

The Catholic Light

DIOCESE OF SCRANTON

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THURSDAY, JANUARY 14, 2021

Pope Francis says he was 'astonished' by violence at Capitol

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – Pope Francis offered prayers for the people of the United States “shaken by the recent siege on Congress” and prayed for the people who lost their lives “in those dramatic moments” when protesters stormed the Capitol Jan. 6.

Remarking on the events after reciting the Angelus prayer Jan. 10, the pope insisted that “violence is always self-destructive. Nothing is gained by violence and so much is lost.”

The pope urged government leaders “and the entire population to maintain a high sense of responsibility in order to soothe tempers, promote national reconciliation and protect the democratic values rooted in American society.”

And he prayed that “Mary Immaculate, patroness of the United States of America,” would “help keep alive the culture of encounter, the culture of caring, as the way to build together the common good; and may she do so with all who live in that land.”

Pope Francis’ remarks came one day after the release of clips of an interview in which he said he was “astonished” by the violent breach of the U.S. Capitol, especially because the people of the United States are “so disciplined in democracy.”



The U.S. Capitol in Washington is seen behind heavy-duty security fencing Jan. 7, 2021, one day after supporters of President Donald Trump stormed Capitol Hill. (CNS photo/Erin Scott, Reuters)

The interview with Italy’s Canale 5 was broadcast Jan. 10.

Violence, he told the interviewer, must always be condemned, but it also is true that in even the most “mature” societies, there are violent minorities, “people taking a path against the community,

against democracy, against the common good.”

“But thank God this erupted and people could see it well. That way it can be remedied,” he said.

“No nation can brag about never having a case of violence—it happens,” he said. “We

must understand it, so it is not repeated – learn from history, right?”

BISHOPS RESPOND TO ASSAULT

Archbishop José H. Gomez of Los Angeles, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, issued a statement the evening of Jan. 6 saying he joined “people of goodwill in condemning the violence today at the United States Capitol.”

“This is not who we are as Americans,” he said, adding that he is praying for members of Congress, Capitol Hill staff members, police officers “and all those working to restore order and public safety.”

The archbishop called the peaceful transition of power “one of the hallmarks of this great nation” and stressed that in this “troubling moment, we must recommit ourselves to the values and principles of our democracy and come together as one nation under God.”

Bishop Joseph C. Bambera also responded to the violence on Jan. 6, writing on Twitter, “Please pray for an end to the violence and insurrection that has enveloped our land, that justice and peace may reign in our country that has been so richly blessed by God.”

Continued on Page 9

Bishop Bambera to celebrate Mass in observance of the Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children

SCRANTON – The Most Reverend Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, will celebrate a special Mass at the Cathedral of Saint Peter later this month to mark the 48th anniversary of *Roe v. Wade* and *Doe v. Bolton* which legalized abortion.

The Mass, in observance of the *Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children*, will be held on Friday, Jan. 22, 2021 at 12:10 p.m.

The Mass will be open to the public. It will be broadcast live on CTV: Catholic Television of the Diocese of Scranton and livestream on all Diocesan social media platforms.

The livestream will also be available at www.dioceseofscranton.org.

As a sign of unity and support for the sanctity of human life and the singular treasure of the unborn, the bishop has also asked all parishes to celebrate the *Mass for Giving Thanks to God for the Gift of Human Life* on the same day.

The bishop is also encouraging the faithful in the Diocese of Scranton to participate in the “9 Days for Life Novena” for the protection of human life. The Novena, which will begin on Thursday, Jan. 21, features a daily intention and is accompanied by a short reflection.

The pro-life novena, sponsored by the Committee on Pro-Life Activities of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, coincides with the annual March for Life that

takes place in Washington every January to mark the anniversary of the Supreme Court’s 1973 *Roe v. Wade* and *Doe v. Bolton* decisions legalizing abortion across the country. This year’s march takes place Jan. 29.

The USCCB pro-life committee began the novena in 2013. *The Catholic Light* is publishing the daily intentions and reflections on Pages 4 and 5 of this edition. The resources are also available on the Diocese of Scranton website.

The over 60 million abortions since the 1973 decisions of *Roe v. Wade* and



A pro-life sign is displayed during a recent March for Life rally in Washington. (CNS photo/Tyler Orsburn)

Doe v. Bolton reflect with heartbreaking magnitude what Pope Francis means by a “throwaway culture.” Each January, Catholics come together to pray for an end to abortion and for a greater respect for all human life.

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We, the Catholic community of the Diocese of Scranton, are called through Baptism to imitate the servant leadership of Jesus Christ. In union with Our Holy Father, the Pope, we proclaim the Gospel faithfully, celebrate the sacraments joyfully, and boldly promote life, justice and peace in northeastern and north central Pennsylvania.

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Bishop Bambera's March for Life Letter 2021

My Dear Friends,

Every year since my appointment as Bishop of Scranton in 2010, I have been privileged to join with many of you for the annual *March for Life* in our nation's capital to give witness to our shared belief that all human life is sacred and must be protected – especially the lives of the unborn, who are unable to protect themselves.

This year, because of the coronavirus and, frankly, out of concern for the safety of all who might gather in our nation's capital in light of the tragic events and the blatant disrespect for life that we've witnessed during the past week, the *March for Life* will take place in a different way. While some will still likely gather in Washington, faithful souls who treasure life from throughout our diocese and country have mobilized at local levels using all sorts of virtual platforms to advocate for the right to life of the unborn. As a result, the 2021 commemoration of the tragic *Roe v. Wade* Supreme Court decision that legalized abortion has the potential to make our message on behalf of human life and the unborn heard more loudly than ever before.

In an address to the Pontifical Academy for Life in June 2018, Pope Francis asserted, "Our defense of the innocent unborn needs to be clear, firm and passionate, for at stake is the dignity of the human person, which is always sacred and demands love for each person, regardless of his or her age or stage of development." As such, for us as Catholics, respecting life, especially the unborn, is intrinsic to our identity as people of faith. It admits no denial, no exception and no compromise.

If we have learned nothing else during this very difficult year in which our world has been enveloped by the deadly coronavirus pandemic, most of us have come to appreciate the value of human life as never before. We've also come to understand that so much of life is beyond our ability to control and, on our own, we are helpless to address the challenges that confront us. Only by handing ourselves over to the power of God and working together to care for the lives that have been given to us, will we ever discover a way forward filled with peace and hope for all.

The theme selected for this year's *March for Life – Together Strong: Life Unites* – is rather providential, given the divisions that exist within our land, as evidenced by the recent events in our nation's capital. Ironically, within the past year that has been fraught by so much suffering and loss of life, the value of something as fundamental to our lives as Christians as the dignity of the human person – from the moment of conception to natural end – tragically seems to have evaporated in the face of political and ideological divisions that have enveloped our country and even our Church.

A year ago, the U.S. Bishops affirmed, "the threat of abortion remains our preeminent priority because it directly attacks life itself, because it takes place within the sanctuary of the family, and because of the number of lives destroyed." The Bishops did not, however, conclude their teaching on the value of human life with a focus solely on life in the womb. To the contrary, the Bishops went on to propose a more comprehensive perspective, "At the same time, we cannot dismiss or ignore other serious threats to human life and dignity such as racism, the environmental crisis, poverty and the death penalty."

While our focus during these latter days of January has traditionally witnessed the value and dignity of the unborn life, we can never authentically embrace such a reality without including a plea to respect every life as having been made in the image and likeness of God. One wonders what will become of our land if we continue to advocate for laws that subjectively respect life in some forms while disregarding its value in its earliest stages of development. The words of Pope Saint John Paul II offer a sobering perspective, "When some lives, including the unborn, are subjected to the personal choices of others, no other value or right will long be guaranteed."

Make no mistake about it; our work in defense of human life is far from over. Thank God for the efforts of so many who work, pray and witness on behalf of life! Locally, in the Diocese of Scranton, through the good efforts of those who work with agencies and programs such as Saint Joseph's Center, Catholic Social Services of the Diocese of Scranton, Friends of the Poor, Rachel's Vineyard and organizations like Pennsylvanians for Human Life, a difference for good has and continues to be made.

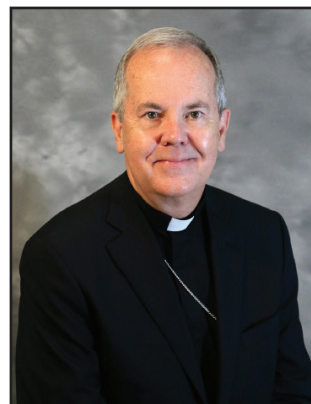
This year, I invite you to avail yourselves of the many opportunities that are being provided in the Diocese of Scranton to witness to life. On Friday, January 22, 2021, the 48th anniversary of the *Roe v. Wade* decision, I will celebrate a Mass for Life at 12:10 p.m. in Saint Peter's Cathedral in observance of the *Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children* and have invited all of our parishes to celebrate the *Mass for Giving Thanks to God for the Gift of Human Life* on the same day. The Cathedral Mass will be broadcast live on Catholic Television of the Diocese of Scranton and on other diocesan social media outlets. Additionally, a Rosary for Life featuring faithful from across our Diocese and resources for the "9 Days for Life Novena" are available on our diocesan website, among many other prayer opportunities. Finally, countless numbers of faithful, particularly young people from our parishes and schools, are organizing local prayer gatherings and socially distant marches through their local communities to raise awareness of the sanctity of human life and the singular treasure of the unborn.

Brothers and sisters, may we come to understand that together, we are indeed strong and are united by God's singular gift of life. May our recognition of the presence of God within the lives of all who have been created in his image and likeness give us the courage and resolve to love generously and to proclaim ever more boldly Jesus' Gospel of Life.

Faithfully yours in Christ,

+ *Joseph C. Bambera*

Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, D.D., J.C.L.
Bishop of Scranton



Parish youth groups join forces to plan local March for Life on Jan. 29

EAST STROUDSBURG – While they will not be able to attend the *March for Life* in person in Washington this year, two parish youth groups in the Poconos are still planning to highlight the importance of the day.

Saint Matthew Parish in East Stroudsburg and Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish in Brodheadsville are joining forces to hold a local “March for Life” on Friday, Jan. 29, 2021.

“We are not able to go to the March itself in Washington but we didn’t want the day to go by without recognizing it,” Dori Hurley, Youth Ministry Director at Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish, said.

Starting at 12:30 p.m., young adults are expected to take part in a one-hour march through East Stroudsburg. COVID-19 precautions will be in place. Because of the ability to remain physically distant from one another, the parishes have also invited community members to take part in the walk.

“The route is about an hour. We’ll start at the corner on the campus of Saint Matthew Church and we’ll head up onto Prospect Street and go up past the hospital. We thought if we went past the hospital



Young adults from Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish pose with Bishop Joseph C. Bambera at the 47th annual March for Life in January 2020. This year, instead of traveling to Washington, the parish is planning a local “March for Life” in East Stroudsburg on Jan. 29, 2021.

and past a couple of the main streets in East Stroudsburg we would get a lot more eyes,” explained Sean Robbins, Youth, College and Young Adult Minister at Saint Matthew Parish.

Prior to the march, students from the two parishes will watch the Virtual Youth Rally from Washington, attend Mass and have other prayer opportunities.

Following the local march, they are expected to participate in a Holy Hour and a witness talk, along with having time for small group discussion and reflection.

Nancy Gabana, a parishioner of Saint Matthew Parish, will discuss her personal witness. When she was in medical school, Gabana will explain how she was pressured to abort her child but refused. Gabana now

has a beautiful daughter who is in her 20s.

“I hope that they (young adults) can see that choosing life is never the bad option. Even when things may seem dim, God always has a plan for our lives,” Robbins said.

Organizers of the event are looking forward to sending a positive message to their community.

“I think this is going to be a little different for the kids. When you’re at the March, everyone is there for the same reason,” Hurley said. “Here locally in East Stroudsburg, our presence is going to be something very different. Some people may not even know the significance of the day.”

“This is an opportunity right in our hometown, right where our parishes are, where many parishioners live, where many of our local businesses and donors live. It’s a great opportunity to show the community that we’re standing up for life,” Robbins added.

Both youth ministry directors say this event is turning into a real parish-wide effort, crossing generations and ministries, as everyone is focused on making sure the event runs smoothly.

National Prayer Vigil for Life will be virtual this year

WASHINGTON (CNS) – Each year on the night before the annual *March for Life*, at least 10,000 people have filled the Great Upper Church of the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington for the National Prayer Vigil for Life.

This year, due to local restrictions on attendance sizes because of the pandemic, the prayer vigil will be virtual.

Catholics across the country are instead being encouraged to take part in a nationwide prayer vigil from Jan. 28 through Jan. 29, marking the 48th anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court’s 1973 *Roe v. Wade* and *Doe v. Bolton* decisions legalizing abortion.

The vigil will begin with a live broadcast at 8 p.m. EST on Thursday, Jan. 28 from the basilica, starting with the praying of the rosary followed by Mass.

Bishops from across the country will be leading Holy Hours throughout the night in the livestream vigil.

The service can be viewed on EWTN or livestreams from the basilica or from the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

The principal celebrant and homilist for the opening Mass will be Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann of Kansas City, Kansas, USCCB’s chairman of the Committee on Pro-Life Activities.



People arrive for the National Prayer Vigil for Life in 2020. (CNS photo/Greg Shemitz)

The vigil will end at 8 a.m. Jan. 29 in a closing Mass celebrated by Archbishop William E. Lori of Baltimore.

“Now, more than ever, our nation is in need of prayer for the protection of the unborn and the dignity of all

human life,” Archbishop Naumann said in a statement. “I invite all Catholics to spend time with our Lord and join in this nationwide vigil for life.”

The closing Mass for the vigil Jan. 29 will be open to the public but because of attendance restrictions allowing only 100 people inside the basilica, admission will be allowed on a first-come, first-served basis.

Pro-life rally to be held in Hazleton Jan. 22

HAZLETON – In lieu of organizing buses to the *March for Life* in Washington this year, Pennsylvanians for Human Life will sponsor a pro-life rally commemorating the 48th anniversary of *Roe v. Wade* at City View Park, 700 South Poplar Street, Hazleton, on Friday Jan. 22, 2021 at noon.

Author Starr Rogers will be the guest speaker for the event. Rogers will talk about her four abortions and journey to becoming a pro-life activist who defends the unborn. Rogers will be accompanied by her son, Matt Finney, who represents siblings of those who have lost brothers or sisters to abortion.

Dr. Frank Schell, Northeast Regional chairperson of Pennsylvanians for Human Life, will act as master of ceremonies. Other featured speakers will include Maryann Lawhon, JMJ Catholic radio show host and executive producer of *The Voice of John* documentary; Father Peter O’Rourke, champion of the unborn; and State Representative Tarah Toohil, speaking about adoption and fostering as a healthy alternative to abortion.

The program will open with prayer from Marian Catholic High School principal Rev. Allen Hoffa, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance by Hazleton Mayor Jeff Cusat. Sam Lasante will be the recipient of the “Defender of Life” award. Music will be provided by Spirit of Grace Music Ministry.

Adequate free parking is available on site. The venue offers several large covered pavilions, tables and benches. COVID-19 precautions will be in place. Bob’s BBQ food truck will be on site beginning at 11:00 a.m.

Prior to the rally, a “Mass for Life” will be held at Holy Annunciation’s Church of Saint Gabriel at 10:00 a.m. Due to COVID-19 physical distancing protocols, those wishing to attend Mass must sign up by going to the Holy Annunciation Parish website.

After the rally, the group will proceed to Hazleton’s Saint Gabriel’s Cemetery Memorial to the Unborn Child to pay tribute to 64 million babies who have died due to abortion.

For more information, contact Mary Ann Lawhon at (570) 764-5428 or Chris Calore at (570) 824-5621.

Stay Up to Date with News in the Diocese of Scranton
www.dioceseofscranton.org

PRAY TO
PROTECT
HUMAN LIFE!

9DAYS FOR LIFE
JANUARY 21 - 29, 2021



WWW.9DAYSFORLIFE.COM

Thursday, January 21 – Friday, January 29, 2021

Pray one Our Father, 3 Hail Marys, and one Glory Be each day with the daily intentions and reflections listed below. The full novena, including daily suggested actions and additional information can be found at www.9daysforlife.com.

Day One January 21

Reflection: At every stage and in every circumstance, we are held in existence by God's love. The presence of an illness, disability, or other challenging situation never diminishes the value of a human life. God does not call us to perfection of appearance or abilities, but to perfection in love. Christ invites us to embrace our own lives and the lives of others as true gifts.

Abortion tragically rejects the truth that every life is a good and perfect gift, deserving protection. This violent practice ends the life of a human being at its very beginning and horribly wounds all those involved. But Christ came that we "might have life and have it more abundantly" (John 10:10), taking on human flesh for the sake of our redemption. May our culture experience the power of God's transforming love, that all eyes may be opened to the incredible beauty of every human life.



Day Two January 22

Reflection: Today, on this 48th anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*, we mourn the many children's lives ended by abortion and remember in prayer those who suffer the aftermath. The Church comes together today to pray for the protection of all unborn children and to make reparation for abortion, trusting that the Lord hears our prayers. The importance of prayer is reflected in *Evangelium vitae*, which says, "A great prayer for life is urgently needed, a prayer which will rise up throughout the world. Through special initiatives and in daily prayer, may an impassioned plea rise to God, the Creator and lover of life, from every Christian community, from every group and association, from every family and from the heart of every believer" (*EV* 100). May that prayer arise in our hearts today and each day forward until every human being is protected in law and welcomed in love.



Day Three January 23

Reflection: When the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary, she opened her heart to receive his message that she would conceive the Son of God in her womb. As a young, betrothed, but unmarried, woman, Mary knew that her pregnancy presented many challenges. Despite this knowledge, she faithfully responded, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word" (Luke 1:38). Like the Blessed Mother, women who unexpectedly become pregnant often face significant challenges. They, too, are called to place their trust in God and faithfully respond to His *gift* of new life. And we are called to walk with them in their time of need. As Jesus taught us, when we love and serve others, we are loving and serving Him. May all expectant mothers be encouraged by Mary's example and receive support and grace in lovingly welcoming their children into the world.



