

The Catholic Light

DIOCESE OF SCRANTON

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THURSDAY, APRIL 1, 2021



He is Risen!

2021 EASTER MESSAGE



Dear Friends,

In the Gospel from Saint Mark that will be proclaimed during the great Vigil of Easter this year, we are told that women, who were followers of Jesus, went to his tomb to anoint his body in the early hours of that first Easter day. They had witnessed the torture and death of their friend and teacher whom they had come to know as their Lord and Master. Their grief was mixed with pain, uncertainty and fear for themselves, their families and friends. Yet, despite the obstacles that they faced, they made their way to the tomb of Jesus.

Pope Francis reflected on the faith of these first believers.

"In this situation, the women did not allow themselves to be paralyzed. They did not give in to the gloom of sorrow and regret, they did not morosely close in on themselves, or flee from reality. . . . They did not stop loving; in the darkness of their hearts, they lit a flame of mercy," Pope Francis said. "They responded to sorrow with trust in the Lord. And then they met Jesus, the giver of all hope . . . who proclaimed: 'Do not be afraid.'"

Through their encounter with the risen Jesus, the lives of those who ventured to his tomb just days after his crucifixion were changed forever! Their lives were changed because God had redirected the course of human history through the resurrection of his Son. By embracing our humanity, Jesus not only gave us hope by identifying with us in his life, suffering and death. He also provided us a way forward amid the pain and struggles of our lives by defeating death through the power of the resurrection!

A year ago at this time, it seemed as if our world had suddenly come to a crashing halt! Not unlike what was experienced by the first followers of Jesus, we were confronted with unexpected suffering and death. We were uncertain of how best to respond. We hid in our homes for fear of what we might experience, not only from unknown individuals but also from neighbors, co-workers and those whom we love the most. While our churches were closed, we prayed fervently that the wave of suffering enveloping our world might stop before it crashed into our lives.

Even though our days found us consumed with uncertainty, pain and confusion, we took great comfort in the example of healthcare workers, first responders, clergy, women and men religious, essential workers, volunteers and so many others. They consoled us and more importantly, they inspired us, didn't they? Like the women who ventured to the tomb of Jesus on that first Easter day, these selfless souls would not allow themselves to be paralyzed, but instead, worked tirelessly to keep the flame of hope burning in our lives. And so did all of you! More than you might realize, you provided hope. In so many and different ways, you responded to the needs of your brothers and sisters and you served generously and selflessly.

Continued on Page 5

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DIOCESE OF SCRANTON



DIOCESE OF SCRANTON MISSION STATEMENT

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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Catholic Television/EWTN Broadcasts During Paschal Triduum

April 1: Holy Thursday

Solemn Mass of the Lord's Supper Live from Rome - Noon

Commemorating when Jesus turned bread and wine into his body and blood, this Mass is presided over by His Holiness, Pope Francis, live from St. Peter's Basilica in Rome.

Mass of the Lord's Supper Live from the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton - 5:30 p.m.

Bishop Joseph C. Bambera will serve as principal celebrant and homilist of the Mass of the Lord's Supper live from the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton.

April 2: Good Friday

Good Friday Commemoration of the Lord's Passion Live from the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton - 12:10 p.m.

Bishop Joseph C. Bambera will serve as principal celebrant for the Commemoration of the Lord's Passion live from the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton.

Liturgy of the Lord's Passion from Washington, D.C., - 2:30 p.m.

This Solemn celebration of the Lord's Passion on Good Friday from the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C., features a Choral Meditation on the Passion of Christ.

Celebration of the Lord's Passion from Rome - 6:00 p.m.

His Holiness, Pope Francis, presides over the Solemn Celebration of the Lord's Passion from Saint Peter's Basilica. (Rebroadcast: Saturday, April 3 at Midnight)

The Way of the Cross from Rome - 8:00 p.m.

Pope Francis presides over the Stations of the Cross from in front of Saint Peter's Basilica.

April 3: Holy Saturday

Easter Vigil Mass Live from Rome - 1:30 p.m.

His Holiness, Pope Francis, presides over the Easter Vigil Mass live from Saint Peter's Basilica.

Easter Vigil Mass Live from the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton - 8:00 p.m.

Bishop Joseph C. Bambera will serve as principal celebrant and homilist for the Easter Vigil Mass live from the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton.

April 4: Easter Sunday

Solemn Mass of Easter Sunday Live from Rome - 4:00 a.m.

He is risen! Pope Francis celebrates the Solemn Mass of Easter Sunday at Saint Peter's Basilica

Urbi et Orbi Message and Blessing - 6:00 a.m.

Live from Saint Peter's Square in Rome, Pope Francis gives the traditional message and blessing for Easter - "to the city of Rome and to the world."

Easter Sunday Mass Live from the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton - 10:00 a.m.

Bishop Joseph C. Bambera will serve as principal celebrant and homilist for the Easter Sunday Mass live from the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton.

Easter Sunday Mass Live from Washington, D.C. - Noon

The Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C. is the setting for EWTN's live coverage of Easter Sunday services.

Local Paschal Triduum Services on CTV

- ✦ Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday, April 1, at 5:30 p.m.
- ✦ Good Friday Commemoration of the Lord's Passion, April 2, at 12:10 p.m.
- ✦ Easter Vigil Mass on Holy Saturday, April 3, at 8:00 p.m.
- ✦ Easter Sunday Mass, April 4, at 10:00 a.m.



DIOCESE OF SCRANTON



Priests praised for leadership during COVID-19 pandemic

Bishop Bambara expresses gratitude during Chrism Mass

SCRANTON – Referencing Psalm 133, Bishop Joseph C. Bambara began his homily during this year's Chrism Mass by saying how wonderful it was to have all of the priests from across the 11 counties of the Diocese of Scranton together in one place.

"It is so very good to be with all of you," Bishop Bambara said. "Thank you for your selfless, creative and faithful ministry to this local Church."

The Chrism Mass, held on Tuesday, March 30, at the Cathedral of Saint Peter, was the first time that priests have been able to all come together in more than a year—since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We have all been wounded and broken during this past year. If we're honest, we must admit that we've been confronted like never before in our lives," the bishop added.

Over the last year, many people, priests included, have faced loneliness, fear and uncertainty. They have worried not only about their own health and their family but also for the safety of the faithful people that they care for.

"It is in the honest embrace of our wounds that we will come to understand something about ourselves, our faith, our priesthood and our God," Bishop Bambara explained. "Today, as we start to see glimmers of light in our world, I trust that we're also beginning to recognize the hope promised by Jesus."

During his homily, the bishop told his brother priests that they have brought more to this past year than they might give themselves credit for.

"First of all brothers, we bring what we



Priests from the Diocese of Scranton celebrate the Chrism Mass on Tuesday, March 30, 2021, at the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton. This is the first time that they have all been able to come together since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. (Photos/Mike Melisky)

have been given. We bring what the Church has entrusted to us. Through the priesthood we have received, we bring the mysteries of God through the Holy Eucharist and the Sacramental Life of the Church. In these gifts, Christ himself heals and teaches," the bishop said.

Drawing upon the words of Pope Francis in *Fratelli Tutti*, the bishop said, "No one is saved alone."

"Thank you for your ministry, thank

you for your service so generously given in the face of so many obstacles," the bishop added.

During the Chrism Mass, the holy oils used throughout the year in the Diocese of Scranton for baptisms, confirmations, ordinations and other milestone events were blessed by Bishop Bambara.

The Chrism Mass has special significance for the clergy. During the Mass, the priests renewed the promises they

made at their ordinations. In addition, the priests renew their promise of obedience to the bishop.

Due to the ongoing pandemic, this year's Chrism Mass was limited to priests to adhere to physical distancing guidelines. Members of the public participated by a live broadcast on CTV: Catholic Television of the Diocese of Scranton and livestreaming on the Diocese of Scranton's YouTube channel and social media platforms.



Above: Rev. Glenn E. McCreary, V.E., forefront, and priests from the Diocese participate in the Chrism Mass at the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton on March 30, 2021.

Right: Bishop Joseph C. Bambara celebrates the Blessing of the Oils and the Consecration of the Chrism.

Other Photos: Priests from the Diocese of Scranton participate in the Renewal of Priestly Promises at the Chrism Mass at the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton on March 30, 2021.



Focus on the example of Jesus, Bishop Bambera says on Palm Sunday

SCRANTON – As Laura Welde celebrated Palm Sunday Mass at the Cathedral of Saint Peter on March 28, she reflected on how much has changed since Holy Week last year.

“It is a blessing because last year we weren’t able to come to church and this year we are able to come and I really missed it last year,” she said.

The Archbald woman called Palm Sunday Mass at the Cathedral “uplifting.” Welde is glad that the church community is able to gather in-person again even as COVID-19 continues to infect thousands of people daily in Pennsylvania.

“I think with everything going on in the world today it’s very, very important for us to have our religion,” Welde explained.

The Most Reverend Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, served as principal celebrant and homilist for the 12:15 p.m. Mass on Palm Sunday at the Cathedral of Saint Peter. Safety protocols, which included masks and physical distancing, were strictly enforced.

Speaking with the media after Mass, the bishop said it is extremely important for the Church to celebrate the Eucharist communally.

“It was so meaningful to be able to see as many people as we did here today, coming together. The Eucharist is meant to be celebrated as a community. While we were able to do that from afar (through livestream Masses and Catholic Television), it clearly resonates with all of our spirits to be able to join with brothers and sisters of faith to affirm our beliefs,” Bishop Bambera said.

While the bishop acknowledged that



Above: With the Twelfth Station of the Cross behind them, two parishioners recite The Lord’s Prayer during Palm Sunday Mass at the Cathedral of Saint Peter on March 28, 2021.

Left: Bishop Joseph C. Bambera carries palm branches at the start of Palm Sunday Mass at the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton on March 28, 2021. (Photos/Mike Melisky)

glimmers of hope are on the horizon in terms of vaccines and lower numbers of coronavirus infections, he said it is important that people not let their guard down with safety protocols. That is why this year’s Passion Narrative was shortened.

“We’ve tried to use shorter readings, we’ve tried to keep at a minimum the amount of time that we are spending together because we are still social distancing but at the heart is the same spirit and the same Eucharist that we always celebrate when we gather, so that is really what gives us hope today,” he explained.

During his homily, Bishop Bambera

said that over the last year many people have struggled with questions about life, death, faith and God. The bishop turned to the Passion Narrative itself to address some of those concerns.

“Jesus said one thing as he hung from the cross: ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’ Abandoned by his closest followers, in the midst of his agony on the cross, Jesus questioned whether his Father had abandoned him as well,” the bishop said.

