

The Inland See

News from the Roman Catholic Diocese of Burlington



January 3–9, 2026

Pastoral letter from Bishop McDermott designating 2026 as Year of Vocations

My dear Family in Christ,

As we prepare ourselves to enter into 2026, I am inviting us to consider deeply the call we all received in baptism to live holy and Christ-centered lives. As Pope Saint John Paul II reminded the youth gathered for World Youth Day in 1997, and as his words remind us today:

"(Baptism) means that God acknowledges you as his children and transforms your existence into a story of love with him. He conforms you to Christ so that you will be able to fulfill your personal vocation. He has come to make a pact with you and he offers you his peace. Live from now on as children of the light who know that they are reconciled by the Cross of the Savior!"

At a time in our state, nation, and world when God seems to be forgotten by many and human dignity is threatened, I am inviting all of us in the Diocese of Burlington to renew our commitment to truly be “children of light” in a darkened world. With this in mind, I am designating 2026 as a Year of Vocations for the Diocese of Burlington.

First and foremost, it must be a year when all of us remember the call and vocation to holiness that we received in our baptism in Christ and to witness to Him in the world. Whatever our state in life, young, old, married, single, priest or religious, this call to holiness must be an essential part of our lives. If we do not want to be holy, if we do not strive, by God’s grace, for sanctity, then our faith is lifeless. We are not called to the mediocrity of life, but to a life of grace leading to eternal life.

Holiness comes to us through a life of prayer, sacrifice, and service. The call we hear in a particular way during Lent to pray, fast, and give alms is the path we must embrace if we are going to be living witnesses to God’s love in the world. Understanding that this call brings with it crosses in imitation of the Lord, who bore His cross for our salvation, we must not be afraid of the demands of love placed upon us by God, but know He will sustain us, especially during trials. The world needs our witness to God’s love now more than ever.

Along with this universal call to holiness, I also want us to dedicate a significant part of our prayer in 2026 for an increase in vocations to the priesthood and consecrated life among the youth in Vermont. This is not to ignore those called to marriage or those in the single life, but a recognition that our diocese is in need of more priests and those in consecrated life to ensure that future generations will have the Gospel proclaimed in the

Green Mountain State. The witness to the evangelical counsels by those in consecrated life serves as a powerful reminder to all of us to live for God first in our lives. Furthermore, without priests, we do not have the Eucharist, the Source and Summit of our lives of faith as Catholics.

To this end, I am directing that at all weekend Masses a prayer for vocations be prayed either in the General Intercessions, prior to Mass, or after Communion. Parishes are free to use the Vocations Prayer provided last year or to use some other prayer of their choosing. I ask that parishes schedule regular holy hours for vocations in their churches throughout the year. I ask that parents pray with their children to be open to a priestly or religious vocation and not to dissuade those who may be trying to answer God’s call. Finally, I urge parishioners to encourage young men and women in your parishes to think about vocations. If we want our parishes and diocese to survive and thrive, we must all take on the responsibility for promoting and sustaining vocations.

Additional activities and programs for vocations will be introduced as the year progresses, including a Vocation Pilgrimage across the state, but in the meantime, please join me in praying that the Lord of the Harvest sends us more workers for the vineyard (Mt 9:38).

In closing, let us remember the words of Saint Teresa Benedicta of the Cross (Edith Stein): “To belong to God and to serve Him in love is the vocation of all.” May all of us embrace the call to holiness we have been given by God so that by the example of saintly parents and families, holy priests, deacons, and religious, more and more Vermonters come to know, love, and serve our Lord. May vocations to the priesthood and consecrated life burst forth from the ranks of our children and youth.

Thanking you for your cooperation and support for our Year of Vocations and remembering that God alone suffices, I remain,

Sincerely yours in Christ,



+John J. McDermott
Bishop of Burlington

Diocesan Event Calendar • vermontcatholic.org/events



01|09, 02|13 FRIDAYS
Essex Community Dinner

Holy Family, Essex Jct. • 5:30 pm

Essex Community Dinners are provided in order to grow and promote our community! These meals are free to all but donations are appreciated to cover parish expenses. Take-out dinners are also available, starting at 6 pm.



01|10, 02|14 SATURDAYS
St. Padre Pio Prayer Group

Holy Family, Essex Junction • 8 am

The Padre Pio group meets the second Saturday of each month, at Holy Family. We begin with the Rosary at 8 am followed by Mass at 8:30 am. Special Intentions for the intercession of Saint Padre Pio and then learning about Padre Pio's life, ministry, and spiritual gifts.



01|10, 17, 24 SATURDAYS
SoulCore

St. Andrew, Waterbury • 9 am

Activate your mind, body, and soul: stretch, strengthen, and pray. SoulCore is an integrated faith and fitness class to the prayers of the rosary with a self-paced workout. Bring a mat and water. Suggested \$10.



