

DIOCESAN ANNOUNCEMENTS

Letters of Good Standing and Celebrets. Priests and deacons who will need good standing letters or celebrets to celebrate Masses or other sacraments **in another diocese** should **complete and submit a “Request form for Letter of Good Standing” at least 3 weeks in advance (except for funerals).** The form can be found on the diocesan website at: <https://www.buffalodiocese.org/resources-for-clergy/> under “Chancery Forms.” Letters will not be issued unless the priest or deacon has a signed Code of Conduct and Uniform Release Authorization in his file, and is current with *Virtus* training and bulletins. For any questions, call the Chancery secretary at 716-847-5559.

Homily Helps from the Buffalo Diocese Care for Creation Committee. The Catholic Climate Covenant and the Integral Faith team provide resources for homilists and other materials that will help you integrate the rich insights of *Laudato Si’* and Christian care for creation into Sunday Mass. These include highlights from the scriptures, readings of the day, relevant quotations from *Laudato Si’*, brief commentary, illustrations and anecdotes, sample applications, sample petitions, and bulletin notes. January 2025 Homily Helps available at: <https://catholicclimatecovenant.org/learn/resources/>.

CHURCH BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENTS

Catholic Charities bulletin messages for upcoming weekends:

December 14-15: Give the gift of food. Catholic Charities runs nine food pantries, seven in Erie County and a pantry in both Franklinville in Cattaraugus County and Wellsville in Allegany County. Your donation of non-perishable food items can help feed hungry individuals and families in our community. To schedule a time to drop off donations, call 716-218-1450, ext. 2005. To find your nearest pantry, visit www.ccwny.org/food.

December 21-22: “The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world.” (John 1:9) As we celebrate the wonder and joy of Christ’s birth, we hope your hearts and homes are filled with peace, happiness, love, and the light of Christ our Savior. **Merry Christmas from all of us at Catholic Charities!**

December 28-29: So much has changed since our founding in 1923, but one thing has remained a constant: just as we have for 100 years, Catholic Charities is here and ready to help – now. If you have an urgent need or you or your family is facing a crisis situation, give us a call or visit www.ccwny.org to complete an online assistance form. Help and HOPE are available.

Catholic Health is currently seeking compassionate and enthusiastic volunteers of all ages to lend their time and talent at one of our sites. Mercy Hospital of Buffalo, Sisters of Charity Hospital, Kenmore Mercy Hospital, Mt. St. Mary's Hospital and Lockport Memorial Hospital are all seeking various roles. Please apply at <https://www.chsbuffalo.org/volunteer> or call Lisa Carey at 716-862-1106. Make a difference!

The Ladies of Charity is in need of children's clothing. The Ladies of Charity are a non-profit organization, affiliated with Catholic Charities of Buffalo. One of the many programs they have to help those in need is a thrift store at 1122 Broadway, Buffalo. In addition to their neighbors who many rely on the store for nice clothing, shoes and household items at very discounted prices, the Ladies give Catholic Charities clients clothing for free. If you can help the Ladies of Charity by donating new or gently used children's clothing, it would be greatly appreciated so the Ladies can help those in need this winter. Dropoff Monday through Friday from 8:30 am-3:30 pm.

Notre Dame Retreat House in Canandaigua provides a place of quiet retreat, prayer and natural beauty where individuals and groups can experience personal growth or strengthen their connection with God. Offered are CORE retreats for men, women or couples; "Fill Your Soul Days" which are one-day retreats; as well as other special events. Notre Dame Retreat House is located at 5151 Foster Rd., Canandaigua. Visit www.notredameretreat.org for more information on the various programs offered.

Locally produced audio series on saints, featuring local students is back! *Sister Justine's Saint Tales*, an original audio podcast play series created and produced by the Diocese of Buffalo's communication department, has launched its third season with 10 new episodes being released this month and next. Created by communications staff members and former local radio personality Michael Mroziak, *Sister Justine's Saint Tales* features a cast including actual students from area Catholic schools and local adult volunteers. This season, students from Catholic Academy of Niagara Falls, St. Gregory the Great School in Williamsville, St. Stephen School in Grand Island, and Cardinal O'Hara High School in Tonawanda were among the performers. The third season features: Blessed Carlo Acutis (Dec. 6), St. Maria Faustina Kowalska (Dec. 10), St. Vincent de Paul (Dec. 13), St. Clare of Assisi (Dec. 17), St. Martin de Porres (Dec. 20), St. Elizabeth Ann Seton (Jan. 7), St. Florian (Jan. 10), St. Sebastian (Jan. 14), St. Kateri Tekakwitha (Jan. 17), and St. Gianna Beretta Molla (Jan. 24). The lead character, voiced by Melissa Cumming, is inspired by the late Sr. Justine Yanics, OSF, who taught in the former Prince of Peace School (now Catholic Academy of Niagara Falls) from the 1970s-early 1980s. The series can be streamed or downloaded from the diocese's official podcast hosting site www.soundcloud.com/buffalodiocese. All content is free to the listener to stream or download.