Bishop Bambera said Pope Francis addressed this idea of abandonment in his Palm Sunday homily last year.

“When we find ourselves at a dead end, with no light and no way of escape, when it seems that God himself is not responding, we should remember that we are not alone. Jesus experienced total abandonment...in order to be one with us in everything. He did it for me, for you, for all of us; he did it to say to us: ‘Do not be afraid, you are not alone,’” the bishop said quoting Pope Francis 2020 homily.

During Holy Week, the bishop stressed that people should not forget to focus on the example of Jesus, who teaches us by the embrace of His cross, how to discover the means to life and peace.

Jesus takes on human suffering to draw even closer to people, pope says

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – A Christian life should be filled with amazement – astonishment at the son of God suffering and dying for humanity and awe at realizing how precious and loved people are in his eyes, Pope Francis said.

“Can we still be moved by God’s love? Have we lost the ability to be amazed by him?” the pope asked in his homily during Palm Sunday Mass, marking the start of Holy Week.

“Let us be amazed by Jesus so that we can start living again, for the grandeur of life lies not in possessions and promotions, but in realizing that we are loved and in experiencing the beauty of loving others,” he said at the Mass March 28.

Palm Sunday Mass, the liturgy that begins with a commemoration of Jesus entering Jerusalem among a jubilant crowd, began with a small procession toward the Altar of the Chair in St. Peter’s Basilica with a few dozen concelebrating cardinals and bishops walking ahead of Pope Francis.

Dressed in red vestments, the color of the Passion, they held large woven palm fronds while the reduced congregation of faithful were sitting distanced in the pews, wearing facemasks and holding small olive branches. Broadcast and livestreamed over a wide range of media, the pope preached in his homily about Holy Week marking an important time to be amazed by Jesus, who completely overturned people’s expectations.

Instead of being “a powerful liberator at Passover,” he arrives on a lowly donkey “to bring the Passover to fulfillment by sacrificing himself” and, instead of triumphing over the Romans by the sword, “Jesus comes to celebrate God’s triumph through the cross,” the pope said.

What is amazing, he said, “is the fact that he achieves glory through humiliation. He triumphs by accepting suffering and death, things that we, in our quest for admiration and success, would rather avoid.”



Pope Francis is pictured as cardinals walk in procession at the conclusion of Palm Sunday Mass in Saint Peter’s Basilica at the Vatican March 28, 2021. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

Even more astonishing is that he endures all this pain and humiliation “for us, to plumb the depths of our human experience, our entire existence, all our evil. To draw near to us and not abandon us in our suffering and our death. To redeem us,

to save us,” the pope said.

With his love, sacrifice and salvation, “now we know that we are not alone: God is at our side in every affliction, in every fear; no evil, no sin will ever have the final word,” he said.

“Let us ask for the grace to be amazed,” he said, because not only is a Christian life without amazement “drab and dreary,” how can people proclaim “the joy of meeting Jesus, unless we are daily astonished and amazed by his love, which brings us forgiveness and the possibility of a new beginning?”

Pope Francis asked that people begin Holy Week with this sense of amazement, by gazing upon Jesus on the cross, and saying to him, “Lord, how much you love me! How precious I am to you!”

“With the grace of amazement we come to realize that in welcoming the dismissed and discarded, in drawing close to those ill-treated by life, we are loving Jesus. For that is where he is, in the least of our brothers and sisters, in the rejected and discarded,” the pope said.

MENSAJE DE PASCUA DEL OBISPO BAMBERA

Queridos amigos,

En el Evangelio de San Marcos que será proclamado durante la gran Vigilia Pascual de este año, se nos dice que las mujeres, que eran seguidoras de Jesús, acudieron a su tumba para ungir su cuerpo en las primeras horas de ese primer día de Pascua. Habían sido testigos de la tortura y muerte de su amigo y maestro, a quien habían llegado a conocer como su Señor y Maestro. Su duelo se mezcló con dolor, incertidumbre y miedo por ellos mismos, sus familias y amigos. Sin embargo, a pesar de los obstáculos que enfrentaron, se dirigieron a la tumba de Jesús.

El Papa Francisco reflexionó sobre la fe de estos primeros creyentes.

“En esta situación, las mujeres no se dejaron paralizar. No se rindieron a la tristeza y el arrepentimiento, no se encerraron malhumorados en sí mismos ni huyeron de la realidad. . . No dejaron de amar; en la oscuridad de sus corazones, encendieron una llama de misericordia,” dijo el Papa Francisco. “Respondieron al dolor con confianza en el Señor. Y luego conocieron a Jesús, el dador de toda esperanza. . . quien proclamó: ‘No temas.’”

¡A través de su encuentro con Jesús resucitado, las vidas de aquellos que se aventuraron a su tumba pocos días después de su crucifixión cambiaron para siempre! Sus vidas cambiaron porque Dios había reorientado el curso de la historia humana a través de la resurrección de su Hijo. Al abrazar nuestra humanidad, Jesús no solo nos dio esperanza al identificarse con nosotros en su vida, sufrimiento y muerte. ¡También nos proporcionó un camino a seguir en medio del dolor y las luchas de nuestras vidas al derrotar a la muerte a través del poder de la resurrección!

Hace un año, en este momento, parecía como si nuestro mundo se hubiera detenido repentinamente. Al igual que lo que experimentaron los primeros seguidores de Jesús, nos enfrentamos a un sufrimiento y una muerte inesperados. No estábamos seguros de cuál era la mejor manera de responder. Nos escondimos en nuestras casas por miedo a lo que pudiéramos experimentar, no solo de personas desconocidas sino también de vecinos, compañeros de trabajo y aquellos a quienes más amamos. Mientras nuestras iglesias estaban cerradas, oramos fervientemente para que la ola de sufrimiento que envolvía a nuestro mundo se detuviera antes de que se estrellara contra nuestras vidas.

A pesar de que nuestros días nos encontraron consumidos por la incertidumbre, el dolor y la confusión, nos reconfortó mucho el ejemplo de los trabajadores de la salud, los socorristas, el clero, los religiosos y religiosas, los trabajadores esenciales, los voluntarios y muchos otros. Nos consolaron y, lo que es más importante, nos inspiraron, ¿no? Como las mujeres que se aventuraron a la tumba de Jesús en ese primer día de Pascua, estas almas desinteresadas no se dejaron paralizar, sino que trabajaron incansablemente para mantener encendida la llama de la esperanza en nuestras vidas. ¡Y todos ustedes también! Más de lo que imagina, brindó esperanza. De tantas y diferentes formas, respondiste a las necesidades de tus hermanos y hermanas y serviste con generosidad y abnegación.

En resumen, amigos míos, a través de su fe y creencia en la resurrección de Jesús y todo lo que significa para nuestras vidas, hicieron suya la enseñanza del Papa Francisco en su encíclica más reciente, *Fratelli tutti*, que nos recuerda: “Nadie se salva solo; solo podemos salvarnos juntos.” Esta realidad, amigos míos, que ustedes y tantos han vivido y experimentado especialmente durante este último año, nació en una tumba vacía en los momentos iniciales de la vida de nuestra Iglesia en esa primera mañana de Pascua.

El Domingo de Ramos, hace apenas unos días, el Papa Francisco nos recordó el poder de la resurrección en medio de la incertidumbre y el dolor de estos días desafiantes.

“Dios está a nuestro lado en toda aflicción, en todo temor; ningún mal, ningún pecado tendrá la última palabra. Dios triunfa. . . a través de la madera de la cruz,” dijo.

En eso, amigos míos, está lo que creemos como cristianos y la verdadera bendición y don de la Pascua. Solo Jesús resucitado tiene el poder de llevarnos a través de los días más oscuros para descubrir el consuelo, la alegría y el verdadero significado y propósito de nuestra vida como pueblo suyo.

A más de 85 catecúmenos y candidatos que esperan el bautismo y la plena comunión en la Iglesia Católica, conozcan nuestras oraciones por ustedes. Su apertura al Espíritu de Dios es motivo de gran gozo. Bienvenidos a nuestra familia católica. De muchas maneras, estás presenciando lo mejor de la Iglesia, ya que tantos sirven desinteresadamente a sus hermanos y hermanas.

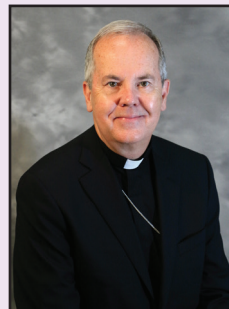
Amigos míos, afortunadamente estamos comenzando a ver destellos de luz y esperanza en todo nuestro mundo, incluso mientras continuamos enfrentando los desafíos que hemos enfrentado durante más de un año. Durante esta Semana Santa, oro para que todos lleguemos a apreciar más profundamente que nunca el hecho de que somos bendecidos en más formas de las que podríamos creer o imaginar. Confiemos en la promesa de Dios de sostenernos y disipar nuestros miedos más profundos. Y que abramos nuestros corazones a Jesús resucitado y permitamos que los llene de su amor y paz.

Este es el día que hizo el Señor. ¡Regocijémonos y alegrémonos!

Fielmente suyo en Cristo Resucitado,

+ *Joseph C. Bambera*

Reverendísimo Joseph C. Bambera, D.D., J.C.L.
Obispo de Scranton



Continued from Page 1

In short, my friends, through your faith and belief in the resurrection of Jesus and all that it means for our lives, you made as your own the teaching of Pope Francis in his most recent encyclical letter, *Fratelli tutti*, that reminds us, “No one is saved alone; we can only be saved together.” This reality, my friends, that you and so many have lived and experienced especially during this past year, was born in an empty tomb in the initial moments of the life of our Church on that first Easter morning.

On Palm Sunday, just a few days ago, Pope Francis reminded us of the power of the resurrection in the midst of the uncertainty and pain of these challenging days.

“God is at our side in every affliction, in every fear; no evil, no sin will ever have the final word. God triumphs . . . through the wood of the cross,” he said.

Therein, my friends, is what we believe as Christians and the real blessing and gift of Easter. The risen Jesus alone has the power to carry us through the darkest of days to discover consolation, joy and the true meaning and purpose of our lives as his people.

To over 85 catechumens and candidates who await baptism and full communion in the Catholic Church, please know of our prayers for you. Your openness to the Spirit of God is cause for great joy. Welcome to our Catholic family. In so many ways, you are witnessing the Church at its best as so many selflessly serve their brothers and sisters.

My friends, thankfully we are beginning to see glimmers of light and hope emerge throughout our world, even as we continue to confront that challenges that we have faced for well over a year.