Day Four January 24

Reflection: Fatherhood has its origins in God, who chose to reveal Himself to us as Our Father, sending his only Son for the sake of our salvation. Fathers have a special role "in revealing and in reliving on earth the very fatherhood of God" (*Familiaris consortio* 25). Fathers are called to exhibit "generous responsibility for the life conceived under the heart of the mother" (*FC* 25). They are uniquely entrusted with the protection and defense of both mother and child and, in this way, in safeguarding the sanctity of human life. Often women choose abortion because they do not have the support of the child's father or the father of the child pressures her to make the decision to abort. It is important to acknowledge with compassion that men can also be overwhelmed by an unexpected pregnancy and that society increasingly tells them that they should have no say in their children's lives. In the face of these false messages, we pray that expectant fathers will find courage in Saint Joseph - who embraced the role of father amid difficult circumstances - and offer loving, life-affirming support to the mothers of their children.



Day Five January 25

Reflection: After more than four decades of legalized abortion, many children's lives have been ended, and many parents and family members suffer that loss - often in silence. Yet God's greatest desire is to forgive. No matter how far we have each strayed from His side, He says to us, "Don't be afraid. Draw close to my heart." Be assured that it is never too late to seek God's forgiveness in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Consider the parable of the Prodigal Son. After repenting of sinning against his father, he returns from far away to seek forgiveness and work as a servant. But the father sees him approaching, runs to warmly embrace him, and hosts a banquet to celebrate his return. So, too, does God welcome all of His repentant children, no matter how serious the sin. Let us turn confidently to Our Lord, Who is love and mercy.



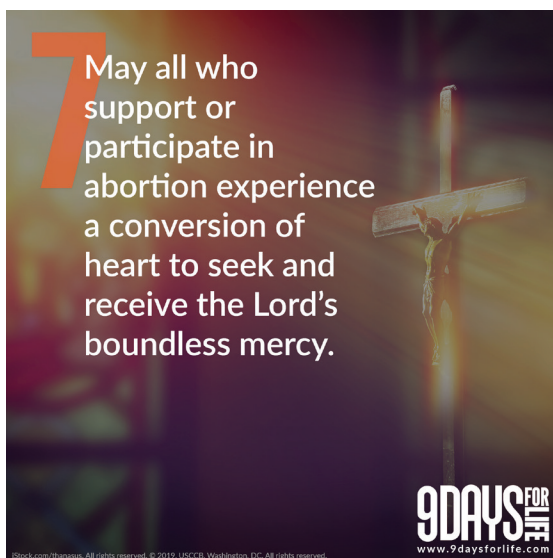
Day Six January 26

Reflection: Mothers placing their children for adoption often face challenges along the way. One of the obstacles can be inaccurately perceiving adoption as abandonment. Mothers who make an adoption plan are not abandoning their children. Rather, they are exemplifying the sacrificial love of Christ on the Cross in choosing to do what is best for their children, even at great cost to themselves. Like Christ, they pour out their bodies and souls for the sake of another. The Letter to the Hebrews reminds us that, in the face of fears and trials, we can "hold fast to the hope that lies before us. This we have as an anchor of the soul, sure and firm" (Heb 6:18-19). We pray that each expectant mother choosing adoption will be filled with "the peace of God that surpasses all understanding" (Phil 4:7) as she makes a loving choice for her child. Let us all cling fast to the anchor of hope, for we have received "a spirit of adoption, through which we cry, 'Abba, Father!'" (Rom 8:15).



Day Seven January 27

Reflection: When God fashioned the human person in His own image and likeness, He destined us for eternal life with Him. Yet because of the sin of our first parents, death entered the world. The book of Genesis recounts the first occasion in which a person takes the life of another, as Cain violently kills his brother Abel. This instance of brother rising up against brother "at the very dawn of history is thus a sad witness of how evil spreads with amazing speed" (*Evangelium vitae* 8). From the time of creation, disregard for human life has continued to spread. When we, like Cain, allow sin to find a place in our hearts, we become blinded to the truth. Sometimes this blindness might be so deep that we fail to recognize the undeniable humanity of unborn children. We may even tragically believe the lie that abortion is an act of compassion. But we know that "life, especially human life, belongs only to God: for this reason whoever attacks human life, in some way attacks God himself" (*EV* 9). Let us pray that all who support abortion will encounter the transforming love of the Father and, with repentant hearts, seek His mercy.



Day Eight January 28

Reflection: The Declaration of Independence boldly affirms that first among our inalienable rights is the right to life, given to us by the Creator. Yet despite being so solemnly proclaimed, the right to life is today threatened and often denied, particularly at the moments when life is most fragile. Our laws should - first and foremost - protect life. But "our highest Court does not recognize children in their mothers' wombs as persons and claims that abortion is a constitutional right. Further, many political leaders work actively to increase access to abortion. Some falsely describe it as health care and even as a basic human right" (*Priorities at the Polls*). Laws and policies that legalize or promote an intrinsic evil like abortion violate the virtue of justice. Those who work as public officials and civic leaders have a duty to serve the common good, and therefore have a profound obligation to safeguard this most fundamental right to life. Through our own prayer, witness, and civic participation, we can encourage our leaders to truly answer their call to protect the rights of all people. For "there can be no true democracy without a recognition of every person's dignity and without respect for his or her rights" (*Evangelium vitae* 101).



Day Nine January 29

Reflection: God has carefully, tenderly created every person in His own image and likeness, to be in a loving relationship with Himself. From each tiny child knit within a mother's womb, to every person approaching death, all are loved perfectly and completely by God: "It is therefore a service of love which we are all committed to ensure to our neighbor, that his or her life may be always defended and promoted, especially when it is weak or threatened [emphasis added]" (*Evangelium vitae* 77). In a world in which those who are most vulnerable are so often overlooked and disregarded, Christ calls us to embrace and uphold the unconditional dignity of every human life. In answering this call, we help to build "a new culture of life, the fruit of the culture of truth and of love" (*EV* 77). May the Holy Spirit continually renew us as we strive to faithfully defend God's gift of life.



Renewing your spiritual life amid a pandemic as the calendar turns to 2021

SCRANTON — As we turn the corner and head down the homestretch toward the finish line marking the one-year anniversary of a global pandemic, faithful of the Diocese of Scranton join their fellow citizens of the world in assessing how the coronavirus has turned their lives — including the spiritual — upside down.

For each Catholic, the journey has taken different twists and turns. Traditional practices of the faith were abruptly interrupted and altered, raising unforeseen challenges in navigating a religious road laden with COVID-19 landmines.

But with each new year, hope springs eternal. Thus, parishioners reflect on how they fared in keeping the faith while looking ahead with a sense of promise and renewal.

Two priests of the Diocese — one new to the ranks of Catholic clergy and the other a seasoned pastor with decades of ministerial experience — offer ways to refresh your spiritual lives with the dawning of the much-anticipated year of 2021.

“A new year is a great gift from God — a fresh start, a clean slate, a renewed sense of opportunity and hope,” Father Kevin Miller, who was among three newly ordained priests who received Holy Orders in June, said. “Indeed God’s gifts of time itself is one of our greatest blessings, and while it may seem like such a limitation at times, it is actually, by its dual nature, a sign of God’s infinite Divine Mercy.”

According to Father Miller, who is serving in his first parochial assignment as assistant pastor at the Carbondale parishes of Saint Rose of Lima and Our Lady of Mount Carmel, the journey to our true homeland in eternity with the Lord, as fallen yet redeemed creatures, is an opportunity to grow closer to God each day.

“As such, now is the time to know God better, to love Him more deeply, and to serve Him more faithfully through the love of others,” he said.

“Pray with the saints,” the young priest offered as a concrete way to achieve such a goal in the new year.

Father Miller referred to the McGrath Institute of Church Life at the University of Notre Dame, which is offering a free, four-part series, “Praying with the Saints,” to lead faithful in ways of prayer unique to particular saints.

“I just started the course and have found the first module of ‘Praying into Silence with Saint Teresa of Avila’ especially helpful,” Father Miller shared, “particularly since I’ve never been comfortable with contemplative of imaginative prayer.”

He also presented the challenge of reflecting daily on God’s Word and reading the entire Bible within the year.

“One of the best ways to deepen our relationship with God is to listen to



Father Kevin Miller

His Word,” Father said. “To that end, I purchased the book ‘Bible in a Year’ from the Augustine Institute to help grow closer to the Lord. It provides daily readings from the Old Testament, New Testament and Psalms/Wisdom Literature to add structure and variety. Twenty minutes a day is all it takes.”

Father Miller also encourages more frequent reception of the Sacraments of Holy Eucharist and Reconciliation, along with the practice of First Friday/First Saturday monthly devotions.

“These two sacraments are ‘saintmakers,’ so any additional encounters with God in these sacraments can only help to deepen our relationship with Him,” he said, suggesting attending one additional Mass during the week and making a sacramental confession at least once a month.”

Accordingly, he related, for those who honor the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Immaculate Heart of Mary on the First Fridays and Saturdays of the month, great reparation for sins committed is offered.

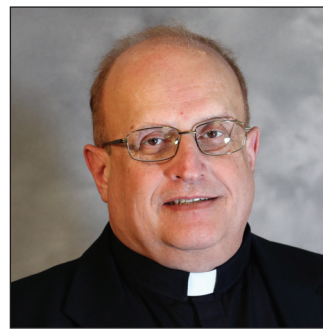
“Any or all of these spiritual practices will do much to deepen our relationship with our good and loving Lord and each other in the new year. Why not start today?” Father concluded.

Father Ric Polmounter, a 42-year priest of the Diocese currently serving as pastor of Saint John Bosco Parish in Conyngham, outlined his spiritual plan for 2021 as “Looking to Ordinary Time with renewed hope,” focusing on the four major pillars of parish and individual spiritual life — Word, Worship, Community & Service.

“The holidays offered many a brief reprieve from the doldrums of the past year and the many changes” brought on by the pandemic, the veteran clergyman said. “The new year is a time to reboot our spiritual lives and keep alive the hope that the season evoked.”

Though faith formation classes and Bible sessions have been interrupted, Father Polmounter said many parishes are availing faithful to inspirational books such as *Your Guide to a Happy Life* by the late Diocesan priest, Father Joseph Sica; *I Heard God Laugh* by Matthew Kelly; and Saint Mother Teresa’s *Do Something Beautiful for God*.

“Such inspirational reading helps keep alive our spiritual life throughout the new



Father Ric Polmounter

year and Lenten season,” he said, noting that the pandemic has led parishioners to tune increasingly more into online spiritual programs and provided a new opportunity to study the works of the great religious writers.

Father Polmounter remarked that since parish churches were opened for public worship last year, he has noticed an increase in participation in daily Masses during the week.

In regard to personal Confession he said, “Although the numbers participating in the Sacrament of Reconciliation has declined, I have found many calling for an appointment to receive the grace of the Sacrament.”

He continued, “For some this pandemic has allowed them to be physically quiet,

unhurried, slowing down from the usual frantic pace of life and carve out time to sit in silence for moments of prayer, Scripture reading and reflection.”

He also noted that many faithful are returning to the time-honored devotion of Eucharistic adoration and time spent before the Blessed Sacrament.

In light of some of the “positives” that the pandemic has ironically brought about, Father Polmounter encouraged individuals to utilize creative means of modern technology to reach out to family, loved ones and previously out-of-touch friends; continue putting time aside for personal prayer and reflection; selflessly respond to the needs of the downtrodden through donations and volunteerism; and practicing acts of self-denial, such as fasting, for the sake of personal penance and offering “saved money” to benefit those most in need.

“Too much of what we are facing is simply beyond our control,” he said. “As we continue this journey, I think it is better to look forward in hope and creatively seek to do the Lord’s work and fulfill our parish mission, given the circumstances we continue to find ourselves in as we enter more deeply into 2021.”

APPOINTMENTS

His Excellency, Bishop Joseph C. Bambera, announces the following appointment, effective as follows:

Deacon Stephen B. Frye, from diaconal ministry, St. Joseph the Worker Parish, Williamsport, to diaconal ministry, St. Ann Parish, Williamsport, effective January 4, 2021.



BISHOP BAMBERA’S SCHEDULE

January 19 - Christian Unity Prayer Service Broadcast on CTV
Cathedral of Saint Peter, Scranton, 12:10 p.m.

January 22 - Mass for the Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children (48th anniversary of the Roe v. Wade Supreme Court Decision)
Cathedral of Saint Peter, Scranton, 12:10 p.m.

February 10 - World Day of the Sick Mass
Cathedral of Saint Peter, Scranton, 12:10 p.m.

February 11 - Installation Mass for Bishop-elect Larry J. Kulick
Sixth Bishop of the Diocese of Greensburg
Greensburg, 2:00 p.m.

Celebrating the Christmas season

Christmas is one of the most important days of the Church year, second only to Easter itself. It is the feast of the incarnation, the feast of God becoming flesh. It is a uniquely Christian teaching, the Divine choosing to become one of us. Because of this belief, God is not only Transcendent, but also wholly Immanent, Emmanuel (God-with-us).

The liturgical season of Christmas began with the vigil Masses on Christmas Eve but did not conclude until the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord on Sunday, January 10, 2021. During this season, we celebrate the birth of Christ into our world and into our hearts, and reflect on the gift of salvation that is born with him...including the fact that he was born to die for us.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this Christmas season was very different from any other year. In an effort to protect the safety and welfare of the faithful, many of the 118 parishes in the Diocese of Scranton required reservations. In an effort to help promote physical distancing, the Most Reverend Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, allowed parishes to begin celebrating the Vigil Mass of Christmas at 2:00 p.m. for this year only. Face masks and physical distancing protocols were also in place.

During the Christmas season, Bishop Bambera celebrated several Masses at the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton. Below are excerpts from his homilies. All homilies can be found on the Diocese of Scranton website at www.dioceseofscranton.org. (Photos from Midnight Mass of Christmas/Mike Melisky)



Midnight Mass of Christmas - December 25, 2020

"For as much as the past year has been a struggle, if we look carefully enough at what we've been experiencing, we will see that 2020 has blessed us with a lens through which we can recognize what matters most in life.

"The heart of Christmas is Jesus – born to save us! His life of love and service show us the only way forward amid the challenges we face and the harsh realization that we are ultimately not in control of our lives or world. May our prayer be for the wisdom to recognize, to honor and to serve the simple blessings that abound, even in these difficult days. Our families and friends, whether they are near or far this day – life, with all of its beauty and flaws – and faith, which reminds us that we have value and worth and are deeply loved by God."

Feast of the Holy Family - December 27, 2020

"It's certainly not by accident that in the midst of a season that finds many of us focusing upon our families, the Church offers for our consideration today this wonderful feast of the Holy Family – Joseph, Mary and the newborn Christ child. The Holy Family provides us with a powerful example of how best to live our lives within our particular families.

"I'd suggest that we focus our attention for just a moment on the figure of Saint Joseph. Joseph is often over shadowed by Mary and Jesus in the gospel stories. Yet, while we don't know much about him, we're told in the gospels that he was a "righteous man" who faced an uncertain and challenging situation and world with hope.

"Joseph revealed in his humanity the unique role of fathers to proclaim God's truth by word and deed. He protected and provided for Jesus and Mary. He named Jesus, taught him how to pray, how to work, how to be a man. Joseph's life teaches us that a family is not built on power and possessions but goodness; not on riches and wealth, but on faith, fidelity, and selfless love. In short, Joseph reminds us that the true treasures which we all seek in life can be found in every family if we look carefully enough – even our own!"

Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord - January 3, 2021

"Epiphany celebrates God's all-inclusive love. More than ever, we need to know and believe that we are loved. Yet sadly, more than we might realize, the best of us put limits on that love, don't we? While we acknowledge our need for God's love and mercy, we sometimes question whether others are just as deserving – because of who they are, what they believe, how they live, where they come from or how they look or sound.

"Today's feast offers an essential insight into our faith as Christians that we ought never to forget. We are saved not by our own righteousness but by the mercy and love of God won for us through the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus. Such overwhelming love and mercy can never be limited by our determination of who is worthy of God's grace and who is not."



Baptism of the Lord - January 10, 2021

"The significance of Jesus' baptism and its relationship to our own is a powerful focus of Saint Mark's gospel. Notice that Saint Mark does not begin his gospel with stories of Jesus' birth and images of shepherds and angels or magi and stars. To the contrary, Mark begins at the Jordan River with the descent of the Holy Spirit and these words of the Father, 'You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.' With those words of affirmation, Jesus embraces the very reason for his birth and begins his mission as the bearer of God's unconditional love, forgiveness and mercy to all.

"My friends, the same Spirit that rested upon Jesus descended upon us, compelling us to assume the work of the gospel in imitation of Jesus and in service of our brothers and sisters. Our baptism is not just a mile marker or sacred tradition that we are called to ritualize as Christians. It is a commitment on our part to embrace a lifestyle – a lifestyle patterned on Jesus' life of selfless service and unconditional love."



Christian Unity Prayer Service to be broadcast Jan. 19

SCRANTON – The theme of this year's Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, which will take place from January 18-25, is: "Abide in my love...you shall bear much fruit." (John, 15)

This year, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the commemoration of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity will take place in a slightly different manner.

The annual Ecumenical Service of Prayer will be broadcast on Tuesday, Jan. 19, at 12:10 p.m. on CTV: Catholic Television of the Diocese of Scranton. At the same time, it will also be made available on the Diocese of Scranton website and across all Diocesan social media platforms, including YouTube, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

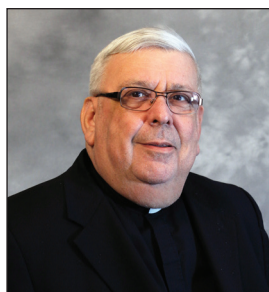
The Rev. Russell McDougall, C.S.C., rector of the Holy Cross Community at King's College and former rector of the

Tantur Ecumenical Institute in Jerusalem, will serve as homilist.

The recent document from the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, "The Bishop and Christian Unity: an Ecumenical Vademecum," reminds the faithful that, "Our Lord's Prayer for the unity of his disciples, 'that they may all be one,' is tied to the mission that he gives them, 'so that the world may believe.' (Jn 17:21)."

