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The Diocese of Ogdensburg Volume 81 Number 19

NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

SEPTEMBER 2, 2026

HERITAGE & HEROES

Dr. William "Bill" Caldon, a Plattsburgh dentist and author, reflects on his service in the United States Air Force and the impact it had on his family and his faith in this second installment of Heritage & Heroes, a series highlighting individuals who have served our nation and our Lord, as well as stained glass windows at St. Mary's Cathedral that feature historical references.

The series is part of the North Country Catholic's celebration of our nation's 250th anniversary.

Dr. Caldon is pictured with his wife, Margaret.

Read the full story on Page 3.

FAREWELL, SR. CINDY

Sister Cindy Sullivan of the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, will be leaving Massena, where she grew up, on Sept. 12 to return to her community's residence in Dubuque, Iowa, where she will live with her mother.

FULL STORY, PAGE 4

Pope: Reformed liturgy promotes participation

By Ishmael Adibuah
EWTN News

VATICAN CITY — Pope Leo XIV has described the liturgical reforms following the Second Vatican Council as necessary to encourage active participation by the faithful.

"Since the gestures and words of the sacred liturgy are critical to realizing this experience, the participation of the faithful cannot be passive," Leo said. "The liturgical reform promoted by the Second Vatican Council is thus firmly rooted in the living tradition of the Church."

During his general audience at the Vatican on Aug. 26, the pontiff concluded his summer catechesis on the Second Vatican Council's constitution on the liturgy, Sacrosanctum Concilium.

Leo defended the council fathers' decision at the Second Vatican Council to reform the liturgy, citing a letter St. Paul VI wrote as archbishop of Milan to encourage the faithful's participation.

"Motivated by these convictions, the future Pope St. Paul VI affirmed that the faithful 'cannot and must no longer remain silent and passive. Their physical presence cannot be reconciled with their spiritual absence,'" Leo said.

The pope also explained that the liturgy has divine aspects that cannot change and human elements that can change to promote the faithful's participation.

"When the Church carries out a reform of the liturgy — a constant process of development across the centuries — there is an important distinction to be made between the divine, immutable elements, and the human elements, which may undergo various modifications."

"The need arose for the faithful to celebrate the liturgies more consciously and actively, not 'as strangers and silent spectators' but participating fully in the salvific mystery," Leo added.

The Church's present liturgy was established in 1969 following the Second Vatican Council. It replaced the older Tridentine liturgy, standardized since the Council of Trent in 1570.

The Tridentine liturgy, also called the Traditional Latin Mass, was largely replaced after the council. Pope Benedict XVI allowed greater access to it in 2007, but Pope Francis restricted access in 2021.

The pope also explained that the liturgical reform began long before the Second Vatican Council, under several popes.

"The assertion that the faithful should not attend celebrations 'as strangers or silent spectators' had already been raised in Pius XI's apostolic constitution Divini Cultus."

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USPS 0039-3400
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Publish 45 issues per year: Weekly except skipping every other week beginning July through August and skipping one week in December by the Diocese of Ogdensburg. 622 Washington Street, Ogdensburg, N.Y. 13669.

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Entered at the Post Office:
Ogdensburg, NY 13669 and additional mailing offices as Periodical Postage.

Subscription:
For one year:
In-Diocese Rate: $27
Outside of Diocese Rate: $30

Matters for publication should be addressed to PO Box 326 Ogdensburg, NY 13669 and should be received by Wednesday prior to publication. Paper is printed each Friday; dateline is Wednesday. Member, Catholic Press Association.

POSTMASTER:
Send address changes to North Country Catholic, PO Box 326 Ogdensburg, NY 13669-0326

It certainly wasn't my will

It wasn't what I wanted to hear.

Both of my hips are what I refer to as "aftermarket parts" – both have been replaced.

Darcy L. Fargo

My right hip is fantastic. It's easy to forget it's not my original parts. The left hip, though, has never been completely right. Since the replacement, I don't have the constant pain I had before the surgery, but I have persistent muscle weakness that has left me with an awkward gait.

I did a couple rounds of physical therapy. I started going to the gym and regularly strength training the affected muscles. While the gait dysfunction is less pronounced, it's still there.

I followed up with my orthopedic specialist. I heard, "some hips are just like that. You should stop lifting heavy weights."

I didn't like that answer. So, I got a second opinion.

"With the approach used on your replacement, they go through (the affected muscle). Sometimes it heals well. That seems to be the case with your right hip. Sometimes, it just doesn't. That seems to be the case with your left. But you're fine to continue lifting heavy."

While I was thrilled with that last part, the rest of it was kind of devastating. I at least made it to my car before I started crying, but I cried off and on for most of the three-hour drive home.

And here we meet my biggest struggle as I try to allow Jesus to help me get to heaven: I stink at surrendering my will to God's will, and I stink at accepting God's will when it differs from mine.

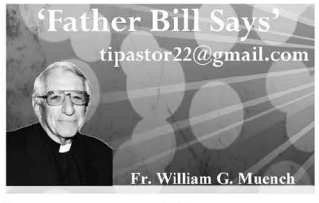
Hip dysfunction certainly wasn't my will.

I get the distinct impression that accepting God's will when it differs from our own is a common struggle. While I find it maddening in some ways, I also find it somewhat odd that I continuously choose to be upset and fight God's will when doing so does nothing but make me sad, bitter and/or angry.

It seems crazy that I choose sadness, bitterness and anger over God's will.

I've spent the last 10 days praying for the grace I need to accept God's will both for this specific issue and in general. I pray for that grace for all of us.

Closer to our popes than ever before



You may remember a recent Sunday Mass when the Gospel reading spoke of Jesus questioning his apostles. He wondered if they truly realized just who he is. It was Peter who immediately answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." This will be the perfect answer for all of us when Jesus turns to us and asks if we know just who He, Jesus, is. We are told in Scripture that when Jesus heard Peter answer, he felt that Peter has been inspired by God the Father.

Jesus decides then. He chooses Peter as the "rock," and on this "rock" Jesus will build His Church. Jesus tells Peter that he will be given the keys to the Kingdom. Since then, we, Catholics, consider Peter to be our first pope. And there has been a pope ever since. During the centuries, the papacy of the Catholic Church has experienced a powerful history, and we admit some difficult problems. In our time, we believe that with God's protection, the papacy has been very stable.

So, on that Sunday, my homily focused on the pope. I believe that we, ordinary Catholics, throughout the world, know more about our present pope, Pope Leo XIV, and all that the papacy means to our Catholic Church. We know what is going on at the Vatican. This has happened because of thigs like the internet and the modern immediate spread of news throughout the world. Nowadays, we are aware of the day-to-day activities of the pope. Through television, we can participate in the pope's Mass each day, and Pope Leo is a frequent part of each of our days. In addition, Pope Leo is an American; he is like us in many ways.

This was not always true. When I was a teenager, our pope was Pope Pius XII. As I think back, he seemed very far away from us and our Catholic Church here in America. We only saw pictures of him, but he did not seem like part of our lives. We did not feel very close to Pope Pius XII.

The next two popes – Pope John XXIII and Pope Paul VI – did not seem very close to us either, however, they had a profound effect on the Catholic Church. The Council did change and transformed my priesthood, and I considered it a happy change. They were instrumental in bring the Second Vatican Council to the Church. I was a different priest because of these two popes, but they were not a part of my everyday life. I do remember that Pope Paul VI did come to this country to speak the United Nations, and he challenged those delegates from every country, saying, "No more war, war never again."

Then, as you remember, the next conclave elected Pope John Paul I, who sadly died after only one month as pope. Then Pope John Paul II was elected. He became well known and liked here in this country; he visited here seven times. So, we saw him often. I remember especially his presence at the World Youth Day in Denver. But otherwise, he seemed far away from us.

Then Pope Benedict XVII and Pope Francis were elected, and we saw much more of them, and they became very involved in our Church. We saw lots of them; they brought peace and joy to our Catholic Church. They helped to draw us all closer together as Catholics.