During this Holy Week, I pray that we will all come to appreciate more deeply than ever the fact that we are indeed blessed in more ways than we might believe or imagine. May we trust in God's promise to sustain us and dispel our deepest fears. And may we open our hearts to the risen Jesus and allow him to fill them with his love and peace.

This is the day that the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad!

Faithfully yours in the Risen Christ,

+ *Joseph C. Bambera*

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



With Easter joy, diocesan faithful return to the pews for the holiest of seasons

SCRANTON — “Hallelujah!” Faithful of the Diocese of Scranton will undoubtedly be filled with “greater joy than ever during this Easter season” as churches once again open wide their doors for the most solemn time of the year in the Christian world. As the coronavirus pandemic suspended in-person participation at houses of worship and *The Catholic Light* front-page headline at this time last year read “Holy Week at Home,” Catholics had to resort to social media to “attend” traditional Holy Week and Easter services and liturgies celebrated before empty pews.

It has been a long year indeed. But the hope of Easter takes on a whole new meaning in 2021 as worshippers are joyfully returning to their rightful place to personally take part in the sacred ceremonies, both in person and as faith communities, beginning with the start of Holy Week on Palm Sunday.

The exuberance diocesan faithful are experiencing this Easter season reminded Chris Calore of the last words of Saint Pope John Paul II before he died in 2005: “Let me go to the house of our Father.”

“Likewise, let us go to our Father by receiving him in the sacraments of confession and the Eucharist,” Calore, a member of Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Swoyersville, said. “There is a physical, spiritual and emotional need for worshipping together in the Church that the Lord left us. Our return to worship in a body, as brothers and sisters and a family, is so important, particularly during this most holy season.”

He continued by lauding pastors and parish staffs for accommodating the general public in providing for a smooth transition back into our churches.

“We have learned much about how to congregate safely,” Calore noted. “Thankfully, we have used this knowledge and can once again be nourished by the Lord’s Sacraments — His Body and Blood.”

Gail Gayeski of Luzerne, who worships at both the Cathedral Parish of Saint Peter and Saint Ignatius Parish in Kingston, lamented the inability to physically be present in church for Palm Sunday, the Sacred Triduum and Easter Sunday a year ago.

“This is the holiest time of the year for Catholic Christians and not to be able to attend and receive Holy Communion was indeed a sacrifice for everyone,” Gayeski commented. “How filled with joy we are to go back to our churches in person. This Easter will be a particularly happy one for us all.”

Continuing the “absence makes the heart grow fonder” theme, she feels a great lesson was learned by what Catholics experienced due to the health crisis.

“I think all of this may have given us a greater understanding and appreciation of the suffering going on in our world,” Gayeski said, “where people longing for Christ’s presence do not have the opportunity to

worship because of governments that prohibit Christian worship.”

She added how grateful she is for the “extraordinary efforts” both of her parishes put forth to livestream Masses online during the pandemic. “Of course, CTV (Catholic Television) was never more valuable to all of us than during this past year.”

Also very thankful for being able to participate in the Catholic Mass “virtually” when COVID kept faithful at a distance is Attorney Tim Foley, a parishioner of Saint Gregory Parish in Clarks Green, who also serves as a lector at Saint Peter’s Cathedral.

However, he noted, something was missing.

“As time went on, I realized I missed the community aspect of the congregation,” Foley recalled, “but most importantly, I became more aware of the absence of the Eucharist.”

Greatly anticipating the opportunity to personally take part in this year’s Holy Week events, he remarked, “I am looking forward to participating and receiving Holy Communion in person during the Easter services and beyond. The Easter season and the customary services of Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday have always been a positive tradition in our house for many years.”

Pittston resident Cathy Mack rejoiced upon the opportunity to participate in the Eucharistic liturgy at her parish of Saints Peter & Paul, Plains, when churches throughout the diocese reopened following the pandemic’s initial impact.

“For me it was a sad, empty, detached feeling not being able to attend Mass in person,” Mack said as she looks forward with great joy and anticipation to being present for this year’s solemn celebrations of Holy Week, Easter Sunday and Divine Mercy Sunday.

“We need these blessings,” Mack remarked. “Churches have always been our sanctuaries, places where we feel safe and protected as we worship in our Lord’s temples.”

She continued by stressing how important it is to engage in the sacraments, especially during the Solemn Paschal Season. “Our churches provide us with the greatest gift of all — the physical presence of the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ!”

Acknowledging that Easter 2021 will be vastly different from a year ago, Immaculate Heart of Mary Sister Janet Jeffers noted that as life drastically changed for America and the world during the past 12 months, faithful of the Scranton Diocese experienced major changes in how we celebrate our religious rites.

“It appears the worst of COVID-19 is behind us,” Sister Janet, who lives in community in South Scranton and celebrated her 50th anniversary of religious profession in 2019, said with renewed hope. “We are in a ‘new place.’ Our parishes have opened and we see increasing numbers of our members ‘coming home.’”

The former executive director of Catholic Social Services of the Diocese for Lackawanna/Wayne Counties reflected on the holiest week of the liturgical year as a time filled with powerful accounts and images of the final days in the life of Christ.

“During this time, we recall His life and the ultimate sacrifice Jesus made for each one

of us,” she related, referring to Palm Sunday, Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter as great gifts of faith to be experienced by all.

Sister Janet concluded, “We are an Easter people. Signs of life abound; don’t miss them. May all of us celebrate the graces, gifts and blessings of this very holy season. Blessed Easter! Alleluia!”



BISHOP BAMBERA’S SCHEDULE

- April 1** - Mass of the Lord’s Supper
Cathedral of Saint Peter, Scranton, 5:30 p.m.
- April 2** - Commemoration of the Lord’s Passion
Cathedral of Saint Peter, Scranton, 12:10 p.m.
- April 3** - Easter Vigil Mass
Cathedral of Saint Peter, Scranton, 8:00 p.m.
- April 4** - Easter Sunday Mass
Cathedral of Saint Peter, Scranton, 10:00 a.m.
- April 8** - Healing Mass for Survivors of Abuse
Cathedral of Saint Peter, Scranton, 12:10 p.m.
- April 11** - Divine Mercy Sunday Mass
Cathedral of Saint Peter, Scranton, 10:00 a.m.
- April 12** - Confirmation
Saint Joseph the Worker Parish, Williamsport, 5:00 p.m.
- April 14 & 15** - Confirmation
Saint Gregory Parish, Clarks Green, 5:00 p.m.
- April 19** - Confirmation
Saint Joseph Parish, Matamoras, 5:00 p.m.
- April 20** - Confirmation
Saint Patrick Parish, Milford, 5:00 p.m.
- April 21 & 22** - Confirmation for Saint Jude Parish & Saint Mary Parish
Saint Jude Parish, Mountain Top, 5:00 p.m.
- April 25** - World Day of Prayer for Vocations Mass
Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish, Peckville, 5:00 p.m.
- April 26 & 27** - Confirmation
Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish, Brodheadsville, 6:30 p.m.
- April 28** - Confirmation
Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary Parish, Jermyn, 5:00 p.m.
- April 29** - Confirmation
Saint John the Evangelist Parish, Honesdale, 5:00 p.m.

Catholic Social Services becomes lifeline during year of COVID-19

CARBONDALE – One year into the COVID-19 pandemic, the need for food assistance continues across northeastern and north central Pennsylvania.

On Tuesday, March 23, Catholic Social Services of the Diocese of Scranton tackled that need by holding an Easter food distribution outside its offices in Carbondale.

Families began lining up in their cars along River Street more than an hour before the distribution began.

“I don’t think anybody expected it to last this long,” Michelle Santanna, Catholic Social Services Carbondale Office Manager, said reflecting on the past year of the pandemic. “The need is still there. My pantry is busy every single week. I’m open every single day. It is a constant flow of people.”

To help alleviate the stress of families around the holidays, Catholic Social Services in Carbondale has been hosting special food distributions in addition to their normal pantry services.

“It frees up a little bit of money for them,” Santanna explained.

“Food is not a luxury, it is a necessity” *Saint Vincent de Paul Kitchen holds Easter food distribution*

WILKES-BARRE – Just five days before Easter, Saint Vincent de Paul Kitchen and Food Pantry opened its doors to the community for a special holiday food distribution on March 30.

“A lot of people are struggling. We’re here to help them and support them,” Kitchen Director Mike Cianciotta said. “Food is not a luxury. It is a necessity.”

The Easter food distribution was open to anyone in need, no pre-registration was required. It took place at the Kitchen and Food Pantry property on East Jackson Street.

Volunteers Mary Ann Wills and Bill Leonhardt assisted members of the community that came looking for help.

“I feel like I’m doing something to help somebody that needs help, rather than sitting at home on the couch,” Wills said. “This is eye-awakening down here when you see the people coming through that are needy in the community.”

“They are so grateful to be



Carrie DiGregorio, a volunteer with Catholic Social Services in Carbondale, helps to pack food bags during an Easter food distribution on March 23, 2021. (Photos/Eric Deabill)

Ham, vegetables, juice and other essentials were provided to 297 families during the event. That translated to 472 individuals receiving assistance.

“It does help. It really does. I’m very thankful for them,” William Staples of Carbondale said.

Staples was surprised to see all of the cars lined up for assistance.

“I have a lot of grandkids and they come down and visit and I always have to have something for them. Between me and my wife, she can’t get out because she’s in

a walker, I work three days a week. This helps because all we get is social security,” Staples added.

Individuals and families could either drive-up or walk-up to receive assistance. Numerous drivers expressed sincere appreciation for the help.

“I’m so happy that there is a place here that can give them that help,” volunteer Carrie DiGregorio said. “I have family in other states and there is no help for them so it’s great to have a place for them to come to when they really need something.”



Volunteers with Catholic Social Services help to fill the vehicles of people needing assistance during an Easter food distribution on March 23, 2021. In all, 297 families received assistance during the event.

DiGregorio volunteers for Catholic Social Services several days a week. She has seen the constant need for help firsthand.

“A lot of people have suffered because of this pandemic and there are a lot of people that have been out of work or couldn’t work because of the pandemic so there have been a lot more people needing food or clothing,” she added.

In 2020, the Catholic Social Services Carbondale Office alone served 7,287 households. That translates to more than 10,000 children and adults receiving help.

“The mission of Catholic Social Services is to serve individuals and families facing hardship,” Mary Theresa Malandro, Diocesan Secretary for Catholic Human Services and Chief Executive Officer of Catholic Social Services, said. “The need for assistance continues to grow and our staff has been working tirelessly to give people a helping hand.”

