. There will be no newspaper next week. The next edition will be dated Aug. 12.

Celebration of young ministers

Youth from around the diocese who serve as altar servers, musicians, lectors, greeters and ministry helpers gathered at Camp Guggenheim in Saranac Lake on July 18 for the Youth Ministers Picnic. The event brought together 125 young volunteers, family members and adult volunteers.

FULL STORY, PAGE 3, PHOTOS ON PAGE 16

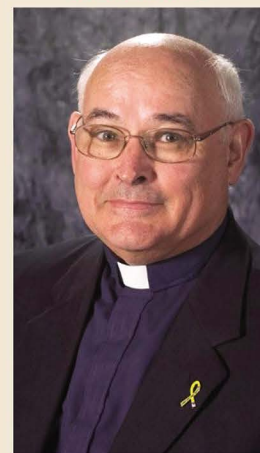
INSTALLED AS LECTORS



PHOTO BY DEACON KEVIN MASTELLON

Candidates for ordination as permanent deacons were installed as lectors of the Church in a ceremony in June at Wadhams Hall. The Rite of Institution of Lectors is one of the ministries a candidate must receive before ordination to the diaconate. Those given the ministry of lector are entrusted with reading the Sacred Scriptures during Mass and the Liturgy of the Hours. Bishop Terry R. LaValley presided at the ceremony. These candidates will participate in the Rite of Acolyte next winter. Ordination is scheduled for August 2027. Pictured are (front row, from left) Russell Backus of Canton, Lucien Leroux of Fort Covington, Daniel Haycock of Clayton, Bishop LaValley, (back row) Jack Lucia of Clayton, Jason Scull of Lake Placid, David Hunt of Malone, Michael Salaun of Brownville, and Deacon Lee Trudeau, director of the Permanent Deacon Formation Program.

FR. LABAFF RETIRES



Bishop Terry R. LaValley has accepted the request of Father Arthur J. LaBaff to retire from his position as sacramental minister and supervising priest in Clayton and Alexandria Bay. Father Donald A. Robinson has been appointed to the role.

FULL STORY, PAGE 3

Pope's advice: Remember those in need

By Ishmael Adibuah
EWTN News

In response to a question about summer advice, Pope Leo XIV emphasized the importance of remembering those most in need during the holidays.

The question and answer were both published in the July/August 2026 issue of *Piazza San Pietro*, the official magazine of St. Peter's Basilica in the Vatican.

As reported by Vatican News on July 22, Maurizio from Rome asked the pontiff how best to deepen his spiritual life during the summer amid the distractions of daily life. Leo XIV responded that one ought to think of those unable to enjoy the summer, particularly the sick, victims of war, and migrants who do not feel welcomed.

"Holidays should also be for everyone a space of respite from occupations and wor-

ries," Leo wrote.

"Let us think of the sick, of people who have lost faith in life, of those who are overwhelmed by grief over the loss of loved ones, of the victims of wars, of hatred, of terrorism and of violence, of those persecuted for their faith and for justice, of prisoners, of those who have been left without work, without a home, of migrants who have not been humanely welcomed."

The pope also reminded

Maurizio and families of the importance of the elderly, encouraging them to support them during the summer.

"To families I say: Do not leave your elderly alone."

"Here is the advice I can give to increase our faith. Use the summer time as well to live the gospel of peace and mercy. Let us think of the privilege we have when we support the poor and bear witness to evangelical poverty," the pope said.

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I couldn't find it!

"This is an example of that thing I talk about where people assume others have the same knowledge they have."

I said that to my son, Jake, as I showed him a post on social media advertising an opportunity to visit an exhibit related to a specific item from American history.

The post gave the name of the exhibit and the details about accessing it, but it gave no information about what the item on display was or why it was significant.

"I'm guessing the people who wrote the post are very, very familiar with (the topic of the exhibit), and they just assume everyone else shares that knowledge," I told Jake. "My degree is in history and government, and I have no clue what that is or why I should care."

To be fair, it's completely

possible that I once learned about the item, since it did, in fact, have a lot of historical significance. But if I did learn about it, I had long since forgotten it, or I wasn't paying enough attention in class that day (also a strong possibility).



Darcy L. Fargo

I've talked about my disdain for insider language in this space before, but I think assumed knowledge is even easier to miss.

When I first started working for the diocese, it took me far longer than it should've to find daily Mass at the cathedral. I just assumed "at the cathedral" meant in the main church, the location where I would go to photograph major events. At that time, daily Mass was held in a small chapel downstairs from the main church. There was no signage that indicated that, though, and

I couldn't find it. I eventually asked a colleague, and she showed me where to find Mass. The lack of signs, to me, meant it was just assumed that people knew where to find it.

There was also the time I was meeting a friend for adoration at her parish, which was also not in the main church. I couldn't find it. No signs. It was assumed that people who wanted to attend would know where it was. I wandered around aimlessly looking for Jesus (that feels like a metaphor for my life) until I saw a person I could ask.

There was also the time I went to a church to go to one of those all-day confession and adoration events. There was a sign on the main entry door advertising the event, but the confessional wasn't where I expected (in the back of the church or along the side of the church), and I couldn't find it. I was terrified (I had been away from the sacra-

ment for a long time), and I wasn't brave enough to ask for help. I didn't go to confession that day.

We say we want to bring people to the Church, to our ministries and to our events, but then we don't always make it clear how they do that. We assume people know. I'd consider myself "an insider," and I feel lost or confused not infrequently. How much worse is it for someone who is approaching for the first time, especially if the person is apprehensive and may not be willing to ask someone for help (like me with the missed confession)?

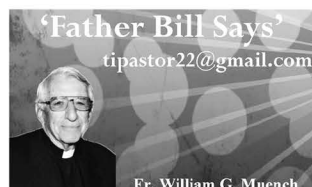
I've never heard anyone complain that a poster or sign gave instructions that were too good.

So, let's consider that in our own parishes, schools and organizations. Let's be mindful of the new person and the visitor. Let's help them gain the knowledge we have.

Prepare for confession with gratitude

This is Monday. Each Monday, here in this parish, we are open for confessions, the Sacrament of Penance, later in the afternoon. There are a few priests available. As the day goes along, I will be thinking about the fact that I will be hearing confessions this afternoon. As a spiritual preparation on my part, I plan to take a little time for prayer – a prayer of gratitude to God in thanksgiving that I will properly bring the Lord's mercy and forgiveness to those who come to me. I thank God for this privilege as a priest and confessor.

I often encourage those who are planning to make a confession in this sacrament to prepare themselves well by praying in remembrance and gratitude of God's many blessings that God has given to them over their lifetime. They have been blessed and



loved. May they remember that God still loves them. Even as they examine their conscience, our God continues to demonstrate his care and concern for them all. God likes them even in their sinfulness.

So, as each of us prepares for confession, we will remember who we are. As we consider our failings, our sins, we will be aware of what we have to change, of how we should live better than ever before empowered by with God's love and forgiveness – this God who loves us profoundly.

It is all about gratitude. Many spiritual writers remind us that a grateful

heart realizes that everything we have is ultimately a gift from God. Every day brings God's gifts: life, faith, forgiveness, the hope of eternal life. Gratitude changes the way we see ourselves – noticing God's presence in what we have received. A grateful person will find peace and hope.

Recently, I found this: "Gratitude is not simply saying 'thank you' after we receive a blessing. Gratitude is a way of living – a daily recognition that every breath, every grace, and every hope for tomorrow comes from the loving hands of God. The grateful person sees God's fingerprints everywhere. The sunrise becomes a promise, a meal becomes a blessing, a friend becomes a gift, even a trail becomes an opportunity to trust. Gratitude does not ignore life's difficulties; it recognizes that

God walks with us through them."

So, I hope that each person who comes to me for confession spends time with God first and takes the time to recognize God's great love for them – even in their failings – removing all fear, finding the forgiveness of the Lord. In gratitude, they will form a unique relationship with the Lord, so that they are ready to change as they continue to travel along the path to becoming a saint. I want them to never forget that God likes them.

A prayer: Lord, thank you for the gift of life, for the faith you have planted in my heart, for those who have loved me, for the blessings I recognize and those I do not yet see. Teach me to receive each day as a gift from your hand and to live with a heart that continually says, "Thank you." Amen.



PHOTO BY CHRISTIAN GRATTO/NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

Bishop Terry R. LaValley chats with youth volunteers and their families from St. Mary's Church in Brush-ton at the annual Youth Ministers Picnic held July 18 at Camp Guggenheim. The annual event celebrates youth who volunteer as altar servers, music ministers, lectors, greeters and ministry helpers. Additional photos from the event are on Page 16.

Youth volunteers honored

By Deacon Garry Stevens

Diocesan Vocations Coordinator

The Youth Ministers Picnic held on July 18 at Camp Guggenheim brought together young people from across the diocese for an afternoon of fellowship, gratitude, and summer fun. Youth who serve as altar servers, musicians, lectors, greeters and ministry helpers arrived with their parents and siblings, creating a warm, family centered atmosphere that highlighted the strength of parish life throughout the North Coun-try.