Now, Pope Leo XIV is an American. So, increasingly the papacy has become part of our life as Catholics. We see news about the pope every day. So, we must pray often for our pope, our Holy Father. We must be ready to listen to his talks and read his writings and keep up with what is happening with him each day. We thank God for these opportunities to make the popes a part of all that we do as Catholics.

HERITAGE AND HEROES

Veteran is thankful for faith, family, freedom

By Mary Beth Bracy,
consecrated virgin
North Country Catholic

This is the second article in our Heritage and Heroes *series.*

For Dr. Bill Caldon, life in the military is a family affair. Bill and his wife, Margaret, are originally from Kentucky but moved to the North Country decades ago. They are members of Holy Cross Parish in Plattsburgh, where Bill also co-owns High Peaks Dental.

Dr. Caldon is also a veteran of the United States Air Force.

"I would like to say it (enlisting in the Air Force) was totally out of patriotism but in reality, it was more due to need and pragmatism," he said. "In my senior year of dental school, I was concerned with the fact that I was not a speed demon in completing my scheduled procedures and was wondering how I could generate enough income to support a family."

An Air Force recruiter convinced him service with the branch would address his concerns, and he enlisted.

Dr. Caldon and Margaret were first stationed at the now-closed Wurtsmith Air Force Base in Michigan, where their first two sons were born. The young family was later stationed in Italy.

"(The assignment overseas) was really challenging for Margaret, who had a two-year-old and a six-month-old while living 12 miles from the base, initially without a car and no phone for the first two years," Dr. Caldon said. "She had no access to paper diapers, no washer or dryer, so she was washing all of the diapers by hand and air drying them. There were other challenges with lack of water, sweltering heat in the summer and no heat in the winter... I went to work on base each day while she was home just trying to survive. Anyway, the Air Force offered me a two-year residency in general dentistry and once again Margaret gave up possible careers to allow me to follow my advancements in dentistry and the military. She is the real hero in our 20-year Air Force experience and the one who made all the sacrifices."

After completing the requirements to be considered a general dentist in the military, Dr. Caldon's responsibilities and skills increased.

"During my career, I served as an educator and director of a one-year general practice residency, commander of three dental squadrons and board examiner for the Armed Forces Board of General Dentistry among other positions," he said.

The Caldon's are faithful, lifelong Catholics.

"Both Margaret and I were raised Catholic," Dr. Caldon explained. "She went to Catholic grade schools and a Catholic High School, as did I, as well as attending a Catholic College. Our Sacrament of Matrimony was concelebrated by three priests who were professors at the Catholic High School which I attended. So, both of us had a very strong Christian foundation in our relationship. With all of the forced moves, we either needed to find a new civilian parish or, if overseas, become part of the base parish. Being overseas was a great experience because you were forced to be a true faith 'community.' There were no choices of parishes to belong to, no extended families to rely on... If you wanted the community to be vital, you needed to step up and do what needed to be done. Margaret reminded us that it wasn't called the 'Now Air Force' for nothing: Now you're a musician. Now you're a singer. Now you're a lector. Now you're a lay Eucharistic Minister."

The Caldons' beliefs have also impacted their military service.

"I have no doubt that without our faith, the challenges would have been a lot harder to face," Dr. Caldon said. "Our oldest child went to the Air Force Academy, and it is a physically and mentally grueling experience, especially the first 10 months before you are recognized. In addition to many other activities, he was a member of the Catholic choir. He said that in the chapel was the only place that he felt safe and was at peace and he didn't know how the other young adults who did not have a strong faith as a basis could have coped. Probably not as acute as for our son, being God focused allowed us to endure any of our challenges with acceptance and even joy."

Military life helped prepare Dr. Caldon to live out his faith today.

"All of our experiences made us appreciate how important our faith is in our everyday life and how faith is more than a personal decision and commitment, it is a community," he said. "We are the body of Christ. It is all of us together. Also, to be a good Christian requires courage, discipline and integrity, all character traits that are required in the military."

While his practice schedule limits Dr. Caldon's ability to participate in parish ministries, Margaret is very active in

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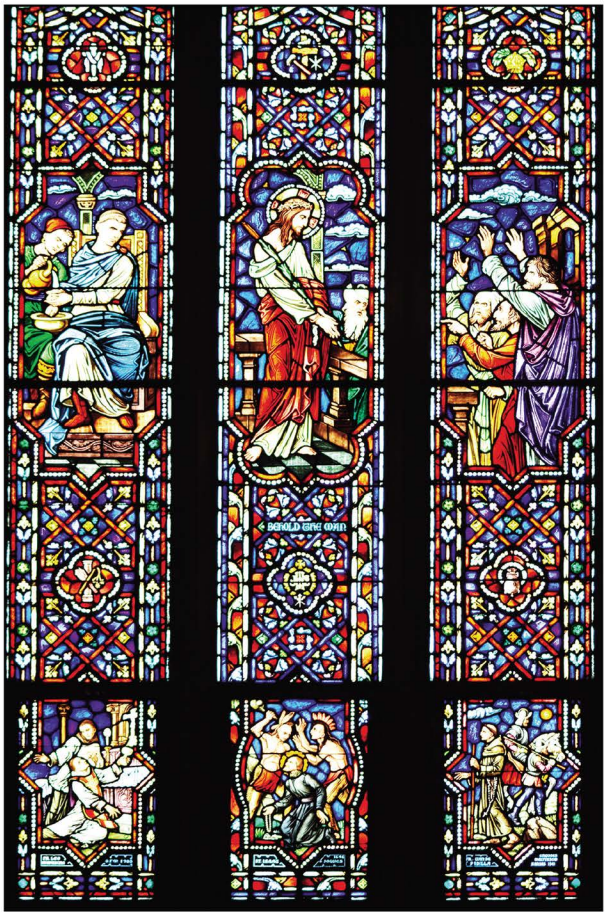

(Left) This window at St. Mary's Cathedral in Ogdensburg is depicting Jesus before Pilate. Underneath are three scenes of martyrs in American history (from left to right): Father Juan de Padilla, who became the first martyr of the New World in 1541, in what is now Kansas; St. Isaac Jogues, a French missionary priest who is revered as one of the North American martyrs and was killed in Auriesville, New York, in 1646; and Father Leo Heinrichs, a Franciscan priest who was shot while celebrating Holy Mass in Denver, Colorado in 1908. (Above) Dr. Bill Caldon, center, with his four children and son-in-law, Boone, Josh, Seth, Lizzie and Kevin.

Sister Cindy bids farewell to home diocese

By Darcy Fargo
Editor

While living her vocation involved spending 43 years in South America, Sister Cindy Sullivan, a sister with the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary (BVM), is preparing to leave Massena and the Diocese of Ogdensburg, where she grew up and where she has lived for nearly 10 years, on Sept. 12.

Sister Cindy will be moving to a residence at the mother house of the BVM community in Dubuque, Iowa, where she and her mother will live.

"I'm originally from Massena; I was born in Massena," Sister Cindy said. "I lived and worked in South America – in Ecuador – for 43 years, and I came back when my dad got sick in 2017 to help care for my dad and mom. Dad died in January. Mom is ready to get out of the house. There are too many memories there."

The BVM community, in partnership with Presbyterian Homes & Services, offers community living to the sisters and area residents in two assisted living facilities, senior living apartments and a new memory care unit.

"Mom will be living with me in senior housing," Sister Cindy said. "It's right on a bluff of the Mississippi River. I'm going from one river, the St. Lawrence, to another. There's the original mother house, and an atrium connects that old part with the new. It's very nice."

Sister Cindy said she has "mixed emotions" about the move.