Anyone needing assistance from Catholic Social Services in the Carbondale area can call (570) 282-0460.

Catholic Social Services in Hazleton helps distribute Easter meals

HAZLETON – Catholic Social Services in Hazleton joined several other community partners in helping to distribute Easter meals to the community this week.

On Wednesday, March 31, volunteers delivered numerous Easter dinners to the homebound in the greater Hazleton area and other people in need of assistance.

This year’s effort was held in memory of Ed Scarp, a former community meal volunteer and Hazleton firefighter who died in 2013.

Residents who wanted to enjoy a dinner were asked to call 211 and register beforehand. Volunteers then brought the meals to their homes while remaining socially distant.

The meals consisted of a traditional Easter feast which included ham, mashed potatoes,

mixed vegetables, dinner rolls and dessert.

During COVID-19, Catholic Social Services has continued to serve the greater Hazleton community through numerous programs, including the Saint Joseph Food Pantry. In 2020, Saint Joseph Food Pantry served 5,874 households, 7,866 children, 11,884 adults and 2,159 seniors.

Numerous community partners helped to make the Easter meal distribution on March 31 a success. They included: United Way of Greater Hazleton, Hazleton firefighters, Bonanza Steakhouse, Capriottis, Carmen’s Bakery, Frankie’s, Hazleton Rotary Club, Mary Scarp, Lehigh Valley Health Network, PA 211/Family Service Association, Team Hazleton, USA Pork Packers and Vesuvio’s.



Volunteer Mary Ann Wills prepares bags of food to be given out during a special Easter food distribution at Saint Vincent de Paul Kitchen and Food Food Pantry in Wilkes-Barre March 30. (Photo/Dan Gallagher)

getting something. It does me good (to help),” Leonhardt added.

The food distribution lasted from 9:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. Individuals and families were given ham and other essential items to help them cook an Easter feast at home.

“They’re going to have a nice Easter dinner that everybody should have,” Wills explained.

The special Easter food distribution held on March 30 comes in addition to meals served at the kitchen every day of the year, including holidays.

On Easter Sunday, April 4, Saint Vincent de Paul Kitchen will provide an Easter dinner to anyone

in need. The meal, which will be served in to-go containers, will be a ham dinner, including a starch, vegetable and dessert. There will also be assorted fresh fruit that clients will be able to take home.

The Easter dinner at Saint Vincent de Paul Kitchen will be served from 11:00 a.m. until 12:30 p.m., which is the same time that meals are served on a daily basis.

In addition, Saint Vincent de Paul Kitchen plans to reopen its clothing room to the public on Tuesday, April 20, 2021. The clothing room will be open on Tuesday and Thursday from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

Livestream Masses during pandemic keep connections alive

Epiphany Parish in Sayre recently broadcast funeral Mass with 700 viewers

SAYRE – What began with just a cell phone and tripod last year at Epiphany Parish has now turned into a brand new ministry aimed at keeping people connected.

It was Palm Sunday 2020 when the parish in northern Bradford County livestreamed its first Mass to Facebook. While there were initial glitches and audio problems, they were quickly corrected.

“We had to make sure that we, first of all, had internet in the Church. We did not so we had to run a booster router from the front of the rectory to the back of the rectory,” Rev. Andrew S. Hvozdozovic, pastor, said.

At the urging of parishioners, Father Hvozdozovic decided to make the parish’s livestreaming equipment permanent. With the help of the church organist, Larry Hoey, who did a lot of research, the parish decided to invest in a professional two-camera set-up for the church.

“We have a camera mounted now on the choir loft and we have a second camera that is mounted on the first pillar of the church and that one rotates so we are now able to get shots as we process in from the back of the church and close ups on the altar,” Father Hvozdozovic explained.

The parish has also created an area where the Masses are professionally produced with computers and graphics. In all, the cost of the equipment has been about \$10,000.

While a significant expense, Father Hvozdozovic says donations covered the cost. Parishioners were happy to donate to the effort after a request was placed in the parish bulletin.

“We’re getting donations from people all over the country who used to live in Sayre that moved away. We’re hearing messages that they’re thrilled that they’re able to reconnect with their home parish,” Father Hvozdozovic added.

Since Mother’s Day 2020, Epiphany Parish has been professionally broadcasting its 9:00 a.m. Mass on Sunday morning.

“We’re reaching out to parishioners, for example, that have not attended Mass even prior to COVID for health reasons and now they’re thrilled because they’re able to participate in the Mass. We have Eucharistic ministers that go after the 9:00 o’clock Mass on Sunday to their homes and actually bring them communion,” Father added.



With the help of donations, Epiphany Parish in Sayre invested in professional livestreaming equipment during the COVID-19 pandemic. The parish believes livestreaming Masses and funerals has helped to keep their parish community connected over the last year.

Besides keeping the faithful connected, starting the livestreaming efforts have also connected parishioners in another way.

“It has helped us to form a whole new ministry,” Father Hvozdozovic explained. “We call it our technology ministry in the parish. We have high school kids who are assisting with this. We have five or six adults that are assisting with it as well.”

Working closely with the Parish Pastoral Council to institute the technology ministry, Epiphany’s pastor believes the livestreaming efforts have opened up a completely new way of spreading the Gospel message.

“I told the Pastoral Council, what would Jesus do if he had technology? I think he would take advantage of it as we are too,” he explained.

The parish now even offers livestreaming of all funerals as part of its bereavement ministry.

One funeral in February 2021 had approximately 700 people viewing it from all over the country.

“A lot of the second cousins and third cousins and great uncles and aunts just could not come. We had family viewers who were watching it from all over the country,” Father Hvozdozovic said.

Even as more people have returned to church for in-person

Masses, viewership on the livestream has been consistent.

“The viewership has remained very steady and we’re surprised by that because people are returning to church because people are getting vaccinated and they’re feeling more comfortable to return to church,” Father Hvozdozovic said.

When asked if he believes Epiphany Parish will continue livestreaming Masses even after the coronavirus pandemic ends, the Sayre pastor said simply, “Yes. This is the new norm.”

In the Diocese of Scranton, more than 75-percent of parishes have started livestreaming Masses over the last year.

For those that have not yet started, Father Hvozdozovic believes there is an unfounded fear.

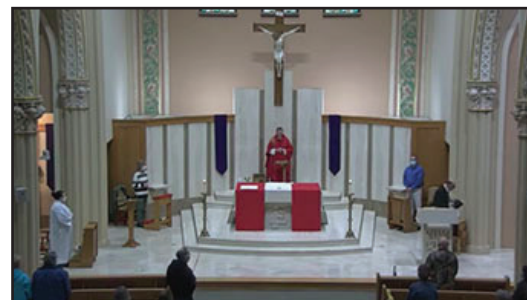
“I think it’s just the fear of the unknown of technology. I just encourage guys, saying you’re going to have to do this, bite the bullet, go out of your comfort zone. It is possible and very, very much appreciated,” he explained.

Father Hvozdozovic says the benefits greatly outweigh the risks.

“People really like to attend their own church. That is what I hear so much. People who have left the area or have been homebound prior to COVID say it’s so great I can worship in my own church again via the internet,” he added.



A light near the livestream station gives a signal to the cantor when it is time to begin Mass at Epiphany Parish in Sayre.



Epiphany Parish has two cameras set up in their church for livestreaming. One is located in the choir loft and the other is mounted on the first pillar of the church. This allows for directors to take shots from multiple angles during each broadcast. These photos are screen grabs from the Palm Sunday Mass at Epiphany Parish on March 28, 2021.

Vocations answer God's call to make great dreams come true, pope says

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Religious and priestly life must be filled with the simple joy of caring every day for what really matters — faithful friendship with God and one another, Pope Francis said.

“I pray that you will experience this same joy, dear brothers and sisters who have generously made God the dream of your lives, serving him in your brothers and sisters through a fidelity that is a powerful testimony in an age of ephemeral choices and emotions that bring no lasting joy,” he wrote in his message for the 2021 World Day of Prayer for Vocations.

The day will be celebrated April 25 at the Vatican and in many dioceses around the world.

The message, released at the Vatican March 19, the feast of St. Joseph, was dedicated to the saint and “the dream of vocation.” The pope had declared a special year devoted to the saint starting Dec. 8, 2020, to encourage a greater love for and inspiration from Jesus’ guardian and patron of the universal church.



A statue of St. Joseph is seen as Pope Francis celebrates morning Mass in the chapel of his residence, the Domus Sanctae Marthae, at the Vatican in this photo from May 1, 2020. The Vatican has released the pope's message for the 2021 World Day of Prayer for Vocations, to be celebrated April 25 and dedicated to St. Joseph. (CNS photo/Vatican Media)

As the protector of Jesus and the church, St. Joseph can be a model for all vocations, which are meant to be the “ever-active hands of the Father, outstretched to his children,” the pope wrote in the message.

St. Joseph has “the heart of a father, able to give and generate life in the midst of daily routines,”

which is the same aim of vocations, he wrote.

“The Lord desires to shape the hearts of fathers and mothers: hearts that are open, capable of great initiatives, generous in self-giving, compassionate in comforting anxieties and steadfast in strengthening hopes.

“The priesthood and the

consecrated life greatly need these qualities nowadays, in times marked by fragility but also by the sufferings due to the pandemic, which has spawned uncertainties and fears about the future and the very meaning of life,” he wrote.

St. Joseph, the pope said, is one of those gentle “saints next door” whose “strong witness can guide us on the journey.”

The saint’s heart was always listening to God, who spoke to him in his dreams, the pope wrote.

“This applies also to our calling: God does not like to reveal himself in a spectacular way, pressuring our freedom,” Pope Francis wrote. “He conveys his plans to us with gentleness,” speaking through one’s thoughts and feelings, and unveiling “profound and unexpected horizons.”

The saint faced numerous upheavals, but he always found the courage to follow God’s will, the pope said. The same must happen with a vocation, he said, because “God’s call always urges us to take a first step, to give ourselves,

to press forward. There can be no faith without risk.”

St. Joseph is a model of service “as a concrete expression of the gift of self,” the pope wrote.

He always adapted to different and unexpected circumstances without getting discouraged and without complaining because he was always “ready to give a hand to help resolve situations.”

And St. Joseph was always faithful and always persevered, he said, bolstered by God’s words: “Do not be afraid.”

God speaks those same words to priests and religious every day, but especially amid “uncertainty and hesitation” or “trials and misunderstandings,” because they are called, like St. Joseph, to “say ‘yes’ to God with their lives, through their fidelity each day.”