The annual week of prayer is an opportunity for every person to examine and renew their commitment to promote the unity that Our Lord desires.

The Ecumenical Directory states, "...rather than begin with our relations with other Christians, it is necessary for Catholics ... to examine their own faithfulness to Christ's will for the church and accordingly to undertake with vigor the task of renewal



**By Monsignor Vincent
J. Grimalia**

**Diocesan Coordinator
for Ecumenical
and Interfaith Relations**

Every Sunday and Holy Day of Obligation we pray the Nicene Creed, our Profession of Faith. One of the articles states, "We believe in one holy Catholic and apostolic church."

It is worthwhile from time to time to meditate on the words of our prayers and our Profession of Faith. The Catholic Catechism is a good place to begin a reflection on the four marks of the Church: one, holy, Catholic and apostolic. Our belief in the unity of the Church is meant to be lived each day as we cooperate with the grace of God.

The modern ecumenical movement began for Catholics at the Second Vatican Council. There was a lot of excitement and enthusiasm as Catholics and other Christians gathered for prayer and began to learn what we have in common and where we are different. As time goes on, we periodically need to re-energize our interest in promoting the unity of the Church and the will of Jesus for the unity of his disciples.

On May 25, 1995, Pope Saint John Paul II issued his encyclical *Ut Unum Sint*. Twenty-five years later, Bishop Joseph Bambera, serving as chairman for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, issued the statement: "This anniversary should serve as a reminder that the way of ecumenism is the way of the Church, and that all Catholics are called to espouse a strong commitment to building Christian unity."

Pope Saint John Paul, who worked tirelessly to build ecumenical relationships, described the impulse of working for unity between Christians as "a duty of Christian conscience enlightened by faith and guided by love."

We rejoice that Pope Benedict XVI and Pope Francis have continued to advance this singular mission between the Catholic Church and other Christian communities. May this anniversary of Pope John Paul II's call for Christian unity serve as a unique pastoral opportunity to build bridges by continuing to reach out with love to all of our brothers and sisters in Christ. "May He heal our wounds of division and help us grow closer in unity."

This year, the Scranton Diocese will broadcast a virtual prayer service for Christian unity on Tuesday, Jan. 19, at 12:10 p.m. Father Russell McDougall, C.S.C., of King's College will serve as the homilist.

All Christians have a responsibility for the sake of the Gospel to pray for unity, develop ecumenical friendships, and cooperate for the common good.

About the homilist...



Holy Cross Father Russ McDougall, originally from northwestern Indiana, received his B.A. and M.Div. from Notre Dame University, and S.S.L. from the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome. He made final vows in the Congregation of Holy Cross in 1990 and was ordained a Roman Catholic priest in 1991. He has served in parochial ministry at Holy Cross Parish in Nairobi, Kenya; as formation director, academic dean and lecturer in Old Testament at the

Queen of Apostles Philosophy Centre in Jinja, Uganda; and most recently as rector of the Tantur Ecumenical Institute in Jerusalem. Currently he serves as lecturer in theology and campus minister at King's College in northeastern Pennsylvania and as superior/director of the local Holy Cross community at King's.

and reform. This inner renewal disposes and orders the Church towards dialogue and engagement with other Christians."

During this special week, the faithful can ask themselves questions including: Do we pray for unity and work to overcome disunity within the Catholic community and with other Christians? How do our parishes, deaneries and our diocese express unity and

cooperation in mission?

To begin to achieve such noble ends, parishioners can participate in ecumenical prayer opportunities, programs and joint projects, especially in service of the poor. The faithful can also actively take membership in regional ministeriums to strengthen our commitment to the realization of Jesus' prayer for unity.

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity January 18 - January 25, 2021

The theme for this year's Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is,
"Abide in my love...you shall bear much fruit."
(cf. John 15:5-9)

Prayer Requests for Priests

The Daily Prayer Request for Priests schedule for the upcoming weeks is as follows:

January 14, Father J. Duane Gavitt; January 15, Father Anthony Generose; January 16, Father Richard Ghezzi; January 17, Father Ryan Glenn; January 18, Holy Cross Father Anthony Grasso; January 19, Father Joseph Greskiewicz; January 20, Monsignor Vincent Grimalia; January 21, Father Louis Grippe; January 22, Father Eugene Gunning; January 23, Father Gerald Gurka; January 24, Saint Peter Priestly Fraternity Father Simon Harkins; January 25, Passionist Father Lee Havey; January 26, Father Robert Hochreiter; January 27, Father Joseph Horanzy; January 28, Father Thomas Hudak; January 29, Father Andrew HvozdoVIC; January 30, Holy Cross Father Daniel Issing; January 31, Father George Jeffrey; February 1, Pope Francis; February 2, Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI; February 3, Bishop Joseph C. Bambera; February 4, Monsignor John Jordan; February 5, Father Joseph Kakareka; February 6, Father Louis Kaminski; February 7, Father William Karle; February 8, Monsignor Arthur Kaschenbach; February 9, Father Joseph Kearney; February 10, Jesuit Father Herbert Keller; February 11, Father Brian Kelly; February 12, Father E. Francis Kelly; February 13, Father John Kilpatrick; February 14, Father Shane Kirby; February 15, Father Michael Kirwin; February 16, Father Kenneth Kizis.

In message for World Sick Day, pope calls for health care for all

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – Praising those who help the sick and praying for those who are sick, Pope Francis called on Christians to practice what they preach, including by guaranteeing equal access to health care for all people.

“The current pandemic has exacerbated inequalities in our health care systems and exposed inefficiencies in the care of the sick,” the pope wrote in his message for the 2021 World Day of the Sick, which the Catholic Church marks Feb. 11, the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes.

The COVID-19 pandemic has made it obvious to everyone that “elderly, weak and vulnerable people are not always granted access to care,” at least not in an equitable way, he said. “This is the result of political decisions, resource management and a greater or lesser commitment on the part of those holding positions of responsibility.”

“Investing resources in the care and assistance of the sick is a priority linked to the fundamental principle that health is a primary common good,” Pope Francis wrote in his message, which was released by the Vatican Jan. 12.

The papal message, using Jesus’ denunciation of hypocrisy in Matthew 23:1-12, insisted that real faith leads to real care for all who suffer from illness, poverty or injustice.



A health care worker comforts an elderly patient at a hospital in England during the COVID-19 pandemic. In his message for the Feb. 11 celebration of the World Day of the Sick, Pope Francis called on Christians to practice what they preach, including by guaranteeing equal access to health care for all people. (CNS photo/Hannah McKay, pool via Reuters)

“When our faith is reduced to empty words, unconcerned with the lives and needs of others, the creed we profess proves inconsistent with the life we lead,” the pope wrote. “The danger is real.”

When another person is suffering, he said, Jesus “asks us to stop and listen, to establish a direct and personal relationship with others, to feel empathy and compassion, and to let their suffering become our own as we seek to serve them.”

Being sick makes one realize his or her “own vulnerability and innate need of others,” the pope said. “It makes us feel all the

more clearly that we are creatures dependent on God.”

“When we are ill,” he continued, “fear and even bewilderment can grip our minds and hearts; we find ourselves powerless, since our health does not depend on our abilities.”

For many people, the pope said, “sickness raises the question of life’s meaning,” something Christians must “bring before God in faith. In seeking a new and deeper direction in our lives, we may not find an immediate answer. Nor are our relatives and friends always able to help us in this demanding quest.”

Like Job in the Bible, people must stick with their prayers, crying out to God for help, he said.

In the end, God “confirms that Job’s suffering is not a punishment or a state of separation from God, much less as sign of God’s indifference,” he said. Job, “wounded and healed,” confesses his faith in the Lord.

Pope Francis praised the “silent multitude of men and women,” who, as the pandemic continues, do not look away, but help their patients or their neighbors.

“Such closeness is a precious balm that provides support and consolation to the sick in their suffering,” he said. “As Christians, we experience that closeness as a sign of the love of Jesus Christ, the

Good Samaritan, who draws near with compassion to every man and woman wounded by sin.”

Jesus’ commandment to love one another also applies to a Christian’s relationship with a person who is sick, the pope said. “A society is all the more human to the degree that it cares effectively for its most frail and suffering members, in a spirit of fraternal love.”

“Let us strive to achieve this goal, so that no one will feel alone, excluded or abandoned,” he said, praying that “Mary, Mother of Mercy and Health of the Infirm,” would watch over the sick, health care workers and all those who help others.

Bishop Bambera to celebrate World Day of the Sick Mass on Feb. 10

The Most Reverend Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, will celebrate Mass for the 29th World Day of the Sick on **Wednesday, Feb. 10, 2021 at 12:10 p.m.** at the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton. The Mass will be open to the public and also will be broadcast on CTV: Catholic Television of the Diocese of Scranton and livestream on the Diocese of Scranton website and across all social media platforms.

Parishes around the diocese are also encouraged to offer a Mass for the Sick either on Feb. 11 or another convenient day near it, but because of the current health crisis, the sacrament of Anointing of the Sick is not to be offered communally.

Resources for World Day of the Sick can be found on the Diocese of Scranton website.

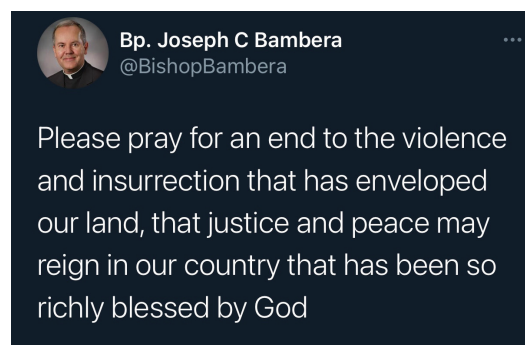
Assault on the Capitol shocks the world

Continued from Page 1

The bishop added additional context in his homily on Sunday, Jan. 10, 2021.

“A good number of the individuals who stormed the Capitol building would proudly claim for themselves the title of Christian. Why do I say that? Because they said it themselves. Many carried signs and flags proclaiming “Jesus Saves!” the bishop noted.

He continued, “Brothers and sisters, make no mistake about it. Jesus did not preach whatever gospel motivated those insurrectionists to invade the halls of democracy and freedom. Nor did they embrace any type of life-giving agenda as they set the stage for the death of five individuals, including a member of the Capitol police force who was attempting



Bishop Bambera first responded to the violence at the United States Capitol on Twitter on Jan. 6, 2021 and later provided additional comments during a homily on Sunday, Jan. 10, 2021.

to keep peace. No matter how anyone attempts to rationalize their actions, their gospel was rooted in hatred, revenge and a gross disrespect for human life – not the gospel of Jesus.”

Bishop Bambera also added, “Many of those who attacked our nation’s capital and placed the lives of countless individuals in jeopardy sought to justify their actions by raising the banner of

Christianity... but there was no integrity in what they did. Brothers and sisters, you and I know that the true banner of faith in which we have been baptized and through which we find meaning, purpose and peace is nothing like what we witnessed this week. It is life-giving and hope-filled for all.”

The bishop’s full homily for Jan. 10 is available on the Diocese of Scranton website.

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

The breach of the U.S. Capitol Jan. 6 sent shock waves around the world.

As Archbishop Mark Coleridge of Brisbane, president of the Australian bishops’ conference, tweeted: “I didn’t realize just how much the integrity of and respect for the democratic institutions of the U.S. matter to the rest of the world until this pandemonium erupted in D.C. From the other side of the world, I find myself shaken and disbelieving.”

“Washington: Democracy wounded” read the large headline on the front page of the Vatican newspaper, L’Osservatore Romano, Jan. 7. In smaller type, it explained that

Congress reconvened to certify the presidential election of Joe Biden “after the violent assault committed by supporters of Trump and during which several people died.”

Under the headline, “A fragile good,” the newspaper’s assistant director, Giuseppe Fiorentino, wrote that the assault on the Capitol shows that “politics cannot ignore individual responsibility, especially on the part of the person who is in power and is able – through a polarizing narrative – to mobilize thousands of people. ‘He who sows the wind reaps the storm’ and at this point it is easy to tie the events in Washington to the accusations of fraud launched by Trump after the voting Nov. 3, accusations that never found objective confirmation.”

Bishop Bambera writes letter to the faithful of Diocese of Scranton regarding COVID-19 vaccine



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

DIOCESE OF SCRANTON
300 WYOMING AVENUE
SCRANTON, PENNSYLVANIA 18503-1279

January 8, 2021

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to affect our nation and world, we have started to see medical professionals receiving their first doses of life-saving vaccines against the coronavirus. During the last year, their efforts to protect public health have been nothing less than extraordinary.

In response to some questions about the source of the vaccines, I wish to provide some clarity regarding the ethical and moral status of the current COVID-19 vaccines. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) carefully evaluated the two current vaccines as they relate to Catholic Moral Teaching.

They have concluded:

"Neither the Pfizer nor the Moderna vaccine involved the use of cell lines that originated in fetal tissue taken from the body of an aborted baby at any level of design, development, or production. They are not completely free from any connection to abortion, however, as both Pfizer and Moderna made use of a tainted cell line for one of the confirmatory lab tests of their products. There is thus a connection, but it is relatively remote."

Dating back to 2005, the Holy See has addressed such topics, indicating it is morally permissible to accept vaccinations when there are no alternatives and there are serious risk to health. In December 2020, the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF) confirmed, that due to the situation of the ongoing pandemic, it is morally acceptable to receive the current COVID-19 vaccines.

The CDF's note stated:

"All vaccinations recognized as clinically safe and effective can be used in good conscience with the certain knowledge that the use of such vaccines does not constitute formal cooperation with the abortion from which the cells used in production of the vaccines derive."

Based on this information, I want to emphasize that a Catholic can receive these COVID-19 vaccines in good conscience. **I strongly encourage the faithful to receive a vaccine against COVID-19, unless medically indicated otherwise.** Receiving a vaccine is not only an act of love, but also an act of charity, as it lessens one's chances of infecting someone else.

At the same time, it is important to reiterate the call for pharmaceutical companies and government health agencies to produce, approve, distribute and offer ethically acceptable vaccines that do not create problems of conscience.

I am so grateful to the clergy, religious and lay faithful in our parishes, schools and social service programs who have generously imitated the servant leadership of Jesus through the care that they have provided to those most in need during this difficult time. I pray for all who have died from the coronavirus and for the health and well-being of you and your family.

Faithfully yours in Christ,

+ Joseph C. Bambera

Most Reverend Joseph C. Bambera, D.D., J.C.L.
Bishop of Scranton

Pope says he felt 'caged' in lockdown



Pope Francis leads a prayer service in an empty St. Peter's Square at the Vatican March 27, 2020. In an interview with an Italian television network, Pope Francis said that while he felt "caged" during the COVID-19 pandemic, it also prompted him to pray more and try to connect with others. (CNS photo/Evandro Inetti, pool)

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – Pope Francis said that the coronavirus lockdown made him feel imprisoned but ultimately led him to find different ways to carry out his ministry.

In an interview with Italy's Canale 5 broadcast Jan. 10, the pope was asked how his routine changed once COVID-19 restrictions prevented public events at the Vatican.

"First of all, I have to tell you I was caged up," he said. "But then, I calmed myself and I took life as it came. One prays more, one talks more, one uses the telephone more, one has meetings to resolve problems."

He also said that while the pandemic has affected his life, "I am happy."

Pope Francis recalled his mini-pilgrimage March 15 to pray before an ancient wooden crucifix known as the "Miraculous Crucifix," first carried in procession by the faithful in Rome in 1522 during the great plague.

That pilgrimage, as well as the extraordinary blessing "urbi et orbi" March 27, were "expressions of the pain felt, expressions of love for all people and to show new ways to help each other," the pope said.

The pope also spoke about the COVID-19 vaccine and said that receiving the vaccine was "the ethical option because you are playing with your health, life, but you also are playing with the lives of others."

The pandemic, he continued, forced the cancellation of a planned trip to Papua New Guinea and Indonesia "because in good conscience, I can't be the cause for gatherings, no?"

Pope Francis said that although his visit to Iraq is scheduled for March, he did not know "if it will happen; life has changed."

"Yes, life has changed," the pope said. "But the Lord always helps us all."

Married couples encouraged to celebrate National Marriage Week 2021

SCRANTON – The Diocese of Scranton is inviting all married couples to join in celebrating National Marriage Week, which will take place from Feb. 7 – Feb. 14, 2021.

National Marriage Week 2021 is an opportunity to focus on building a culture of life and love that begins with supporting and promoting marriage and the family. The theme for this year's celebration is "To Have, To Hold, To Honor," which serves as a reminder of the promises made on a couple's wedding day.

"Marriages are one of the cornerstones of our Church. This past year, with the COVID-19 pandemic, it has been difficult for all of us and marriages have not been spared the many extra stressors that have been brought into our lives," Jennifer Housel, Director for Community and Family Development in the Diocesan Office for Parish Life, said. "During National Marriage Week, we are sending out a special invitation to couples to do the things we ideally would be doing everyday to care for one another and our marriages."

The Diocese of Scranton is offering several resources to help couples celebrate National Marriage Week together. Each day of the week, husbands and wives are encouraged to commit to doing something loving for or with each other.

Many of the ideas are simple, inexpensive and pandemic-friendly. Some of the ideas, many of which

are listed on this page, include re-reading your wedding vows to each other, reconnecting with friends who were a part of your wedding day that you may have lost contact with and writing a short love note to your spouse.

"We are challenging people to step out of what can be the misery of the pandemic and each day of that week, either do something nice for your spouse or do something enjoyable together, or both," Housel added.

National Marriage Week will culminate in the celebration of World Marriage Day, the second Sunday of February, which coincides this year with Valentine's Day. Parishes have been provided information on ways to incorporate prayers and blessings into the Sunday liturgy.

The Diocese of Scranton has also engaged two couples to present virtual marriage enrichment events on World Marriage Day, Feb. 14. Chris and Linda Padgett will host the first event. The second event, for Spanish-speaking faithful, will be hosted by Joel and Nora de Loera. The events are open to all married couples across the Diocese. Registration is required. There is not a registration fee but donations to help offset the cost of the speakers will be accepted.