"Mom has never not lived in Massena," she said. "She's 96. All her friends are gone. She frequently tells me 'everyone who was in my wedding is gone.' Being here in Massena has been just great. Bishop Terry (R. LaValley) has been great to work with. I was first on the Mission Board for two terms, and now I'm on the Diocesan Pastoral Council. It's been fun working with and getting to know people from other parishes. And I'll miss this community. I know a lot of people here. I'm a substitute bridge player and a golfer, and I was teaching kids on Sundays for a long time. Father Mark (Reilly, pastor of St. Peter's parish in Massena) and everyone here have been welcoming."

Father Reilly noted that Sister Cindy has been serving the community in "quiet but competent ways" since she started living there in 2017.

"She's had her hands in a lot of things," he said. "From helping out with formation, parish programs and Super Sunday breakfasts to Meals on Wheels, she's been there serving."

Sister Cindy served as the director of Meals on Wheels in Massena from 2017 to 2024.

"When I first came back here from Ecuador, I was translating in the prisons," she said. "When the (Spanish speaking) prisoners would go for hearings, I would be their translator. The handlers I was working with moved out of state. Before that job went away, Meals on Wheels was looking for someone. I thought 'I could do that.' When I ran the center in Ecuador, we served 2,000 people. Feeding 100 felt like a piece of cake."

Sister Cindy said her time with Meals on Wheels was "a perfect ministry."

"I got to meet some of the most vulnerable people in our community and their families," she said. "In Ecuador, I dealt with entire families but not many seniors. So, it was nice dealing with a population I had never served before."

Even as she served Meals on Wheels, she continued to raise funds for the Center for Working Families, formerly the Working Boys' Center, in Quito, Ecuador, the place where she originally became acquainted with the BVM community.

"I went down originally with the Peace Corps," she said. "I was a dental hygienist. They didn't know what that was in Ecuador. Originally, there were four of us – dental hygienists – who went down. Two went home the first week. They decided it wasn't for them. Two of us stayed on. When we first got there, the people in charge of our program weren't there. We were told to 'find something to do.' Another volunteer who was working at the (Working Boys') Center took me with her to build houses. I spent Sundays working with a family making bricks. We were working mud into tar with our feet and getting the stones out, then mixing in straw and forming it into bricks. It was great! The center was great! The first day I walked in, I knew I wanted to be a part of it. We were working with kids who were working as shoe-shine kids by age 5. They were tough kids, but great kids."

Joining the Peace Corps and ending up in Ecuador was not part of Sister Cindy's original plans.

"I thought I was going to be a professional golfer," she said. "I had a natural swing. I moved to California, and I was working as a hygienist and working with a professional golfer, who was teaching me. I got to where I didn't want to work at playing golf and work. I had a friend from home who was off in Zaire with the Peace Corps. That sounded interesting. So, when I signed up for the Peace Corps, I said I wanted to go to Africa. Instead, I ended up in Ecuador. I turned 21 in Ecuador."

The Center for Working Families/Working Boys' Center was founded by a Jesuit priest, Father John Halligan, in 1964. In 1967, after Father Halligan put out a call for assistance, Madre Miguel Conway, BVM, joined him in running the center.

"When I first applied to the BVMs, they pointed out that they weren't really a missionary community," Sister Cindy said. "I figured God wouldn't have taken me halfway around the world to meet the BVMs if that wasn't where he wanted me."

After completing her formation in the United States with the BVMs, she asked to return to Ecuador. Her request was granted, and she served there for over 40 years.

"I'd love to go back at some point," she said. "It's different now, though. When I was there, we could go anywhere we wanted without fear. We always felt safe. Now, with all the Narco Trafficante (gangs connected to narcotics trafficking) taking over everything, it's not safe to go out without someone accompanying."

Until then, she looks forward to spending time living with her sisters in community.

"It'll be nice going back to the community, being back in contact with our sisters," she said.

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SEPTEMBER 2, 2026

Belief, belonging on the Portuguese Way

By Mark Valley
For the North Country Catholic

A scene from Mark Valley's trip along the Camino, his third journey on the trail.

No plan survives first contact with the Camino. I left Porto on August 4, 2026, with one anyway: follow the Portuguese Coastal Way north, keep the Atlantic somewhere to my left, follow the yellow painted arrows (flechas), then turn inland toward Tui and up to Santiago. At 5:15 the first morning I hugged the Douro river toward the ocean, where I met a fisherman preparing to launch a wooden skiff. The sky went blue and pink before the sun began cutting across toward the west. Many miles later, much of it on warped and weathered boards laid over the dunes, I decided the Coastal was a good choice and flat terrain good for the knees. Europe's heat had brought even more tourists to the coasts, but they were mostly on the beaches, or so I thought.

A few days later, when lodging and distance stopped cooperating, I shipped a kilo of gear ahead and moved inland to the ancient Central Way along old Roman roads, the trail of Queen Isabel of Portugal to Santiago way back in the 14th century.

What has interested me more on this third Camino is what exactly we think we are doing out here. A pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela is an intensely active Catholic phenomenon since the 1100s. It's a physical act performed in public: thousands of us walking through other people's towns toward the reputed remains of a supporting apostle. The reaction from locals varies. Some offer a cheerful Buen Camino. Others seemed understandably less enchanted by the annual migration of foreigners wandering past their houses with clacking sticks.

Almost nobody I met said they were walking for religious reasons. People wanted exercise, solitude, adventure, a reset, perhaps to lose a little weight. Yet everyone wanted the ink stamps. Pilgrims carried credentials, ducked into cafes and churches to have them marked, and carefully document evidence of progress toward Santiago. Everyone wanted the official scripted Latin compostela at the end, printed from a color printer in Santiago.

The credential itself is an old solution to an old problem. Medieval pilgrims needed ways to identify themselves and eventually to prove they had actually completed a pilgrimage. The modern credential, it seems, is a medieval blockchain updated with rubber ink stamps and wax seals from another time, a distributed ledger recording my movement north. There's no cryptography involved, but the system has value because there is a historical record of use. Most interestingly, my credential records nothing about what I believe. It only records that I was there. There is a Portugese proverb: Quem anda à chuva molha-se. Essentially, If you walk in the rain you will eventually get wet.

I still don't know what repeated exposure to an explicitly Catholic act does to someone who calls himself a lapsed Catholic, and I am suspicious of easy answers. Catholicism has always been intensely physical anyway: kneeling, standing, and of course CYO basketball. Belief may take place somewhere inside, but Catholicism has never been content to leave it there. The Camino wants our feet, and lets God sort out the rest.

Crossing the trestle border-bridge at Valença into Galicia, the Camino became more crowded and the sense of belonging more obvious. Portuguese, Spanish, German, French and Chinese pilgrims moved toward the same place without requiring much explanation from one another, but everyone gathered on the bridge at Pontrevedra to watch the solar eclipse to see a shared phenomena.

Finally, I clomped into Santiago from the south after 28 kilometers, the city seeming to hide just beyond one more hill all day. In the Praza do Obradoiro I met a family of six who had walked from Burgundy, two thousand kilometers, which adjusted any assessment I'd made of my own accomplishment. The next morning was the Feast of the Assumption. Lines for Mass curled around the cathedral while I wandered the city nursing a respiratory infection, no fever and no COVID, but enough wheezing to preclude another long walking day. Camino cough – it's a thing apparently.

I went instead to the other church in town, the ornate Basílica de San Francisco and knocked on the big black door. An older churchman behind a desk gave me the Franciscan credential, a standard blessing in Spanish, a stamp on paper with my latin name. Then he offered me a hug. That surprises me every year. Sometimes I wonder whether he needs it more than the weathered pilgrims passing through his dark sacristy. *Maricum Vallis* has a dash to it. Sounds like an ex-crusader, haunted from the Siege of Damascus who returns to walk the peaceful pilgrimage to Santiago…

After setting off west toward Finisterre – the end of the Earth as far as the Romans were concerned, I took another restless rest day at a hotel with no AC. Night Maricum had everything packed for early morning Maricum, and we were out the door at five the next morning, over rustling eucalyptus leaves in the dark, backtracking once after missing a flecha. The sun came up around Langosteira. Then the trail turns south down the peninsula and the sun is suddenly on the other side of me, which is disorienting for a moment. This is the pagan route, out to where the sun goes away at night, at a large stone lighthouse, waves hitting the palisade of rock below. No apostle at the end of it, no relics, no queue for noon Mass. I collected no stamps and went into no churches, but there they were – my teammates, other pilgrims carrying on, all having finished or started something in Santiago and reminding me of what we think we are doing out here.