Pope Francis asked that St. Joseph protect vocations and that men and women see how God’s call will make their greatest dreams come true; respond with generous service and attentive care; and live with simple, joyful fidelity.

Divine Mercy Sunday to be celebrated April 11

Each year, on the Second Sunday of Easter, the Church celebrates the Sunday of Divine Mercy.

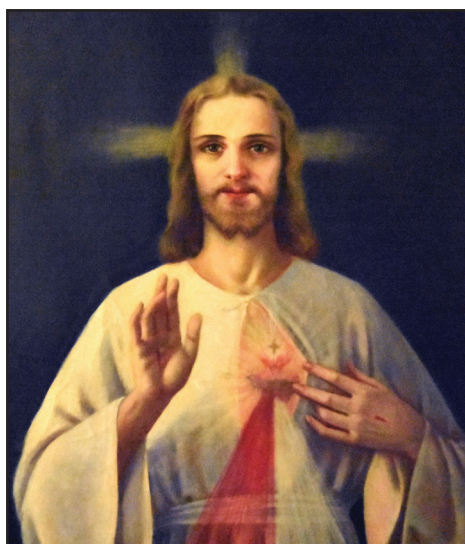
Mankind’s need for the message of Divine Mercy took on dire urgency in the 20th century, when civilization began again to lose the understanding of the sanctity and inherent dignity of every human life.

In the 1930s, Jesus chose a humble Polish nun, Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska, to receive private revelations concerning His Divine Mercy that were recorded in her Diary.

Saint Faustina’s Diary records 14 occasions when Jesus requested that a Feast of Mercy be observed.

On May 5, 2000, five days after the canonization of Saint Faustina, the Vatican decreed that the Second Sunday of Easter would henceforth be known as the Sunday of Divine Mercy.

Divine Mercy Sunday focuses on the gift of mercy and love given through Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection. As Pope John Paul II stated, “Divine Mercy reaches human beings through the heart of Christ crucified.”



This image of the Divine Mercy painted in 1943 by Felician Sister Mary Fabia Szatkowska and housed at the Felician Sisters’ motherhouse in Livonia, Mich., is believed to be the first of its kind painted in North America. Masses for Divine Mercy Sunday are celebrated on the Sunday after Easter. (CNS photo/Dan Meloy, The Michigan Catholic)

West Scranton parish hosting Divine Mercy Sunday celebration

SCRANTON — Saint Lucy Parish in West Scranton announces Divine Mercy Sunday will be celebrated by the parish on the Second Sunday of Easter, April 11, at Saint Lucy Church, 949 Scranton St.

The Divine Mercy Sunday observance begins with sacramental confessions from 1 to 2 p.m., followed by the celebration of Sunday Mass.

The Chaplet of Divine Mercy will be offered at 3 p.m., concluding with benediction and a blessing with the relic of Saint Faustina — the Saint of Divine Mercy.

All faithful are invited to attend the Divine Mercy devotion. COVID guidelines regarding facial masks and physical distancing will be observed.

Diocese to celebrate World Day of Prayer for Vocations in Peckville

“It is the joy of simplicity, the joy experienced daily by those who care for what truly matters: faithful closeness to God and to our neighbor. How good it would be if the same atmosphere, simple and radiant, sober and hopeful, were to pervade our seminarians, religious houses and parishes,” Pope Francis said on the upcoming occasion of the 58th Anniversary of World Day of Prayer for Vocations.

He continued, “I pray that you will experience this same joy, dear brothers and sisters who have generously made God the dream of your lives, serving him in your brothers and sisters through a fidelity that is a powerful testimony in an age of ephemeral choices and emotions that bring no lasting joy. May Saint Joseph, protector of vocations, accompany you with his fatherly heart!”

The Diocese of Scranton celebration will be held on the Fourth Sunday of Easter, April 25, at 5:00 p.m. at Sacred Heart

of Jesus Parish, Peckville, with Bishop Joseph C. Bambera as celebrant.

“We made the decision to celebrate this year’s World Day of Prayer for Vocations at Sacred Heart,” Father Alex Roche, Diocesan Director of Vocations and Seminarians, said. “Their pastor, Father Andy Kurovsky, was pastor at my home parish of Saint Ann’s in Williamsport when I decided to enter seminary. His passion and energy were influential in my discernment so it was a natural choice to host my first WDPV as Vocation Director in Peckville.”

In addition to the Diocesan celebration, parishes are encouraged to have vocation-based homilies, vocation-themed youth ministry nights, lessons in religious education programs, recitation of the Rosary for Vocations and Holy Hours.

For more information, contact the Vocation Office at (570) 207-1452 or email vocations@dioceseofscranton.org.

Give thanks for example of Saint Joseph's life, faith and his trust in God's plan

SCRANTON – Saint Joseph was a simple, quiet and humble man who listened carefully to the voice of God and we should all give thanks for the example of his life, his faith and his trust in God's plan.

That was the message Bishop Joseph C. Bambera delivered in his homily during a Mass celebrating the Solemnity of Saint Joseph on March 19, 2021 at the Cathedral of Saint Peter. The Mass also served as the 'Closing Mass' for a Year of Saint Joseph celebrated in the Diocese of Scranton, which began exactly one year earlier.

"It is not at all by coincidence that while we in the Church of Scranton have dedicated this past year to Joseph, our Holy Father, Pope Francis, on behalf of the universal Church, dedicated a year to him as well," the bishop said.

As the spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary and caretaker of Jesus, the bishop said Saint Joseph's life speaks to our lives as well.

"Saint Matthew, in the opening chapter of his gospel, lays groundwork for the birth of Jesus. He reminds us that when Mary was engaged to Joseph – but

before they lived together – she was found with child through the power of the Holy Spirit. Joseph was rightly confused about this and wanted to divorce her quietly, when suddenly an angel appeared to him in a dream saying 'Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife,'" Bishop Bambera said. "These are key words in the life of Joseph, 'Do not fear to take Mary as your wife.' With these words, God entrusts to Joseph – the carpenter of Nazareth – the mystery of salvation."

As the result of Saint Joseph's openness to embrace the mystery of God's plan, Bishop Bambera told the faithful gathered at the Cathedral that Joseph grew as a man of faith and found himself committed to his vocation.

"Saint Joseph teaches us so very much about our lives in relationship to God, doesn't he?" the bishop asked. "Despite the fact that not a single word spoken by this great saint is recorded in the scriptures, he speaks eloquently through the example of his life, his faith in God, his generous embrace of his vocation as husband and



Pictured is the Saint Joseph Altar in the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton depicting the death of Saint Joseph surrounded by Jesus and Mary. During a Mass on the Solemnity of Saint Joseph on March 19, Bishop Joseph C. Bambera encouraged the faithful to give thanks for the example of Saint Joseph's life and his trust in God's plan.

father and his care for the lives entrusted to him by God."

Bishop Bambera also

mentioned Pope Francis' Apostolic Letter, *Patris Corde* (With a Father's Heart), that was released

in late 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic. In his letter, the pope explained how Saint Joseph, who lived in the shadows of the Holy Family, is like many others that often get overlooked like doctors, nurses, storekeepers and supermarket workers.

In *Patris Corde*, The Holy Father writes, "Each of us can discover in Joseph – the man who goes unnoticed, a daily, discreet and hidden presence – and intercessor, a support, a guide in times of trouble. Saint Joseph reminds us that those who appear hidden or in the shadows can play an incomparable role in the history of salvation."

As he has done numerous times of the course of the 'Year of Saint Joseph,' Bishop Bambera ended his homily by asking for the help of this important intercessor, simply saying, "Saint Joseph, pray for us."

If you would like to read Bishop Bambera's entire homily, the text is located on the Diocese of Scranton website. The Mass is also available to view on the Diocese of Scranton's YouTube channel.

Oblates Novena devotees implore the intercession of their patron Saint Joseph

LAFLIN — A year ago, faithful followers of Saint Joseph entered into the Annual Novena to their patron and model at Saint Joseph's Oblate Seminary with more enthusiasm than ever, uplifted by Bishop Joseph C. Bambera's declaration of the "Year of Saint Joseph" in the Scranton Diocese. The devotional event proved short-lived as the COVID-19 pandemic abruptly shut down the Novena halfway through.

The disappointment only heightened the resolve of devotees in 2021, who were able to return to their place of worship emboldened by Pope Francis's proclamation in December of a worldwide "Year of Saint Joseph" to mark the 150th anniversary of the foster father of Jesus being declared patron of the Universal Church.

Cathy Mack was raised in an atmosphere of devotion to Saint Joseph as she recalled how the spirit of the Guardian of the Holy Family permeated her home parish of Saint Rocco in Pittston as a child.

The ethnic parish was staffed by the Italian-immigrant Saint Joseph Oblate priests, whose commitment to fostering veneration to their patron saint was also evident to Mack as a student at the former parish's Saint Rocco Elementary School.

"We were educated to know all about Saint Joseph," Mack said. "In our home, in our church and in our school, we were always taught that whatever the need, you 'go to Saint Joseph.'"

Much like the many devotees of the Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the Greater Pittston area and beyond, Mack was over-joyed with the special designation of the "Year of Saint Joseph" by both the Holy Father and the Bishop of Scranton.

The cenacle leader of the Eucharistic Apostles of Divine Mercy and a member of Saints Peter & Paul Parish in Plains, Mack stressed, "Saint Joseph is our protector. We need him now more than ever as Father figure for all of us."



Mary Jo Chiampi has been attending the Solemn Novena to Saint Joseph at the Oblates of Saint Joseph Seminary in Laflin for the past 55 years. Members of Saint Joseph Marello Parish in Pittston, she and her husband Anthony faithfully attended this year's nine-day Novena at the Oblates leading up the Solemnity of Saint Joseph on March 19.

Mary Jo, who claims both the Blessed Mother and Saint Joseph as her patron saints since her middle name — Josephine — honors the Holy Spouse of the

Virgin Mary, said the devotion began for her as a special intention for her niece, who battled health issues since the tender age of six.

"As a little girl, my niece was diagnosed with serious diabetes," she related. "We were praying devoutly for her condition to improve. It was 55 years ago I said to my sister-in-law (the girl's mother), 'there's a Novena to Saint Joseph on the highway,'" referring to the OSJ Seminary on Route 315.

Despite a multitude of medical problems — including cancer — Mary Jo's niece defied the odds and lived for 53 years.

"As far as I'm concerned, that was all Saint Joseph interceding for us over the years," she said. "Prayer is what keeps us going. Our prayer is what gets us through every day."

