



LENT 2026

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

Our leaders govern with chaos and fear rather than respect for law and human dignity. The economy frightens us as prices rise. AI comes for our job and human connections. Addictions run rampant while we create more ways to harm ourselves. Local hospitals struggle to pay staff and provide services. The news leads us to the brink of darkness. And many feel that Lent and the focus on repentance adds to the despair.

But Lent is not about despair. As winter doldrums lead to spring, Lent leads us to Easter joy and prepares us for Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem, the Last Supper, Crucifixion and Resurrection!

Reparation is not a popular word these days. Reparation is making amends for a wrong, an offense, a sin. It is not an attempt to buy forgiveness, but rather an attempt to repair a broken situation or relationship. A special dinner for a spouse may help correct previous inattentiveness. We can offer reparation for sin, offenses against God, for our sin and the sins of all. Offering reparation can enhance the Lenten trifecta of prayer, fasting and almsgiving.

Out the front door of the bishop's residence and across the intersection is the old Bishop Conroy School occupied by Our Ladies Outreach which sells and donates gently used clothes to those in need; that income to provide emergency food and assistance. Upstairs, Gabriel Project supports pregnant women materially and spiritually. Next door is the city fire company. A few blocks away are the Ogdensburg Boys and Girls Club and the Knights of Columbus. Turning the other way out the front door, Catholic Charities operates Seaway House supporting those with mental health and substance abuse issues. Further on, the Neighborhood Center feeds the hungry.

It is not really about these organizations or many others. Instead, it is about the real, imperfect people working there, offering moments of humble service, a word of empathy, a bag of groceries and a smile of support. In the hundreds of homes that surround me, a tired mother comforts a hurting child, a grateful son cares for an aging mother, a neighbor helps shovel out a neighbor. This happens in cities, towns, villages and crossroads across this diocese, state, country and world.

This Lent, I pray you combat the avalanche of despair by opening your eyes and heart to the millions and millions of unreported good news stories that happen at every moment of every day. I encourage you to create or give witness to moments of service and offer them to the Lord in reparation for sin and brokenness in your life and in the lives surrounding you.

May your 2026 Lent help you encounter our Lord anew and prepare your heart for the message and joy of Easter.

In Christ our Hope,

Most Reverend Terry R. LaValley
Bishop of Ogdensburg