There is a tradition to throw a stone into the sea that you have carried with you, something you want to unburden yourself of. I am not alone, there are others doing what I do. We don't need credentials here and don't need to state our beliefs either. We demonstrate them, or at least I felt I did. I threw a rock and watched it pass over the cliff, over the edge of the earth.

Actor and producer Mark Valley was born in Ogdensburg.

Environmental Stewardship

The rights of nature

Everything God creates, He ties together in various ways. This results in all entities being interconnected in such a complex web that not even the most advanced and powerful supercomputer could ever decipher the beauty of this system.

This is God's way to protect all His creatures, regardless of how small or seemingly insignificant they appear, for if one is injured or killed, it impacts others.

As stewards of God's handiwork, our obligation is to treat everything with kindness, gentleness and honor. Harming any one of His creations ripples through the entire system in unseen ways; and there are penalties for violating a creature's "rights." A harmful deed to another entity eventually triggers events that come around and impact the rest of the connected web, including us as people.

A life in harmony with nature is one in which your actions minimize the impact you have on your surroundings. For example, try to prepare only enough food for what can be eaten, so that there are few, if any leftovers. This leaves food for others and less waste. Rather than stepping on a bug on the floor, scoop it up and take it outside for a bird or other small critter to eat. Allow weeds and other plants to grow in spaces around your home rather than having a lawn that needs regular mowing.

All entities in nature have the God given "right" to experience an existence that was planned for them by the Father. Yet, because we have free will, humans often insert our own selfish influence. Certainly, we have the obligation to address issues that pertain to our basic health and well being; however we should never live a life of excess.

Jesus took only what was necessary and never more. It is believed He had few, if any possessions when He died. Most of us cannot say the same.

Bishop's Public Schedule

Sept. 2 – 11 a.m. – Mass at Wadhams Hall
Sept. 3 – noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral
Sept. 4 – noon – Diocesan Staff Picnic at Bishop's Residence
Sept. 6 – 8 a.m. – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral
Sept. 8 – 9:30 a.m. – Diocesan Department Head Meeting at Wadhams Hall in Ogdensburg
3:30 p.m. – New York State Catholic Conference Board of Bishops Executive Committee Conference Call
Sept. 9 – 10:30 a.m.–1 p.m. – Episcopal Council Meeting at Bishop's Residence followed by lunch
5 p.m. – Mass with the Adirondack, Franklin and St. Lawrence Commissioned Lay Ministers Association followed by dinner at St. Mary's Church in Brushton

Protecting God's Children

The Diocese of Ogdensburg has scheduled Protecting God's Children training sessions. This required training addresses child abuse, the methods and means by which abusers commit abuse, and the five steps to prevent abuse from occurring and stop it from continuing. Pre-registration is encouraged at www.virtus.org. Upcoming sessions:
Sept. 9 – 9 a.m. – St. James Major Church, Carthage
Sept. 10 – 6 p.m. – Catholic Community of St. Alexander and St. Joseph, Morrisonville
Sept. 16 – 3 p.m. – St. Peter's Parish, Massena
Sept. 17 – 7 p.m. –Augustinian Academy Carthage

Rest in Peace

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

Sept. 2 – Rev. Timothy J. Mahoney, 1938; Msgr. Claudius Sechi, 1966; Rev. Thomas G. Votraw, 2007; Rev. Floyd J. Bleaux, 2009
Sept. 3 – Rev. David W. Driscoll, O.S.A., 1963; Rev. John S. Branche, 2003
Sept. 4 – Rev. Alphee Perron, 1938; Rev. Walter J. Charbonneau, 1982; Msgr. Robert J. Giroux, 2000; Rev. Patrick Mundy, 2017
Sept. 5 – Rev. Arthur Tardiff, O.M.I., 1961; Rev. John Sullivan M.S.C., 1962; Rev. Louis C. Gardner, 2000
Sept. 6 – Rev. James Connor, 1930; Rev. Joseph Stanislaus Carroll, 1952
Sept. 7 – Rev. Manuel Belleville, 1964
Sept. 8 – Rev. Michael Jacobs, S.J., 1988; Rev. William H. Coffey, 2000

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

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Message as it will appear in the ad (please print)
Feel free to use your own paper.
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Project aims to heal 'toxic polarization' in U.S. Church

By Tessa Gervasini
EWTN News

The Communion Project initiative hopes to repair polarization in the U.S. Church and aid the Church in offering a better and more joyful witness in a divided country, organizers said.

"Unfortunately, too often Catholics and Catholic leaders are acting more like thermometers instead of thermostats," Jonathan Lewis, mission strategy officer for the Paulist Fathers and co-director of the Communion Project, told EWTN News.

"We're reading the temperature of the room or the culture, instead of setting the temperature according to our values and the truths of the Church," he said.

"So, part of what this effort is aimed to do is to lower the temperature of division and distrust, starting with those of us Catholics who call ourselves brothers and sisters, who are a real spiritual family," Lewis said.

"As we approach any election season, there's always a need to help lower the temperature, have more thoughtful conversations, discern our Catholic values," he said.

The Catholic initiative hopes to heal toxic polarization in the Church by creating dialogue, providing resources, promoting unity through national communication methods, and by aiding local communities to create unification at their level, organizers said. Exact plans are still being formed.

"We're just beginning … and trying to share," Lewis said. "We're starting with a lot of resources" and "adapting resources that already existed."

"Then we're planning, over the next year or two years, to develop programs for dioceses and organizations and religious communities, students in Catholic schools."

The movement to start the project began in 2022 at the Paulist Fathers' general assembly.

"One of the priorities of the Paulists is to read the signs of the times, like the Second Vatican Council tells us to do, so that we can respond in a spirit-filled way," Lewis said.

At the gathering, they discussed "the realities of the United States and the Church in the United States today that we need to respond to or engage," he said. "And that's when the topic of toxic polarization emerged."

"The polarization affecting the U.S. Catholic Church is not merely a matter of policy dispute or partisan loyalty," said Father Ricky Manalo, CSP, co-director of the Communion Project. "It is a deeply spiritual and relational rupture, shaping how Catholics imagine moral life, celebrate the sacraments, interpret tradition, and remain in communion amid difference."

"Within Catholic life, polarization is more than disagreement; it is the loss of our capacity to remain in relationship, even amid difference, as one body in Christ," he said.

Inspired by Pope Francis, the group founded The Paulist Initiative on Polarization as a national partnership of Catholic leaders committed to strengthening unity across political, theological, and cultural divisions.

In 2025, the effort was renamed the Communion Project following Pope Leo XIV's public commitment to building communion in the Church.

"This is really a priority of Pope Leo," Lewis said. "In his first inaugural Mass, Pope Leo said his first great desire would be for a unified Church in communion. We really see this as an initiative that is trying to live out the message and the priority of the Holy Father."

When people think of polarization, they usually first think of "left and right politics, Republicans, Democrats," Lewis said. "And certainly that's one area, but I really see polarization showing up in a lot of different ways."

"This isn't only in public life or in politics, where one might expect, it's also in the Roman Catholic Church in the United States," Lewis said.

It can come up due to division surrounding the liturgy, or cultural or generational differences, but ultimately the goal is to remind Catholics of shared beliefs and values.

The project hopes to help the faithful "see that while people might prioritize different dimensions of our Catholic social teaching, there's unity within that work, and we need to bring people together," Lewis said.

