

Diocese of Scranton *News Briefing*



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**BISHOPS HEAR THAT THIRD-PARTY REPORTING SYSTEM
MAY START IN FEBRUARY**



(CNS photo/Bob Roller)

A third-party reporting system to field sexual misconduct allegations against bishops could be in place by the end of February, an official of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops told the bishops during their fall general assembly this week in Baltimore.

The company awarded the contract for the system is working quickly to implement it so that it is in place well before the May 31, 2020, deadline set by Pope Francis, said Anthony Picarello, USCCB associate general secretary, in a Nov. 13 presentation to the bishops on the final day of their three-day meeting.

The precise date a toll-free hotline will be activated and links on diocesan and eparchial websites and the USCCB website will go live is going to depend on how quickly each diocese or eparchy can implement the program, Picarello said.

The USCCB awarded a two-year contract to Denver-based Convercent to implement the reporting system.

The bishops approved the establishment of the reporting system in June. Under it, people would be allowed to make reports of "certain complaints" through a toll-free telephone number as well as online.

HUNDREDS OF STUDENTS ATTEND #LeaveaMark19 MASS



The Catholic Light Photo/Mike Melisky

SCRANTON -- As he looked around the Cathedral of Saint Peter and saw hundreds of other young adults, Jonathan Mengoni, 22, was glad he decided to attend his first #LeaveaMark Mass in the Diocese of Scranton.

"It's very nice seeing all the young people in the Diocese come together and worship together because I feel in the Catholic Church a lot of young people are leaving," Mengoni said.

Mengoni said he recognized some of the people at the #LeaveaMark Mass but was excited to meet new friends.

"I'm running into a few friends here and there but there's a lot of unfamiliar faces too with these Masses and retreats, I get to know more and more people throughout the Diocese," he added.

The Diocese of Scranton's fourth annual #LeaveaMark Mass was held on Sunday, November 3, 2019. The event brings together young adults, including public and Catholic high school students, college students, women and men religious, priests and youth ministers from throughout the 11 counties of the Diocese.

"It's a fantastic experience getting to see everyone! You really get a sense of how alive the young Church is in our Diocese and it's just a great experience to see everyone and is a lot of fun," Tyler Osipower, 17, a parishioner of Saint Therese Parish in Shavertown said.

To read the full story, read next Thursday's *Catholic Light* newspaper or visit: <https://www.dioceseofscranton.org/hundred-attend-annual-leaveamark-mass/>

**AUDIT DETERMINES DIOCESE OF SCRANTON REMAINS
IN COMPLIANCE WITH CHILD PROTECTION CHARTER**



The Diocese of Scranton has once again been found in compliance with the U.S. Bishops' "Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People."

The Diocese has passed independent audits of its child protection procedures every year since the policy was adopted by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in 2002.

For the audit, the Diocese submitted data to Stonebridge Business Partners, a Rochester, N.Y. firm that is tasked with conducting compliance audits of the nation's 195 dioceses.

The audit evaluates each diocese's efforts to ensure the protection of children, including criminal background checks and educational awareness programs on recognizing and preventing abuse.

**HOLY CROSS HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER RECEIVES \$2,000
GRANT FROM VOYA FINANCIAL**



DUNMORE, PA - Miss Kimberly Mecir, an educator at Holy Cross High School, is one of only four teachers in Pennsylvania being recognized with a 2019 Voya Financial Unsung Heroes Grant for Innovative Teaching.

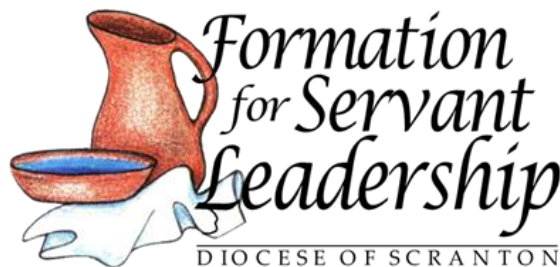
Selected from a group of more than 650 applicants, Mecir will receive \$2,000 to bring one of her educational ideas to life.

Mecir's innovative teaching idea, "Mission to Planet X," focuses on increasing student engagement and achievement in biology through a story-driven experience that challenges students to use creativity, problem-solving and biology knowledge to uncover signs of life on an "alien plant." After learning scientific method, biochemistry, 3D design and coding through a series of lessons and labs, students will be tasked with the mission of designing and 3D printing fins for a rocket that will launch a rover to the planet. It is the hope that this project helps students connect to biology content by framing it in a real-life research area of astrobiology as well as learn future-ready skills of 3D design, coding and critical thinking.

To read more about the grant,

visit: <https://www.dioceseofscranton.org/holy-cross-high-school-teacher-receives-2000-grant-from-voya-financial/>

DIOCESAN CERTIFICATE IN LAY MINISTRY ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FOR JANUARY 2020



The Office for Parish Life encourages parish leaders to consider application for the Diocesan Certificate in Lay Ministry for January 2020!

