

# Diocese of Scranton *News Briefing*



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**BISHOP BAMBERA REFLECTS ON AD LIMINA VISIT AND  
MEETING WITH POPE FRANCIS**



*Photo Courtesy of Vatican Media*

VATICAN CITY - While many families in northeastern and north central Pennsylvania spent Thanksgiving discussing football and politics over turkey dinner, Bishop Joseph C. Bambera was in Rome for a two-and-a-half-hour meeting with Pope Francis.

The meeting, which involved all of the bishops of Pennsylvania and New Jersey, was an important part of the bishops' "ad limina" visit.

"He was welcoming, he was disarming in terms of his ordinary, simple demeanor, he was funny, he was extremely well-versed on our situation locally and was very encouraging," Bishop Bambera said reflecting on the meeting with the Holy Father.

Pope Francis greeted the bishops by saying "Happy Thanksgiving" at the beginning of their discussion. He then encouraged them to ask questions, offer observations or seek input on any situation they wanted to.

The wide-ranging conversation focused on topics including the clerical sexual abuse scandal, ways to be responsive to survivors of sexual abuse and the decreasing number of Catholics in many parts of the East Coast.

"He was very, very in tune to where we are," Bishop Bambera said.

At the time of the meeting on Nov. 28, Pope Francis had just returned from a weeklong trip to Thailand and Japan. Bishop Bambera said the Holy Father's comments were very much "like a father."

"He challenged us, in the best way, to be sensitive to our priests because of what they're dealing with on the front lines," Bishop Bambera said. "He encouraged us to be supportive of them and all our people."

*Read more about Bishop Bambera's meeting with Pope Francis and his ad limina visit in The Catholic Light newspaper next Thursday.*

## OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE CELEBRATIONS



*The Catholic Light Photo/Mike Melisky*

The feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe is being celebrated around the Diocese of Scranton, particularly in the areas with large Latino populations.

The annual observance commemorates the appearance of the Virgin Mary to a Mexican Indian, Juan Diego, in December of 1531. The Blessed Mother's message of hope continues to inspire people of Hispanic descent, especially those from Mexico.

Our Lady of Guadalupe is venerated as patroness of the Americas.

December 12 is the Feast Day of Our Lady of Guadalupe. We pray that she may help us never see others as burdens, especially migrants to our country and communities.

Bishop Joseph C. Bambera will celebrate Mass today, on the Feast Day of Our Lady of Guadalupe, at Saint Nicholas Parish in Wilkes-Barre at 6:00 p.m.

The bishop also celebrated Mass in honor of Our Lady of Guadalupe on Saturday, Dec. 7 at Saint John Neumann Parish in Scranton, as depicted in the above photograph.

## **SCRANTON PARISH PLANS BLUE CHRISTMAS MASS**



Saint John Neumann Parish, Nativity of Our Lord Church, will offer a "Blue Christmas Mass" on Christmas Day, December 25 at 9:30 a.m.

This celebration of the Eucharist will be offered for anyone who might feel at odds with or estranged from the general feeling of joy and happiness at this time of the year. There may be people among us who are suffering a personal loss: death of a loved one, divorce, illness, family trauma, abuse or job loss.

Others may be simply too stressed out because of holiday expectations.

This Mass seeks to comfort people by reminding them that they are not alone.

Invite anyone you know experiencing these feelings, no matter where they are from, to enter the stable with the shepherds at Nativity Church.

The calm, peaceful liturgy is not to give neat answers to anyone's suffering, but to assure people of Christ's message of HOPE at Christmas.

The message will be simple, but remarkable: 'The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness cannot overcome it,' no matter how much it might seem the darkness is winning over our lives and our world.

The Church is located at 633 Orchard Street in Scranton.

For more information, please contact Saint John Neumann Parish at (570) 344-6159 or check out the parish website at [stjnparish.org](http://stjnparish.org) or on Facebook.

## CATHOLIC YOUTH CENTER OPENS NEW ANNEX TO MEET GROWING NEED FOR CHILD CARE SERVICES



*The Catholic Light Photo/Eric Deabill*

WILKES-BARRE, PA - After months of planning and construction, the opening of the new CYC Annex Child Care Center will help to meet the growing needs of child care in the Wyoming Valley.

A ribbon cutting ceremony for the new facility located on South Washington Street was held on Wednesday, December 4, at 1:00 p.m.

The new facility includes two infant rooms, a pre-school classroom, kitchen area and laundry room.

"We are elated to be able to convert this vacant space into something valuable for our community," Mark Soprano, Executive Director of the Catholic Youth Center, said. "We are excited to be able to provide more families in Luzerne County with quality child care!"

Within the last year, the Catholic Youth Center has seen a tremendous increase in need for its child care services. During the months of December 2018 through February 2019, the center went from an average enrollment of 227 children per day to more than 300 per day.

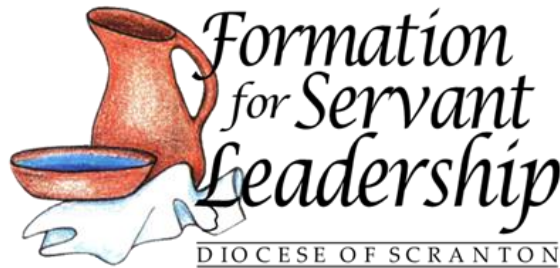
The new CYC Annex Child Care Center will provide additional space to increase enrollment by 45 children and will also create six new full-time positions at the agency.