For example, the Church has a mission to protect human dignity, and "some people focus on ending the death penalty," while "other people might focus on ending abortion and the work of the pro-life movement," Lewis explained. "Even if we're working in different areas, those areas are not in conflict."

CATHOLIC WORLD AT A GLANCE

Visa rule reversed after legal challenge from Catholic group

A federal judge has struck down a major Trump White House immigration policy, calling the directive "patently unlawful" and handing a win to a Catholic immigration group that brought suit against the administration. U.S. District Judge Jeannette Vargas rebuked the Trump administration in the Aug. 21 ruling for what she said was a "direct" infringement on normal federal policy rules. The U.S. government through the Department of State had issued a policy on Jan. 14 suspending new immigrant visas to dozens of countries. Secretary of State Marco Rubio directed consular offices to adhere to the policy and deny new visas to nationals of 75 countries. In making the policy, the government alleged that immigrants from those countries were at risk of becoming "public charges." The Catholic Legal Immigration Network subsequently sued, arguing that the White House had in part "invented a visa processing regime" that violated U.S. statutory rules.

Illinois Catholic hospitals won't have to promote suicide

Some Catholic hospitals and several other religious objectors in Illinois will not have to promote the state's assisted suicide regime while a lawsuit challenging the policy plays out in federal court. Springfield Bishop Thomas Paprocki had earlier in August brought the lawsuit against the state in U.S. district court alongside a Lutheran care home and several Christian doctors. The suit argues that the Illinois "End-of-Life Options" law requires doctors to participate in helping patients kill themselves even if the doctors conscientiously object to doing so. On Aug. 21, the district court said the state would be restrained from enforcing the suicide rules against the objectors while the lawsuit continues through the federal court system. The Thomas More Society, which is representing the plaintiffs in the suit, announced the order in a press release on Aug. 24. Peter Breen, the head of litigation at the Catholic legal group, described the order as "a critical first victory" for the religious objectors in the case.

Knights of Columbus leader appointed to Vatican body

Pope Leo XIV has appointed Knights of Columbus Supreme Knight Patrick Kelly as a member of the Dicastery for the Laity, the Family, and Life. The Vatican announced Kelly's appointment on Aug. 25. The dicastery was created by Pope Francis in 2016 to promote, as stated in its statutes, "the apostolate of the lay faithful, the pastoral care of the family and its mission according to God's plan and for the safeguard and support of human life." The dicastery is also the Vatican office responsible for organizing the international World Youth Day (WYD). Its members are not full-time staff and do not need to relocate to Rome. Rather, they attend plenary sessions in Rome and vote on decrees. Cardinal Kevin Farrell has served as its prefect since 2016, the year it was founded.

ADIRONDACK MOUNTAIN

ALPHA

Lake Placid – Alpha program to be held.

Date: Sundays, Sept. 20 to Dec. 6

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

Place: St. Agnes Church

Features: Alpha offers a welcoming place to gather with others for conversation, friendship, and discovery. Each session includes a shared meal, an engaging video, and honest, respectful discussion in a relaxed and hospitable environment. Whether your faith is strong, you're returning after time away, or you're simply seeking more, every question and every person is welcome.

Contact: Deb Lennon for more information: lennondebra26@gmail.com or 518-524-4388

CLINTON NORTHERN FRANKLIN

SOAKING PRAYERS SESSIONS

Come enjoy a relaxing prayer opportunity at two different locations.

Plattsburgh: Newman Center, 1:30 p.m. to 3:30; 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); Sept. 10, Oct. 8

Features: 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.

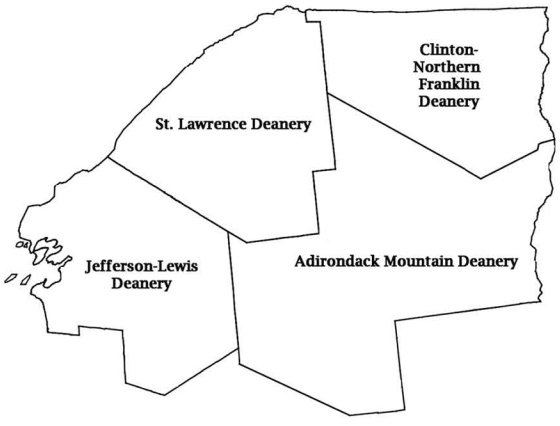
Contact: All sessions are facilitated by Eve McGill, Living Waters Healing Ministry 518-645-2648, evemcgill16@charter.net

FIRST FRIDAY

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

Date: Sept. 4

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



The North County 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.

CHICKEN BBQ

AuSable Forks - The Holy Name Church is bringing back its chicken barbecue, which was featured for many years in the town's Labor Day celebration. The event is being sponsored by the Au Sable Forks Knights of Columbus and the Holy Name Church.

Date: Sept. 5

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

Place: Holy Name Parish Center

Cost: $15 includes 1/2 BBQ chicken, cole slaw, potatoes, roll, dessert, and bottled water. And for the children, for $10 we are serving hot dogs, chips or sides, dessert, and bottled water.

CLM ANNUAL DINNER

Brushton – The St. Lawrence, Franklin, and Adirondack Commissioned Lay Ministers Association are invited to the CLM Annual Dinner.

Date: Sept. 9

Time: Mass at 5 p.m. with Bishop LaValley followed by dinner at 6 p.m.

Place: St. Mary's Church

Cost: $15 per person

Contact: To register go to: https://www.rcdony.org/clm-event

TURKEY DINNER

Lyon Mountain – St. Bernard's and St. Edmund's Parish to have a turkey dinner to benefit the fuel fund.

Date: Sept. 13

Time: 11:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Place: Lyon Mountain American Legion

Cost: Adults, $15, Children 6-12, $7; Under 5, Free

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

APPLEFEST

Peru - Join your family and friends at the 48th Annual St. Augustine's Applefest.

Date: Sept. 19

Place: St. Augustine's Parish Center

Schedule: Activities at St. Augustine's Parish Center begin at 10:30 a.m. At 11 a.m., the community parade begins its route down Main Street, from Peru Elementary to St. Augustine's Parish. Enjoy apple fritters, chicken BBQ, fried dough, caramelized apples, michigans, sweet sausages, burgers, games, train ride, face painting, bounce house, Pipes and Drums of Plattsburgh, and the On Three Band. Roger's House and St. Vincent DePaul have sales throughout the day. The Grand Raffle drawing takes place at 4 p.m. Father Alan Shnob is Parade Grand Marshal.

HARVEST DINNER

Altona – St. Ann's and Holy Angels invite you to St. Ann's Harvest Dinner.

Date: Sept. 20

Time: 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Place: Holy Angel's Hall

Cost: Adults, $18; Children 6-12, $10; 5 and under, $Free

Features: Turkey and all the trimmings, Apple and Pumpkin desserts. There will be a bake sale, themed basket raffles and a Lottery Ticket Raffle.

JEFFERSON-LEWIS

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: Sept. 6

Time: Following 11 a.m. Mass

Place: St. Hedwig's Church

Contact: 315-348-6260

SPAGHETTI & MEATBALLS

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

Date: Sept. 12

Time: 4 p.m. to 7

Place: St. Mary's Parish Center

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

Contact: For more information call 315-629-4678

ST. LAWRENCE

CHICKEN BBQ

Gouverneur – St. James School to have a Chicken BBQ.

Date: Sept. 6

Time: 11 a.m. until sold out

Cost: $15

ROSARY WITH DEVOTIONS

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

Date: Sept. 5

Time: 8 a.m.

Place: Notre Dame Church, Ogdensburg

Features: Rosary with devotions

FIRST SATURDAY ROSARY

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

Date: Sept. 5

Time: 3:15 p.m.

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

MENS GROUP

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

Date: Sept. 5

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

Place: Sacred Heart Church

ALPHA

Massena – You are invited to join us for ALPHA.