A total of 46 youth ministers regis-tered for the event, with addition-al walk-ins bringing the number even higher. When combined with parents, siblings, volunteers and visitors, at-tendance surpassed 125 people, an encouraging sign of how deeply fami-lies value the ministries their children serve.

The picnic lunch quickly became one of the day's highlights. More than 125 attendees enjoyed hamburgers, hot dogs, salads, fruit and treats prepared by the Diocese of Ogdensburg Vocation Society (DOVS). Volunteers from the Knights of Columbus, diocesan helpers and several of our diaconate formation candidates and their wives took on the cooking and serving. Their steady, cheerful presence offered a quiet wit-

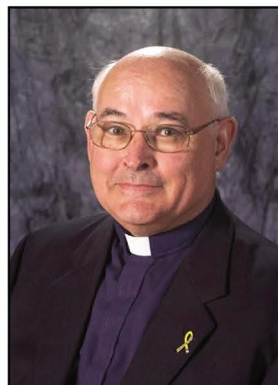
ness of service that helped set a wel-come tone for the entire afternoon.

Activities began with a lively Name Bingo icebreaker and the ever popular Youth Ministry Olympics.

Midway through the day, a Vocations Panel provided a thoughtful pause, giving youth the chance to hear brief reflections and ask questions of panel-ists Pat Looby, diocesan Youth Ministry director; Father Matt Conger, diocesan Vocations director; Mary Beth Bracy, consecrated virgin; Sister Jackie Sellap-pan, of the Sisters of the Cross of Cha-vanod; and William and Marjorie Todd, a married couple.

Additional games and open activities rounded out the schedule before the community gathered for Mass celebrat-ed by Bishop Terry R. LaValley.

The day closed with a genuine sense of gratitude, for the young ministers who strengthen parish life across the diocese, for the families who support them, and for the volunteers whose generosity made the event possible. With more than 125 people partici-pating, the picnic offered a simple but meaningful reminder of how vibrant our communities become when youth, parents, clergy, religious and lay volun-teers share their time and gifts. It was a good day for the diocese: warm, wel-come, and rooted in the quiet joy of serving together.



Father Arthur J. LaBaff



Father Donald A. Robinson

Fr. LaBaff retires, Fr. Robinson to serve parish

Bishop Terry R. LaValley has accepted the re-quest of Father Arthur J. LaBaff to retire as sac-ramental minister and supervising priest of St. Mary's Church in Clayton and The Catholic Com-munity of Alexandria in Alexandria Bay. Father LaBaff will remain in residence in the Clayton rectory.

Bishop LaValley has appointed Father Donald A. Robinson to the above aforementioned posi-tions.

Bishop LaValley is grateful for the dedicated priestly witness and ministry of both Father La-Baff and Father Robinson during their "retire-ment" years.

Please keep both fathers and the parish com-munities they serve in your prayers.

FATHER ARTHUR J. LABAFF

Father LaBaff, 87, retired from his position as pastor of The Catholic Community of Alexandria and St. Mary's Church in Clayton in July of 2021 but continued serving as sacramental minister and supervising priest after his retirement.

Father LaBaff has served St. Mary's in Clayton since 2009.

A native of Massena, he studied for the priest-hood at Wadhams Hall Seminary-College and Christ the King Seminary in Olean before his ordination May 28, 1966, by Bishop Thomas A. Donnellan.

Father Labaff's first assignment was as assis-tant pastor at Our Lady of Victory in Plattsburgh. He also served as assistant pastor at Notre Dame in Malone and St. Mary's in Ogdensburg and was pastor in Morristown, Lisbon, and Chateaugay with its mission in Brainardville.

From 1983 to 1997, he was pastor at Notre Dame Church in Malone and then served as pas-tor of St. Patrick's in Watertown from 1997 until his current assignment in Clayton.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



A float created by parishioners of St. Joseph's Church in Olmstedville received an award for 'Best Representation of America's 250th' in the Minerva Day Parade on July 4. In addition to featuring Charles Carroll, the only Catholic signer of the Declaration of Independence, the float invited the community to visit the local church.

Olmstedville church salutes 'Faith & Freedom'

By David McNally

For the North Country Catholic

St. Joseph's Church in Olmstedville celebrated the nation's 250th anniversary by highlighting the faith and life of Charles Carroll, the only Catholic signer of the Declaration of Independence, in its entry in the 38th annual Minerva Day Parade on July 4.

The entry received the parade's "Best Representation of America's 250th: St. Joseph's Catholic Church" award.

On the back of a pickup truck, a mannequin dressed as Carroll

knelt before a wooden cross. Banners on each side displayed his words, "Without morals a republic cannot subsist," while a banner on the rear invited parade goers to visit St. Joseph's Church.

Many parishioners and community members contributed their time, talents and materials to the effort. David and Clare McNally provided the truck, and David designed and built the display. Jan Hogan hand-drew the side banners, and she and Clare donated candy for the parade. Judy Jennings, Diane McNally, Rebecca Pless and

Darlene Dimick donated materials. Ed Doran helped assemble and secure the display. Amanda Savarie drove the truck, while Annie Bulmer rode in the parade and distributed candy.

Charles Carroll of Carrollton is remembered as the only Catholic to sign the Declaration of Independence and as its last surviving signatory. A wealthy Maryland planter and outspoken advocate for independence, he later became one of Maryland's first United States senators.

Because of Maryland's strict anti-Catholic laws, Carroll was

initially barred from holding public office. His election to the Second Maryland Convention in 1774 helped break that barrier and advance greater political and religious freedom for Catholics.

Located in Essex County, in the southernmost part of the Diocese of Ogdensburg, St. Joseph's Church was built in the Olmstedville hamlet of the Town of Minerva in 1871. It was constructed after the congregation outgrew its original church, St. Mary's, which had been built in 1848 in Minerva's Irishtown section.

Father LaBaff & Father Robinson

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

Father LaBaff also served the diocese as youth director from 1971 to 1977, overseeing the department as Guggenheim summer camp program began in 1972. Also in 1972, Father LaBaff was named assistant chancellor and director of the Bishop's Fund, a role he held until 1977 when he was named chairman of the Bishop's Fund Committee. He has also served as a diocesan consultant, member of the Council

of Priests and member of the Priests Personal Committee.

FATHER DONALD A. ROBINSON

Originally from Watertown, Father Robinson, 75, completed a bachelor's degree in social sciences and elementary education at SUNY Oswego and was completing a master's degree in reading education when he began studies for the priesthood.

He attended both Wadhams Hall and Christ the King (Diocese of Buffalo)

seminaries. He was ordained in St. Mary's Cathedral on May 30, 1980, by Bishop Stanislaus J. Brzana.

After beginning his priesthood with a temporary assignment as parochial vicar at St. Peter's Church in Lowville, Father Robinson served as a parochial vicar at Notre Dame Church in Malone.

Father Robinson then served as an instructor at Immaculate Heart Central in Watertown while serving as parochial vicar at St. Anthony's

Church in Watertown. He also served on the faculty at Wadhams Hall and as diocesan Vocations director, director of seminarians.

In 1998, he was named pastor of St. Mary's Church in Champlain, a role he held until 2001, when he became pastor of St. Anthony's Church in Watertown. In 2009, he was given additional duties as administrator of St. Patrick's Church in Watertown. He was later named pastor of that church, as well.

From 2015-21, Father Robinson served as pastor at St. James Minor Church in Carthage and St. Mary's Church in Copenhagen.

He served as pastor of The Roman Catholic Community of Brownville and Dexter and St. Andrew's Church in Sackets Harbor until his retirement in 2025. He will continue serving as dean of the Jefferson-Lewis Deanery.

He continues to serve as dean of the Jefferson-Lewis Deanery.

Missionaries visit churches around the diocese

By Hattie Taylor
Pastoral Associate &
Campus Minister

"There are three guys up front..."

I turned my head from the windows I was shutting and immediately stopped muttering.

Good thing I brought my aware boyfriend, Colin, as backup for locking the church, St. Mary's in Potsdam.

Three black-haired heads pointed forward, almost motionless, as a Hail Mary echoed.

I returned to the windows in hopes that they'd take the hint that the church was closing.

Thirty minutes later, I desperately peeked my head around the doors, hoping they would notice me. They were singing a song neither Colin nor I knew. It was getting late.

Then the moment came - I was spotted!

The three strangers slowly made their way back and said: "Peace be with you. We're Catholic missionaries, sent to the Ogdensburg Diocese from New Jersey. Can we sleep here?"

Missionaries, to our northernmost diocese?!

After an hour of these men explaining their faith journeys, sharing their schedule - they would be in the area from July 5 to 11 - and describing the 'reality' they were with - a Catholic formation program called "The Neocatechumenal Way" (NCW), I sent Father Bryan D. Stitt, our pastor, and our custodian a text: "Expect three missionaries at the Potsdam church early tomorrow morning."

By coincidence (may-



Missionaries from the Neocatechumenal Way, Julian, Nick and Ramone (center) were among a number of missionaries who visited the Diocese of Ogdensburg from New Jersey. The three missionaries were aided in Potsdam by Pastoral Associate and Campus Minister Hattie Taylor (right) and her boyfriend, Colin (left) and others from the parish community.

be), Mass was celebrated in Potsdam the following morning as Father rolled through town. It was just six of us for Mass, with McDonalds breakfasts waiting for us after.