The Diocesan Certificate in Lay Ministry is a ministry formation program designed to equip and advance the servant leadership capacities of individuals serving their parish in areas such as:

- Parish Pastoral Councils,
- Directors of Religious Education and Catechists,
- Liturgical Coordinators,
- Parish Staff,
- Volunteer Ministry teams,
- and others!

Through independent online study with the University of Dayton's Virtual Learning Community for Faith Formation (VLCFF), as well as regional skills workshops and opportunities for prayer and reflection, *Diocesan Certificate* candidates enrich their knowledge base, while also learning practical tools for effective parish ministry in their faith communities.

Starting with our New Candidate Orientation Retreat on Saturday, January 25, 2020, the Office for Parish Life anticipates welcoming new candidates into the *Diocesan Certificate in Lay Ministry* program in the New Year.

Prospective candidates are encouraged to contact Kitty Scanlan, Coordinator for Lay Ministry Formation, at (570) 207-2213, ext. 1157, or by email at Kitty-Scanlan@dioceseofscranton.org for application information, materials, and application submissions.

RETIREMENT FUND FOR RELIGIOUS COLLECTION TO BE HELD DECEMBER 7-8



The annual Retirement Fund for Religious collection will be held Dec. 7-8 in the Diocese of Scranton. The parish-based appeal is coordinated by the

National Religious Retirement Office (NRRO), and proceeds help hundreds of U.S. religious communities to care for aging members. Some 30,000 senior Catholic sisters, brothers and religious order priests benefit.

Last year, the Diocese of Scranton donated \$86,516.40 to the collection. In 2019, the Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary received financial support made possible by the Retirement Fund for Religious.

The 2018 appeal raised \$27.7 million, and 360 religious congregations across the nation received funding. Distributions are sent to each eligible congregation's central house. Communities combine this assistance with their own income and savings and apply it toward various retirement expenses, such as medications and nursing care.

"We are humbled and profoundly grateful for the countless Catholics who honor the service and witness of senior religious through their prayers and generosity," said Presentation Sister Stephanie Still, the NRRO's executive director.

Catholic bishops of the United States initiated the Retirement Fund for Religious in 1988 to help address the profound lack of retirement savings among U.S. religious communities. Since the collection's launch, U.S. Catholics have donated \$872 million to the annual appeal.

Despite this generosity, many congregations still struggle to provide for aging members. Most older religious served for low wages that did not include retirement benefits. Today, numerous communities face a critical shortage in retirement savings. Moreover, retired religious now outnumber wage-earning members, resulting in declining income and a rising cost of care.

Proceeds from the annual collection allow the NRRO to offer assessment tools, educational programming, services and resources that enable communities to evaluate and prepare for long-term retirement needs. The NRRO also coordinates an extensive network of volunteer consultants, including experts in eldercare and financial planning, to help congregations lower costs while enhancing care.

"Donations to the Retirement Fund for Religious enable our office to provide financial assistance for an array of direct needs," said Sister Still. "They also underwrite education and resources that help religious communities stretch retirement dollars and plan for the future."

Visit www.retiredreligious.org to learn more.

DIOCESAN ANNUAL APPEAL REACHES 50-PERCENT OF GOAL BUT STILL NEEDS GENEROUS DONORS!

Diocese of Scranton
2019 **DIOCESAN**
ANNUAL APPEAL

SERVING *faith*
IN WITH HOPE
AND GRATITUDE



"We are able to help so many people in need because of your generosity.

As we reflect on our Catholic faith, may we open our hearts to be filled with God's grace and mercy and so enable us to reflect in our lives the theme of this year's Annual Appeal -

Serving in Faith with Hope and Gratitude."

MOST REVEREND JOSEPH C. BAMBERA, D.D., J.C.L.
BISHOP OF SCRANTON

Thank you for your support of the Annual Appeal

See the Appeal at Work in Your Region ...
View Parishioners and Clergy in Six Unique Videos -
Visit AnnualAppeal.org!

GIFTS to the APPEAL support Diocesan ministries & will not be used to defray legal fees or fund the Survivors Compensation Program.

Have you made a gift to the 2019 Diocesan Annual Appeal yet?

Your generous gifts support many important programs and ministries across the 11 county Diocese of Scranton, including:

- Catholic Education
- Catholic Social Services
- Clergy Support and Seminarians
- Catholic Communication and Media
- Office for Parish Life
- Faith Formation Grants
- Social Justice Grants

If you'd like more information about the 2019 Diocesan Annual Appeal, visit www.AnnualAppeal.org

Follow the Diocese on Social Media

www.facebook.com/DoS150/

www.twitter.com/BishopBambera

www.twitter.com/DioceseOfScr

www.facebook.com/DioceseOfScranton

For a listing of all Diocesan and parish events, visit: [Calendar](#)

You are also encouraged to visit the Facebook pages of other Diocesan departments. They are listed on our website at:

<http://www.dioceseofscranton.org/media/social-media/>

Thank you for connecting with us!

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