



The Ancient Order of Hibernians announced 2026 award recipients in December. From left: Mr. Hibernian Jordan Lemieux; Mary O'Connor, LAOH president; Christian Charity Award recipient Sister Betsy Sullivan, SSJ; Joe O'Connor, AOH president; and Ms. Hibernian Kit Collamore.

Hibernians bestow annual awards

Story by Kathy Harrington

HOLYOKE — Carrying on a 153-year-old tradition, the Ancient Order of Hibernians continue to live their motto of "Friendship, Unity and Christian Charity." In December, the Ancient Hibernians and the Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians announced the 2026 Hibernian Man and Woman of the year: Jordan Lemieux and Catherine "Kit" Collamore.

Jordan Lemieux (Mr. Hibernian) is a longtime member of the Irish organization. He served on the Holyoke Fire Department for 32 years.

Kit Collamore (Ms. Hibernian) is the financial secretary of the Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians.

"I am truly honored and overwhelmed with this recognition," said Collamore, who created the Children's Christmas party and also volunteers with Kate's Kitchen.

The awards were to be presented on Feb. 28 at the Hibernian Irish Night at the Log Cabin in Holyoke.

Additionally, the Christian Charity Award will go to Sister Betsy Sullivan, president of the Sisters of St. Joseph.

Entering religious life in 1962, Sister Betsy has been a member of the Sisters of St. Joseph for 63 years.

"I was floored," said Sister Betsy. "I was shocked and humbled."

She said the announcement brought tears to her eyes. "I feel so very honored to accept this award on behalf of our congregation," she said. The Sisters of St. Joseph have been serving in the Diocese of Springfield for 143 years. Their mission is "to unite neighbor with neighbor."

The Christian Charity Award will be presented to Sister Betsy at the March 15 Hibernian Annual Community Breakfast. Ian Delahanty, associate history professor at Springfield College is the Communion breakfast speaker. Delahanty is the author of an award-winning book on Irish America: *Embracing Emancipation: A Transatlantic History of Irish Americans, Slavery, and the American Union, 1860-1865*. Delahanty serves on the Massachusetts Ireland Trade Commission. ●



Assignments Diocese of Springfield

Effective Nov. 1, 2025

Father Peter A. Avorogo, from the Diocese of Navrongo-Bolgatanga, Ghana, has been named provisional priest at St. Patrick Parish in South Hadley.

Effective Nov. 5, 2025

Father John Gawienowski, administrator of Our Lady of the Hills Parish in Haydenville, has been named pastor of the parish.

Father Mark Glover, administrator of St. Mary Parish in Orange, has been named pastor of the parish.

Father Valentine Nwora, administrator of St. Brigid Parish in Amherst and director of the Newman Catholic Center at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst, has been named pastor of St. Brigid's while remaining as director of the Newman Center.

Father Christopher J. Waitekus, pastor of St. Mary Parish in Longmeadow and directing pastor of St. John the Evangelist Parish in Agawam will now also serve as chair of the Committee for the Continuing Education, Formation and Support of Clergy for the Diocese of Springfield.

Effective Oct. 7, 2025

Father Kenneth Tatro, a retired priest of the Diocese of Springfield will now also serve as co-vicar for retired priests.

Effective Feb. 1, 2026

Father Francis Lawlor, who was on a leave of absence residing outside the Diocese of Springfield, is now retired and residing outside the Diocese of Springfield.

In memoriam

Complete obituaries can be found at iobserve.org.

Father Donald Lapointe, 83, died in Springfield on Dec. 30, 2025. A native of Chicopee, he was a priest of the Diocese of Springfield for 58 years.

Sister Patricia Curran, SSJ, 87, died in Holyoke on Jan. 15. A native of Southbridge, Mass., She was in the 68th year of her religious life.

Father Lionel Edward Bonneville, 88, died in Springfield on Feb. 5. A Native of Springfield, he was a priest of the Diocese of Springfield for 63 years.

Father Henry Dorsch, 84, died on Feb. 18. A native of New York City, he was a priest of the Diocese of Springfield for 57 years.