Around the Potsdam rectory dining room table, we realized a number of the churches on their list were closed. Colin and I worried about missionaries in other dioceses who might have been sent to closed churches.

This meant the furthest churches for the three missionaries, Julian, Nick and Ramone, were now Gouverneur and Ogdensburg. Julian, the four-year veteran of NCW trips, kept helpfully suggesting they could hitchhike. We ignored that.

By coincidence (maybe), Father Stitt was heading to Ogdensburg that day, right where they were hoping to go to meet the bishop.

And by coincidence (likely not), Bishop Terry R. LaValley's schedule freed up that day - a meeting had been canceled. Bishop LaValley was instead the first person Julian, Ramone and Nick met as they reached Ogdensburg.

Father Stitt and I were on the phone a lot that day, trying to plan where to shelter missionaries. We agreed on the Canton Parish Hall, and I volunteered to get them there that evening.

Colin and I packed up a car with blankets, pillows and a very bendy mattress from Colin's mom, while other parishioners sent bedding with Father Stitt to Canton.

Later, the three men piled into our car and joyfully explained the rest of their day to us.

With home base settled in Canton, Monday night's accommodations were spruced up

with access to a World Cup soccer game. Plans were being made to get the three back to Potsdam, up to Madrid and out to Gouverneur over the next five days.

In our conversations, Father Stitt and I found out other "groups of three" were sent to this diocese. Tuesday afternoon, three weary ladies showed up at the Potsdam rectory picnic table.

The conversation with Father Stitt went something like this:

"Hattie, have you checked outside lately?"

"Err, no. Out front?"

"Yes."

"Our picnic table is being used! By three women! How nice."

"Yes. What comes in threes?"

"Oh. Missionaries."

Eva, Paula and Senovia had been sleeping outside of local churches for two nights and needed help getting to Long Lake. Their parish list was not nearly as streamlined as the men's list, instead sending these women all over the Adirondack park.

Phone calls were made. Guest beds were made. Dinner was made (thanks, Sarah.) By evening the women had a plan to get to Long Lake the following day.

It is rare that we praise our priests for traveling, but the efforts of our local priests to get these missionaries where they asked was heroic.

An email was sent to pastors that day from the diocesan offices alerting clergy to this interesting diocesan-wide development.

Over 500 missionaries gathered in New Jersey that past Saturday and were sent to churches along the east coast for a week. For the Diocese of Ogdensburg, six teams of three (men and women) were

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BARSTOW

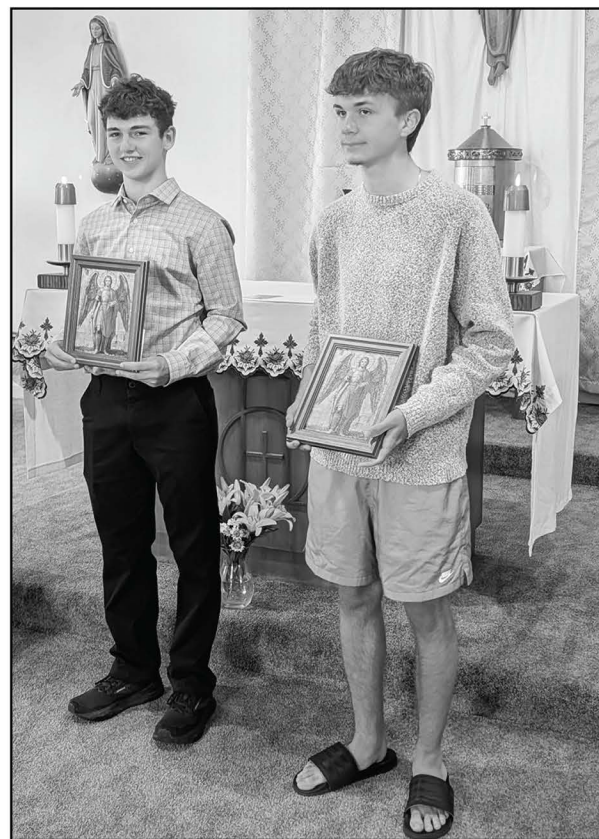
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HONORED FOR THEIR SERVICE



(Left) Father Christopher C. Carrara and Our Lady of Grace Parish in Hammond recently honored two young men, Joseph Kring and Porter Lonsbery, for their service to the parish. Both young men aided as altar servers through their senior year of high school. (Right) In recognition of that service, Kring, left, and Lonsbery were each given \$200 and a picture of Saint Michael the Archangel. In addition to the service award, Kring received the Monsignor Kevin Connors Award, an honor given to a high school graduate from the parish who remained active in their faith and in service to the community. Msgr. Connors, who died in 1971, was pastor in Morristown and was active in the Morristown Fire Department. In the fall, Kring plans to attend Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT), and Kring plans to attend Jefferson Community College.

Missionaries visit diocese

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

sent. According to Julian, this event of sending the teams happens once every four years, but COVID threw off the cycle.

Every phone call Father Stitt made to priests while at the Potsdam rectory seemed to start with "Have you seen any missi- oh, yeah? Where?"

Over this week, I grew closer to these missionary teams. The women promised to text me when they got their phones back. We found a way to get them to

the Syracuse bus terminal from Boonville on Saturday (thanks, Jake!) due to the women's phone calls from available landlines.

After Thursday's Mass in Madrid, Father Garry B. Giroux gathered the daily Mass goers to hear the missionaries' testimonies. Each time I heard them, I pieced together more and more of their stories. Hearts and eyes were full. A local parishioner generously slid me some cash for breakfast at the Hometown Cafe, where we

met with some Potsdam and Colton parishioners.

Encouraging the men to share their testimonies, I also challenged them to get us to share our testimonies. Curious ears tuned into our sharing.

That afternoon, I kept the men with me in Potsdam. We journeyed into the hospital for visitation. The Spirit of God rested upon us and greeted everyone we encountered. I was reminded, as we walked back refreshed, how the early Church would

miss the disciples when they left towns.

Thursday night for adoration, two guitars were lent to them. Tears escaped as I sang, remembering how diverse and beautiful our shared faith is.

By Friday and Saturday, the men had traveled around the local towns sharing the Good News with those on the streets, and helping Father Stitt.

Saturday night we said goodbye, as they would leave early Sunday. Back at the rectory in Potsdam, Colin and

I laughed with them. They invited us to think about starting a chapter of NCW in Potsdam, which we'll pray about. I took down names and numbers, and I told them to come visit again.

Now a guitar sits in the Potsdam living room, waiting for the day when it will be picked up by the next traveler. The bedding and toiletries have been cleared away. I am almost waiting for the next group of three to show up - hopefully it will be a fast four years.

Consecrated virgins gather in Wisconsin

By Mary Beth Bracy,
consecrated virgin
North Country Catholic

The 2026 United States Association of Consecrated Virgins (USACV) Convocation was held from June 19-23 in Green Bay, Wisconsin, at the Norbertine Center for Spirituality. This year's theme was "Virginal Love for the Bridegroom."

The convocation is a special time for communal prayer, pilgrimages, inspiring talks and enjoying time together. It was also a time to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the USACV, which fosters communication, solidarity and spiritual growth among consecrated virgins, while also providing educational resources and programs about this ancient vocation, which was restored in the Church in 1970 for women living in the world (consecratedvirgins.org).

This year, there were 42 attendants in person, and 20 others participated via livestream. Attendants were from 35 dioceses and included 11 candidates who are preparing for their consecration. Half of the participants were consecrated for more than five years.

Each day of the convocation, Father David Whiteside, a priest of the diocese of Peoria, Illinois and chaplain for the consecrated virgins, offered talks on the humanity of Christ, including His Sacred Heart, Holy Face, Precious Blood and Soul. He reflected: "Jesus is inviting all of us to a deeper virginal love for Him... not an emotional love but one that makes acts of love for Him."

On Saturday, attendants traveled to the



(Above) Consecrated virgins and candidates at the National Shrine of St. Joseph in De Pere, Wisconsin, with their chaplain Father David Whiteside of Peoria, Illinois, toward the center and Bishop Earl A. Boyea of Lansing, Michigan, toward the right. (Right) From left, Joan McCann, Archdiocese of Boston, Mary Kelly, Diocese of Little Rock, Rubi Garfias, Diocese of Joliet, Elma Espinoza, Diocese of Fresno, and Mary Beth Bracy Diocese of Ogdensburg take in sights in Green Bay, Wisconsin, during the 2026 USACV Convocation in June.



National Shrine of St. Joseph in De Pere, Wisconsin. The shrine has a special relic of St. Joseph's cloak and one of the only 17 statues of St. Joseph in the world that is crowned. It was a blessing to lay our intentions at the feet of St. Joseph, praying not only for our personal needs, but those of our dioceses, loved ones and all who have asked for our prayers.

Bishop Earl A. Boyea, of the diocese of Lansing, Michigan, and moderator for the USACV, offered Mass and talks on the history of virginity on Sunday, focusing on the writings of the Fathers

of the Church. He noted that from the beginning, virginity was an "accepted and celebrated call (in Christ and Mary)." To go against the Genesis call, to be fruitful and multiply, he noted, "would require a great deal of courage and grace."