She was quick to attribute the power of prayer to her husband's successful recovery from open-heart surgery years ago, and that the couple was spared from serious illness during the first year of the coronavirus pandemic.

Mary Jo is grateful for the peace and solace she finds in the intimate chapel at the nearby seminary, where the spirit of Saint Joseph is constantly present, awaiting prayerful devotion. "Prayers are answered," she said, "and if they are not, there is a reason."

Jim Liberski of Saint Barbara Parish in Exeter was grateful for the livestream broadcast of this year's Saint Joseph Novena, in addition to the services being aired over JMJ Catholic Radio which broadcasts from its facilities within the Oblates seminary.

The noon livestream broadcast of the Novena was an extension of the daily Mass from the seminary chapel that has been airing online since Saint Joseph Oblate Father Paul McDonnell returned to his duties as rector of the religious congregation in the Diocese in July after serving seven years with the OSJ community in California.

Continued on Page 23

Religious education teachers spread safe environment message

PECKVILLE – An important part of keeping children safe is empowering them with knowledge about safe environments and boundaries.

Students in all Diocese of Scranton Catholic schools and parish religious education programs learn about these important skills on a yearly basis.

“Each lesson provides the children with grade-appropriate, age-appropriate lessons on how to keep their environments safe, which then keeps them safe in the process,” Gayle Castellani, Pastoral Associate and Director of Religious Education at Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish in Peckville, said.

Castellani, who is responsible for coordinating the safe environment lessons at her parish, says they pertain to real life situations. She says the lessons cover a variety of topics including safety and honesty, respect and boundaries, and communication.

“It’s a difficult topic to talk about but it’s necessary and if it is done properly, it provides children with understanding,” she explained. “It reinforces the Catholic theology of God’s love for us, the dignity of the person and the dignity of all.”

Castellani says the 225 students in her religious education program often ask important questions about the topics that are covered.

“It is pertinent in their lives, whether they’re involved in sports or any kind of extra-curricular activities, dancing, they’re always surrounded by different

people, volunteers, coaches, instructors, and teachers. The children begin to realize this is something that they not only can use here in the building with us, but in every aspect of their life,” she added.

In the past, many adults used the “stranger danger” method of talking to young children about safe environments. However, statistics have proven many people who want to hurt or abuse children are already known to their victim and are good at blending into society.

“We always let the children know that they have someone safe that they can come and talk to if anything is bothering them or anything seems out of place,” Castellani said.

At Saint Joseph the Worker Parish in Williamsport, Makenzie Conner, Director of Youth Ministry, is responsible for safe environment programs that involve sixth through 12th grade students.

“I think they’re important because they prepare them for the real world,” Conner said.

Conner says communication with parents is just as important as communicating with the students. She lets parents know well in advance of when the safe environment lessons will take place.

“Parents know when we’re going to do the lessons so they can have the conversation on the car ride home. It’s not a surprise to them,” she said.

To help bring the lessons alive, Conner says her parish will sometimes incorporate the story of a saint who faced hardship,

challenge or struggle. That gives young adults a concrete example of how the lesson could apply to their life. This year, they used Saint Maria Goretti.

“We shared her story and brought her to life and the kids asked questions,” Conner explained. “It wasn’t complicated and doesn’t need to be complicated.”

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, Saint Joseph the Worker Parish only recently conducted their safe environment lessons. Typically, they have taken place in the fall.

“This year it was nice being able to do the lessons in the spring time because the Catholic schools did them in the fall and it reinforced the same lesson,” Conner said.

Both parishes stress that creating safe environments is not just about lessons taught to students. They say it also involves having clear policies, procedures and guidelines and making sure all stakeholders are fully informed.

Castellani says her parish has specific entry doors for students’ arrival and dismissal and specific areas of the parish complex that are off limits to children.

“We re-evaluate the facility every year with fresh eyes just to make sure we’re doing everything we need to do to keep the kids safe, know who is coming in and out of the building and who has access to the children,” she said.

Volunteers gather at Diocesan Pastoral Center to spread Irish cheer



The MacLeod family from Madison Township helps prepare flowers for the Shamrock Heart Foundation, which distributed green carnations to nursing homes, assisted living centers and hospitals in Lackawanna County. The flowers were prepared at the Diocesan Pastoral Center in Scranton on March 16, 2021. (Photo/Eric Deabill)

SCRANTON – A Saint Patrick’s Day tradition continued in Lackawanna County this year despite the ongoing challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

On March 16 and 17, volunteers from the Shamrock Heart Foundation gathered at the Diocesan Pastoral Center in Scranton to prepare 4,500 green carnations to be delivered to nearly 50 nursing homes, assisted living centers and hospitals in Lackawanna County.

“I like helping people,” Matisse MacLeod, 12, said as she prepared carnations on her birthday with her mother and siblings by her side.

The MacLeod family of Madison Township realizes that because of lockdowns, many of the seniors receiving the carnations have struggled with isolation over the past year.

“People can’t visit them as easily so

at least they’ll have something,” MacLeod explained.

Volunteers wore masks and gloves while they prepared all the green carnations on March 16. On Saint Patrick’s Day morning, two dozen drivers then departed the Pastoral Center to spread some Irish cheer.

“I think it’ll make a big impact this year. Even though it’s been well received in other years, I think this year it will really brighten somebody’s day even more,” volunteer Cindy Cramer of Scranton said.

Cramer, who is Irish, has been volunteering with the Shamrock Heart Foundation for the least five years.

“I’m glad they were able to find a way to continue to do it this year,” she said.

This was the 28th annual carnation distribution for the Shamrock Heart Foundation.

APRIL Is Child Abuse Prevention Month



The month of April is Child Abuse Prevention Month. It is a time to recognize the importance of families and communities working together to prevent child mistreatment.

Bishop Joseph C. Bambera will celebrate a Healing Mass for Survivors of Abuse at 12:10 p.m. on Thursday, April 8, 2021 at the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton.

The Mass is open to the public following COVID-19 safety protocols. No reservations are required.

The Mass will also be broadcast live on CTV: Catholic Television of the Diocese of Scranton and livestream on the Diocese of Scranton website, YouTube channel and social media platforms.

"With Merciful Love" is theme for 2021 Catholic Women's Conference

SCRANTON – "Mercy is love's second name." These powerful words were spoken by Saint John Paul II.

In his book *Divine Mercy Explained*, Father Michael Gaitley explains that Divine Mercy is a particular kind of love, a particular mode of love when it encounters suffering, poverty, brokenness, and sin. Divine Mercy is when God's love meets us and helps us in the midst of our suffering and sin.

"Speaking the truth in love all

the time" are the words Catholic Women's Conference Keynote speaker Theresa Bonopartis uses when speaking about healing from abortion and the profound effect abortion has not just on mothers, but fathers, siblings, friends and families.

Bonopartis came to her life's work the hard way, through experiencing abortion as a teenager. Guilt, shame and regret threatened to consume her life, and for a time they did.

It was only in discovering God's infinite mercy and capacity to forgive even the most grievous sins that she came to learn how to forgive herself.

She was inspired to reach out to others and speak openly about the most devastating moment in her life. In doing so, she discovered how to love herself again and how to embrace her faith and live her life in God's love.

She partnered with the Sisters of Life to co-found Entering

Canaan Ministry: Healing After Abortion.

Bonopartis has told her story on radio, television and before an almost countless number of audiences. The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops highlighted her testimony in a nationally distributed pro-life mailing.

Little would she know that the secret tragedy of her abortion would one day be known by so many. Yet, it would not be the shame and guilt of the abortion which would send her out on her mission, but rather her dramatic healing.

In short, she tells us, "I was healed by the Divine Mercy of God."

Taking the long road, while not the theme of this year's conference, applies not only to Theresa Bonopartis but also to featured speaker, Father Chris Alar, a priest with the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception.

After attaining a bachelor's degree in Industrial Engineering and then his MBA, Father Alar worked in the automotive industry in Detroit and owned his own consulting firm before answering the call of God and entering the priesthood.

Father Alar is the author of numerous works including *Explaining the Faith: Understanding Divine Mercy*.

In his writing, Father Alar explores the legacy and teachings

of Saint Faustina Kowalska and the diary in which she reveals her visions of Jesus and what it means to accept God's Divine Mercy.

Father Alar tackles the difficult questions we all ask including, "Why does a merciful God allow so much suffering?" He experienced the death of his grandmother by suicide and explores the role of Divine Mercy in healing those affected when a loved one takes their own life.

Join this year's conference and experience Divine Mercy and the restoration of your soul. In addition to Theresa Bonopartis and Father Alar, Sister Virginia Joy of the Sisters of Life will also speak of God's healing love.

The day will include Eucharistic Adoration, Recitation of the Rosary, and Mass celebrated by Bishop Joseph C. Bambera.

Uplifting and inspirational music will be performed by Cleveland-born, Christian music artist Taylor Tripodi and her band.

Participants can also enjoy a continental breakfast, lunch and shopping at the Catholic Vendor Marketplace. Cost to attend the conference is \$40 for in-person and \$20 for virtual. Student tickets are \$20, and women religious are welcome free of charge.

Volunteers are always needed and those who sign up for four hours at the conference will receive a free ticket. For more information and to register, visit cwcnepa.com.



Catholic Women's Conference

Saturday, June 19, 2021

Marywood University*

\$40 In person/\$20 Virtual



Theresa
Bonopartis



Father
Chris Alar



Sister
Virginia Joy



Music
Taylor Tripodi



Hostess
Jeannine Lesante

SIGN UP NOW! ONLINE AT CWCNEPA.COM OR MAIL IN THIS FORM

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Tickets x \$40 Live or \$20 Virtual = _____

Make the check out to the Diocese of Scranton. Mail to:
Stephanie Westington, Treasurer
Refresh Your Faith Conference
P.O. Box 202, Dunmore, PA 18512

*Outdoor tented seating with social distancing protocols in place

Prayer Requests for Priests

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

April 1, Pope Francis; April 2, Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI; April 3, Bishop Joseph C. Bambera; April 4, Father Gerard McGlone; April 5, Monsignor Stephen McGough; April 6, Father John McHale; April 7, Father Connell McHugh; April 8, Jesuit Father Bernard McIlhenny; April 9, Father Leo McKernan; April 10, Jesuit Father Ronald McKinney; April 11, Father Patrick McLaughlin; April 12, Father Edward Micheleni; April 13, Father Kevin Miller; April 14, Jesuit Father J. Patrick Mohr; April 15, Father Joseph Mosley; April 16, Father Joseph Motsay; April 17, Monsignor Thomas Muldowney, V.G.; April 18, Father Kevin Mulhern; April 19, Father Paul Mullen; April 20, Father James Nash; April 21, Jesuit Father Eugene Nolan; April 22, Father Theodore Obaza; April 23, Father Dominic Obour; April 24, Saint Peter Priestly Fraternity Father Joseph Orlovski; April 25, Holy Cross Father Thomas O'Hara; April 26, Father Peter O'Rourke; April 27, Passionist Father Sibi Padinjaredath; April 28, Father James Paisley; April 29, Father Francis Pauselli; April 30, Father Jaime Perez Restrepo; May 1, Pope Francis; May 2, Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI; May 3, Bishop Joseph C. Bambera; May 4, Father Carmen Perry.