"We are excited to be offering fully parallel resources and events for our English-speaking congregation and our Spanish-speaking faithful," Housel

explained. "This has become possible this year largely through the efforts of our new Coordinator of Hispanic Ministry, Jose Flores."

World Marriage Day began in 1983. In 1993, his Holiness, Pope John Paul II, imparted his Apostolic Blessings on World Marriage Day. The purpose of World Marriage Day is to highlight the beauty of marriage and to honor husbands and wives for their faithfulness and sacrifices. National Marriage Week, which launched in 2010, seeks to mobilize individuals, organizations and businesses in a common purpose to strengthen marriage in communities and influence the culture.

Virtual Marriage Enrichment Event Sunday, Feb. 14, 2021

Chris
and
Linda
Padgett



Joel
and
Nora
de Loera



As part of the culmination of the week-long celebration, the Diocese of Scranton has engaged two couples to present a virtual marriage enrichment event for all of our diocesan faithful on World Marriage Day, Feb. 14th. Dual tracks will feature: Chris and Linda Padgett (English) and Joel and Nora de Loera (Spanish).

The virtual event will begin at 6:30 p.m. and run through 8:30 p.m. Registration is required. To register for either event, please visit: www.dioceseofscranton.org/parish-life/community/marriage.

WAYS IN WHICH YOU CAN BE KIND AND LOVING TO YOUR SPOUSE

- Make a point to thank your spouse for something(s) they did during the day.
- Offer your husband or wife simple displays of affection throughout the day – a hug, a kiss, or a gentle touch.
- Write a short love note for your spouse to find in their bag, or near their workspace in your home.
- Make (or buy/bring home already prepared) one of your spouse's favorite foods or drinks.
- Write a list of 5-10 appreciations for your spouse; let him/her know the ways in which he/she adds value to your life.
- Do nice things for your spouse: make his or her morning coffee/tea, pick up his or her dry cleaning, wash the car.
- Make your spouse a playlist. You can include songs that have sentimental value to your relationship and/or songs that were popular when you started dating.

WAYS IN WHICH COUPLES CAN SPEND SOME ENJOYABLE TIME TOGETHER

- Look through your wedding album or watch your wedding video together.
- Cuddle up on the couch with some popcorn and watch a movie you've both been eager to see or choose an old favorite. (Make a date to do this once the kids have gone to bed if small ones are at home)
- Recall the friends and family members who were a part of your wedding day. With whom have you lost contact? Should you try connecting with them again? Who has passed away? Pray together for their souls.
- Bundle up and go outside together for a walk, a hike, or to build a snowman/have a friendly snowball fight.
- Take a few minutes and slow dance together if a favorite song comes on your radio/Pandora/Spotify etc. OR purposefully play and dance along to the song you chose for your first dance on your wedding day.

Pope announces yearlong reflection on family, 'Amoris Laetitia'

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – As the fifth anniversary of his apostolic exhortation "Amoris Laetitia" approaches, Pope Francis announced that the Catholic Church will dedicate more than a year to focusing on the family and conjugal love.

During his Sunday Angelus address Dec. 27, the pope commemorated the feast of the Holy Family and said that it served as a reminder "of the example of evangelizing with the family" as highlighted in his exhortation.

Beginning March 19, he said, the year of reflection on "Amoris Laetitia" will be an opportunity "to focus more closely on the contents of the document."

"I invite everyone to take part in the initiatives that will be promoted during the year and that will be coordinated by the Dicastery for Laity, the Family and Life," he added. "Let us entrust this journey, with families all over the world, to the Holy



Pope Francis leads the recitation of the Angelus prayer Dec. 27, 2020, from the library of the Apostolic Palace. Marking the feast of the Holy Family, Pope Francis announced the Catholic Church will observe a special year dedicated to the family from March 19, 2021, to June 26, 2022. (CNS photo/Vatican Media)

Family of Nazareth, in particular to St. Joseph, the devoted spouse and father."

According to the dicastery's website, the "Amoris Laetitia Family" year "aims to reach every family around the world through several spiritual, pastoral and cultural proposals that can be implemented within parishes, dioceses, universities, ecclesial movements and family associations."

The dicastery said that the goals of the celebration include sharing the contents of the apostolic exhortation more widely, proclaiming the gift of the sacrament of marriage and enabling families to "become active agents of the family apostolate."

The "Amoris Laetitia Family" year will include forums, symposiums, video projects and catechesis as well as providing resources for family spirituality, pastoral formation and marriage preparation.

In his Angelus talk, the pope said that the Holy Family is a model in which "all families of the world can find their sure point of reference and sure inspiration."

Through them, he said, "we are called to rediscover the educational value of the family unit; it must be founded on the love that always regenerates relationships, opening up horizons of hope."

Families can experience sincere communion when they live in prayer, when forgiveness prevails over discord and "when the daily harshness of life is softened by mutual tenderness and serene adherence to God's will," he added.

"I would like to say something to you: If you quarrel within the family, do not end the day without making peace," the pope said. "And do you know why? Because cold war, day after day, is extremely dangerous. It does not help."

The commemoration will conclude June 26, 2022, "on the occasion of the World Meeting of Families in Rome," the dicastery said.

Diocesan Annual Appeal at 75%, 15 parishes currently surpassing goal

SCRANTON – The 2020 *Diocesan Annual Appeal: Bound Together in Hope* has raised \$3.4 million in gifts and pledges reaching 75% of the \$4.5 million goal. More than 16,500 donors have made donations to the Appeal and 15 parishes have surpassed their Annual Appeal goal. A chart listing the progress toward Appeal goals for all of our 118 parishes is shown on the following page.

New this year was the Annual Appeal Commitment Weekend, a special online giving opportunity that began on the weekend of November 20 & 21. This fundraising effort raised more than \$100,000.

“I deeply appreciate the support of our Diocesan Annual Appeal from so many parishioners throughout the Diocese at a time when many are facing financial struggles of their own,” Bishop Joseph C. Bambera said. “The generosity of parishioners to help their parish reach its Annual Appeal goal is vital to our ability to serve those in need especially now as we respond to the challenges of the coronavirus pandemic.”

Bishop Bambera added, “If you haven’t given yet to the Appeal, I would be most grateful if you would consider making a gift at this time so that we may continue to provide hope to all those who rely on the life-giving ministries of our Diocese and our parishes.”

For parishes that have not yet reached goal, the Diocesan Development Office staff is currently working with pastors and parish

life coordinators, Appeal lay and clergy chairs and Appeal parish representatives to conduct special Appeal collections, make contact with past donors and present information on the ministries supported by the Annual Appeal at weekend Masses.

“I offer my heartfelt gratitude to our Appeal regional chairs, parish representatives, pastors, parish life coordinators and parish staffs who closely work with us to continue to forward the mission of our local Church,” Jim Bebla, Diocesan Secretary for Development, said. “We have some more work to do to reach goal but I am confident that we will be successful.”

Diocesan ministries supported by gifts to the Annual Appeal include Catholic Social Services; parish social justice and faith formation programs; Catholic education in our Catholic schools and parish religious education programs; care for our current and retired priests and support for seminarians preparing for the priesthood; parish life and pastoral planning efforts; and communication programs such as *The Catholic Light* and Catholic Television.

Parishioners and friends who have not yet made an Appeal gift are asked to consider a donation at this time. Gifts of any amount are welcome. Interested donors may make a gift to the Diocesan Annual Appeal by visiting www.annualappeal.org to give online, by calling the Diocesan Development Office at 570-207-2250 or by sending a donation to: Diocesan Annual Appeal, 300 Wyoming Ave., Scranton, PA, 18503.

Social justice grants enable Wilkes-Barre parish to live the Gospel message



Sister Anna Nguyen, SCC, sorts sandwiches made by parishioners at Saint Nicholas Parish in Wilkes-Barre. The parish receives a Social Justice Grant from the Diocesan Annual Appeal to provide sandwiches to four local shelters on a monthly basis. (Photos/Chris Dolan)

WILKES-BARRE – The love that Sister Anna Nguyen, SCC, shows for the poor is evident in the way that she is able to inspire others to join her in service.

Sister Anna, a Sister of Christian Charity and director of social ministries at Saint Nicholas Parish, brings together dozens of people on a monthly basis to make sandwiches for several local shelters in Luzerne County.

“I feel very, very happy to give,” Sister Anna explained on a recent morning as volunteers filled the lower level of Saint Nicholas Parish to make sandwiches. “I feel thrilled.”

With the help of a Social Justice Grant from the Diocesan Annual Appeal, Saint Nicholas Parish is able to help bring the Gospel message alive, helping the less fortunate in the community.

Wearing both gloves and masks to protect others from COVID-19, volunteers made ham and cheese and chicken salad sandwiches for individuals who are staying at Ruth’s Place, Keystone Mission, the McCauley House and the Kirby House.

“We’re feeding the Lord. Whatsoever we do to the least of His brothers and sisters, we’re feeding the Lord,” the Rev. Joseph Verespy, pastor of Saint Nicholas Parish, said. “In a simple thing like a ham and cheese sandwich,

God’s life is touching us and we’re touching God’s life.”

Due to the coronavirus, the sandwich-making ministry was temporarily paused between April and July, not due to a lack of volunteer interest, but because many of the shelters were not able to accept the donations in the early days of the pandemic.

When volunteers resumed their efforts in August, there was a renewed sense of mission and purpose. Parishioners know their small efforts make a big impact.

“We’ve been doing three locations where people in need are and we’ve added a fourth location,” parishioner Rich Burns said. “Most of us have had an opportunity to deliver the sandwiches and baked goods and those kinds of things.”

Thanks to generous donors to the Diocesan Annual Appeal, parishes are able to apply for grants that help pay for social concern ministries. The theme of this year’s Appeal is Bound Together in Hope.

Father Verespy says the theme is very fitting because many people are looking for hope during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“I look for hope in all little events, kind words and simple gestures. It is like the little flower coming up through the crack in the sidewalk. There is always hope!”



Members of the Saint Nicholas Parish Social Concerns Committee work to package sandwiches for residents of four shelters in the Luzerne County area. The parish receives a Social Justice Grant from the Diocesan Annual Appeal to help fund this important ministry.

Giving to the 2020 Diocesan Annual Appeal is easy!

Return this form to:

Diocesan Annual Appeal, 300 Wyoming Avenue, Scranton, PA 18503

Your Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Cell _____

Email _____

Please credit my gift to (Parish Name & City) _____

Diocese of Scranton

DIOCESAN

ANNUAL APPEAL

Total amount pledged \$ _____

Enclosed amount \$ _____

Balance to be paid \$ _____

☐ I would like to pledge a gift now.

☐ **\$25** ☐ **\$50** ☐ **\$75** ☐ **\$100** ☐ **\$250** ☐ **\$500** ☐ **Other \$** _____

Check One: ☐ Single Payment in Full ☐ Monthly Payments _____ # of Payments

You may pay using your credit card by carefully completing the following:

Name on credit card (please print) _____

Check One ☐ ☐ Card # _____ CVV _____ Exp. Date _____

One-time Payment **Monthly Payments**

Amount \$ _____ or Amount to be deducted each month \$ _____

For _____ months, Starting in _____

(Number of months) (month)

Your Signature _____ Date _____

Thank you for considering a gift to the Diocese.

Please make checks payable to: **Diocese of Scranton**

| PARISH | GOAL | PLEDGES | PERCENTAGE | PARISH | GOAL | PLEDGES | PERCENTAGE |
|---|-------------|-------------|------------|--|--------------|--------------|------------|
| All Saints - Plymouth | \$37,000.00 | \$15,328.00 | 41% | St. Andrew - Wilkes-Barre | \$17,000.00 | \$6,520.00 | 38% |
| Annunciation - Hazleton | \$33,000.00 | \$17,835.00 | 54% | St. Ann Basilica - Scranton | \$30,000.00 | \$23,411.00 | 78% |
| Ascension - Forest City | \$25,000.00 | \$23,873.00 | 95% | St. Ann - Shohola | \$20,000.00 | \$11,065.00 | 55% |
| Blessed Sacrament - Throop | \$16,000.00 | \$17,070.00 | 107% | St. Ann - Williamsport | \$59,000.00 | \$36,875.00 | 63% |
| BVM Queen of Peace - Hawley | \$76,000.00 | \$52,335.92 | 69% | St. Barbara - Exeter | \$31,000.00 | \$35,931.00 | 116% |
| Christ the King - Archbald | \$67,000.00 | \$52,442.00 | 78% | St. Benedict - Wilkes-Barre | \$21,000.00 | \$6,475.00 | 31% |
| Corpus Christi - West Pittston | \$30,000.00 | \$32,780.00 | 109% | St. Boniface - Williamsport | \$64,000.00 | \$46,280.00 | 72% |
| Divine Mercy - Scranton | \$63,000.00 | \$39,795.00 | 63% | St. Brigid - Friendsville | \$22,000.00 | \$25,830.00 | 117% |
| Epiphany - Sayre | \$85,000.00 | \$61,118.15 | 72% | St. Catherine of Siena - Moscow | \$63,000.00 | \$57,450.00 | 91% |
| Exaltation of the Holy Cross - Hanover Twp. | \$15,000.00 | \$17,325.00 | 116% | St. Elizabeth Ann Seton - Swoyersville | \$44,000.00 | \$37,264.00 | 85% |
| Gate of Heaven - Dallas | \$47,000.00 | \$24,280.00 | 52% | St. Elizabeth - Bear Creek | \$24,000.00 | \$28,040.00 | 117% |
| Good Shepherd - Drums | \$24,000.00 | \$16,342.00 | 68% | St. Eulalia - Elmhurst | \$40,000.00 | \$23,300.00 | 58% |
| Holy Child - Mansfield | \$28,000.00 | \$17,249.00 | 62% | St. Faustina Kowalska - Nanticoke | \$47,000.00 | \$39,169.78 | 83% |
| Holy Cross - Olyphant | \$47,000.00 | \$36,183.00 | 77% | St. Frances X. Cabrini - Carverton | \$13,000.00 | \$13,495.00 | 104% |
| Holy Family - Luzerne | \$40,000.00 | \$46,124.50 | 115% | St. Gregory - Clarks Green | \$74,000.00 | \$65,058.00 | 88% |
| Holy Family - Sugar Notch | \$16,000.00 | \$16,910.00 | 106% | St. Ignatius Loyola - Kingston | \$77,000.00 | \$60,276.40 | 78% |
| Holy Name of Jesus - West Hazleton | \$21,000.00 | \$14,885.00 | 71% | St. John Bosco - Conyngham | \$55,000.00 | \$50,550.00 | 92% |
| Holy Name of Mary - Montrose | \$16,000.00 | \$15,382.50 | 96% | St. John Neumann - Lords Valley | \$28,000.00 | \$17,550.00 | 63% |
| Holy Rosary - Hazleton | \$17,000.00 | \$16,903.06 | 99% | St. John Neumann - Scranton | \$52,000.00 | \$22,733.00 | 44% |
| Holy Spirit - Mocanaqua | \$28,000.00 | \$12,130.00 | 43% | St. John - E. Stroudsburg | \$57,000.00 | \$29,575.00 | 52% |
| Immaculate Conception - Scranton | \$40,000.00 | \$31,910.00 | 80% | St. John the Baptist - Larksville | \$21,000.00 | \$11,920.00 | 57% |
| Immaculate Conception - Williamsport | \$26,000.00 | \$10,270.00 | 40% | St. John the Evangelist - Honesdale | \$64,000.00 | \$55,874.00 | 87% |
| Immaculate Heart of Mary - Dushore | \$38,000.00 | \$20,646.00 | 54% | St. John the Evangelist - Pittston | \$56,000.00 | \$33,825.00 | 60% |
| Mary, Mother of God - Scranton | \$56,000.00 | \$42,691.00 | 76% | St. John Vianney - Montdale | \$30,000.00 | \$20,715.00 | 69% |
| Most Holy Trinity - Cresco | \$49,000.00 | \$31,185.00 | 64% | St. Joseph Marello - Pittston | \$27,000.00 | \$21,652.00 | 80% |
| Most Holy Trinity - Susquehanna | \$30,000.00 | \$16,604.56 | 55% | St. Joseph - Matamoras | \$37,000.00 | \$37,366.70 | 101% |
| Most Precious Blood - Hazleton | \$36,000.00 | \$33,630.00 | 93% | St. Joseph the Worker - Williamsport | \$75,000.00 | \$64,202.38 | 86% |
| Nativity of Our Lord - Duryea | \$40,000.00 | \$31,555.00 | 79% | St. Jude - Mountain Top | \$79,000.00 | \$62,770.00 | 79% |
| Nativity of the BVM - Tunkhannock | \$32,000.00 | \$21,590.00 | 67% | St. Katharine Drexel - Pleasant Mount | \$13,000.00 | \$15,780.00 | 121% |
| Our Lady Help of Christians - Dorrance | \$18,000.00 | \$11,951.00 | 66% | St. Lawrence - S. Williamsport | \$26,000.00 | \$20,806.00 | 80% |
| Our Lady of Fatima - Wilkes-Barre | \$44,000.00 | \$27,240.00 | 62% | St. Leo - Ashley | \$33,000.00 | \$12,504.00 | 38% |
| Our Lady of Hope - Wilkes-Barre | \$37,000.00 | \$27,296.00 | 74% | St. Lucy - Scranton | \$19,000.00 | \$6,830.00 | 36% |
| Our Lady of Lourdes - Montoursville | \$41,000.00 | \$29,240.00 | 71% | St. Luke - Jersey Shore | \$16,000.00 | \$7,905.00 | 49% |
| Our Lady of Mount Carmel - Carbondale | \$23,000.00 | \$10,060.00 | 44% | St. Luke - Stroudsburg | \$114,000.00 | \$119,947.00 | 105% |
| Our Lady of Mount Carmel - Dunmore | \$56,000.00 | \$46,845.00 | 84% | St. Maria Goretti - Laffin | \$42,000.00 | \$12,910.00 | 31% |
| Our Lady of Mount Carmel - Lake Silkworth | \$19,000.00 | \$13,231.00 | 70% | St. Mary of the Lake - Lake Winola | \$12,000.00 | \$5,980.00 | 50% |
| Our Lady of Perpetual Help - Wyalusing | \$19,000.00 | \$11,350.00 | 60% | St. Mary - Waymart | \$17,000.00 | \$23,885.00 | 141% |
| Our Lady of the Abingtons - Dalton | \$16,000.00 | \$6,485.00 | 41% | St. Matthew - E. Stroudsburg | \$66,000.00 | \$39,037.00 | 59% |
| Our Lady of the Eucharist - Pittston | \$16,000.00 | \$9,304.00 | 58% | St. Maximilian Kolbe - Pocono Pines | \$24,000.00 | \$19,929.00 | 83% |
| Our Lady Immaculate Conception - Freeland | \$26,000.00 | \$15,238.00 | 59% | St. Michael - Canton | \$12,000.00 | \$11,675.00 | 97% |
| Our Lady of the Snows - Clarks Summit | \$87,000.00 | \$66,357.30 | 76% | St. Michael - Scranton | \$9,000.00 | \$2,185.00 | 24% |
| Our Lady of Victory - Harveys Lake | \$37,000.00 | \$35,420.00 | 96% | St. Monica - West Wyoming | \$31,000.00 | \$24,290.00 | 78% |
| Our Lady of Victory - Tannersville | \$52,000.00 | \$38,055.00 | 73% | St. Nicholas - Wilkes-Barre | \$52,000.00 | \$46,761.00 | 90% |
| Our Lady Queen of Peace - Brodheadsville | \$58,000.00 | \$55,113.00 | 95% | St. Patrick - Milford | \$33,000.00 | \$23,996.00 | 73% |
| Prince of Peace - Old Forge | \$28,000.00 | \$13,012.00 | 46% | St. Patrick - Nicholson | \$9,000.00 | \$4,370.00 | 49% |
| Queen of Angels - Jessup | \$26,000.00 | \$14,077.00 | 54% | St. Patrick - Scranton | \$42,000.00 | \$21,021.00 | 50% |
| Queen of Heaven - Hazleton | \$29,000.00 | \$20,995.00 | 72% | St. Patrick - White Haven | \$16,000.00 | \$6,718.00 | 42% |
| Queen of the Apostles - Avoca | \$23,000.00 | \$15,177.50 | 66% | St. Paul of the Cross - Scranton | \$52,000.00 | \$21,313.00 | 41% |
| Resurrection - Muncy | \$33,000.00 | \$25,325.00 | 77% | St. Paul - Scranton | \$66,000.00 | \$31,383.00 | 48% |
| Sacred Heart of Jesus - Dupont | \$30,000.00 | \$11,725.00 | 39% | St. Peter - Wellsboro | \$43,000.00 | \$33,980.00 | 79% |
| Sacred Heart of Jesus - Peckville | \$41,000.00 | \$40,272.15 | 98% | St. Peter's Cathedral - Scranton | \$71,000.00 | \$84,012.17 | 118% |
| Sacred Heart of Jesus - Weston | \$11,000.00 | \$6,196.00 | 56% | St. Rita - Gouldsboro | \$14,000.00 | \$10,997.00 | 79% |
| Sacred Hearts of Jesus & Mary - Jermyn | \$21,000.00 | \$11,511.00 | 55% | St. Robert Bellarmine - Wilkes-Barre | \$34,000.00 | \$32,595.00 | 96% |
| SS. Anthony & Rocco - Dunmore | \$47,000.00 | \$28,689.00 | 61% | St. Rose - Carbondale | \$62,000.00 | \$45,600.00 | 74% |
| SS. Cyril & Methodius - Hazleton | \$43,000.00 | \$31,327.00 | 73% | St. Therese - Shavertown | \$71,000.00 | \$46,875.00 | 66% |
| SS. Peter & Paul - Plains | \$66,000.00 | \$31,421.00 | 48% | St. Thomas More - Lake Ariel | \$49,000.00 | \$45,380.00 | 93% |
| SS. Peter & Paul - Scranton | \$13,000.00 | \$5,261.00 | 40% | St. Thomas the Apostle - Elkland | \$13,000.00 | \$9,405.00 | 72% |
| SS. Peter & Paul - Towanda | \$31,000.00 | \$32,280.00 | 104% | St. Vincent de Paul - Milford | \$35,000.00 | \$34,520.00 | 99% |
| St. Andre Bessette Parish - Wilkes-Barre | \$28,000.00 | \$19,138.50 | 68% | Visitation, Blessed Virgin Mary - Dickson City | \$55,000.00 | \$48,497.00 | 88% |