Another highlight of the convocation was our pilgrimage to Our Lady of Champion Shrine on Monday. This is the site of the first and only approved apparition of the Blessed Mother in the United States. Numerous miracles and healings have occurred there. On October 8, 1871, during the Great Peshtigo Fire - the deadliest fire in

American history - faithful gathered in prayer near the original chapel. They processed around the outside of the chapel with a statue of Our Lady through the night, praying the Rosary and singing hymns to Jesus and Mary. The next morning miles of devastation

could be seen, but the chapel, school and convent were spared.

Consecrated virgins enjoyed chanting Lauds and Vespers - morning prayer and evening prayer - together each day, spending time in Eucharistic Adoration,

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Local fruits & veggies

Mid summer is when most local fruits and vegetables start to ripen and become available at farm stands. Until now, most of these seasonal micro-businesses had only strawberries, rhubarb and a few other early season items to offer. As August approaches, blueberries arrive followed by the first picking of beans, peas and a host of other items, all of which taste far superior to the same produce found in supermarkets.

Supporting local businesses of any kind is important in efforts to reduce our carbon footprint. The transportation of goods of all kinds is a major consumer of fossil fuels. Additionally, doing business with a neighbor you may not know helps contribute to the strength of the community.

Over the past several weeks, numerous stories have aired concerning the safety of certain produce, especially lettuce. Issues associated with a digestive ailment called cyclosporiasis have developed in locations across the country. This condition is caused by a parasitic microbe known as cyclospora, which enters the digestive tract of humans on contaminated foods that have not been thoroughly washed or cooked.

Please be aware that some researchers are not totally convinced that washing your veggies before eating them raw is adequate to rid it of cyclospora. However, washing does help rid surfaces of other contaminants, like E-coli and Listeria, so it is always a good idea to rinse everything before eating.

Yet, if I happen to encounter a clump of raspberries, a ripe tomato or some mature peas as I pass the garden, I never hesitate to pop them directly into my mouth. Because I am a cautious individual, I do say a brief prayer of thanks and ask my guardian angel to take care of any dangerous substances attached. That is one of the tasks that your guardian angel gets paid for, at least that is what I learned in first grade.

Rest in Peace

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

July 30 – Rev. Francis Smyth, 1902; Rev. Patrick Majock, O.S.A., 1922; Rev. Jeremiah P. Murphy, 1925; Rev. Moses Minnie, 1935

July 31 – Rev. Napoleon Brisson, 1950; Rev. Michael O'Reilly, 1980

Aug. 1 – Rev. J. Everett Denecha, 2013

Aug. 2 – Rev. Zephyrin Jutras, 1919

Aug. 4 – Rev. Alexandre Soulerin, O.M.I., 1892; Rev. Adolphe Saurel, 1925; Rev. Willie Caron, M.S.C., 1972

Aug. 5 – Rev. M. Calixte Mourié, O.M.I., 1912; Rev. David N. Burke, 1913; Gerald A. Sharland, 1973

Aug. 7 – Msgr. Edmund H. Dumas, 2000; Rev. Lawrence E. Cotter, 2016

Aug. 8 – Rev. Donald E. Seguin, 1976; Rev. Gilbert B. Menard, 2025

Aug. 9 – Rev. Edward B. May, O.S.A., 1953; Rev. James N. Flattery, 1997

Aug. 10 – Rev. Walter J. LaRocque, 1936; Rev. Joseph Bolduc, O.M.I., 1956; Rev. Cornelius Vullings, M.S.C., 1971; Msgr. Anthony A. Milia, 2010; Deacon Bruce C. Wadsworth, 2013

Aug. 11 – Rev. Gilbert Monroe, O.F.M., 1958; John M. Kennedy, 1979

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

Consecrated virgins

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

and enjoying communal meals and activities together, such as a special anniversary dinner and talent show.

My group sang and danced to a patriotic medley in honor of the

250th anniversary of America. Other performances included beautiful music from The Hobbit to hymns, poetry, and amusing stories. Following the show, Father Whiteside invited us to ask our Lord for

a special intention and then blessed each of us with holy oil of St. Sharbel Makhlof from his shrine.

I have become part of what is referred to as "the adventure group." When we had free time, some of us went to a local historical site, wildlife sanctuary and to walk near Bay Beach where we sang an impromptu "Salve Regina" as we watched the beautiful sunset.

Consecrated virgins also presented reflections throughout the convocation: Claire Halbur of the Diocese of Phoenix spoke on "The Public Witness of the Vocation," Eileen Belongea, Diocese of Milwaukee, gave a talk, "For the Bridegroom," Magalis Aguilera, Psy.D., Diocese of Miami, talked on "The Root of the Virginal Vocation," and Judith Stegman, J.C.D., Diocese of Miami, addressed "The Ecclesial Tradition of Virginal Love for Christ, the Bridegroom, in Law and Liturgy."

Whether spending quiet moments in prayer before our Eucharistic Lord together late at night or early in the morning or walking with each other on the breathtaking abbey grounds and sharing challenges and joys, the convocation was truly an opportunity to grow in love with our Bridegroom.

In the words of Father Whiteside, when one gazes upon the Holy Face of Jesus, He is gazing back at us. Consecrated virgins "take great delight in gazing on the Face of their Divine Spouse everyday and in doing so you will grow in your virginal love for Him."

Bishop's Public Schedule

Aug. 2 – 11 a.m. – Mass Celebrating the 150th Anniversary of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart coming to the Diocese of Ogdensburg at The Church of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart in Watertown

Aug. 3 – 12:30 p.m. – Mass at the Gouverneur Correctional Facility

Aug. 4 – 4:15 p.m. – Mass for Youth Camp at Camp Guggenheim in Saranac Lake

Aug. 5 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Aug. 5 – 5 p.m. – Picnic with the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart at Dablon Point in Cape Vincent

Aug. 7 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Aug. 8 – 11 a.m. – Mass at Our Lady of the Adirondacks House of Prayer in Ellenburg Center

Aug. 9 – 8 a.m. – Mass at the Thousand Island Park on Wellesley Island

Aug. 9 – 11 a.m. – Installation Mass of Reverend Leagon J. Carlin as Pastor of Our Lady of Grace Parish in Morristown

Aug. 10 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Aug. 10 – 5 p.m. – Bishop's Fund Appeal Reception at St. Patrick's Parish Center in Port Henry

Aug. 11 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Aug. 11 – 5 p.m. – Bishop's Fund Appeal Reception at St. Augustine's Parish Center in Peru

Aug. 12 – 11:30 a.m. – Lunch followed by an Episcopal Council Meeting at Bishop's Residence

Aug. 12 – 5 p.m. – Bishop's Fund Appeal Reception at the Malone Golf Club in Malone

To Report Abuse

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

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

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Sisters, bishop sue NY over suicide mandates

By Tyler Arnold
EWTN News

Bishop John O. Barres of the Diocese of Rockville Centre, New York, and four communities of religious sisters have filed a lawsuit against New York's attorney general and commissioner of health over a law they say would force them to participate in the process of physician-assisted suicide.

The Diocese of Rockville Centre and the religious communities — the Carmelite Sisters for the Aged and Infirm, the Dominican Sisters of Hawthorne, the Missionary Sisters of St. Benedict, and the Little Sisters of the Poor — provide care for elderly and terminally ill people and say their Catholic faith prohibits them from participation in the process in any way.

Democratic New York Gov. Kathy Hochul signed a bill legalizing physician-assisted suicide in February, and the law goes into effect in August. Although some facilities can opt out of parts of the physician-assisted suicide process, the exemptions are limited, and the law

imposes additional requirements on the diocese and religious communities.

"We will never submit to New York's culture of death," Barres said in a statement through his attorneys at the Becket Fund.

"Assisted suicide is a grave moral failure that puts the elderly, the disabled, and those suffering from mental and emotional illness at risk of abuse and manipulation," the bishop said. "Christ the Divine Physician calls us to accompany the sick and dying with compassion, not abandon them to death. The court should protect that millennia-old mission."

The New York attorney general's office and Department of Health did not immediately reply to a request for comment.

REQUIREMENTS IN THE LAW

More than a dozen states have legalized physician-assisted suicide over the past two decades, but New York's opt-out policy "is among the narrowest in the nation," according to the lawsuit, and it affects some of the religious communities

differently.

While most of the Catholic-run facilities qualify for the narrow "opt outs," those that qualify must still follow existing laws to offer counseling to terminally ill patients that explains various options for end-of-life care, along with the "risks and benefits" of their options, or refer them to someone who will.

According to the lawsuit, this will now apply to the "option" of physician-assisted suicide, which means nurse practitioners or physicians "must either counsel terminal patients about the availability and benefits of [physician-assisted suicide] or else help the patient find a provider who is willing to do so."

Physicians covered by the opt outs must also assist in determining whether patients qualify for assisted suicide through actions such as referring them for mental health evaluations. Facilities covered by the opt outs — if they refuse to directly participate in the suicide itself — must refer the patient to a facility that will administer it, according to the lawsuit.