School prayer service marks one year anniversary of COVID-19 pandemic

EXETER – Exactly one year after transitioning to distance learning because of the COVID-19 pandemic, students from Wyoming Area Catholic School came together in-person on March 12 to mark the anniversary with a prayer service.

“It was beautiful. It was a chance to reflect and that was the whole point, focusing on where we’ve come and where we’re going and that we are so lucky to be in school now and look at what we’ve accomplished,” principal Eileen Rishcoff said.

Rishcoff said teacher Toni Griseto first suggested marking the anniversary with some type of event filled with hope. School administrators and teachers quickly settled on holding a prayer

service. Initially, the event was going to be held inside the school gym but that is when the weather warmed up and they were able to go outside.

“The fact that it was such a beautiful day, it all fell into place. I’m a true believer that God intervenes and we were able to go outside,” Rishcoff added.

Wearing masks and remaining six feet apart, the students all came together on the front lawn of Wyoming Area Catholic School.

The prayer service was actually the first time all 146 students came together for an event in the last year.

“We’ve kept everybody in their own classrooms for the whole year, lunches and everything and

this was the first time they were all together anywhere for the whole school year,” Rishcoff explained. “When I mentioned that, they all started cheering.”

In addition to the prayer service, students also spent time in their religion classes reflecting on how “good things” can come from something that is “bad.”

The gathering of students was visible to many drivers passing by the school. That is because the former Saint Cecilia Church’s abandoned convent, rectory and garages were razed earlier this year.

The demolition has made the school much more visible.

“Our school is beautiful and nobody even knew we existed back here!” Rishcoff joked.



Students from Wyoming Area Catholic School in Exeter held an outdoor prayer service on March 12, 2021, marking the first anniversary of the COVID-19 pandemic which shut down schools in 2020. Students are shown spacing themselves according to health guidelines. (Photo courtesy: Tony Callaio, *The Sunday Dispatch*)

Senior project of Williamsport teen benefits military members

WILLIAMSPORT – The senior project of a Lycoming County teenager is having an impact around the globe.

Zach Lisi, a senior at Saint John Neumann Jr./Sr. High School, recently sent 24 special Easter boxes to members of the military stationed throughout the country and the world.

“It made me feel good to brighten their day,” Lisi explained.

The Easter boxes were filled with candy and notes of appreciation written by students at Saint John Neumann Regional Academy.

To raise money to ship the boxes, Lisi put together a “Penny War” fundraiser at his school from March 10-19.

“I put jars out in front of the office and each class put money in them. Each penny was worth one point. If you put nickels, dimes or quarters in other jars they lost a certain amount of points,” the high school senior said.

A total of \$234 was raised from the “Penny War” fundraiser. The senior class raised the most money and earned a pizza party as a reward.

“I used that money to ship the boxes. People donated the candy and other items to put in the boxes,” Lisi added.

All seniors at Saint John Neumann must complete a service



Saint John Neumann senior Zach Lisi shows off 24 Easter boxes that have been shipped to military members around the world.

project prior to graduation. In keeping with the Gospel message of helping others, Lisi explained what sparked his interest in helping military members.

“I just felt bad that they weren’t home with their families so I wanted to make them feel appreciated,” he said.

The first Easter box arrived less than a week after it was shipped out.



Holy Rosary School in Duryea



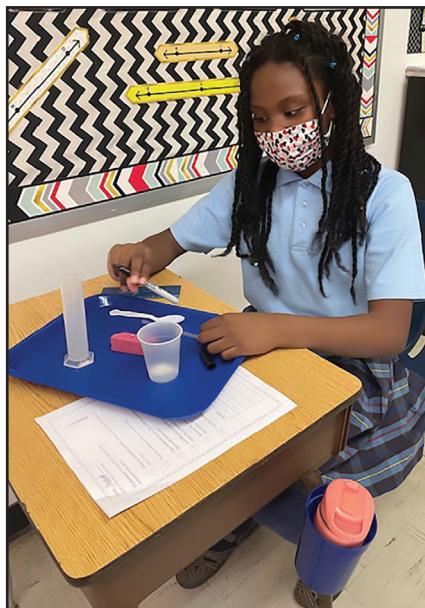
Saint Clare/Saint Paul School in Scranton



Wyoming Area Catholic School in Exeter

Diocese of Scranton
CATHOLIC
 SCHOOL SYSTEM
 FAITH • ACADEMICS • SERVICE

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.



Fifth grade students at **Notre Dame Elementary School in East Stroudsburg** made a hydrometer in science class and measured the salinity of water.



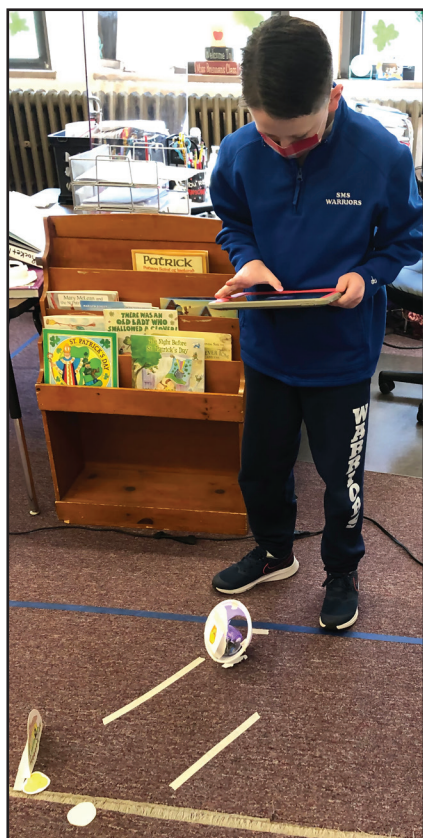
Freshmen students in Mrs. Taylor's art class at **Saint John Neumann Jr./Sr. High School in Williamsport** look over an art piece they created while having class outdoors.



Drishti Matta and Claire O'Donnell, honors chemistry juniors at **Notre Dame Jr./Sr. High School in East Stroudsburg**, demonstrate titration of an acid for their DVA peers.



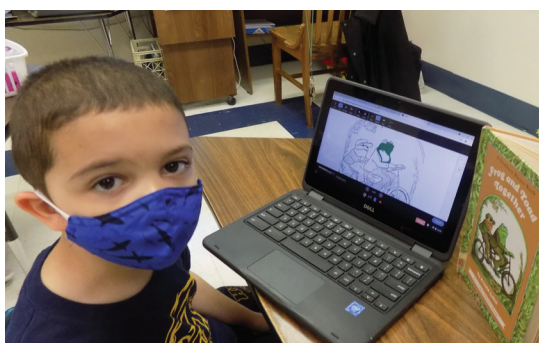
Eighth grade students at **La Salle Academy in Jessup** recently completed a STREAM challenge to build their own bowling alleys.



Third grade students at **Saint Mary of Mount Carmel School in Dunmore** had to create a Sphero car and code a path on their computer in order to drive their leprechaun to his pot of gold.



Seventh graders from Mr. Jablonowski's science class at **Good Shepherd Academy in Kingston** took advantage of the beautiful spring weather to move class outdoors. Nina and John design Punnett Squares that are diagrams used to predict genotypes.



Students at **Holy Family Academy in Hazleton** use their computers to create a newly colored cover of classic stories like "Frog and Toad Together."



First graders at **Saint John Neumann Elementary School in Williamsport** enjoy the great weather and a chance to play a friendly game of hockey outside during their gym class.



Jack Frusciante, a pre-kindergarten student at **Saint Jude School in Mountain Top**, learns that Jesus is the biggest and best of all superheroes.

An annual tradition in many of our schools is to present The Living Stations just before Holy Week begins. This timeless work allows students to recreate the events leading up to and including the crucifixion of Jesus. Typically held in front of classmates and family members, many of this year's performances were broadcast virtually so that others could walk the road to Calvary with the actors.



First graders at **All Saints Academy in Scranton**



Seniors at **Holy Redeemer High School in Wilkes-Barre**



Fourth and fifth graders at **Saint Agnes School in Towanda**



Second grade class at **Saint Nicholas/Saint Mary School in Wilkes-Barre**



Rev. Andrew Hvozdovic, V.F., pastor of Epiphany Church, visited the second grade class of **Epiphany School in Sayre** to share information about the sacred vestments and vessels that are using during Mass.



In preparation for this sacred season, kindergarten students at **Our Lady of Peace School in Clarks Green** created Lenten watercolors on canvas.



Rev. Cyril D. Edwards, V.E, chaplain of **Holy Cross High School in Dunmore**, posed questions to the freshmen students in attendance at the Feast of Saint Joseph Mass. Other members of the student body watched the Mass from their classroom via the school's YouTube streaming channel.



Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper, April 1, 2021



FIRST READING

Ex 12:1-8, 11-14

The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, "This month shall stand at the head of your calendar; you shall reckon it the first month of the year. Tell the whole community of Israel: On the tenth of this month every one of your families must procure for itself a lamb, one apiece for each household. If a family is too small for a whole lamb, it shall join the nearest household in procuring one and shall share in the lamb in proportion to the number of persons who partake of it. The lamb must be a year-old male and without blemish. You may take it from either the sheep or the goats. You shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month, and then, with the whole assembly of Israel present, it shall be slaughtered during the evening twilight. They shall take some of its blood and apply it to the two doorposts and the lintel of every house in which they partake of the lamb. That same night they shall eat its roasted flesh with unleavened bread and bitter herbs.

"This is how you are to eat it: with your loins girt, sandals on your feet and your staff in hand, you shall eat like those who are in flight. It is the Passover of the LORD. For on this same night I will go through Egypt, striking down every firstborn of the land, both man and beast, and executing judgment on all the gods of Egypt - I, the LORD! But the blood will mark the houses where you are. Seeing the blood, I will pass over you; thus, when I strike the land of Egypt, no destructive blow will come upon you.