Father John Kulavich, Mercy Center chaplain, buried

CARBONDALE — Bishop Joseph C. Bambera served as principal celebrant of a Pontifical Mass of Christian Burial for Father John J. Kulavich on Dec. 22 at Saint Rose of Lima Church. Father Kulavich, who had been serving as the chaplain of Mercy Center in Dallas, died Dec. 19 at the Suburban Community Hospital in Norristown.

Born in Carbondale on Jan. 28, 1952, son of the late John and Catherine Colacino Kulavich, Father Kulavich received his early education in Waymart public schools. He continued his education at The University of Scranton and completed his preparatory studies for the priesthood at Mount Saint Mary's Seminary in Emmitsburg, Md., earning a Master of Theology degree.

Father Kulavich was ordained a priest for the Diocese on Nov. 5, 1983, in the Cathedral of Saint Peter by Bishop (Cardinal) John J. O'Connor, late bishop of Scranton and archbishop of New York.

Following ordination, Father Kulavich served as an assistant pastor at the parishes of Saint Gabriel, Hazleton; Saint Jude, Mountain Top; Sacred Hearts of Jesus & Mary, Scranton; Holy

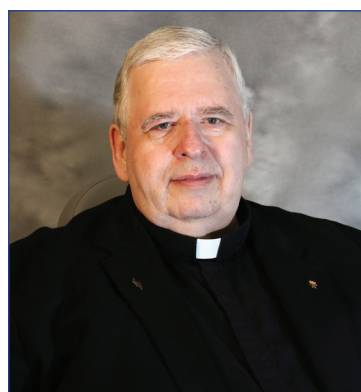
Trinity, Nanticoke; and Saint Mary, Old Forge.

He received his first pastoral assignment, to Saint John Nepomucene Parish, Freeland, in 1992, shortly thereafter being appointed pastor of Saint David Parish, Scranton. Father Kulavich subsequently served in pastorates at the parishes of Saint Lawrence, Great Bend; Saint Ann, Bentley Creek; and Sacred Heart of Jesus, Mayfield.

Prior to being named in 2010 as chaplain at Mercy Center, Dallas, where he remained until his death, Father fulfilled his role for a year as senior priest at Saint Paul of the Cross Parish in South Scranton.

In addition to his parochial duties, Father Kulavich served as Dean of the Susquehanna Deanery during 2001-03 and as chaplain for the Fourth Degree Knights of Columbus Council 7622, Jermyn-Mayfield, and the Padre Pio Knights of Columbus Assembly.

"Jesus is the one who calls; not the priest, nor the Bishop, or the Pope. It is Jesus who gazes at him with love, who shows him the people, who shows him the needs of the people of God, and says, 'If you wish, come help.'"



Father John J. Kulavich

With these words, originally offered by Pope Francis "to help us realize the invitation extended to those who consider a priest," Father Joseph Elston began his homily at the Mass of Christian Burial for his dear priest-friend.

"It is an invitation that Father John Kulavich heard and a calling that he graciously answered," Father Elston said. "For the past 37 years, Father John did his best to live out that call by putting the people he willingly served first, before himself, and to consider their needs ahead of his own."

The homilist continued, "The charism and spirituality of the Diocesan priest comes from immersing himself into the life of the community he is sent to serve.

The people of God, by sharing their lives, their joys, struggles, disappointment, and fears with their priest, is what gives the ministry of the Diocesan priest the opportunity to bring people closer to the God who made them.

"Through the many (sacraments), weddings and funerals he would both celebrate and attend, Father John's life would grow deeper and more enriched by experiencing these sacramental moments with his congregation and parish families. Many of these, and other experiences that all priests have in a parish setting, serve as great witness to what the life of a priest is all about."

According to Father Elston, Father Kulavich would derive great joy and blessings from this life, especially over his several decades in the priesthood, establishing many longstanding friendships along the way.

"Father John would respond during his entire life in the person of Christ, becoming the 'alter Christus' — the 'other Christ' — to so many people," Father Elston offered. "He would respond to their needs and their wants in a way which only a priest can. He would do so, not out of a sense of

privilege, but out of the knowledge that Christ acts through him. Father John understood this and did so with joy in being able to see Christ in those he served.

"Father John had a big smile, and an easy, hearty laugh! Even though he faced many difficulties in his last few years, I never heard him complain. The conversation never turned to 'why me?' or 'poor me,' never questioning God for the path that his life was taking. Instead, John relied on his prayer life and his faith to get him through some very challenging days."

In concluding his eulogy, the homilist stated, "A faithful priest, a blessed and willing servant, was exactly who God welcomed to paradise — a priest, Father John Kulavich, who responded in love to God's call: 'If you wish, come help!'"

Surviving are two sisters, Margaret McGinnis and husband, Scott, of Mercer; and Catherine Dunay and husband, Martin, Clarks Summit; a brother, James, Waymart; and several nieces and nephews.

Private interment was held at Sacred Heart of Jesus Cemetery, Mayfield.

Editorial Eulogy: Father Andrew R. Gallia

Today, we gather here as a community of faith with heavy hearts as we mourn the death of Father Andrew Gallia. Our tears that we shed are signs of our love and respect for Father Gallia. We gather here to pray for and offer this Mass of Christian Burial honoring Father Gallia for the years of service he had given to Christ's Church as a priest.

As family, friends and parishioners of the different parishes Father Gallia served in the Diocese, we feel the pain and sorrow that death brings when someone whom we came to know and love after many years of loving, caring, teaching, nourishing and guiding us is suddenly gone from this life.

Father Gallia was a man of God, a man who loved God with his entire life. His love for God allowed him to answer his call to the priesthood, working in the

vineyard of the Lord.

Jesus said that "he came to serve." The priest shares in the priesthood of Christ. His mission is the mission of Christ; it is a mission of service. Above all, it is a selfless service, a life given for the people he serves.

Even in sickness, Father Gallia assisted here at Prince of Peace Parish with confessions and Mass. On Monday evening during Lent, he would hear confessions as part of "The Light is On for You." He would occasionally celebrate a daily Mass at Saint Mary's and a Sunday Mass at Saint Lawrence. Father Gallia was a priest of God, a priest for his people in the parishes where he served as an assistant and then as a pastor.

Today is a day of sadness, but the death of a priest is a special time of thanksgiving for a life of service. Today we say quite simply, "Thank you, Father Gallia,

for the years of service you have given us in the Church."

Father Gallia has completed his journey of faith that began at his baptism, and he is now sharing in the life of glory that God prepared for us from the beginning of time. Even though Father Gallia has died, he is not entirely absent from us. We can still experience his presence through his good deeds and example.

These are more than just memories. His good deeds and example made the world different. His good deeds made a difference in the lives of many people, the community and family. Isn't the best epitaph we would ever want on our gravestones be the words: "This person made the world a better place?"

The Eucharist was the center of Father Gallia's faith. It was his faith in the Eucharist that he answered the Lord's call to

become a priest. It was his faith in God's Word that he was able to preach that Word to others.

For Father Gallia, hope was that desire to do God's will in his life. He wanted to be faithful to the Lord, and so he relied on his faith and trust in God to lead his life where God wanted him. He hoped to be a wise and industrious servant of the Gospel in living out his priesthood. He hoped that by his life of service he would lead others to God, as well as bring God to them. He hoped that someday he would be with the Lord celebrating the heavenly liturgy with the angels and saints.

Today, it is good for us to gather here to pray for and to remember Father Gallia. Being here gives us an opportunity to recognize that death takes away the possibility of accomplishing any more in life but it does not take away the good already done.

Saint Augustine wrote that what we do at a funeral is more for our own sake than for the sake of the person who has died. It is true that our being here is a testimony to the respect and affection we have for Father Gallia. It is also true that our being here gives Father Gallia a chance to do one more good deed for us: That is, to remind us that death can take away life but it cannot destroy it.

Isn't this basically the good news that Jesus brings to us as we celebrate this Mass — that living according to the Gospel is to make our life of eternal value.

Excerpted from the homily by Father August A. Ricciardi at the Mass of Christian Burial celebrated for Father Andrew R. Gallia on Dec. 16 at Prince of Peace Parish in Old Forge.

Diocesan schools prepare to celebrate Catholic Schools Week 2021

SCRANTON – For the last 47 years, Catholic schools across the country have participated in Catholic Schools Week and this year will be no exception.

Traditionally held the last week of January, this year's celebration will take place from Jan. 31 – Feb. 6, 2021. Each of the Diocese of Scranton's 19 Catholic Schools are busy preparing numerous activities in which students can participate.

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, principals and staff members are adjusting some popular annual activities to make sure safety remains paramount.

"While faced with unprecedented challenges, our Catholic schools have been at the forefront of providing an excellent, in-person, education. We have been nimble and innovative and never forgotten why we are called to this work – to serve children and families," Jason Morrison, Diocesan Secretary of Catholic Education/Chief Executive Officer, said. "Because of our health and safety protocols, Catholic Schools Week will look different. However, our schools will use new technologies and platforms to bring to life the Catholic School difference."

Each year, the National Catholic Education Association (NCEA) chooses a theme to highlight an aspect of Catholic schools. This year's theme, "Catholic Schools: Faith. Excellence. Service." calls attention to the purpose of Catholic schools – to form disciples, to grow the whole person and encourage students to be witnesses to Catholic social teaching.

"Catholic Schools Week sets aside time to reflect on the truly remarkable and amazing schools we have and, in a fun way, celebrate them," Superintendent of Schools Kristen Donohue added. "Although the pandemic requires some changes to the activities planned for the week to be conducted virtually, we will in a genuine and creative way, share our gratitude for our schools while also sharing good health."

In addition to holding fun events for students, numerous Diocesan schools are planning events that will show their students' kindness and generosity to others. A central aspect of Catholic education is learning the importance of service to others.

Some of the activities currently being planned include Saint Mary of Mount Carmel School in Dunmore holding a collection for the Saint Francis of Assisi Kitchen, while All Saints Academy in Scranton will collect canned food items.

Catholic school students at Saint Agnes School in Towanda and Epiphany School in Sayre will make Valentine's Day cards for residents of personal care and nursing homes.

Many other Diocesan schools are planning similar events.

"Our school's motto this year is 'See the face of God in all you meet; be kind, loving, compassionate, and respectful,' so for every one fun activity we have scheduled, we are also doing one service project," Kelly Wilhelm, principal of Saint Agnes School in Towanda, said. "Our Pre-Kindergarten teacher has done projects for a personal care home that is located very close to the school and they have always been so appreciative. When we talked about projects that the whole school could do, we decided that

valentines would be perfect. The children will make at least one during their class time and for those that finish faster, maybe one or two more, so we know that every resident will receive a special gift from a Saint Agnes student. Each valentine will be as unique as the student who make it."

Catholic schools offer academic excellence and a faith-filled education for students nationwide. National test scores, high school graduation rates, college attendance and other data show that Catholic

schools frequently outperform schools in both the public and private sectors.

National statistics show that 99-percent of Catholic school students graduate from high school. The percentage of high school graduates who attend a four-year college is 85-percent, compared to 44-percent of public school students.

Catholic schools also save taxpayers money. Based on the average public school per pupil cost of \$12,756, Catholic schools provide \$22 billion in savings each year for the nation.

a dozen reasons to choose Catholic Schools

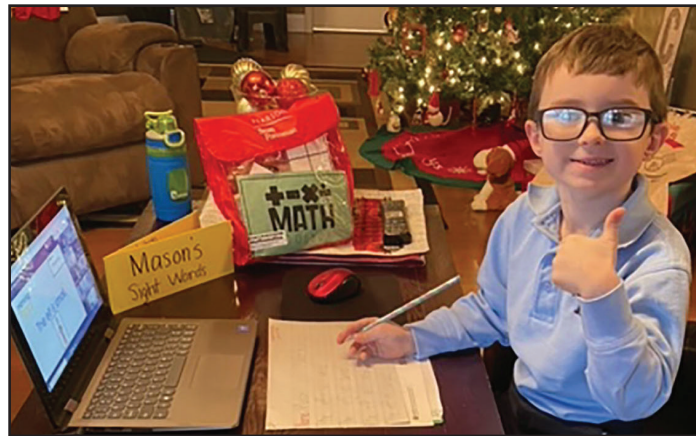


Diocese of Scranton
CATHOLIC
 SCHOOL SYSTEM
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The Diocese of Scranton is committed to educating our students in an environment that is academically excellent and facilitates the development of moral judgment and Christian decision-making. We are proud to share the following successes of our students in the classroom and in their service to others. Each day, our schools are fulfilling their mission of preparing today's youth and young adults to become tomorrow's faith-filled leaders.



Miss Kaitlin Chmielewski, a first grade teacher at **Saint Nicholas/Saint Mary School in Wilkes-Barre**, works with her students during a distance learning session.



Mason, a student at **Holy Rosary School in Duryea**, shows off his school work space while participating in distance learning.



Mr. Bedford is virtually teaching Theology to an eighth grade class at **Our Lady of Peace School in Clarks Green**.



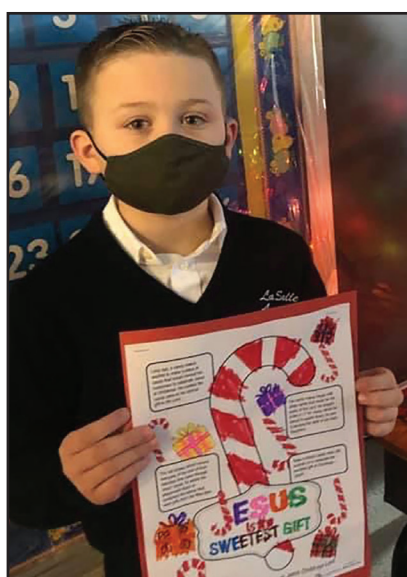
Fifth grader Keira Lalli prepares for a distance learning class from **Saint Mary of Mount Carmel in Dunmore**.