The lawsuit further states that providers must sign a death certificate that says the patient died from his or her underlying condition rather than the drugs that ended his or her life. It states that facilities may also not be able to take adverse employment actions against employees who act in accordance with New York's physician-assisted suicide law, even if the facility prohibits it.

At least one facility —

the Missionary Sisters of St. Benedict — is not covered by the opt outs, which means it must also allow the prescription and the ingestion of the suicide drugs on its property. Those that qualify for the opt out are exempted from this requirement.

Adele Keim, senior counsel at Becket, told EWTN News the law essentially requires all the facilities to "take [the patients] through the process" and "allow that very involved process to take place in their facilities."

"[They] will not do that," she said, explaining that it violates their religious beliefs.

FIRST AMENDMENT OBJECTIONS

Keim said Catholic sisters have offered end-of-life care to New Yorkers for more than 100 years, "providing that personal accompaniment, which, in Catholic teaching, is rooted in the example of Mary sitting at the foot of the cross as Jesus died."

"That's what they believe they're called to do," she said. "... [They are] bearing witness to the distinctly Catholic response to the suffering people experience in their final days."

Sister Justyna Owsiejk, OSB, of the Missionary Sisters of St. Benedict, said in a statement through Becket that "we are simple nuns whose mission is to serve God — and we do that by offering the aged a home in which to live their final days in peace, tranquility, and comfort, cared for by sisters who see the face of Christ in each person they serve."

"New York is trying to force us to abandon that vocation and help

our residents commit suicide," she said. "That is something we will never do. Our foundress overcame war and exile to serve those in need — we will overcome this law to do the same."

Mother Alice Marie Monica of the Little Sisters of the Poor said in a statement that "we have served God by welcoming the elderly poor and dying into our homes for nearly 200 years."

"Our calling is to protect and care for needy seniors, not steer them toward suicide," she said. "We will remain true to that mission, whatever the cost."

The lawsuit argues that forcing Catholic-run facilities to participate in physician-assisted suicide violates their First Amendment right to the free exercise of religion. The Church teaches that life must be protected from conception until natural death.

The suit also argues that the law violates their freedom of speech by compelling them to counsel their patients about physician-assisted suicide.

"The sisters' Catholic faith leads them to accept death as the natural end to a life well lived: neither artificially prolonging it through burdensome technological and medical interventions that provide no reasonable benefit, nor artificially hastening it," the lawsuit states.

"Above all," the lawsuit adds, "it means that the sisters seek to personally provide a loving human presence alongside each person — bearing witness to the ending of a uniquely beautiful and unrepeatable life."

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CATHOLIC WORLD AT A GLANCE

Lawmakers urge investigation of 'D.C. Five' aborted babies

Nearly five dozen U.S. lawmakers sent a letter to the Department of Justice (DOJ) urging a federal investigation into the deaths of "the D.C. Five," the five allegedly late-term aborted babies recovered from a Washington, D.C., abortion clinic four years ago. Sen. Mike Lee, R-Utah, and Rep. Chris Smith, R-New Jersey, along with more than 50 other GOP lawmakers, called on Acting Attorney General Todd Blanche to "comprehensively investigate the circumstances surrounding the deaths." The lawmakers also requested DOJ ensure the "children receive a proper and respectful burial once the investigation is complete and all responsible parties have been brought to justice." In 2022, "the D.C. Five" were found at the home of Catholic convert and pro-life activist Lauren Handy. The group Progressive Anti-Abortion Uprising, a secular organization that demonstrates against abortion, said it obtained the remains from reported whistleblowers who believed the circumstances might have violated federal prohibitions on partial-birth abortion or the failure to provide care to infants born alive. In the letter sent July 20, lawmakers said the babies' remains are held by the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner in Washington, D.C. Lawmakers are calling for autopsies to find out if the babies "were victims of the crimes of infanticide or partial-birth abortion." "For four years, members of Congress have remained alarmed at this clear violation of life and law, but the Biden Administration Department of Justice refused to act," the lawmakers wrote.

Bishops demand justice, transparency after migrant deaths

U.S. Bishops Daniel E. García and Brendan J. Cahill lamented the deaths of migrants that occurred during recent immigration enforcement operations and called for "accountability, transparency, and justice." García, chair of the Subcommittee on the Promotion of Racial Justice and Reconciliation of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), and Cahill, chair of the Committee on Migration, issued a pastoral reflection following "several recent immigration enforcement encounters resulting in the loss of life." In Houston on July 7, a U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agent shot and killed Mexican national Lorenzo Salgado Araújo during an operation. On July 13, Colombian national Johan Sebastián Durán Guerrero died after being shot by a federal agent in Maine. In both cases, the U.S. government maintains that the agents acted in self-defense. In their joint reflection, the prelates said that Catholics "grieve all situations where human life is brought to an unnatural end." "This is a core teaching of our faith and one we can never grow weary of proclaiming as disciples of Our Lord Jesus Christ," they noted. The bishops recalled the statement issued by the USCCB in November 2025 in which the American bishops expressed concern regarding the "climate of fear and anxiety" they observed among the population "around questions of profiling and immigration enforcement."

DOJ updates guidance on religious liberty

By Tyler Arnold
EWTN News

The Department of Justice (DOJ) sent a memorandum to federal departments and agencies with updated guidance on religious liberty and parental rights protections, based on recent U.S. Supreme Court precedent.

The update, issued July 23, is the first revision to the guidance since 2017. It incorporates Supreme Court rulings issued after the earlier guidance, including rulings on church autonomy, equal access for religious entities to grants and government programs, and the right for parents to direct the religious upbringing of their children.

"Religious liberty is not merely a right to personal religious beliefs or even to worship in a particular place," the memorandum, sent by the attorney general's office, states. "It also encompasses religious observance and practice as displayed in a person's daily life."

"Except in the narrowest circumstances, no one should be forced to choose between living out his or her faith and complying with the law," it says. "Therefore, to the greatest extent practicable and permitted by law, religious observance and practice should be reasonably accommodated."

The guidance expands the DOJ interpretation of church autonomy for hiring and firing practices. Current statutes already give religious employers discretion to base employment decisions on a person's adherence to the entity's religious faith under Title VIII exemption.

The update adds: "Even in the absence of the Title VII exemption, both RFRA [the Religious Freedom Restoration Act] and the principle of church autonomy under the Religion Clauses of the Constitution protect religious employers' authority to make employment decisions consistent with their religious mission."

Under the guidance, religious entities must have the opportunity to compete for government grants and contracts "on an equal basis with nonreligious organizations." Government entities cannot force a religious organization "to choose between curtailing their government-funded mission and taking actions inconsistent with their religious beliefs" as a condition of a grant or contract.

This extends to school choice programs, stating religious schools "with

curricula and activities that include religious elements" have the same right to participate in vouchers.

The guidance also explains that RFRA's prohibition on burdening a person's religious practice is not limited to individuals, citing the Supreme Court decision that allowed Hobby Lobby to refuse to cover abortifacient drugs in its insurance plans.

"RFRA protects the exercise of religion by individuals and by corporations, companies, associations, firms, partnerships, societies, and joint stock companies," it states.

"Constitutional protections for religious liberty are not conditioned upon the willingness of a religious person or organization to remain separate from civil society," the guidance states.

"Although the application of the relevant protections may differ depending on the context, individuals and organizations do not give up their religious-liberty protections by providing or receiving social services, education, or healthcare; by earning or seeking to earn a living; by employing others to do the same; by receiving government grants or contracts; or by otherwise interacting with the federal government or with state or local governments," it states.

Employers, the guidance notes, must also provide accommodations for employees to ensure employment does not interfere with religious practice "unless the employer cannot reasonably accommodate such observance or practice without incurring substantial hardship."

The guidance further prohibits government interference in parental rights to direct the religious upbringing of their children, stating: "This right extends beyond a mere right to teach religion in the confines of one's home and encompasses the choices parents make for their children outside the home."

"Government policies that substantially interfere with the religious development of children violate this right," it adds. "Government may not choose to condition the availability of public benefits, such as public schooling, upon parents' willingness to surrender their religious freedom."

Updated guidance includes instructions for departments and agencies to proactively consider potential burdens on religious exercise and possible accommodations during the rulemaking process.

ADIRONDACK MOUNTAIN

TECHNOLOGY WORKSHOP

Tupper Lake - Mercy Care for the Adirondacks will host a Technology Assistance Workshop open to all older adults.

Date: Aug. 20

Time: 9:30 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Place: Adirondack Adult Center

Features: Invited Guest Presenter, Basel Farhat, President & CEO of the Adirondack Federal Credit Union in Tupper Lake, will be presenting on the upcoming technology upgrades at the Credit Union. He will discuss common fraud and scams targeting older adults and provide practical guidance to help avoid them. The event is provided free of charge. Refreshments will be served. On a first-come, first-served basis, Mercy Care will provide elders with a permanently loaned iPad and one-on-one technology assistance with cell phones and tablets.

Contact: Registration is required by contacting Lexi Bevilacqua, Mercy Care's Director of Programs & Mission Integration, at abevilacqua@adkmercy.org or by calling her at 518-523-5446.