To find out more about the new CYC facility, visit:

<https://www.dioceseofscranton.org/cyc-annex-child-care-center-opening-meets-a-growing-need-for-child-care-services/>



**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](mailto:Kitty-Scanlan@dioceseofscranton.org) for application information, materials, and application submissions.

**DIOCESAN DELEGATION INSPIRED BY NCYC**



*The Catholic Light Photo/Eric Deabill*

INDIANAPOLIS - Loud cheers filled Lucas Oil Stadium, the home of the Indianapolis Colts, on Nov. 21, but it wasn't because of football fans.

With 20,000 youth inside for the opening night of the National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC), the clapping and screaming was for a surprise guest.

Pope Francis recorded a video message which was played at the beginning of the biennial conference on large TV monitors.

"I send you an affectionate greeting and my prayers at this moment of encounter that you are living. May it be an opportunity to deepen your faith and communion," the Holy Father said. "May it light your missionary hearts with the courage and strength to live in and with the Lord always as a Church sent forth."

In the video message, Pope Francis reminded the young adults that many people do not know Jesus.

"Go, go and take the world with you. Go and fill your surroundings, even the digital ones. Not of convictions. Not to convince others. Not to proselytize. But to bear witness of the tenderness and mercy of Jesus."

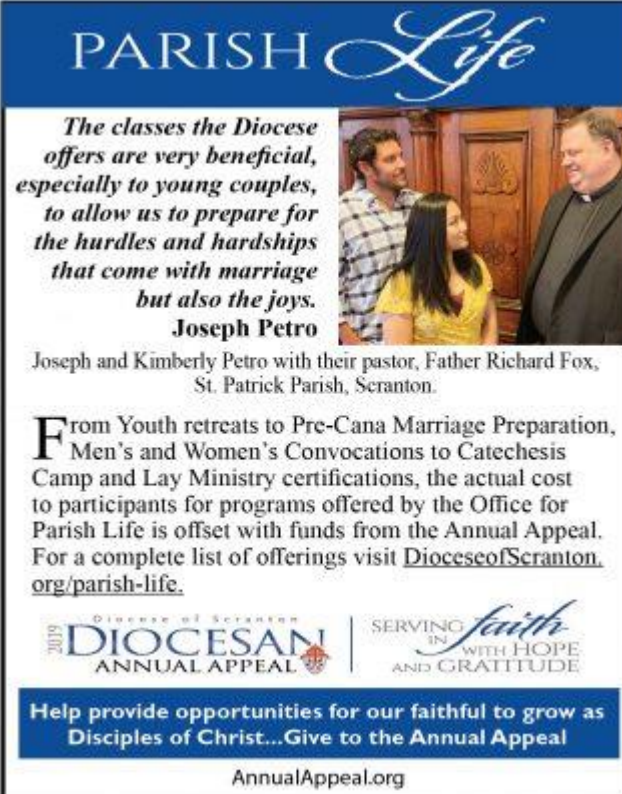
Young adults from the Diocese of Scranton who attended the conference described it has "life changing" and "amazing."

A total of 131 people from the Diocese of Scranton, including four priests, one parish life coordinator and one seminarian, traveled to Indianapolis to experience NCYC. Eleven different parishes were represented for the inspiring, three-day conference with the theme, "Blessed, Broken, Given."

During the conference, young adults participated in Mass, Eucharistic Adoration, interactive presentations and much more.

*Read all about the student's NCYC experience in The Catholic Light newspaper next Thursday.*

## **DURING THIS ADVENT SEASON, KINDLY REMEMBER THE GOOD WORK OF THE DIOCESE CONTINUES**



**PARISH Life**

*The classes the Diocese offers are very beneficial, especially to young couples, to allow us to prepare for the hurdles and hardships that come with marriage but also the joys.*

**Joseph Petro**

Joseph and Kimberly Petro with their pastor, Father Richard Fox, St. Patrick Parish, Scranton.

**F**rom Youth retreats to Pre-Cana Marriage Preparation, Men's and Women's Convocations to Catechesis Camp and Lay Ministry certifications, the actual cost to participants for programs offered by the Office for Parish Life is offset with funds from the Annual Appeal. For a complete list of offerings visit [DioceseofScranton.org/parish-life](http://DioceseofScranton.org/parish-life).

2019 **DIOCESAN ANNUAL APPEAL** | SERVING *faith* IN WITH HOPE AND GRATITUDE

**Help provide opportunities for our faithful to grow as Disciples of Christ... Give to the Annual Appeal**

AnnualAppeal.org

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](http://www.AnnualAppeal.org)

#### Follow the Diocese on Social Media

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[www.twitter.com/DioceseOfScr](http://www.twitter.com/DioceseOfScr)

[www.facebook.com/DioceseOfScranton](http://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!*

Diocese of Scranton, 300 Wyoming Ave, Scranton, PA 18501

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