Date: Tuesdays starting Sept. 8

Time: 6 p.m. to 8:30

Place: St. Mary's Social Hall

Features: Alpha is an opportunity to explore life and the Christian Faith in a friendly, open and informal environment. No pressure. No follow up. No charge including a FREE Meal.

Contact: For more info at 315-769-2469

BRUNCH

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

Date: Sept. 13

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Chicago Bears donate to Catholic Charities

By Francesca Pollio Fenton
EWTN News

The Chicago Bears announced Aug. 22 a donation of $200,000 to Catholic Charities' work to support those impacted by severe storms and flooding across the southern suburbs of Chicago and northwest Indiana.

Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Chicago and Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Gary, Indiana, will each receive $100,000 to aid in their efforts to help address immediate and ongoing needs in the affected communities including food, clothing, housing assistance, and other resources to help in recovery while many families are still without power, displaced from their homes, and begin to consider rebuilding plans.

On Aug. 11, high winds, heavy rain, and tornado activity swept through northwest Indiana and east Chicago causing severe damage to homes and other buildings. Gary, Indiana, was reported as being the hardest-hit city.

NIPSCO, one of Indiana's largest natural gas and electric companies, reported nearly 400,000 outages after the storm. The company described the storm as the most destructive ever to strike its service area, causing historic damage to the electric system and producing its largest power outage ever.

As of Aug. 24, roughly 10,000 individuals remain without power in Gary.

"We are very grateful for this generous gift from the Bears, which will immediately benefit many people in need who have been impacted by recent storms and provide for ongoing recovery efforts," Bishop Robert J. McClory of the Diocese of Gary said in a statement.

"Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Gary has been responding to local needs from day one. The support from the Bears and many other partners will help elevate efforts to reach the most vulnerable in our communities," he added. "I encourage everyone to continue to pray, reach out to our neighbors who are suffering, and support efforts by Catholic Charities and others to assist those in need."

Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Gary Executive Director Terry Seljan said: "The devastating impact of the storms across northwest Indiana has turned lives upside down for thousands of families, leaving them to face unexpected challenges and uncertainty."

He explained that currently their focus "is on helping our neighbors access the support and resources they need to stabilize so they can begin to recover and move forward."

He added: "We are incredibly grateful to the Chicago Bears organization for their generous support and for the care and concern they have shown for our Northwest Indiana community. Their commitment is a powerful reminder of what can happen when people come together to help their neighbors in times of need. We hope others who are able will join them in supporting the Storm Relief Fund and helping bring relief, hope, and healing to families across our region."

Sally Blount, CEO of Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Chicago, also expressed her gratitude.

"We deeply value and respect the long-standing philanthropic leadership of the Chicago Bears organization. As one of our region's largest human services providers, we are honored to be entrusted with distributing this critical funding," she said.

"An unexpected expense of even a few hundred dollars can amount to a crisis for an individual or family already living on a very limited budget. This funding will make a big difference to families affected by the storm," she said.

Around the diocese

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

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

Place: Father Amyot Parish Center

Cost: Adults, $10; under 12, $5; under 5, Free; Omelets, add $3; Take-outs available

Contact: For more information contact Grand Knight Gil Gonthier 315-212-5166.

ALPHA

Gouverneur – You are invited to Alpha.

Date: Mon. Sept 14 to Nov. 22

Place: St. James School

Time: 5:30 p.m.

Features: Each session includes a shared meal, an engaging video, and honest, respectful discussion in a relaxed and hospitable environment. Whether your faith is strong, you're returning after time away, or you're simply seeking more, you'll find that every question and every person is welcome. Many people find that Alpha becomes a place where faith comes alive, relationships are formed, and hearts are opened to what God is doing. It's completely FREE and includes a delicious home cooked dinner each week.

Contact: For more information call 315-287-0114

EUCHARISTIC ADORATION

Bishop Terry R. LaValley is encouraging the centuries-old devotion of 40 Hours of Eucharistic Adoration throughout the diocese of Ogdensburg for vocations to the priesthood and consecrated life. The Highway to Heaven team is sponsoring this traditional "forty-hour period" commemorating our Lord's burial until His resurrection. Individuals, families, and groups are invited to join us on the Highway to Heaven!

Date: Sept. 18

Time: 5 p.m.

Place: St. Mary's Cathedral

Features: During the 40 Hours Devotion, individuals sign up to spend an hour with Jesus, truly present in the Holy Eucharist. It provides a wonderful opportunity to hear God speaking to your heart, through quiet and community prayers, and unleashes His blessings upon parishes.

Contact: To sign up for a Holy Hour as an individual, family, or group, **contact:** Deacon Bill O'Brien at 315-528-0461 or billob315@gmail.com

DIOCESAN EVENTS

DISCERNMENT GROUPS

The Diocese of Ogdensburg is pleased to announce the launch of Men's Discernment Groups beginning this September. These gatherings are an opportunity for men who are feeling called to explore the possibility of priesthood, deepen their prayer life, and walk with others who are discerning God's will.

Place: Plattsburgh – led by Father Doug Schirmer; Canton – led by Father Scott Belina; Watertown – led by Father Carter Pierce

Features: Whether you are actively discerning a vocation to the priesthood or simply seeking clarity in your spiritual life, you are warmly invited to participate. More information, including meeting dates and registration details, will follow soon.

Contact: For more information contact Deacon Garry Stevens, gstevens@rcdony.org or 315-854-6158

SSJ LAY ASSOCIATE PROGRAM

The Sisters of St. Joseph invite you to a meeting being held around the diocese if you are interested in learning about our Lay Associate Program.

Schedule: Sept. 12 at St. Patrick's Church, Colton at 1 p.m.; Sept. 13 at John XXIII Newman Center, Plattsburgh at 2 p.m.; Sept. 20 at Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, Dostie Hall, Watertown from 2 to 4 p.m.

Features: Associates meet once a month to learn about the spirituality, the charism and mission and history of the Sisters of St. Joseph, pray together, and discuss ways to deepen one's spiritual life. This group is open to men and women.

Contact: If you are interested, please contact Sister Mary Eamon

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SUNDAY'S SCRIPTURE

When we've been wronged

September 6

Twenty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time

READINGS
Ezekiel 33:7-9
Romans 13:8-10
Matthew 18:15-20

I very seldom do Facebook, and I let the birds do most of the tweeting. Some may wonder how I can face reality without Facebook or Instagram or Twitter/X.

Msgr. Robert H. Aucoin

Why bring up social networking? We hear Jesus describe in today's Gospel how to correct our friends or enemies if we have been wronged. Talk to the person one on one is the simple but very profound advice that Jesus gives. If the offender does not change, then bring in some witnesses while you explain to the offender why you have been wronged. If that doesn't work, then go to the assembly, the Church, and let the Church decide.

Do we follow a different path? Do we talk to everyone else about how we have been wronged? Perhaps, some also use various social networking techniques to blab to others about others.

Jesus' formula is that we build bridges. Instead, do we tend to build barriers?

Not only do we talk about the faults and mistakes of others, but some sometimes build up what I would call "savings accounts" of their errors. You have offended me so that gives me the right to chalk up that one offense. You offend me a second time, then I can make another deposit. So, we build up these savings accounts of offenses believing that we can cash them in some day and really get even with the one who has offended us.

Jesus' simple method tells us to repair the damage right away even if we have not caused the damage. That formula applies to human and family situations, to work situations and to the Church environment. From a human point of view, we should build up one another. You can't do that while harboring grudges, hurts and petty peeves. Likewise, we cannot build up the body of Christ, the Church, when we let annoyances fester.

In all of this, remember that if you are offended in any way, no matter how, make sure that you are not the one who is at fault. Sometimes, we are quick to judge and place blame on others when we should be placing the blame on ourselves.

Here's another fact about my life. I do not watch reality television. In fact, I don't know what the latest reality TV shows are. The Biggest Loser was not part of my repertoire, Jersey Shore is not my idea of a shore vacation, Real Housewives are quite unreal. I have seen enough reality TV to know that this so-called reality must change.