CLINTON NORTHERN FRANKLIN

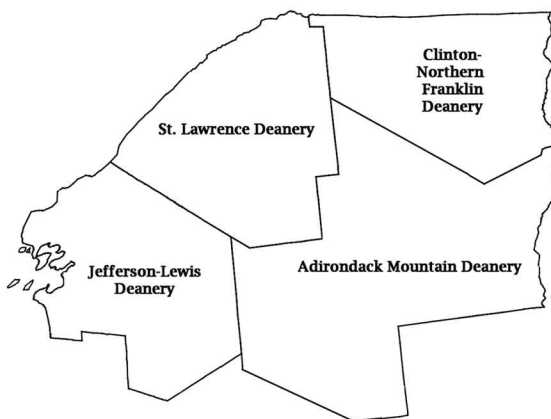
FOUNDATION DAY

Ellenburg Center - Our Lady of the Adirondacks will be celebrating their Foundation Day.

Date: Aug. 8

Schedule: The day begins at 9:30 a.m. with special music by Permelia Provost, followed by a program at 10 a.m. from Deacon Kenneth Lushia on the topic of "Dying A Good Death" part of which features a short video from Father Joseph Mary Wolfe with the Franciscan Missionaries of the Eternal Word. At 11 a.m., we are once again privileged to have The Most Rev. Terry R. LaValley, Bishop of Ogdensburg, to celebrate Mass. All are invited to stay for a delicious summer luncheon after the Mass.

Features: The House of Prayer is YOUR House of Prayer...open to anyone for private retreats, group retreats and meetings or just to



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

Parishioners are invited to send information about activities to:

North Country Catholic, PO Box 326,

Ogdensburg, NY 13669

e-mail news@northcountrycatholic.org.

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

come and spend a couple of hours with the Lord. If you have driven by but never stopped or if you are a regular now is your time to step through the blue doors.

Contact: You may RSVP to Sarah at 518-534-9976, but if you forget, come anyway!

HOUSE OF PRAYER

Ellenburg Center - Our Lady of the Adirondacks House of Prayer summer hours and events.

Schedule: 2nd Tuesday of August, September, October Open from 11 a.m. - 3 p.m. with Linda and Cheryl C., Volunteers; 1st, 3rd, and 4th Thursdays of July, August, September, October Open from 12 noon - 4 p.m. with Cheryl L. and Richard V., Volunteers
Events: Aug. 15, Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary/Day of Reflection with Father Roy Tverdik, SMM. Light luncheon provided. (Please call to register); Aug. 22, Day of Reflection with Marika Donders, Light luncheon provided.

Contact: By appointment anytime: Please call 518-534-9976 (Sarah) or 518-416-9495 (Cheryl) to make arrangements to visit. Whether for an hour or an overnight or several nights, you are always welcome! (We welcome small group meetings and retreats as well!)

SOAKING PRAYERS SESSIONS

Come enjoy a relaxing prayer opportunity at two different locations.

Plattsburgh: Newman Center, 1:30 p.m. to 3:30; 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); 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

FIRST FRIDAY

Champlain - St. Mary's to have Mass, Exposition and Benediction

every first Friday of the month.

Date: Aug. 7

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

BUS TRIP TO "SIGHTS AND SOUNDS"

Lancaster, Pa - St. Mary's and St. Augustine's Altar and Rosary Society of North Bangor and Brushton are doing a trip to see Sights and Sounds "Joshua."

Date: Sept. 14 - 16

Cost: \$605 Double, \$575 Triple, \$804 single. All rates are per person.

Features: Package includes: lodging, two breakfasts, two dinners, performance of Joshua at Sight and Sound Theatre, Chalk Talk, Bird in Hand Farmers Market, Bass Pro Shop and Outlets, Souvenir gift, Motorcoach Transportation, taxes and gratuities. Pickups in Brushton, Potsdam, Canton, Watertown

Contact: Gayla LePage 518-569-3612 or email luer913@hotmail.com

JEFFERSON-LEWIS

HOLY HOUR AND DIVINE MERCY

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

Date: Aug. 2

Time: Following 11 a.m. Mass

Place: St. Hedwig's Church

Contact: 315-348-6260

ST. MARY'S GALA

Clayton - St. Mary's Gala and Raffle to be held.

Date: Aug. 4

Time: 5:30 p.m. to 10

Place: Cerow Arena at the Town of Clayton Recreation Park.

Cost: \$100. Each ticket includes dinner for two, hors d'oeuvres, two coupons for one drink each, coffee, and dessert. (Sorry, no take-outs.)

Features: Grand Prize: \$10,000; four \$500 prizes. Winner need not be present to win. All winning tickets will be returned to drum and be eligible for all 6 prizes!

Contact: Tickets Available At: St. Mary's Parish Office (521 James Street, Clayton) or by phone at 315-686-3398.

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 bhwjhdioogd@gmail.com 315-486-7967

SACRED MUSIC CONCERT

Clayton - Join St. Mary's music ministry and youth choir for an evening of sacred choral music, scripture readings, and solo performances.

Date: Aug. 9

Time: 4 p.m.

Place: St. Mary's Church

Features: This concert is a free event, but a goodwill offering to support our music ministry will be available at the door.

Contact: For more information 315 686 3398 or email corrinefwil-lis@gmail.com

BLESSING OF FLOWERS

Houseville - St. Hedwig's will observe the Polish custom of blessing flowers, herbs and grains.

Date: Aug. 16

Time: 11 a.m. Mass to honor our Blessed Mother, Matka Boska Zielna, Our Lady of the Greens.

Place: St. Hedwig's

Features: All are welcome to participate by bringing pots and or bouquets of flowers, herbs, and grains and join in a proces-

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

sion if desired. The blessed items can decorate the home, be taken to the cemetery or given as gifts. There is no limit to the items you can bring. A free ice cream social will follow in the church hall.

Contact: Call 315-348-6260 for more information.

ST. LAWRENCE

PIPE ORGAN CONCERT

Canton — St. Mary's Church is proud to host an organ recital by Dr. Benjamin Stone in celebration of its 150th anniversary!

Date: Aug. 9

Time: 2 p.m.

Features: Everyone is welcome to join for a free afternoon concert followed by an ice cream social. Benjamin A. Stone, a native of Potsdam, New York, is Director of Liturgy and Music and Assistant Professor of Sacred Music at Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology in Hales Corners, Wisconsin.

MEAL DELIVERY DRIVERS NEEDED

The St. Lawrence County Office for the Aging is seeking drivers for home delivered meals in Brasher Falls, DeKalb, Canton, Gouverneur, Morristown, Ogdensburg, Potsdam and Star Lake.

Features: These drivers deliver hot, nutritious meals to older adults. Many are homebound and receive a lunchtime meal Monday through Friday. A critical component of this program is the daily wellness check that is provided by this service. Drivers receive a mileage reimbursement. Typical deliveries take place between 9:30 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. Routes can be between one hour and two hours. You can volunteer for one day a week or several. Any help is greatly appreciated.

Contact: If you are interested please contact Danielle Durant at 315-386-4730.

DIOCESAN EVENTS

CATECHIST WORKSHOP

All parish catechists are invited to attend our Annual Summer Work-

shop Bonanza with 2 locations and dates to choose from.

Schedule: Aug. 8 at Immaculate Conception, Brownville or Aug. 15 at St. Mary's Social Hall, Massena.

Time: 8:45 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Features: Continue working toward certification and deepen your faith life. Travel money available for early registration.

Contact: For more information and to register please go to www.rcdony.org/certworkshops. Anita Soltero 518-310-3669 asoltero@rcdony.org

MARRIAGE CELEBRATION MASS

Ogdensburg — We invite all married couples and their families to join us at the annual Celebration of Love and Marriage Mass.

Date: Sept. 20

Time: 2:30 p.m.

Place: St. Mary's Cathedral

Features: Bishop LaValley will be presiding. Whether you have been married for less than 1 year, over 50 years or anywhere in between, we want to acknowledge your commitment and celebrate with you. Married couples that wish to receive a certificate signed by Bishop LaValley and have their names appear in the program should register no later than September 11th at <https://www.rcdony.org/jubilee>. There will be a gathering with refreshments after the Mass.

Contact: For more information please contact Steve Tartaglia at 315-393-2920 or startaglia@rcdony.org.

DYING WITH CHRIST, LIVING WITH HOPE

Plattsburgh — When we make a commitment to die with Christ, we can truly live with hope. Learn about the new Physician Assisted Suicide law and how MAID has progressed throughout Canada.

Date: Sept. 29

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

Place: St. Peter's Emmaus Room

Cost: \$10 donation, includes lunch

Features: Discussions feature

theologians and healthcare professionals giving perspectives on suffering, grief, dying and our Christian duty to care. The day will include guest speaker Jessica Rodgers, coalition director of Patients Rights Action Fund.

Contact: Registration online at: <https://www.rcdony.org.living-withhope> For more information contact cminer@rcdony.org

RACHELS VINEYARD

Saranac Lake — Are you or a friend suffering after abortion? You aren't alone. Join others for a week-end of hope and healing.