01|10, 02|07 SATURDAYS
St. Peter's Cemetery Association Bingo

St. Peter Parish Hall, Vergennes • 5 - 8 pm

Doors open at 5 pm, Bingo starts at 6 pm. This is a family friendly event. All cash prizes, 50/50 raffle. Refreshments sold. This event is sponsored by St. Peter's Cemetery Committee to benefit the on-going efforts for cemetery improvements.



01|12 MONDAY
Senior Citizen Luncheon

St. John Vianney, S. Burlington • 12 - 2 pm

A healthy, hot meal will be offered at no charge, and free-will donations are also being accepted to support the program. Following the meal, Isaac Desranleau will share a brief reflection on ways we can pray for and make faith connections with young adults in our lives. Please join us and bring a friend!



01|12 MONDAY
Newman Series on the Parochial and Plain Sermons

via Zoom • 7:30 pm

Fr. Matthew Rensch will present on The State of Grace. The sermon will be read at the meeting; no need to prepare beforehand. Zoom link: vermontcatholic.org/event/newman-series-on-the-parochial-and-plain-sermons/



01|14 – 02|11 WEDNESDAYS
Become a Mentor to an Incarcerated Woman

via Zoom • 5:30 pm

Mercy Connections is seeking women across Vermont to join its Vermont Women's Mentoring Program, a powerful initiative that supports incarcerated women as they transition back into the community. For registration link, go to: vermontcatholic.org/event/become-a-mentor-to-an-incarcerated-woman/

For more info on this 5-week training course, please contact Joanne Nelson at jnelson@mercyconnections.org or at (802) 846-7164.



01|19 – 02|24 MONDAYS OR TUESDAYS
The Genius of Tolkien

Immaculate Heart of Mary, Williston •

Jan. 19 – Feb. 23 • Mondays at 6:30 pm

St. John Vianney, South Burlington •

Jan. 20 – Feb. 24 • Tuesdays at 1 pm

Just in time for the re-release of the Lord of the Rings film trilogy in theaters! Using a series from the Formed platform, we will uncover biblical connections to Tolkien's characters, offering a unique lens on human experiences. Each session will begin with a short video, followed by discussion.



01|24, 02|21 SATURDAYS
St. Peter's Church Preservation Committee BINGO

St. Peter, Vergennes • 5 - 8 pm

Doors open at 5 pm and games start at 6 pm.

This is a family friendly event. All cash prizes, 50/50 raffle. Refreshments sold. This event is sponsored by the St. Peter's Historic Preservation Committee to benefit the on-going restoration efforts for the bell tower and the church. Please join us!



01|26, 02|02, 09 MONDAYS
SJV Book Group — Praying for Our Adult Sons and Daughters

St. John Vianney, S. Burlington • 9:30 - 11 am

Please join us for our book group on Praying for Our Adult Sons and Daughters: Placing them in the heart of God, meeting in the Fellowship Room of the Parish Center. Books will be

\$10 each; sign up by January 4 to order yours. Learn more at: stjohnvianneyvt.org/sjv-book-group.



02|01 SUNDAY
Eucharistic Healing Service

St. John the Evangelist, St. Johnsbury • 3 - 4:30 pm

Father Lance W. Harlow will conduct a Eucharistic Healing Service featuring Adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament along with praying over by Father Harlow.



02|07 SATURDAY
Annual French Canadian Tourtiere Supper

Holy Rosary, Richmond • 5 - 6:30 pm

Join us for a delicious traditional French Canadian Tourtiere Supper including: Pea Soup, Tourtiere (meat) Pie, Mashed Potatoes, Green Beans and Desserts. Reservations suggested — online: KK1L.com/KnightsMeatPieDinner2026 or call/text Ron (470) 588-5515. Sit down or Take-Out available. \$17 per person. Hosted by the Knights of Columbus Council 4684.



02|14 – 03|21 SATURDAYS
Grieving with Great Hope

St. Catherine of Siena, Shelburne • 10 am - 12 pm

Grieving With Great Hope is a bereavement program based on Catholic teachings, developed by Good Mourning Ministries (GMM) and presented on the FORMED website. The program consists of five weekly sessions. Each session will include watching a video, time for personal reflection, and small group sharing. All conversations are confidential and no one may share in discussion outside of session. This offering will be limited to 25 participants. Note that no new participants will be added after the second session.



HOW TO GIVE

Online:
vermontcatholic.org/donate

Call:
802.658.6110 x 1102

Mail:
Bishop's Annual Appeal
55 Joy Drive
South Burlington, VT 05403