Why avoid reality TV? Well, as Jesus says in today's Gospel, we must build up others, society and the Church. Many of these reality TV shows are like instruction manuals on how to bring out and encourage the worst in people rather than their best. Reality TV and similar types of programming create situations for people to display their darker side. Whether it's conniving to get someone thrown off the island, plotting to get someone else fired or even publicly displaying one's ignorance on one of the courtroom drama shows. None of that brings out the best in us.

As sons and daughters of God and brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ, we have a dignity that comes to us from being made in the image and likeness of God, redeemed through the saving waters of Baptism. That dignity is restored when we celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation and is enriched every time we celebrate the Eucharist. We must build up God's people, one person at a time or as a group, rather than tearing down. Because of Jesus Christ, we are really so much better than we sometimes portray ourselves. May we always reflect the greatness that God has given us!

CALLED TO SERVE

A retreat does not need dissection

Some of the deacons of the diocese are on retreat for a few days this week.

The presenter is a deacon from Indiana. I will tell you more about him and his presentations next week.

I want to write about retreats though. To do that let me introduce you to my stepdad, Joe O'Shea. Every year since he went to high school, Joe would go on retreat at least once a year. He did this when he was single and when he was married. Joe felt obliged to attend a retreat. He did not come back home from each retreat a changed person; at least not to this observer. I should add, I was a young adult when Joe came into my mother's life, so these are not childhood observations.

Joe died in 2009. I remember him as a font of useful and useless information. And to hear him talk, Joe was present at every major event in the metro area in his lifetime. Joe was there when New York came alive during the VE (Victory in Europe) parade. He was in the crowd when Jackie Robinson played in his first game for the Brooklyn Dodgers. He said he was in the crowd along 1st Avenue in Lower Manhattan when Pope Paul VI went to the United Nations in 1965. I believed him.

But Joe never talked about his retreats. The retreat sites must have been reasonably close given that he would have to take City of New York transit, but Joe never shared a location with me.

Deacon Kevin Mastellon

I knew they were sponsored retreats. The parish Holy Name Society or the Knights of Columbus or something. The cynical me would always wonder if Joe went on retreat at all. Maybe he was calling a get-away week "a retreat" but was really stealing away to some obscure venue doing nefarious things.

If you knew Joe, you knew that was not possible. He was truly on a retreat, sponsored by a Catholic organization complete with Mass, prayers, conferences, contemplation and a bit of social time with the other retreatants.

I believed him and I understood why he did not talk about his retreats.

It is impossible to describe the moments in life when you are silently with God. That's what a retreat is for. The Cambridge Dictionary defines a retreat as "a period of time used to pray and study quietly, or to think carefully, away from normal activities and duties."

That's why Joe went on retreat each year. That is why all of us should take a few days to get away from the routine we know as life. Even once or twice a day call a "time out" and spend the moment quietly. Just a few minutes with God.

It may not be evident to everyone you meet, but you will feel better about you and your relationship with your Creator. Pray for all of us on retreat.

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

Building a university campus

"Wisdom never goes out of fashion. The purpose of the Anton Neuwirth College is to contribute to the good of society by following the wisdom of Christian values. What was wise a thousand years ago is still wise today, as is the case with forgiveness, patience and love."

Bishop of the Diocese of Zilina, Tomáš Gális said this in his homily at a Mass commemorating Anton Neuwirth, the first post-war ambassador of the Slovak Republic to the Holy See, on the occasion of the 105th anniversary of his birth.

The Mass, held in the church in Bojnice, where Neuwirth is buried, was part of the pilgrimage organized for the 18th time by the College that bears the ambassador's name. Staff members, friends and some students of the institute took part in the pilgrimage and Mass.

The Catholic-inspired College, founded in 2009 in the village of Ivanka pri Dunaji, near Bratislava, offers one- and two-year programs, primarily for university students. Catholic ethics, philosophy and art are taught there, drawing on the works of major authors, while lectures on current affairs are given by Slovak and international academics and scholars.

In 2020, the Anton Neuwirth College opened the Citadela primary school. In September, a secondary school bearing Anton Neuwirth's name will also open in Bratislava, following the same educational approach.

The College has recently embarked on a more ambitious project: work is beginning on the construction of a "campus" intended to house the country's first 'grassroots' university, building on the academic teaching already provided to resident university students. The primary and secondary schools are also expected to be relocated to the campus.

At present, most classes are held at the manor house in Ivanka, which belongs to the Jesuits. The College's programs are financed mainly through individual donations and contributions from students.

In autumn 2025, the cornerstone of the future campus was blessed by Pope Leo XIV during a general audience at the Vatican.

"This pilgrimage is also an invitation to the entire ecclesial community, so that everyone may be encouraged to follow Neuwirth's example, who urged people to 'heal evil with good'," College founder and rector Martin Luterán said after the Mass on 20 August.

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

OBITUARIES

Chateaugay – John R. McCormick, 88; Mass of Christian Burial Aug. 24, 2026 at St. Patrick's Church; burial in St. Patrick's Cemetery.

Chateaugay – Marcia May McDonald, 88; Mass of Christian Burial Aug. 28, 2026 at St. Patrick's Church; burial in St. Patrick's Cemetery.

Lowville – George Charles Feuerstein, III, 69; Graveside Services Sept. 4, 2026 at Beaches Bridge Cemetery, Watson.

Lowville – Christina (Mathis) Moshier, 84; Funeral Services Aug. 28, 2026 at Iseneker Funeral home, Inc.

Norwood – Wallace LePage, 78; Mass of Christian Burial Aug. 26, 2026 at St. Andrew's Church; burial in Hale Cemetery, Norfolk.

Ogdensburg – Richard F. Schond, 75; Mass of Christian Burial Aug. 29, 2026 at St. Mary's Cathedral.

Peru – Michael Edgar Downs, 86; Mass of Christian Burial Aug. 29, 2026 at St. Augustine's Church; burial in parish cemetery.

Peru – Patricia (Teichman) Latourelle, 90; Funeral Services Sept. 2, 2026 at the Hamilton Funeral Home; burial in St. John's Cemetery, Keeseville.

Peru – Michael Edward Trombley, 76; Mass of Christian Burial Aug. 25, 2026 at St. Augustine's Church.

Plattsburgh – Charles "Terry" Polhemus, 81; Mass of Christian Burial Aug. 29, 2026 at Our Lady of Victory Church; burial in St. Peter's Cemetery.

Port Henry – Paul William Tromblee, 80; Mass of Christian Burial Aug. 27, 2026 at St. Patrick's Church.

Rouses Point – Russell James Gadway, 75; Mass of Christian Burial Aug. 29, 2026 at St. Patrick's Church; burial in St. Patrick's Cemetery.

Rouses Point – John Michael Linscott, 72; Mass of Christian Burial Sept. 11, 2026 at St. Patrick's Church.

Saranac Lake – Henry G. LaPan, 86; Funeral Services Aug. 27, 2026 at Fortune-Keough Funeral Home; burial in St. Mary's Cemetery.

Watertown – Edward C. Montrois, 95; Private services to be held; burial in Black River Cemetery.

Watertown – Ann S. (Conant) Pacific, 96; Mass of Christian Burial Aug. 26, 2026 at St. Patrick's Church; burial in Glenwood Cemetery.

Heritage and heroes

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Holy Cross Parish.

"She attends daily Mass religiously often bringing grandchildren who don't normally go to Mass at all, is doing Vacation Bible School with a granddaughter and her friend, cleans the church and works on the grounds etc. I could go on and on," he said. "She carries the weight of the family commitment."

The martyrs in the stained-glass window featured in this article gave their life in defense of the faith. Dr. Caldon said such sacrifices are similar to those made by those who serve in the military.