Date: Oct. 9 -11

Place: Guggenheim Lodge

Cost: \$150 includes lodging, food and all retreat materials. Scholarships available.

Contact: Confidential online registration at www.rcdony.org/pro-life/rv-retreat For more information: Colleen Miner Email: cminer@rcdony.org Phone Number: 518-524-0774

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

FOSTER GRANDPARENT

Foster Grandparents are role models, mentors and friends to children with exceptional needs. The program provides a way for volunteers age 55 and over to stay active by serving youth in their communities. They are placed in a classroom serving with a child or children who are in need of emotional support, development of basic learning skills, friendship, encouragement, individual attention and unhurried help. The program currently has 40 volunteers and serves more than 100 kids per year. To volunteer in this program, you can live in one of the following counties. Franklin, Essex County, Clinton County, St. Lawrence County or Jefferson County

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

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Canadaigua — Notre Dame Retreat

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Contact: www.notredamere-treat.org, info@notredamere-treat.org; 585-394-5700

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Contact: For more information contact Father Donald Robinson at donrob4@twcnr.com / (315) 408-0858



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France bans social media for kids under 15

By Solène Tadié
EWTN News

The French Parliament on July 21 definitively passed a law banning children under the age of 15 from accessing social media, making France the first country in Europe to enshrine such a restriction in its national legislation.

The measure is the culmination of a campaign led by President Emmanuel Macron since 2017 in which he has denounced anonymity on social media as a gateway to online abuse.

The law, presented as a child protection measure against all the risks associated with the use of social media, from addiction to bullying and abuse, has also reignited concerns about increased government oversight of internet users, as the age verification requirements — intended to target minors — entail identity checks for everyone.

“France is leading the way in Europe by becoming the first country to establish a ‘digital age of majority’ to better protect our children online,” said Anne Le Hénanff, minister delegate for digital sovereignty, following the vote.

The Senate adopted the compromise bill by a vote of 243 to 2, and the National Assembly followed suit a few hours later, paving the way for Macron to sign the measure into law, subject to review by the Constitutional Council.

The bill’s central provision bars minors under 15 from accessing

“an online social network service.” Leading platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and Snapchat are expected to fall under the ban, though lawmakers left the precise scope undefined.

Wikipedia and other online encyclopedias, along with open-source software and educational platforms, are explicitly exempted. Responsibility for verifying users’ ages falls to the platforms themselves, which must offer at least two different verification methods.

Enforcement will unfold in two different stages. New accounts will be subject to age checks starting Sept. 1, while existing accounts belonging to minors under 15 will have until Jan. 1, 2027, before they are suspended.

The law also extends France’s existing smartphone ban in middle schools to high schools starting in the 2026 school year.

France’s move makes it the first EU member state to enact a blanket social-network age floor, though it follows Australia, which imposed a minimum age of 16 in December 2025.

Officials say a coalition of roughly 15 European countries is interested in adopting a similar standard. Le Hénanff confirmed Greece is ready to transpose the French model, with Spain expected to follow in the fall.

The European Commission is separately developing its own EU-wide age-verification tool, expected to be available to member states by the end of the

year.

Under the model France has adopted — built around the “double anonymity” principle found in the EU’s Digital Services Act, the bloc’s main online-platform law — a trusted third party would verify a user’s age from an ID document or bank card and issue an anonymous token confirming only whether the user is over or under 15, without revealing the user’s identity or which platform requested the check. Le Hénanff has described this as a way of avoiding data collection by the platforms themselves. Critics, however, argue the system’s implementation is far less safe than officials suggest.

The underlying concern is that this child-protection measure could evolve into a broader mechanism for verifying and tracking the identity of internet users generally. Opponents of the law claim that the mechanics of age verification remain largely undefined barely a month before the law takes effect.

They also point to recent history of large-scale personal data breaches across government agencies as a reason for caution about centralizing age- or identity-verification data.

La Quadrature du Net, France’s leading

digital-rights advocacy group, and the Conseil national du numérique, an official government advisory body, both warned that the law amounted to what they termed “generalized surveillance disguised as child protection.”

The European Center for Law and Justice, along the same lines, argues that France and the European Commission are each independently pushing to generalize identity checks across the EU under the banner of online safety policy.

Several digital-rights groups are reportedly preparing separate challenges before France’s Council of State and the EU’s Court of Justice, arguing the law violates free-expression and proportionality principles.

For now, all eyes are

on Australia, the only country with a comparable ban already in force.

An early analysis of survey data from roughly 400 young social media users, published in The BMJ on June 24, found little evidence that Australia’s Social Media Minimum Age Act had produced any substantial early drop in social media use among adolescents in its first three months — although researchers cautioned that legislative effects can take time to appear and called for longer-term evaluation.

A companion analysis reported that roughly 85% of Australians aged 12 to 15 were still using restricted platforms, the most common workarounds being fake accounts and private browsers.

THE MONTHLY PRAYER REQUEST FOR PRIESTS

WOULD YOU PRAY FOR A PRIEST EACH DAY?

— PRAYER SUGGESTION —

O Jesus, Eternal High Priest, live in (name a priest), act in him, speak in and through him. Think your thoughts in his mind, love through his heart. Give him your own dispositions and feelings. Teach, lead and guide him always. Correct, enlighten and expand his thoughts and behavior. Possess his soul; take over his entire personality and life.

Replace him with yourself. Incline him to constant adoration and thanksgiving; pray in and through him. Let him live in you and keep him in this intimate union always. O Mary, Immaculate Conception, Mother of Jesus and Mother of priests, pray and intercede for (...)



AUGUST

DIOCESE OF OGDENSBURG, NY						2026		Immaculate Heart												
SUNDAY		MONDAY		TUESDAY		WEDNESDAY		THURSDAY		FRIDAY		SATURDAY								
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A donation to help support THE MONTHLY PRAYER REQUEST FOR PRIESTS will be appreciated. The Monthly Prayer Request for Priests is graciously underwritten by: Diocese of Ogdensburg Vocations Society www.mprrequest.com



SUNDAY'S SCRIPTURE

'How much do we really need?'

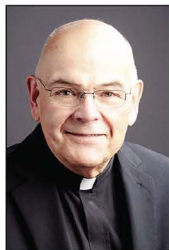
Have you ever been in a situation where you planned for 10 people, but then, without warning, there are 15. What to do? Jesus faces a similar situation in this week's Gospel. In their admiration of him, people have been following Jesus. Without any pre-planning, Jesus sees the crowd, understands their need, cures the sick and preaches. As evening approaches, the disciples ask Jesus to dismiss the crowd because there is no food available. In fact, there are only five loaves of bread and two fish.

Miraculously, there is enough food for all. Ac-

tually, there is food left over. A little food was able to satisfy a huge crowd.

Thinking about this situation with Jesus and the many similar situations in our own lives, we can reasonably ask: "How much is enough? How much do we really need?" The Gospel tells us that a little can be more than enough. In our own lives, we have probably experienced the same reality that a small amount can be enough even though we thought we would need more.

Even the first reading of today's Mass emphasizes that we should come to God because



Msgr. Robert H. Aucoin

August 2

**Eighteenth Sunday
in Ordinary Time**

READINGS

Isaiah 55:1-3

Romans 8:35, 37-39

Matthew 14:13-21

there is always enough. In fact, if we go to God, we will have life.

Hearing these words is truly an invitation for us to reflect both on how generous we have been and where we have looked for life.

So, how generous have we been and should we be? Mother Teresa said it best: "We can't do great things; we can only do small things with great love."

Her phrasing provides a key to success in our world? The disciples

fretted over the small amount of available food. Jesus' approach was radically different. For him, there was enough because he did all things with love. Was this a great miracle? Or, perhaps, it was a small miracle with great results? "Yes" answers both questions. The message for us: we will accomplish much if we do all with great love.

Then, there's that other pesky question: "Where have we looked for life?" The apostles wanted to look beyond the available food. Jesus said no. There was enough food already there. We tackle that same question every now and then, especially at the big moments in our lives. Where do we find our sustenance, our

hope, the meaning of life itself?

Over the many years of our lives, we may have done a good job, or we may have not been as good. If we have done well, thanks be to God. If we have not done well, we should recognize that is not a permanent condition. No matter our current age, there is still time, but that time is not limitless.

The lesson of today's liturgy is clear. Come to the Lord in his abundance, find life in the Lord, live life to the fullest by doing all things with love.

Perhaps, St. Ignatius of Loyola said it best with these brief words: "Work as if everything depends on you, but pray as if everything depends on God."

CALLED TO SERVE

The disappearance of the penny

For starters, do not blame God.

The demise of the penny, or "cent" as it is officially called, is a U.S. Government thing. The Mint stopped producing new one-cent coins a couple of years ago. The one-hundredth of a dollar coin is still in circulation but is rarely used. Now Congress is considering the Common Cents Act which would eliminate the penny altogether.

The House of Representatives version of the bill, sponsored by Lisa McClain, R-Michigan, has already passed. The Senate version, sponsored by Cynthia Lummis, R-Wyoming has not been reported out of the committee at this writing. I think the president says he will sign it.