The Choir of St. Louis Church invites you to join them for the following December music events. "Carols by Candlelight" on Friday, December 13 at 7:30 pm. The Women of St. Louis are drawn from the St. Louis Choir's soprano and alto sections. Together they will offer a program of lovely solo and ensemble carols for Advent and Christmas – all in the muted candlelight of St. Louis' majestic nave. "A Festival Service of Lessons and Carols" on Friday, December 20 at 7 pm. The choir leads us in this highly anticipated annual event which traces, in scripture and song, the Nativity story as foretold by the Old Testament prophets and narrated by the Gospel writers. Both events will be held at St. Louis Church, Main & Edward Sts., Buffalo.

Music of Angels & Other Enchanting Voices with Mezzo Soprano Karen Saxon and the City Honors School Chorale on Friday, December 13 at 7 pm at Blessed Sacrament Church, 1029 Delaware Ave., Buffalo. Doors open at 6:30 pm. Off street parking. Reception to follow. Admission is \$22 or by subscription. Advance tickets and more program details at <https://cameratabflo.com>. Free for ages 17 and under or with an *Arts Access Pass* (<https://www.arts-access.org/apply-online>).

The St. John Paul II Schola Cantorum will present two performances during the upcoming Advent and Christmas seasons. Advent Service of Lessons & Carols will be presented on Sunday, December 15 at 2 pm at SS. Peter & Paul Church, 5480 Main St., Williamsville. Concert of Choral Treasures of Advent and Christmas will be performed on Friday, December 27 at 7 pm at the National Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima, 1023 Swann Rd., Lewiston during its Festival of Lights celebration. This concert will include a sing-along of traditional Christmas carols. These events are free and open to the public. Free-will offerings will be accepted to support the ministries of the host parishes. For more information, contact the choir by email at JP2Schola@gmail.com or follow them on Facebook and Instagram @JP2Schola. Subscribe to their YouTube channel at <http://www.youtube.com/@JP2Schola>.

Festival of Lessons and Carols, a reflective service of Scripture and Song, on December 15 at 7 pm at Our Lady of Victory Basilica, 767 Ridge Rd., Lackawanna. And throughout this special season, come and view **Sacred Stories in Glass**, a close-up exhibit of some of the Basilica's beautiful stained-glass windows. Also, back by popular demand, Fr. Roy Herberger's unique collection of **Nativity Sets** from around the world will be on display. Both exhibits located in the lower level of the Shrine during regular Basilica hours from December 1 through January 5.

Inclusive Christmas Mass for with special needs on Saturday, December 28 at 1:30 p.m. at St. Bernadette, 5930 South Abbott Rd., Orchard Park. Fr. Joe Wolf will be the celebrant. The Mass will be interpreted in American Sign Language and will be live-streamed on St. Bernadette's Facebook page. The Mass offers a shorter, less crowded worship setting allowing for freedom of movement as needed. The lighting will be dimmer, the music soothing and low gluten hosts will be available. Guests of all ages are welcome to participate in the Nativity Pageant. Simple costumes are provided. All communications are a gift from god, so expressions of glory are welcome in sound, gestures and movement. We encourage movements like swaying or humming to the music. There is a sensory room with rocking chairs, kneelers and open pews along with manipulative boards in the back of the church. After Mass, a reception will be held in the accessible Parish Ministry Center. This event is sponsored by Open Doors Ministry which advocates for the inclusion of people with disabilities into the life of the parish. Any questions, contact Sharon Urbaniak at 716-648-1720, ext. 3 or sharonu@saintbopny.org.

Catholic Men's Conference of WNY will take place on March 29, 2025 at Cardinal O'Hara High School, 39 O'Hara Rd., Tonawanda. Feature speaker will be Fr. Larry Richards. Along with the speakers, confessions, adoration and breakout discussions will be offered. Priests that can be available to hear confessions between 11 am-1 pm are sorely needed. Please call 716-868-5871.

In the Footsteps of Carlo Acutis Canonization Pilgrimage from April 23-May 4, 2025. Focused on the canonization of Blessed Carlo Acutis, this spiritual pilgrimage led by Fr. Leon

Biernat, includes visits to significant religious sites in Italy, starting with a welcome dinner and Mass in Rome. Key locations will include St. Peter's Basilica, the Vatican Museums, and various basilicas emphasizing Carlo's devotion to the Eucharist, particularly sites related to Eucharistic miracles. Pilgrimage includes: round trip airfare, 10 nights accommodation, breakfast and dinner daily, Mass daily and spiritual activities, assistance of a local guide, and transportation by air-conditioned motor coach. For more information and to book, visit <http://www.206tours.com/frleon> (booking code LB042325). Any questions, contact Dominic at 1-800-206-8687 or dominic@206tours.com.

German & Austrian Christmas Markets & Cathedrals Pilgrimage from November 30-December 10, 2025 with Fr. Peter Karalus. Consider a very unique and special trip to celebrate Advent/Christmas 2025. At this time of year, the towns and cities of Germany and Austria become a magical Christmas wonderland. Each location on the itinerary offers a Christmas market filled with specialty foods, unique gifts, and a festive atmosphere. Highlights include Cologne, Frankfurt, Rothenburg Ob Der Tauber, Nuremberg, Munich, Salzburg, and Vienna. Mass celebrated at significant shrines/cathedrals, and guided tours. Stay in centrally located hotels so you can explore each of the stops at your own pace. For fully itinerary and online booking, visit bit.ly/KaralusChristmasMarkets. If you reserve by January 2, 2025, you will receive a \$50 discount. It's not too early to plan ahead. For more information, contact Fr. Peter at 716-847-5560.

ENCLOSURES

(none)