A distance learning session at **Wyoming Area Catholic School in Exeter**.



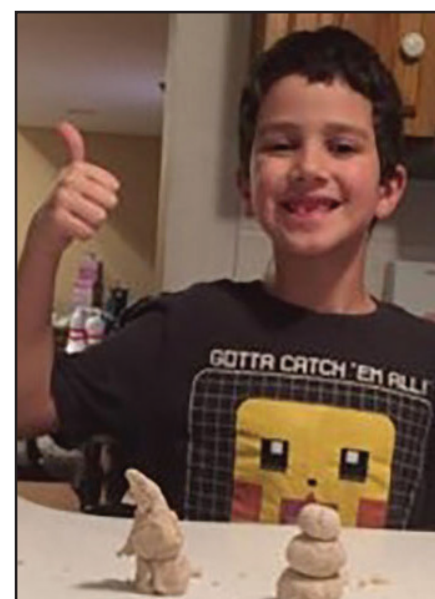
While celebrating the feast of the Epiphany, first grade students from **All Saints Academy in Scranton** learned how the wise men followed the star to find the Baby Jesus.



Students at **La Salle Academy in Jessup** learned the lesson of the Candy Cane just before their Christmas break.



Shannon Logue, a third grade student at **Saint John Neumann Elementary in Williamsport**, shows off the "Merry Memo" she received from a member of the Saint John Neumann High School Spirit Club.



Students at **Holy Family Academy in Hazleton** got creative while working on a clay project as part of a library class.



A drawing by Grace Aposhian, a student at **Saint Clare/Saint Paul School in Scranton**, was selected to be on a billboard as part of the Lackawanna/Susquehanna Office of Drug and Alcohol Holiday Poster Contest.



Mrs. Riley's fifth grade class at **Epiphany School in Sayre** was called to the "Epiphany Hospital" to reassemble their patients in this Body Systems STREAM project.



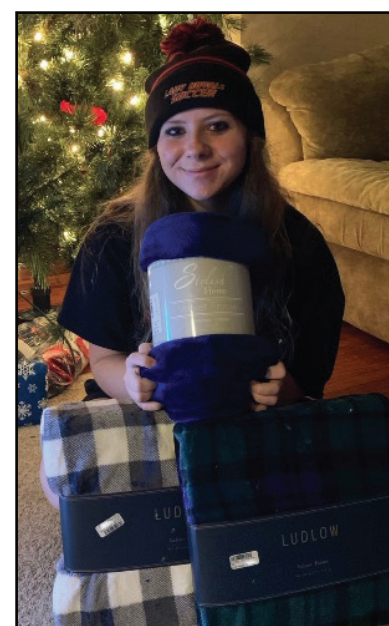
The National Honor Society at **Holy Cross High School in Dunmore** held a special Mass and induction ceremony for its members in December.



Mrs. Durham's first grade class at **Notre Dame Elementary School in East Stroudsburg** learns to measure the amount of water in snow.



The Pre-K4 class at **Good Shepherd Academy in Kingston** recently stopped at the school's Grotto of Our Blessed Mother to pray for a healthy and safe 2021.



The Girls Soccer Team at **Holy Redeemer High School in Wilkes-Barre** joined Operation Spreading Holiday Cheer in providing greeting cards and cozy blankets for veterans in a long-term facility.



As part of the Epiphany celebration, students at **Saint Agnes School in Towanda** were delighted to see doorways marked with 20 + C + M + B + 21, which is a traditional blessing asking Jesus to bless all who enter.



Landon Arriaga and Lucas Bower, eighth graders at **Saint John Neumann Jr./Sr. High School in Williamsport**, pose in their Ugly Christmas sweaters.



Coaches Ann Papciak and Eileen Barney from **Saint Jude School in Mountain Top** congratulate their Forensic Finalist students Rhea Mascarenhas (2nd Place Junior Varsity) and Michael Grandzol (1st Place Varsity).



Second Sunday in Ordinary Time, January 17, 2021



FIRST READING

1 Sm 3:3b-10, 19

Samuel was sleeping in the temple of the LORD where the ark of God was. The LORD called to Samuel, who answered, "Here I am."

Samuel ran to Eli and said, "Here I am. You called me."

"I did not call you," Eli said. "Go back to sleep." So he went back to sleep. Again the LORD called Samuel, who rose and went to Eli. "Here I am," he said. "You called me."

But Eli answered, "I did not call you, my son. Go back to sleep."

At that time Samuel was not familiar with the LORD, because the LORD had not revealed anything to him as yet. The LORD called Samuel again, for the third time. Getting up and going to Eli, he said, "Here I am. You called me."

Then Eli understood that the LORD was calling the youth. So he said to Samuel, "Go to sleep, and if you are called, reply, Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening."

When Samuel went to sleep in his place, the LORD came and revealed his presence, calling out as before, "Samuel, Samuel!"

Samuel answered, "Speak, for your servant is listening."

Samuel grew up, and the LORD was with him, not permitting any word of his to be without effect.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Ps 40:2, 4, 7-8, 8-9, 10

Response: Here am I, Lord; I come to do your will.

SECOND READING

1 Cor 6:13c-15a, 17-20

Brothers and sisters: The body is not for immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord is for the body; God raised the Lord and will also raise us by his power.

Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? But whoever is joined to the Lord becomes one Spirit with him. Avoid immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the immoral person sins against his own body.

Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been purchased at a price. Therefore glorify God in your body.

GOSPEL READING

Jn 1:35-42

John was standing with two of his disciples, and as he watched Jesus walk by, he said, "Behold, the Lamb of God." The two disciples heard what he said and followed Jesus. Jesus turned and saw them following him and said to them, "What are you looking for?"

They said to him, "Rabbi," which translated means teacher, "where are you staying?"

He said to them, "Come, and you will see." So they went and saw where Jesus was staying, and they stayed with him that day. It was about four in the afternoon.

Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, was one of the two who heard John and followed Jesus. He first found his own brother Simon and told him, "We have found the Messiah," which is translated Christ. Then he brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon the son of John; you will be called Cephas," which is translated Peter.



Third Sunday in Ordinary Time, January 24, 2021



FIRST READING

Jon 3:1-5, 10

The word of the LORD came to Jonah, saying: "Set out for the great city of Nineveh, and announce to it the message that I will tell you." So Jonah made ready and went to Nineveh, according to the LORD'S bidding.

Now Nineveh was an enormously large city; it took three days to go through it. Jonah began his journey through the city, and had gone but a single day's walk announcing, "Forty days more and Nineveh shall be destroyed," when the people of Nineveh believed God; they proclaimed a fast and all of them, great and small, put on sackcloth.

When God saw by their actions how they turned from their evil way, he repented of the evil that he had threatened to do to them; he did not carry it out.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Ps 25:4-5, 6-7, 8-9

Response: Teach me your ways, O Lord.

SECOND READING

1 Cor 7:29-31

I tell you, brothers and sisters, the time is running out. From now on, let those having wives act as not having them, those weeping as not weeping, those rejoicing as not rejoicing, those buying as not owning, those using the world as not using it fully. For the world in its present form is passing away.

GOSPEL READING

Mk 1:14-20

After John had been arrested, Jesus came to Galilee proclaiming the gospel of God: "This is the time of fulfillment. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel."

As he passed by the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting their nets into the sea; they were fishermen.

Jesus said to them, "Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men."

Then they abandoned their nets and followed him. He walked along a little farther and saw James, the son of Zebedee, and his brother John. They too were in a boat mending their nets. Then he called them. So they left their father Zebedee in the boat along with the hired men and followed him.



Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time, January 31, 2021



FIRST READING

Dt 18:15-20

Moses spoke to all the people, saying: "A prophet like me will the LORD, your God, raise up for you from among your own kin; to him you shall listen. This is exactly what you requested of the LORD, your God, at Horeb on the day of the assembly, when you said, 'Let us not again hear the voice of the LORD, our God, nor see this great fire any more, lest we die.'"

And the LORD said to me, "This was well said. I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their kin, and will put my words into his mouth; he shall tell them all that I command him. Whoever will not listen to my words which he speaks in my name, I myself will make him answer for it. But if a prophet presumes to speak in my name an oracle that I have not commanded him to speak, or speaks in the name of other gods, he shall die."

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Ps 95:1-2, 6-7, 7-9

Response: If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

SECOND READING

1 Cor 7:32-35

Brothers and sisters: I should like you to be free of anxieties. An unmarried man is anxious about the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord. But a married man is anxious about the things of the world, how he may please his wife, and he is divided.

An unmarried woman or a virgin is anxious about the things of the Lord, so that she may be holy in both body and spirit. A married woman, on the other hand, is anxious about the things of the world, how she may please her husband.

I am telling you this for your own benefit, not to impose a restraint upon you, but for the sake of propriety and adherence to the Lord without distraction.

Then they came to Capernaum, and on the sabbath Jesus entered the synagogue and taught. The people were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority and not as the scribes.

In their synagogue was a man with an unclean spirit; he cried out, “What have you to

do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are - the Holy One of God!”

Jesus rebuked him and said, “Quiet! Come out of him!”

The unclean spirit convulsed him and with a loud cry came out of him. All were amazed and asked one another, “What is this? A new teaching with authority. He commands even the unclean spirits and they obey him.”

His fame spread everywhere throughout the whole region of Galilee.



Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time, February 7, 2021



FIRST READING Jb 7:1-4, 6-7

Job spoke, saying: Is not man’s life on earth a drudgery? Are not his days those of hirelings?

He is a slave who longs for the shade, a hireling who waits for his wages. So I have been assigned months of misery, and troubled nights have been allotted to me.

If in bed I say, “When shall I arise?” then the night drags on; I am filled with restlessness until the dawn. My days are swifter than a weaver’s shuttle; they come to an end without hope. Remember that my life is like the wind; I shall not see happiness again.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Ps 147:1-2, 3-4, 5-6

Response: Praise the Lord, who heals the brokenhearted.

SECOND READING 1 Cor 9:16-19, 22-23

Brothers and sisters: If I preach the gospel, this is no reason for me to boast, for an obligation has been imposed on me, and woe to me if I do not preach it!

If I do so willingly, I have a recompense, but if unwillingly, then I have been entrusted with a stewardship.

What then is my recompense? That, when I preach, I offer the gospel free of charge so as not to make full use of my right in the gospel.

Although I am free in regard to all, I have made myself a slave to all so as to win over as many as possible. To the weak I became weak, to win over the weak. I have become all things to all, to save at least some. All this I do for the sake of the gospel, so that I too may have a share in it.

GOSPEL READING Mk 1:29-39

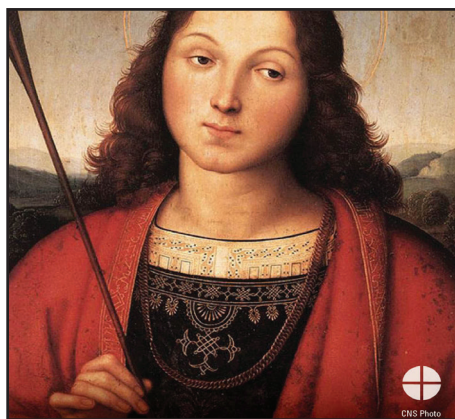
On leaving the synagogue Jesus entered the house of Simon and Andrew with James and John. Simon’s mother-in-law lay sick with a fever. They immediately told him about her. He approached, grasped her hand, and helped her up. Then the fever left her and she waited on them.

When it was evening, after sunset, they brought to him all who were ill or possessed by demons. The whole town was gathered at the door. He cured many who were sick with various diseases, and he drove out many demons, not permitting them to speak because they knew him.

Rising very early before dawn, he left and went off to a deserted place, where he prayed. Simon and those who were with him pursued him and on finding him said, “Everyone is looking for you.”

He told them, “Let us go on to the nearby villages that I may preach there also. For this purpose have I come.” So he went into their synagogues, preaching and driving out demons throughout the whole of Galilee.

Getting to Know the Saints



Saint Sebastian
Feast Day: January 20

According to the many legends surrounding Sebastian, he was born in Gaul and raised in Milan. Though a Christian, he joined the imperial army at Rome about 283. He made converts of officials and jailers, effected cures and urged Christian prisoners to stay strong in their faith. He was named captain of the praetorian guards, but the emperor, upon finding out that he was a Christian, ordered his execution. Shot with arrows and left for dead, Sebastian survived and was nursed back to life. Later, he denounced the emperor for his cruelty to Christians, and the emperor had him beaten to death. A favorite subject of Renaissance artists, Sebastian is the patron saint of archers, soldiers and athletes.



Saint Paula
Feast Day: January 26

The patron saint of widows, Paula was a wealthy Roman widowed with five children at age 32. Another widow introduced her to St. Jerome, a priest and papal secretary to St. Damasus. Jerome became her spiritual director, urging a life of asceticism and charity. When he learned she was fluent in Greek, he enlisted her help in translating Greek biblical texts for his new Latin version of the Bible. Paula had joined the circle of nobility-born Roman women in Jerome’s orbit, and followed him to the Holy Land when he left Rome. She taught herself Hebrew, and exhausted her wealth building a monastery, three convents and a hospital in Bethlehem.



Saint Blaise
Feast Day: February 3

This bishop and martyr lived in the fourth century in Turkey and Armenia. For a time Blaise lived in a cave to escape persecution. On his feast the church recalls a miracle cure associated with him and celebrates the blessing of the throats. Blaise apparently saved the life of a boy who was choking on a fish bone. The saint said that anyone who lit a candle in his memory would be free of infection, thus candles are used in the traditional throat blessing. He is listed among the Fourteen Holy Helpers, saints revered as healers.



Saint Joseph of Leonessa
Feast Day: February 4

Born in Leonessa, Italy, Eufranio took the name Joseph at 18 when he became a Capuchin Franciscan. His forte was preaching and in 1587 he went as a missionary to Constantinople (Istanbul, Turkey) to minister to Christian galley slaves. After recovering from the plague, he was arrested for preaching to Muslims. He was sentenced to death but he survived being hanged from a gibbet with a hook through one hand and one foot. He was banished and returned to Leonessa. He lived austere for another 20 years, sometimes preaching as many as 10 times a day, until he died of cancer. He was beatified in 1737 and canonized in 1746.

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Missionaries at Work: *Music school in Africa allows students to experience alternative to war*

WARSAW, Poland (CNS) – Polish Capuchin Franciscan missionaries have opened the first music school in the Central African Republic in hopes of preventing children from being drafted into paramilitary groups.

About 100 students study each afternoon with professional musicians from Poland and France at the African Music School in the western town of Bouar.

Marcin Choinski, director of the Akeda Foundation in Krakow, Poland, which sponsors the school and works with the Capuchins, said students learn music theory and attend classes in guitar, saxophone, trumpet, keyboard and drumming. Students of various faiths are enrolled. About 40% of the students are girls.

“Of course, we can’t help all this country’s children with a single school, but we can show those who’ve known only war and poverty that better things are possible,” Choinski said. “Though we can’t offer full-time accommodation, our new kitchen is now providing hot meals for our otherwise hungry students. Some say this alone will be the best Christmas gift we could offer.”

Franciscan Father Benedykt Paczka, a musician and one of 14 Polish Capuchins working in the country, founded the school.

Choinski told Catholic News Service Dec. 18 that Father Paczka realized many local children were musically gifted, but that they had no opportunity to develop their talents. In 2013, he began offering music lessons at his monastery after buying instruments in nearby Cameroon.

“War was raging and when more than 300 children turned up, he



Students are pictured rehearsing at the African Music School in Bouar, Central African Republic. (CNS photo/courtesy Capuchin Friars)

quickly saw this as a chance,” said Choinski, whose foundation helps victims of war and natural disasters.

An eight-year conflict between rival militias has displaced 1 million people and forced another 400,000 to flee the country. The Capuchins from Krakow run five missions in the country and bought land for the school in 2015.

Construction continues on a school building in Bouar. Choinski said Father Paczka’s ties with local state school directors has helped to ensure that the site is secure against theft and intimidation by outside groups.

“Soldiers are deployed here under United Nations auspices, so it’s relatively safe, and we haven’t faced any serious attack,” Choinski said.

He said several students had shown extraordinary ability, and that he was hoping to raise funds for sending them to academies in Europe

once the school site was finished.

The Diocese of Bouar, headed by Polish Bishop Miroslaw Gucwa, had supported the school, but that money for construction, instruments, food and maintenance had to be raised from donations, he said.

“By spreading instruments instead of weapons, we hope to show children here and further afield that other life paths are possible,” Choinski said.

The chairman of the Krakow-based Capuchin Mission Foundation, Father Jerzy Steliga, said initiatives such as the school were “much needed in local conditions” for helping youngsters caught up in civil war.

“Music is a key part of African culture, enabling children to discover their interests, but also develop as people through a positive, creative attitude,” Father Steliga said.

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The Monthly Mission message from Father Brian J.T. Clarke, Diocesan Director, Pontifical Mission Societies, will return in the Feb. 11, 2021 edition of The Catholic Light.

Apostleship of Prayer Papal Intention for January 2021

Human Fraternity —

May the Lord give us the grace to live in full fellowship with our brothers and sisters of other religions, praying for one another, open to all.

King's College selects its 10th president

WILKES-BARRE – On Jan. 8, 2021, King's College's Board of Directors proudly announced that it has selected Rev. Thomas P. Looney, C.S.C., Ph.D., to serve as the next president of King's College, with his term to begin in July 2021.

Father Looney succeeds Rev. John J. Ryan, C.S.C., Ph.D., who has served as president since 2011 and will conclude his presidency as of June 30, 2021. Upon his installation, Fr. Looney will be the 10th president of King's College since its founding in 1946.

"Father Looney has a great passion for the mission of King's College and has spent the majority of his ministry advancing that mission," remarked Thomas R. Smith, chair of the King's College Board of Directors. "He has the experience and abilities to perform the duties of the president due to his various leadership positions throughout his Holy Cross ministries and roles at King's College."