"It's the ultimate sacrifice for something that is worth believing in and sacrificing for," he said. "As Christians, we are all asked to be willing and ready to make that sacrifice. There are things that go far beyond our corporal existence here. The sacrifice that American soldiers are asked to make I believe overlaps with our Catholic commitments. They are both for noble and greater causes that far surpass any worldly or temporal motivations. Our 20 years in the military were relatively easy with no deployments, and (we were) not imminently in harm's way… Those families that endure regular deployments and losses are true heroes, and I can't imagine how they cope without strong faith as an anchor."

Dr. Caldon said he is grateful for the gifts of faith, family and freedom.

"We have been so blessed with four incredible children and 11 amazing grandchildren," he said. "All four of our children have served. One is retired Air Force, two are still serving and one is taking a hiatus from the Air National Guard to raise her children. We have had unbelievable opportunities to travel, experience different cultures and attend Mass in countries throughout the world. It is truly a Universal Church and, although the Mass may be in a different language, it is still the same miracle of the Eucharist. I believe all this has helped keep us focused with God and our faith at the center of our lives. We have the freedom to openly practice our faith, which is not the case in many countries. That freedom is because of the sacrifices that American military families make on a daily basis."

Around the diocese

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(smelyngssj@yahoo.com) or call 315-393-6511 or Sister Bethany srbethssj@gmail.com or call 315-405-4058.

FREE THEOLOGY SERIES

Canton - This free professional-development opportunity is open to all who work with middle school or high school youth, including catechists, Catholic school teachers, youth group volunteers, parish youth ministers, and core-team members.

Date: Sept. 12

Time: 9 a.m. to noon

Place: St. Mary's Parish Center

Features: How do we know God exists? Why does evil happen if God is good? What about evolution, the Big Bang, or the multiverse? Ready to Give an Answer series will help Catholics respond to these questions with clarity, confidence, and charity while exploring the relationship between faith and science. Breakfast will be provided, and participants may receive credit toward certification in Youth Ministry.

Contact: Although the event is free, registration is required. Register at or email Patrick Looby at plooby@rcdony.org.

DOVS EVENT

Norfolk - The Diocese of Ogdensburg Vocation Society (DOVS) is sponsoring an event that will include a Mass, a free luncheon and talk.

Date: Sept. 22

Time: Mass begins at 11 a.m. with lunch and talk to follow

Place: Church of the Visitation Parish

Features: Talk by diocesan vocation director, Father Matthew Conger. The talk is entitled, Promoting Vocations Is Everyone's Business: What Can I Do? All are welcome!

Contact: Let Connie know by email at connierandall47@yahoo.com or by phone at 315-783-0574 no later than Sept. 17th if you wish to attend.

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 or over 50 years, 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 11 at https://www.rcdony.org/jubilee.

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

HIGH SCHOOL LEADERSHIP WEEKEND

Saranac Lake – High school Leadership weekend to be held for teens entering 9th to 12th grade.

Date: Sept. 25 – 27

Place: Camp Guggenheim

Cost: $150, Financial aid available

Features: Spend an weekend growing in faith, building friendships, enjoying outdoor adventure, and learning from Catholic leaders.

Contact: To register and find out more information go to www.rcdony.org/leadership

BLUE MASS

Black River – Bishop Terry R. LaValley cordially invites all Police, Corrections, Fire and EMS Personnel to the Diocese of Ogdensburg Blue Mass.

Date: Sept. 27

Time: 2:30 p.m.

Place: St. Paul's Church

Features: The Blue Mass is the Church's way to offer thanksgiving to God for the dedication and sacrifices made by the men and women of Fire, EMS, Corrections, Law Enforcement and Communications. First Responders, their families and all the faithful are invited to attend this Sunday celebration. Uniforms are encouraged but not required.

Contact: Questions can be addressed to Father Chris Carrara, Blue Mass Committee Chair at info@rcdony.org or by phone at 315-393-2920.

DYING WITH CHRIST, LIVING WITH HOPE

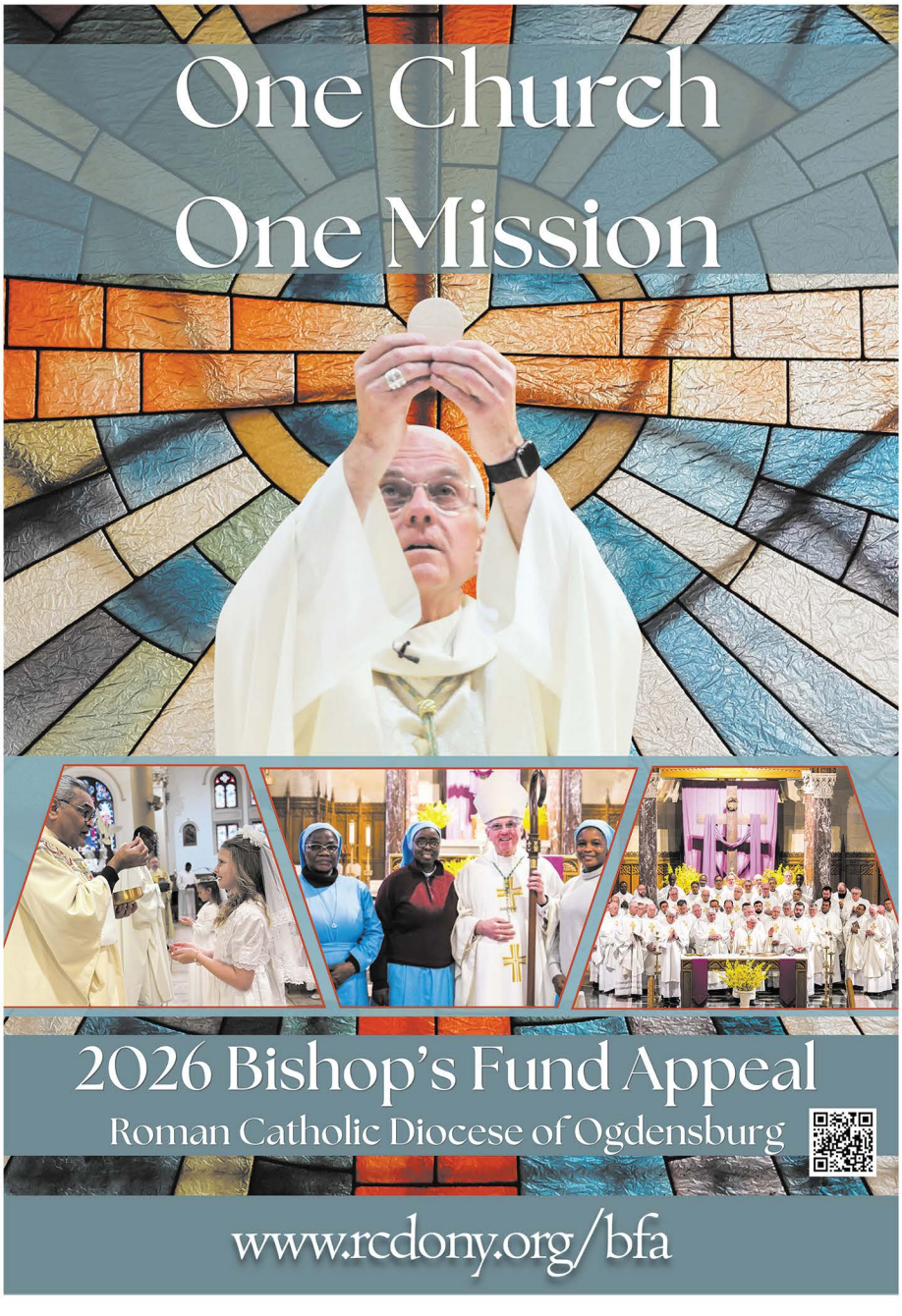
Plattsburgh - When we make a commitment to die with Christ, we can truly live with hope. Learn about the new Physician Assisted Suicide law and how MAID has progressed throughout Canada.

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.livingwithhope For more information contact cminer@rcdony.org