The Common Cents

Act, incidentally, the pun is not lost on me, would round up or down any cash payments to the nearest zero or nickel. Something 51 or 52 cents, for example, would become 50 cents. If the goods or service charge is 53 or 54 cents, the charge will be 55 cents.

The same rounding is used for six and seven cents, down to the nearest nickel, and eight and nine cents rounded up to zero. You might make a couple of cents on one transaction, or it might cost you an extra penny or two on another. It will all work out, say supporters.

And they know, right?

Please note the bills pertain to cash transactions. Credit or debit cards, electronic transfers, digital charges and

checks will continue to be processed to the exact cent.

Several questions occur to me: Will all the cash registers in the nation have to be re-programmed? If not, can check-out folks be trusted to do the rounding? How does a bookkeeper reconcile the cash drawer?

I started writing this column as a lament for the penny. I have changed my mind.

Sure, the days of the penny candy, and reaching into your pocket

or purse to produce a couple of pennies to make exact change are soon to be gone.

So will the rolling of pennies to take to the

bank someday or filling a jar with pennies as a rainy-day fund. And the problems I cited earlier can be overcome.

Canada eliminated their penny more than 10 years ago. At the time they pointed to the excessive cost of production and the value of the coin to the Canadian economy. Canadians survived.

The Bank of Montreal reminded us of a few penny-centric phrases that will always be around: "Saving your pennies," "a pen-

ny for your thoughts," "penny pinching" and "worth every penny."

We will have the inevitable question from future generations.



Deacon Kevin Mastellon

"What's a penny?"

The Bank of Montreal offers this thought: "the penny is not as easy to remove from our culture as the coin was from our economy." Amen to that.

I find solace in the reading from Saint Paul next weekend. He says, among other things, that it isn't present things or future things that separate us from the Love of God. It's us, he suggests.

Eliminating the penny from our pockets will never separate us from God.

It might make us lighter.

Hmmm...is the nickel next?

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



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

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

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

2025 Peter's Pence collected \$65M for pope's mission

By Almudena Martínez-Bordiú
EWTN News

Peter's Pence, the Holy See's fund that gathers donations for the pope's charitable works and the needs of the universal Church, closed 2025 with an income of 57.6 million euros (\$65.8 million) and expenses of 59.8 million euros (\$68.3 million).

The Vatican attributes the 2.2-million-euro (\$2.5 million) deficit to currency exchange rate fluctuations, according to a report published June 30. In 2024, 58 million euros (\$66.3 million) were raised.

The donations received total 54.5 million euros (\$62.3 million) and came primarily from dioceses around the world (63.6%), followed by foundations, private donors, and religious institutes. The remaining 3.1 million euros came from other income, according to the Vatican.

Contributions from the United States (14.2 million euros, or \$16.2 million) were particularly notable, followed by those from other countries such as Italy, Brazil, South Korea, Germany, France, and Spain.

Most donations are channeled through parish collections, direct donations including transfers and online methods, and inheritance legacies.

Of the total donations, 41.2 million euros (\$47.1 million) were used to support the activities of the Holy See in the service of the Holy Father's apostolic mission, and 13.3 million euros (\$15.2 million) went to projects providing direct assistance to people in need in 74 countries.

A total of 252 projects were funded, with a special focus on evangelization, humanitarian aid, and the strengthening of local churches in need.

The projects supported by the Holy See include educational and social initiatives as well as support for ecclesial communities, particularly in Africa and Asia.

Aid in Europe also includes scholarships for priests, seminarians, and religious from Africa, Latin America, and Asia, as well as humanitarian aid for the people of Ukraine.

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.

*Please remember the Pontifical Mission Societies
of the Diocese of Ogdensburg INC.
when writing or changing your will.*

OBITUARIES

Alexandria Bay — Eugenia (Wagoner) Kavanaugh, 101; Mass of Christian Burial July 17, 2026 at St. Cyril's Church.

Altona — Palmina E. (Young) Boyd, 102; Mass of Christian Burial July 10, 2026 at Holy Angels Church; Burial in Holy Angels Cemetery.

AuSable Forks — Edward Kuderski, 76; Mass of Christian Burial July 28, 2026 at Holy Name Church; burial in parish cemetery.

Brownville — Beverly Ann (Alton) Monroe, 91; Mass of Christian Burial July 14, 2026 at Immaculate Conception Church; burial in Brownville Cemetery.

Carthage — Gary W. Gardner, 86; Mass of Christian Burial July 23, 2026 at St. James Church; burial in Glenwood Cemetery, Watertown.

Carthage — Francis Runkles, 72; Funeral Service July 17, 2026 at Lundy Funeral Home Chapel.

Carthage — Paulette Elizabeth (Blackman) Scott, 77; Funeral Services July 22, 2026 at Bezanilla-McGraw Funeral Home.

Champlain — Robert Nelson LaCount, 64; Mass of Christian Burial July 11, 2026 at St. Mary's Church.

Coopersville — Marsha Trombley-Kuhn; Memorial Mass July 24, 2026 at St. Joseph's Church.

Fort Covington — Patrick McCaffrey, 56; Mass of Christian Burial July 10, 2026 at St. Mary's of the Fort Church; burial in St. Joseph's Cemetery, Malone.

Gabriels — Mary Ellen (Helms) Salls, 92; Graveside Services July 18, 2026 at Mountain View Cemetery.

Gouverneur — Marguerite H. (Felt) Hall, 91; Private burial in Maple Grove Cemetery.

Keeseville — Dianne (Connell) Kwashnak, 80; Mass of Christian

Burial July 24, 2026 at Immaculate Conception Church; burial in parish cemetery.

Keeseville — Colin McDonough, 87; Mass of Christian Burial July 27, 2026 at Immaculate Conception Church; burial in parish cemetery.

Lake Placid — Catherine Mad-den Wescott, 69; Mass of Christian Burial July 24, 2026 at St. Agnes Church; burial in St. Agnes Cemetery.

Lowville — Robert Paul Goss, 62; Mass of Christian Burial July 17, 2026 at St. Peter's Church; burial in St. Peter's Cemetery.

Lowville — Josephine Helen "Josie" Jarecki Mroz, 93; Mass of Christian Burial July 21, 2026 at St. Peter's Church; burial in Old Glen-dale Cemetery.

Malone — Charlene Marjorie LaCombe Andrews, 92; Mass of Christian Burial July 24, 2026 at Notre Dame Church; burial in St. Mary's Cemetery, Fort Covington.

Malone — Bernice Alice (Dumas) Gonyea, 98; Mass of Christian Burial July 14, 2026 at Notre Dame Church; burial in Notre Dame Cemetery.

Malone — Anna M. (Harper) Humiston, 89; Private Services held.

Mooers Forks — Ruby M. (LaValley) Garrand, 74; Mass of Christian Burial July 15, 2026 at St. Ann's Church.

Mooers Forks — Clara M. (LaValley) Rabideau, 92; Mass of Christian Burial July 11, 2026 at St. Ann's Church; burial in St. Ann's Cemetery.

Morrisonville — Anthony Edgar Hemingway, 82; Mass of Christian Burial July 9, 2026 at St. Alexander's Church; burial in parish cemetery.

Norwood — Dorothy Mae (Clafey) Deon, 95; Mass of Christian

Burial July 11, 2026 at St. Andrew's Church; burial in Calvary Cemetery.

Norwood — Laura M. (Talcott) LaComb, 87; Mass of Christian Burial July 24, 2026 at St. Andrew's Church; Burial in Calvary Cemetery.

Ogdensburg — George Ayotte, 95; Funeral Services July 20, 2026 at Fox & Murray Funeral Home; burial in Oswegatchie Mausoleum.

Ogdensburg — Thomas A. Burns, 81; Funeral Services July 13, 2026 at Fox & Murray Funeral Home; burial in Oswegatchie Mausoleum.

Ogdensburg — Kathleen N. Ladouceur Farmer, 75; Mass of Christian Burial July 8, 2026 at Notre Dame Church; burial in Notre Dame Cemetery.

Old Forge — Vincent Nells, Jr., 84; Mass of Christian Burial July 20, 2026 at St. Bartholomew's Church; burial in Riverview Cemetery.

Peru — Anne M. (Bridges) Torrance, 87; Mass of Christian Burial to be held at a later date; burial in St. Augustine's Cemetery.

Rouses Point — James Patrick McDonough, 71; Mass of Christian Burial Aug. 1, 2026 at St. Patrick's Church; burial in St. Patrick's Cemetery.

Sackets Harbor — Genie (Rend-land) McKay, 83; Mass of Christian Burial July 15, 2026 at St. Andrew's Church; burial in Lakeside Cemetery.

Watertown — Sheila M. Branche, 82; Mass of Christian Burial Aug. 1, 2026 at St. Anthony's Church; burial in Glenwood Cemetery.

Watertown — Aaron B. Trask, 64; Mass of Christian Burial July 22, 2026 at St. Patrick's Church; burial in Glenwood Cemetery.

Watertown — Daniel J. Villa, 73; Mass of Christian Burial July 21, 2026 at St. Patrick's Church.

HONORING YOUTH

July 18 picnic honors young ministry volunteers

Photos by Christian Gratto