Father Looney's loyal service to the mission of King's College began nearly 35 years ago. He currently serves King's as the associate vice president for academic success, the director of campus ministry, and College chaplain.

Father Looney made his profession of vows in the College's former Chapel of Christ the King on Aug. 13, 1986 and a few weeks later began teaching Theology at King's and serving as a deacon at Saint Nicholas Parish in Wilkes-Barre. He has also previously served as associate professor and chair of the Department of



Rev. Thomas P. Looney

Theology, associate vice president for academic affairs, and dean of the faculty at King's.

Father Looney led the efforts to restore the former Memorial Church on North Street in Wilkes-Barre that now serves as the Chapel of Christ the King at the George & Giovita Maffei Family Commons. In recognition of his exemplary service to the College, Father Looney was awarded the All College Administration Award in both 2016 and 2020, and the All College Teaching Award in 2001.

A widely respected and admired member of the King's family, Father Looney enjoys many deep relationships with King's students, faculty, staff, alumni, and friends.

Father Looney commented on his selection as the new president, saying, "I am deeply humbled and excited by the opportunity to serve the mission and community of King's College in this new role. It has been a great blessing to have worked with three outstanding presidents (Fr. Lackenmier, Fr. O'Hara, and Fr. Ryan), board

members, alumni, administrators, faculty, staff, students, and my brothers in Holy Cross. I look forward to deepening these collaborations and working diligently with the help of God's grace to advance the noble student-centered mission of King's."

Born in Brooklyn and raised in Otisville, N.Y., Father Looney began formation to religious life in the Congregation of Holy Cross at Stonehill College. His vocation was the result of his family's deep faith; his mother's uncle was a Holy Cross Brother and his father's uncle a diocesan priest. Father Looney was ordained a priest on June 13, 1987.

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Bishop Bambera's Statement on the appointment of Rev. Thomas P. Looney as President of King's College

"I take this opportunity to congratulate Rev. Thomas P. Looney, C.S.C., Ph.D., on being selected to serve as the tenth president of King's College. This is an exciting announcement in the history of King's College and Rev. Looney will surely build upon the great work and incredible progress made under the leadership of Rev. John J. Ryan, C.S.C., Ph.D.

"Father Looney brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the office of president of King's College. Through Father Looney's 35-year association with the King's community, he is well-suited to lead this respected Catholic College into the future. As a friend and colleague in ministry, I look forward to collaborating with Father Looney in his new role as president of King's College.

"Rooted in Our Lord's love and mercy, may Father Looney and all of the students, faculty and staff of King's College enjoy a prosperous future now, and always."

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Bishops call for an end to the federal death penalty

WASHINGTON (CNS) – A joint statement from two U.S. bishops who head different committees of the U.S. bishops called for an end to the federal use of the death penalty as “long past time.”

“We renew our constant call to President (Donald) Trump and Acting Attorney General (Jeffrey) Rosen: Stop these executions,” said the Jan. 11 statement from Archbishops Paul S. Coakley of Oklahoma City, chairman of the bishops’ Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development, and Joseph F. Naumann of Kansas City, Kansas, chairman of the bishops’ Committee on Pro-Life Activities.

“Following a year where the federal government, for the first time, executed more people than all 50 states combined, there are three more federal executions scheduled this week,”



The sun sets behind one of the guard towers at the Federal Correctional Complex in Terre Haute, Ind., June 10, 2001. The death chamber at the correctional facility is where the federal death penalty is carried out. (CNS photo/Andy Clark, Reuters)

the two archbishops said. Federal executions resumed last year after a 17-year reprieve.

Archbishops Coakley and Naumann also called on President-elect Joe Biden and Congress to “make this a priority. One vehicle to accomplish this

in federal law is the Federal Death Penalty Prohibition Act. In addition, we ask President-elect Biden to declare a moratorium on federal executions and to commute current federal death sentences to terms of imprisonment.”

“It is long past time to abolish the death penalty from our state and federal laws,” they said.

Ten times in the past two years, bishops, groups of bishops, or the full U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops had either spoken out against capital punishment, asked the faithful to add their voice on the issue, or sought to end its use in the courts.

Also Jan. 11, the Catholic Mobilizing Network launched an online petition campaign asking Biden to make an end to federal executions a priority once he is sworn into office.

“After six months of needless death from what will soon amount to 13 executions, the Trump administration has driven home why an end to the federal death penalty is so urgently needed,” said a Jan. 11 statement by Krisanne Vaillancourt Murphy, executive director.

During a Jan. 6 Georgetown University-sponsored forum on capital punishment, Bishop Daniel E. Flores of Brownsville, Texas, cited the “throwaway culture” line frequently used by Pope Francis and said, “We let people die or we kill people, in the death penalty’s case, to solve problems. And the church is simply saying: Enough blood. Stop.”

The petition urges the incoming administration to “uphold the sacred dignity of every person” and make good on its promises to dismantle the federal death penalty system.

It names several possible avenues toward abolition that the president-elect could pursue, including declaring an official moratorium on federal executions, commuting the death sentences of all those currently on the federal death row, and advocating to end the death penalty in law.

Pope amends canon law so women can be installed as lectors, acolytes

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – Recognizing “the gifts of each baptized person” – women and men – Pope Francis ordered a change to canon law and liturgical norms so that women could be formally installed as lectors and acolytes.

“A consolidated practice in the Latin church has confirmed, in fact, that such lay ministries, being based on the sacrament of baptism, can be entrusted to all the faithful who are suitable, whether male or female,” the pope wrote in his order changing canon law.

The document, issued “motu proprio” (on his own accord), was published by the Vatican Jan. 11. It changes the wording of Canon 230, paragraph 1.

The canon used to say, “Lay men who possess the age and qualifications established by decree of the conference of bishops can be admitted on a stable basis through the prescribed liturgical rite to the ministries of lector and acolyte.”

The updated canon will say, “Laity who possess the age and qualifications established by decree of the conference of bishops can be admitted on a stable basis through the prescribed liturgical rite to the ministries of lector and acolyte.”

“The decision to confer also on women these offices, which involve stability, public recognition and a mandate from the bishop, will make the participation of all in the work of evangelization more effective in the church,” the pope said in a letter to Cardinal Luis Ladaria, prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

In most dioceses around the world – and at the Vatican as well – women and girls have been lectors at Mass and have served at the altar for decades. That service was possible, not as a formally instituted ministry, but under the terms of Canon 230, paragraph 2, which allowed for women or men to carry out the functions “by temporary designation.”

In his letter to Cardinal Ladaria, published with the document changing canon law, the pope said that since the Second Vatican Council the church has made “a clearer distinction between the attributes of what today are called ‘nonordained (or lay) ministries’ and ‘ordained ministries,’” such as deacon, priest and bishop.

Those distinctions, he said, make it “possible to dissolve the reservation of the former to men alone.”

Pope Francis repeated St. John Paul II’s teaching that the Catholic Church “in no way has the faculty to confer priestly ordination on women” since Jesus chose only men as his apostles.

But with “nonordained ministries it is possible, and today it seems opportune, to overcome this reservation” of allowing only men to be formally and permanently instituted as lectors and acolytes.

The pope’s letter also said the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments would oversee the implementation of the change and would need to modify parts of the Roman Missal and the rite instituting lectors and acolytes.

The “General Instruction of the Roman Missal” says: “The acolyte is instituted for service at the altar and to assist the priest and deacon. It is his place principally to prepare the altar and the sacred vessels and, if necessary, to distribute the Eucharist to the faithful as an extraordinary minister.”

“The lector is instituted to proclaim the readings from sacred Scripture, with the exception of the Gospel. He may also

announce the intentions for the universal prayer and, in the absence of a psalmist, recite the Psalm between the readings,” the instruction says.

The instruction also says that in the absence of persons formally instituted for those roles, any qualified lay person may be assigned those roles.

Celebrating Our Lady of the Cloud



On January 1, 2021, the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, the Ecuadorian community of Saint Matthew Parish in East Stroudsburg also celebrated their country’s patroness: Our Lady of the Cloud.

The faithful prayed the rosary and processed with the image of the Virgin Mary. A very moving Mass was celebrated at Notre Dame High School following all guidelines for masks, physical distancing and sanitization.

Our Lady of the Cloud, Pray for Us!

Robert H. Spitz Foundation supports Relief Assistance at Catholic Social Services



Mary Theresa Malandro, Diocesan Secretary for Catholic Human Services; the Most Rev. Joseph Bambera, Bishop of Scranton; and Sandra Snyder, Diocesan Grant Writer, display a copy of the check to support relief assistance received by the Scranton Area Community Foundation, administrator of Robert H. Spitz Foundation.

The Robert H. Spitz Foundation, administered by the Scranton Area Community Foundation, supported Catholic Social Services of the Diocese of Scranton with a \$20,000 grant for a project titled “Reviving a Core Model for Self-Sufficiency: A Return To Evidence-Based Relief Assistance.”

The grant is helping Catholic Social Services provide relief assistance in Luzerne and Lackawanna counties in a manner that has measurable impact on recipients’ lives. Clients who receive relief assistance, for example, are tracked in their progress toward achieving individualized goals, such as maintaining stable housing, obtaining or retaining employment or repairing family finances through better credit management.

“It has always been our goal to show that clients who benefit from our services have achieved

meaningful milestones in their lives as a result,” said Mary Theresa Malandro, Diocesan Secretary for Catholic Human Services and CEO of Catholic Social Services. “This grant is helping us to revive a service delivery model with proven reliability as we strive to continue to measure impact even as client numbers greatly increase during the pandemic.”

Relief assistance, especially via case management, has always been a hallmark of Catholic Social Services’ work.

“We are especially grateful to the Robert H. Spitz Foundation and to the Scranton Area Community Foundation for their continued partnership during these particularly troubling times,” Malandro said.

For more information about Catholic Social Services’ relief assistance program, call (570) 207-3808.

Feast of the Presentation of the Lord - February 2

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JANUARY SCHEDULE

CTV LOCAL ORIENTATION IS BOXED IN BOLD BORDER, OTHER PROGRAMMING IS FROM EWTN

| | SUNDAY | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY | | | | |
|----------|--------------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|--|---|--|--|--|--|
| 12:00 AM | DAILY MASS | SUNDAY MASS (Encore) | DAILY MASS (Encore) | | | | | | | | |
| 1:00 AM | FR SPITZER'S UNIVERSE | (1:10AM) LITANY OF THE SACRED HEART | THE JOURNEY HOME (Encore) | MOTHER ANGELICA LIVE CLASSICS | EWTN LIVE (Encore) | THE WORLD OVER (Encore) | SAINTS VS SCOUNDRELS | | | | |
| 1:30 AM | | EWTN GALLERY | | | | | GK CHESTERTON | | | | |
| 2:00 AM | ICONS SPOTLIGHT | EWTN NEWS NIGHTLY (Encore) | | | | | | | | | |
| 2:30 AM | GOD'S BLUEPRINT FOR A HAPPY LIFE | EWTN GALLERY | EWTN GALLERY | EWTN GALLERY | EWTN GALLERY | EWTN GALLERY | | | | | |
| 3:00 AM | EWTN GALLERY | EWTN RELIGIOUS CATALOGUE | SPECIALS | REAL LIFE CATHOLIC | LIFE ON THE ROCK | BATTLE READY | SPIRITUAL DIRECTION | | | | |
| 3:30AM | | DEFENDING LIFE | | PAPAL AUDIENCE | AT HOME WITH JIM AND JOY (Call in thurs) | | AT HOME WITH JIM AND JOY | | | | |
| 4:00 AM | EWTN LIVE (Encore) | REFURBISHING THE SOUL | SWEAR TO GOD | | BOB AND PENNY LORD | WEB OF FAITH 2.0 | SAVORING OUR FAITH | | | | |
| 4:30 AM | | (4:35)SUNDAY BEST WITH FR GROESCHEL | COMMUNITY TREANSFORMED | (4:40)ANGELUS FROM NAZARETH | FORGOTTEN HERITAGE | LIFE IS WORTH LIVING | MATTHEWS TESTIMONY TO JESUS | | | | |
| 5:00 AM | EXTRAORDINARY FAITH | EWTN BOOKMARK | THE CHURCH UNIVERSAL | SUFFERING AND WHAT TO DO WITH IT | EWTN SPECIALS | LIVING RIGHT WITH DR. RAY | CATHOLIC BEGINNINGS | | | | |
| 5:30 AM | FUNDAMENTALS OF CATHOLICISM | CATHOLIC VIEW FOR WOMEN | APOSTOLATE FOR FAMILY CONSECRATION | GENESIS TO JESUS | | | CATHOLICS COME HOME | | | | |
| 6:00 AM | ANGELUS WITH POPE FRANCIS | EWTN ORIGINAL PRODUCTIONS | | | | | | | | | |
| 6:30 AM | WHERE GOD WEEPS | G.K. CHESTERTON | CHURCH AND THE POOR | MATTHEWS TESTIMONY TO JESUS | SAINTS VS SCOUNDRELS | THE CHOICES WE FACE | EWTN RELIGIOUS CATALOGUE | | | | |
| 7:00 AM | THE CHAPLET OF ST. MICHAEL | | | | | STATIONS OF THE CROSS | CHAPLET OF ST. MICHAEL | | | | |
| 7:30 AM | THE HOLY ROSARY | HOLY LAND ROSARY | | | | | THE HOLY ROSARY | | | | |
| 7:50 AM | | LITANY OF BLESSED VIRGIN MARY | LITANY OF THE HOLY NAME | LITANY OF ST. JOSEPH | LITANY OF THE PRECIOUS BLOOD | LITANY OF SACRED HEART | | | | | |
| 8:00 AM | SUNDAY MASS (Live) | DAILY MASS (Live) | | | | | | | | | |
| 9:00 AM | (9:20AM) LITANY OF THE SACRED HEART | HOLY ROSARY WITH THE FRANCISCAN MISSIONARIES OF THE ETERNAL WORD | | | | | | | | | |
| 9:30 AM | EWTN ROSARY FRANCISCANS | SUNDAY BEST WITH FR. GROESCHEL | LIVING RIGHT WITH DR. RAY | SCRIPTURE AND TRADITION (ENCORE) | EWTN LIVE (ENCORE) | THE WORLD OVER (Encore) | MY TIME WITH JESUS | | | | |
| 10:00 AM | SUNDAY MASS ST. PETER'S CATHEDRAL | RELIGIOUS CATALOG | MOTHER ANGELICA LIVE | LIVE WITH PASSION | FOCUS | CATHOLIC CLASSICS WITH MOTHER ANGELICA | HERMIE AND FRIENDS | | | | |
| 10:30 AM | | SALT AND LIGHT TV | | | | | WE ARE CATHOLIC | | | | |
| 11:00 AM | AT HOME WITH JIM AND JOY | OFOD OR SPECIALS | ST PIO | ST ANN'S WEEKLY NOVENA | CHOICES WE FACE | JP II : THE MAN THE POPE THE MESSAGE | AT HOME WITH JIM AND JOY | | | | |
| 11:30 AM | VATICANO | SPEAKING OF SAINTS | | ST JOSEMARIA ESCRIVA AND OPUS DEI | EUCCHARISTIC JOURNEY | | BOB & PENNY LORD PRESENT | | | | |
| 12:00 PM | SUNDAY MASS (Encore) | THE DAILY MASS FROM ST. PETER'S CATHEDRAL, LIVE AT 12:10 p.m. "DIOCESAN DATEBOOK" airs before and after Mass. | | | | | EWTN DAILY MASS (Encore) | | | | |
| 12:30PM | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1:00 PM | (1:10PM) LITANY OF THE SACRED HEART | WOMEN OF GRACE | | | | | EWTN RELIGIOUS CATALOGUE | | | | |
| 1:30 PM | IN CONCERT | AT HOME WITH JIM & JOY | PRO LIFE WEEKLY | AT HOME WITH JIM & JOY | OFOD | WOMEN OF GRACE HOUR LONG | EWTN BOOKMARK | | | | |
| 2:00 PM | | CALLED TO COMMUNION | SCRIPTURE AND TRADITION | FR. SPITZER'S UNIVERSE | THE JOURNEY HOME | | EWTN ON LOCATION | | | | |
| 2:30 PM | | | | | STATIONS OF CROSS | | | | | | |
| 3:00 PM | THE CHAPLET OF DIVINE MERCY IN SONG | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3:20 PM | LIVE ADORATION FROM EWTN CHAPEL | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3:30 PM | THE ROSARY FROM LOURDES | THE DAILY MASS FROM ST. PETER'S CATHEDRAL, (Encore) | | | | | ROSARY FOR LIFE | | | | |
| 4:00 PM | LIFE IS WORTH LIVING | THE HOLY ROSARY DIOCESAN DATEBOOK | | | | | SUNDAY VIGIL MASS ST. PETER'S CATHEDRAL | | | | |
| 4:30 PM | SAVORING OUR FAITH | THE FRIAR | CAT CHAT | MASTERPIECE DONUT SHOP | MY CATHOLIC FAMILY | THE ROAMIN' CATHOLIC | | | | | |
| 5:00 PM | THE CHURCH UNIVERSAL | EWTN BOOKMARK | THE CHOICES WE FACE | EWTN RELIGIOUS CATALOGUE | BOB & PENNY LORD PRESENT | GOD'S BLUEPRINT | BECOMING CATHOLIC | | | | |
| 5:30 PM | SUNDAY PASSIONIST MASS | SPECIALS | | | | | SWEAR TO GOD | | | | |
| 6:00 PM | SUNDAY MASS FROM ST PETERS CATHEDRAL | EWTN NEWS NIGHTLY (Live) | | | | | THE JOURNEY HOME | | | | |
| 6:30 PM | | CATHOLICS COME HOME | REAL LIFE CATHOLICS | CHURCH UNIVERSAL | VATICANO | WHAT IS GOD'S WILL? | | | | | |
| 7:00 PM | SUNDAY MASS | THE DAILY MASS FROM ST. PETER'S CATHEDRAL, (Encore) | | | | | DAILY MASS | | | | |
| 7:30PM | | THE HOLY ROSARY | | POPE'S AUDIENCE | THE HOLY ROSARY | | | | | | |
| | | DIOCESAN DATEBOOK | | | | | | | | | |
| 8:00 PM | (8:20) LITANY OF SACRED HEART | THE JOURNEY HOME (Live) | OFOD OR SPECIALS (CAN BE 90 MINUTES) | EWTN LIVE | THE WORLD OVER (Live) | SPECIALS | EWTN CINEMA | | | | |
| 8:30 PM | CATHOLICS COME HOME | | MUSIC AND SPOKEN WORD | | | | | | | | |
| 9:00 PM | LIFE ON THE ROCK | EWTN NEWS NIGHTLY (Encore) | | | | | | | | | |
| 9:30 PM | HOLY ROSARY W MOTHER ANGELICA | WEEKLY NOVENA TO ST. ANN | THE CHOICES WE FACE | FOCUS | LIVE WITH PASSION | SALT AND LIGHT TV SISTERHOOD | | | | | |
| 10:00PM | EWTN SPECIALS | THE WORLD OVER LIVE (ENCORE) | SCRIPTURE AND TRADITION (ENCORE) | FR. SPITZER'S UNIVERSE | PRO-LIFE WEEKLY | LIFE ON THE ROCK | LIVING RIGHT WITH DR. RAY | | | | |
| 10:30 PM | | | | | DEFENDING LIFE | ICONS SPOTLIGHT | | | | | |
| 11:00PM | CATHOLIC BEGINNINGS | BATTLE READY | LONG RIDE HOME | CROSSING THE GOAL | REAL LIFE CATHOLIC | WOMEN OF GRACE HOUR LONG | WEB OF FAITH 2.0 | | | | |
| 11:30PM | CATHOLIC VIEW FOR WOMEN | WOMEN OF GRACE | | | | | GENESIS TO JESUS | | | | |

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Catholic Happenings Around the Diocese

Annual Knox Mine Disaster Memorial Mass — JAN. 17, celebrated at 9 a.m. at St. John the Evangelist Church in Pittston; offered in conjunction with events marking Anthracite Heritage Month, the annual liturgy commemorates the 1959 Knox Mine Disaster in the Pittston area that claimed the lives of 12 miners and ended anthracite coal mining in the region. All faithful are welcome to attend.

8th Annual "Be Cool for Our School" Polar Plunge — JAN. 30, fundraiser to benefit Marian Catholic High School in Tamaqua, Schuylkill County; held at Mauch Chunk Lake in Jim Thorpe. Registration for

"plungers" and spectators held from 10 to 11:30 a.m.; fee is \$35. Polar plunge begins at noon. All those who register receive a commemorative T-shirt. Event is

family friendly and features a DJ. For more information or to pre-register, email mehspolarplunge@gmail.com, or call Kathy Goff at (610) 704-8037.

Parish to Begin New Series on Sacraments

SCRANTON — Mary, Mother of God Parish in North Scranton encourages all faithful to participate in a virtual seven-part weekly series on the Sacraments of the Catholic Church.

Beginning on the third week of January, the series will be offered every Tuesday evening at 7 p.m. on Facebook and YouTube and continue for seven weeks.

The first session, "Baptism...Explained," will launch the series on Tuesday, Jan. 19.

Guest speakers include: Father Cyril Edwards, host pastor; Marie Purcell, faith formation director; Dave Regeski, RCIA program director; and Immaculate Heart of Mary Sister Therese Mary.

The practical informational series will also offer the opportunity to submit questions for discussion. Submissions may be made by calling the parish office at (570) 342-4881 or email: mmog.secretary@gmail.com.

Notice Regarding Reporting Sexual Abuse of a Minor

It is the policy of the Diocese of Scranton to report any allegation of sexual abuse of a minor to law enforcement. If you are a victim of sexual abuse committed by a priest, deacon, religious or lay employee or volunteer of the Diocese of Scranton, you are encouraged to immediately report the matter to law enforcement. If any priest, deacon, religious, lay employee or volunteer of the Diocese of Scranton has cause or reason to suspect that a minor has been subjected to any form of abuse, including child sexual abuse, the matter will be reported to law enforcement.

It is also the policy of the Diocese to adhere to all civil and state regulations. To this end, the Diocese is equally committed to adhering to the norms of the *Code of Canon Law* and to upholding the tenets of the USCCB *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*, which includes supporting victims of sexual abuse in their pursuit of emotional and spiritual well-being. As such, information regarding an allegation of sexual abuse of a minor should also be reported to the Victim Assistance Coordinator, Mary Beth Pacuska at (570-862-7551).

Aviso al Respeto de Reportar el Abuso Sexual de Un Menor de Edad

Es la norma de la Diócesis de Scranton reportar cualquier alegación de abuso sexual de un menor de edad a las autoridades. Si usted es una víctima de abuso sexual cometido por un sacerdote, diácono, religioso o empleado laico, o voluntario de la Diócesis de Scranton, usted está obligado a reportar el asunto inmediatamente a las autoridades de la ley.

Si algún sacerdote, diácono, religioso, empleado laico o voluntario de la Diócesis de Scranton tiene sospecha de que un menor de edad ha sido sujeto a cualquier forma de abuso, incluyendo abuso sexual de menor de edad, el asunto será reportado a las autoridades de la ley.

Es la norma de la Diócesis defender todas las regulaciones civiles y del estado. Al fin de que la Diócesis esté comprometida igualmente a defender las normas del Código de Derecho Canónico y defender los principios de la Carta Para la Protección de Niños y Jóvenes (Conferencia de los Obispos Católicos de los Estados Unidos), lo cual incluye apoyar a las víctimas de abuso sexual en pos del bienestar emocional y espiritual.

Por eso, información respecto a una alegación del asunto sexual de un menor de edad, debe ser reportada a la Coordinadora Diocesana de Asistencia para Las Víctimas, Mary Beth Pacuska, a (570-862-7551).

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Ancient Order of Hibernians support Saint Francis of Assisi Kitchen



The Paul "Hook" O'Malley Ancient Order of Hibernians Division #4 made a \$500 donation to Saint Francis of Assisi Kitchen in Scranton on Monday, Dec. 21, 2020. The money will support the kitchen's ongoing daily effort to provide a hot, nutritious meal to individuals and families in need seven days a week. This is the second donation the organization has provided to the kitchen since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. In April, the group provided a separate \$600 donation to the kitchen.

Shown at the check presentation, from left: Joseph Holland, Treasurer; Patrick O'Malley, Ancient Order of Hibernians President; Mary Theresa Malandro, Diocesan Secretary for Catholic Human Services & Chief Executive Officer of Catholic Social Services; Mark McDade, AOH Member; and Father Richard Fox, Pastor of Saint Patrick Parish, AOH Division Chaplain and 2020 AOH "Man of the Year."



DIocese of SCRANTON Diocesan Secretary for Property & Risk Management

The Diocesan Secretary for Property and Risk Management is a key member of the Bishop's senior leadership team and is responsible for providing direct management and supervision of personnel in the multifaceted areas of facilities management, property assets, risk management and diocesan cemeteries. This position requires significant interaction and collaboration with both internal and external stakeholders in these operational areas in order to achieve successful outcomes. The individual in this position must be a team player with an attention to detail who has experience in facilities management and/or construction management with some background in architecture and engineering along with a working knowledge/training in applicable building and life safety regulations.

Interested candidates are encouraged to visit the Diocese of Scranton website at www.dioceseofscranton.org to review the comprehensive job description for this position. Applicants will need to submit a complete resume and salary requirements with a minimum of three (3) references by January 22, 2021 to:

James Burke

Diocesan Secretary of Human Resources

300 Wyoming Avenue, Scranton, PA 18503

Or email to Jim-Burke@dioceseofscranton.org

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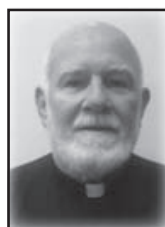
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Who makes house calls?

As of October 2015, I will now meet clients either at their home, or at a location they choose and no longer require clients to meet at my office. I have decided that I would change the way I meet with people so it will be as easy and as convenient as possible for the client.

Based on my practice, which consists of estate planning and administration along with elder law, I find that clients are more comfortable discussing such matters in familiar surroundings. While I know this may seem unconventional to some, I believe I will be able to serve clients much better in this fashion.

If anyone is uncomfortable with home visits, I have a few locations where I can meet in an office setting. I look forward to meeting with my existing clients and especially meeting new clients that are looking for any assistance in estate or elder law matters.



Elder Law

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- Medicaid Application Assistance

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Settle all estate matters and distribute inheritances.

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- Powers of Attorney • Living Wills • Wills
- Trusts Guardianships • Asset Protection Planning
- Medicaid Application Assistance

Estate Planning

- Powers of Attorney • Living Wills
- Wills • Trusts Guardianships

Saint Joseph Oblates to celebrate Feast of the Holy Spouses

PITSTON — As the Universal Church celebrates this Year of Saint Joseph, the Congregation of the Oblates of Saint Joseph will host the annual celebration honoring Mary and Joseph as the “Holy Spouses” later this month.

The Feast of the Espousals of Mary & Joseph was at one time included on the Roman Church calendar, but eventually was removed during the post-Vatican II era of liturgical renewal and only permitted for particular liturgical calendars.

By Decree of the Congregation of Divine Worship in 1989, the Oblates of Saint Joseph obtained permission to celebrate the Feast of the Holy Spouses every January.



The feast day Mass will be offered on Saturday, Jan. 23, at 4 p.m. in the Chapel of Saint Joseph, 1880 Highway 315, Laflin, with Father Eric Bergman serving as guest celebrant and homilist.

A former Anglican clergyman,

Father Bergman is a husband and father of ten children and serves as pastor of Saint Thomas More Parish in North Scranton.

He was ordained to the Catholic priesthood under the Pastoral Provision of Pope John Paul II on April 21, 2007, and became the first priest incardinated in the Personal Ordinariate of the Chair of Saint Peter in May 2012.

Saint Joseph Oblate Father Paul McDonnell, rector of the Oblates religious community, invites all faithful to this liturgical celebration, with due regard to the health/safety guidelines by the Diocese of Scranton.

For more information, contact the OSJ main office at (570) 654-7542.

IHM Sisters continue series of virtual prayer evenings

SCRANTON — The Immaculate Heart of Mary Sisters will continue their monthly “Evenings of Prayer with the Sisters of IHM” on Wednesday, Feb. 10.

The ongoing series celebrates the 175th anniversary of the founding of the Congregation of Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary in 1845.

The Evenings of Prayer are offered on the second Wednesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. via videostreaming. Participants may

access the devotions at: <https://video.ibm.com/channel/ihm-tv>.

The Feb. 10 Evening of Prayer will celebrate the 25th anniversary of the OSP-IHM Haiti Project sponsored by the Oblate Sisters of Providence and the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

Blue Army announces ‘First Saturday’ series

ASBURY, N.J. —The World Apostolate of Fatima USA (Blue Army), headquartered in Asbury, N.J., has dedicated 2021 as The Year of Saint Joseph under the title: “The greatest consoler of the Immaculate Heart.”

In conjunction with the devotional year, the Blue Army Apostolate will offer a new series to be presented virtually on the First Saturday of each month throughout the year. Guest presentations will livestream on the First Saturday beginning at 11 a.m. February’s First Saturday

discussion on Feb. 6, entitled “You at least try to console me,” will feature virtual speaker Father Donald Calloway, of the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception.

His talk at 11 a.m. will be followed by Rosary recitation with a 15-minute meditation at 11:30 a.m.; Holy Mass at 12:15 p.m.; and concluding with the Divine Mercy Chaplet and Brown Scapular enrollment.

For more information, contact the Fatima Apostolate at (908) 689-1700 ext. 210, or www.bluearmy.com.



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First Friday Reparation Vigil

The next monthly First Friday Reparation Vigil, dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Immaculate Heart of Mary and sponsored by the Blue Army, will be held Feb. 5 at Saint Joseph’s Oblate Seminary, 1880 Highway 315, Laflin (Pittston).

Devotions begin Friday evening at 8 p.m. with recitation of the Luminous Mysteries of the Rosary, during which time confessions are heard. Mass

of the Sacred Heart of Jesus is celebrated at 8:55 p.m., followed by benediction, litany and consecration to the Sacred Heart.

The vigil continues with the crowning of the Blue Army Pilgrim Virgin Statue, the Blue Army Pledge, Fatima prayers and Marian hymns, followed by litany and consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. The vigil concludes with scapular enrollment at 10:15 p.m.



In what has become an annual tradition since 2003, Knights of Columbus Council 7622 in Jermyn once again served as the sponsor for a billboard celebrating the true meaning of Christmas. The large placard depicting the Nativity of Our Lord was made possible this year through the generous contributions from the following: Christ the King Parish in Archbald; Sacred Hearts of Jesus & Mary Parish in Jermyn; Community Bank, N.A.; Harrison Funeral Home; Battenburg Furniture Store; Wilson Insurance, Inc.; T & R Service Station; Highway Auto Parts; Louis J. Rapoch Funeral Home; Fixit Shoppe; Joseph W. Arcadipane, DMD; Sterling Pharmacy; Calabro Floor Coverings, Inc.; Calabro Floor Coverings, Inc.; Bednash Petroleum, Inc.; Vladika Insurance Agency; Convenient Food Mart; and Paul Eastlake. Pictured, from left: Mark Bednash of Bednash Petroleum; K of C Council 7622 Grand Knight Tony Sparato; Father John Ruth, pastor of Sacred Hearts of Jesus & Mary Parish and Council 7622 chaplain; Knights Brock Noldy and Del Riffe; and Deputy Grand Knight Mario Fitzgerald.

Providing food for the holiday table

This year's Confirmation class at Saint Faustina Parish in Nanticoke put a unique and charitable twist on the traditional Advent Calendar as the students added a non-perishable item to a box each day during the Advent season to donate to the local food pantry. With the full support of Saint Faustina pastor, Father Jim Nash, and parish DRE Charlotte Golobek, the giving effort netted the largest one-time donation to the food bank in its 20-year history. Pantry shelves that were near empty when the seasonal drive began became packed with more than 4,000 items the Confirmation class received during the drop-off days, which adhered to safety guidelines in place during the COVID-19 pandemic. Local businesses and members of the community responded fittingly during "the season of giving" by making generous food and monetary donations. Located at the Catholic parish in Nanticoke, the food pantry is open to anyone in need on the first four Wednes-



days of the month from 9 to 11 a.m. Patrons are required to show proper ID and proof of address, in addition to wearing masks and practicing social distancing.

A YouTube video created by the Confirmation students advertised the impressive undertaking, which even received coverage in *The Wall Street Journal*!



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For Ash Wednesday, Vatican asks priests to 'sprinkle' ashes on heads



Pope Francis sprinkles ashes on the head of a cardinal as he celebrates Ash Wednesday Mass at the Basilica of Santa Sabina in Rome Feb. 26, 2020. The Vatican Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments has issued a note on how priests can distribute ashes on Ash Wednesday while taking precautions to avoid spreading COVID-19. (CNS photo/Cristian Gennari, pool)

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – The Vatican Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments asked priests to take special anti-COVID-19 precautions this year when distributing ashes on Ash Wednesday, Feb. 17, including sprinkling ashes on the top of people's heads rather than using them to make a cross on people's foreheads.

The congregation's note on the "distribution of ashes in time of pandemic" was published on the congregation's website Jan. 12 and directs priests to say "the prayer for blessing the ashes" and then sprinkle "the ashes with holy water, without saying anything."

"Then he addresses all those present and only once says the formula as it appears in the Roman Missal, applying it to all in general: 'Repent and believe in the Gospel' or 'Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return.'"

"The priest then cleanses his hands, puts on a face mask and distributes the ashes to those who come to him or, if appropriate, he goes to those who are standing in

their places," it said. "The priest takes the ashes and sprinkles them on the head of each one without saying anything."

The usual practice would be to repeat the formula – "Repent and believe in the Gospel" or "Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return" – to each person as the ashes are sprinkled on the top of their head or rubbed onto their forehead.

Sprinkling ashes on the top of people's heads, rather than marking foreheads with ashes, is the customary practice at the Vatican and in Italy. Given the spread of the coronavirus, the practice has the advantage of not requiring the priest to touch multiple people.

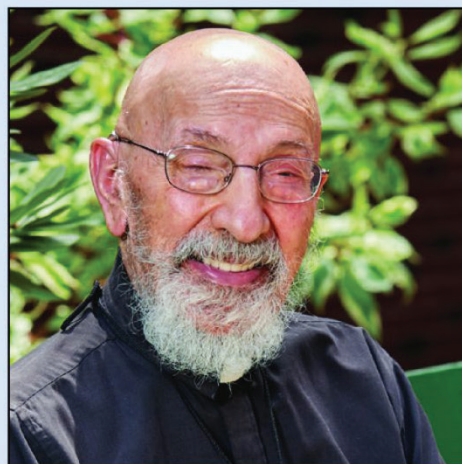
The Latin, Italian, French, German, Spanish and Portuguese versions of the note also specify that the mask should cover the priests' "nose and mouth."

All guidelines and protocols for the celebration of Mass in the Diocese of Scranton during the COVID-19 pandemic continue to be available on the Diocese of Scranton website.

The Catholic Light

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"One of the best things we have here at Villa St. Joseph is the fraternity of the priesthood, brothers living in a community of love. This cohesion brings us together... I can't thank you enough. We truly need your help. We're so grateful."

MSGR. JOHN A. ESSEFF, RETIRED

It is a magnificent life I have had," said Msgr. Esseff, ordained in 1953. His 68 years of priestly service include 14 years at St. Matthew Parish, East Stroudsburg, 14 years as teacher at St. Pius X Seminary, and five years among the poor in Peru when he learned Spanish. He is known as "John the Baptizer" for his work among Scranton's poor children and prison inmates. While Director of the Propagation of the Faith, he visited every parish in the Diocese but was also sent to Beirut where he began a lifelong association with (St.) Mother Teresa.

Retired priests continue to be a vital part of our Diocese. Before the COVID pandemic they assisted by offering Mass and administering the sacraments. From the most senior to the newly ordained, our priests selflessly serve us. We now ask you to support them through the Diocesan Annual Appeal.

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