"This day shall be a memorial feast for you, which all your generations shall celebrate with pilgrimage to the LORD, as a perpetual institution."

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Ps 116:12-13, 15-16bc, 17-18

Response: Our blessing cup is a communion with the Blood of Christ.

SECOND READING

1 Cor 11:23-26

Brothers and sisters: I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord

Jesus, on the night he was handed over, took bread, and, after he had given thanks, broke it and said, "This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

In the same way also the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the death of the Lord until he comes.

GOSPEL READING

Jn 13:1-15

Before the feast of Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to pass from this world to the Father. He loved his own in the world and he loved them to the end. The devil had already induced Judas, son of Simon the Iscariot, to hand him over.

So, during supper, fully aware that the Father had put everything into his power and that he had come from God and was returning to God, he rose from supper and took off his outer garments. He took a towel and tied it around his waist. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and dry them with the towel around his waist.

He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Master, are you going to wash my feet?"

Jesus answered and said to him, "What I am doing, you do not understand now, but you will understand later."

Peter said to him, "You will never wash my feet."

Jesus answered him, "Unless I wash you, you will have no inheritance with me."

Simon Peter said to him, "Master, then not only my feet, but my hands and head as well."

Jesus said to him, "Whoever has bathed has no need except to have his feet washed, for he is clean all over; so you are clean, but not all."

For he knew who would betray him; for this reason, he said, "Not all of you are clean."

So when he had washed their feet and put his garments back on and reclined at table again, he said to them, "Do you realize what I have done for you? You call me 'teacher' and 'master,' and rightly so, for indeed I am. If I, therefore, the master and teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash one another's feet. I have given you a model to follow, so that as I have done for you, you should also do."



Good Friday of the Lord's Passion, April 2, 2021



FIRST READING

Is 52:13-53:12

See, my servant shall prosper, he shall be raised high and greatly exalted. Even as many were amazed at him - so marred was his look beyond human semblance and his appearance beyond that of the sons of man - so shall he startle many nations, because of him kings shall stand speechless; for those who have not been told shall see, those who have not heard shall ponder it.

Who would believe what we have heard? To whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? He grew up like a sapling before him, like a shoot from the parched earth; there was in him no stately bearing to make us look at him, nor appearance that would attract us to him. He was spurned and avoided by people, a man of suffering, accustomed to infirmity, one of those from whom people hide their faces, spurned, and we held him in no esteem.

Yet it was our infirmities that he bore, our sufferings that he endured, while we thought of him as stricken, as one smitten by God and afflicted. But he was pierced for our offenses, crushed for our sins; upon him was the chastisement that makes us whole, by his stripes we were healed. We had all gone astray like sheep, each following his own way; but the LORD laid upon him the guilt of us all.

Though he was harshly treated, he submitted and opened not his mouth; like a lamb led to the slaughter or a sheep before the shearers, he was silent and opened not his mouth. Oppressed and condemned, he was taken away, and who would have thought any more of his destiny? When he was cut off from the land of the living, and smitten for the sin of his people, a grave was assigned him among the wicked and a burial place with evildoers, though he had done no wrong nor spoken any falsehood. But the LORD was pleased to crush him in infirmity.

If he gives his life as an offering for sin, he shall see his descendants in a long life, and the will of the LORD shall be accomplished through him.

Because of his affliction he shall see the light in fullness of days; through his suffering, my servant shall justify many, and their guilt he shall bear. Therefore I will give him his portion among the great, and he shall divide the spoils with the mighty, because he surrendered himself to death and was counted among the wicked; and he shall take away the sins of many and win pardon for their offenses.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Ps 31:2, 6, 12-13, 15-16, 17, 25

Response: Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.

SECOND READING

Heb 4:14-16; 5:7-9

Brothers and sisters: Since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast to our confession.

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has similarly been tested in every way, yet without sin. So let us confidently approach the throne of grace to receive mercy and to find grace for timely help.

In the days when Christ was in the flesh, he offered prayers and supplications with loud cries and tears to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence. Son though he was, he learned obedience from what he suffered; and when he was made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him.

GOSPEL READING

Jn 18:1-19:42

Jesus went out with his disciples across the Kidron valley to where there was a garden, into which he and his disciples entered. Judas his betrayer also knew the place, because Jesus had often met there with his disciples. So Judas got a band of soldiers and guards from the chief priests and the Pharisees and went there with lanterns, torches, and weapons.

Jesus, knowing everything that was going to happen to him, went out and said to them, "Whom are you looking for?"

They answered him, "Jesus the Nazorean."

He said to them, "I am."

Judas his betrayer was also with them.

When he said to them, "I am," they turned away and fell to the ground.

So he again asked them, "Whom are you looking for?"

They said, “Jesus the Nazorean.”

Jesus answered, “I told you that I am. So if you are looking for me, let these men go.”

This was to fulfill what he had said, “I have not lost any of those you gave me.”

Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it, struck the high priest’s slave, and cut off his right ear. The slave’s name was Malchus.

Jesus said to Peter, “Put your sword into its scabbard. Shall I not drink the cup that the Father gave me?”

So the band of soldiers, the tribune, and the Jewish guards seized Jesus, bound him, and brought him to Annas first. He was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was high priest that year. It was Caiaphas who had counseled the Jews that it was better that one man should die rather than the people.

Simon Peter and another disciple followed Jesus. Now the other disciple was known to the high priest, and he entered the courtyard of the high priest with Jesus. But Peter stood at the gate outside. So the other disciple, the acquaintance of the high priest, went out and spoke to the gatekeeper and brought Peter in.

Then the maid who was the gatekeeper said to Peter, “You are not one of this man’s disciples, are you?”

He said, “I am not.”

Now the slaves and the guards were standing around a charcoal fire that they had made, because it was cold, and were warming themselves. Peter was also standing there keeping warm.

The high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and about his doctrine.

Jesus answered him, “I have spoken publicly to the world. I have always taught in a synagogue or in the temple area where all the Jews gather, and in secret I have said nothing. Why ask me? Ask those who heard me what I said to them. They know what I said.”

When he had said this, one of the temple guards standing there struck Jesus and said, “Is this the way you answer the high priest?”

Jesus answered him, “If I have spoken wrongly, testify to the wrong; but if I have spoken rightly, why do you strike me?”

Then Annas sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest. Now Simon Peter was standing there keeping warm.

And they said to him, “You are not one of his disciples, are you?”

He denied it and said, “I am not.”

One of the slaves of the high priest, a relative of the one whose ear Peter had cut off, said, “Didn’t I see you in the garden with him?”

Again Peter denied it. And immediately the cock crowed.

Then they brought Jesus from Caiaphas to the praetorium. It was morning. And they themselves did not enter the praetorium, in order not to be defiled so that they could eat the Passover.

So Pilate came out to them and said, “What charge do you bring against this man?”

They answered and said to him, “If he were not a criminal, we would not have handed him over to you.”

At this, Pilate said to them, “Take him yourselves, and judge him according to your law.”

The Jews answered him, “We do not have the right to execute anyone,” in order that the word of Jesus might be fulfilled that he said indicating the kind of death he would die.

So Pilate went back into the praetorium and summoned Jesus and said to him, “Are you the King of the Jews?”

Jesus answered, “Do you say this on your own or have others told you about me?”

Pilate answered, “I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests handed you over to me. What have you done?”

Jesus answered, “My kingdom does not belong to this world. If my kingdom did belong to this world, my attendants would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not here.”

So Pilate said to him, “Then you are a king?”

Jesus answered, “You say I am a king. For this I was born and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.”

Pilate said to him, “What is truth?”

When he had said this, he again went out to the Jews and said to them, “I find no guilt in him. But you have a custom that I release one prisoner to you at Passover. Do you want me to release to you the King of the Jews?”

They cried out again, “Not this one but Barabbas!”

Now Barabbas was a revolutionary. Then Pilate took Jesus and had him scourged. And the soldiers wove a crown out of thorns and placed it on his head, and clothed him in a purple cloak, and they came to him and said, “Hail, King of the Jews!” And they struck him repeatedly.

Once more Pilate went out and said to them, “Look, I am bringing him out to you, so that you may know that I find no guilt in him.”

So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple cloak.

And he said to them, “Behold, the man!”

When the chief priests and the guards saw him they cried out, “Crucify him, crucify him!”

Pilate said to them, “Take him yourselves and crucify him. I find no guilt in him.”

The Jews answered, “We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God.”

Now when Pilate heard this statement, he became even more afraid, and went back into the praetorium and said to Jesus, “Where are you from?”

Jesus did not answer him.

So Pilate said to him, “Do you not speak to me? Do you not know that I have power to release you and I have power to crucify you?”

Jesus answered him, “You would have no power over me if it had not been given to you from above. For this reason the one who handed me over to you has the greater sin.”

Consequently, Pilate tried to release him; but the Jews cried out, “If you release him, you are not a Friend of Caesar. Everyone who makes himself a king opposes Caesar.”

When Pilate heard these words he brought Jesus out and seated him on the judge’s bench in the place called Stone Pavement, in Hebrew, Gabbatha. It was preparation day for Passover, and it was about noon.

And he said to the Jews, “Behold, your king!”

They cried out, “Take him away, take him away! Crucify him!”

Pilate said to them, “Shall I crucify your king?”

The chief priests answered, “We have no king but Caesar.”

Then he handed him over to them to be crucified.

So they took Jesus, and, carrying the cross himself, he went out to what is called the Place of the Skull, in Hebrew, Golgotha. There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, with Jesus in the middle. Pilate also had an inscription written and put on the cross. It read, “Jesus the Nazorean, the King of the Jews.” Now many of the Jews read this inscription, because the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, Latin, and Greek. So the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, “Do not write ‘The King of the Jews,’ but that he said, ‘I am the King of the Jews.’”

Pilate answered, “What I have written, I have written.”

When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four shares, a share for each soldier. They also took his tunic, but the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from the top down.

So they said to one another, “Let’s not tear it, but cast lots for it to see whose it will be,” in order that the passage of Scripture might be fulfilled that says:

They divided my garments among them, and for my vesture they cast lots.

This is what the soldiers did. Standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary of Magdala. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple there whom he loved he said to his mother, “Woman, behold, your son.”

Then he said to the disciple, “Behold, your mother.” And from that hour the disciple took her into his home.

After this, aware that everything was now finished, in order that the Scripture might be fulfilled, Jesus said, “I thirst.”

There was a vessel filled with common wine. So they put a sponge soaked in wine on a sprig of hyssop and put it up to his mouth. When Jesus had taken the wine, he said, “It is finished.” And bowing his head, he handed over the spirit.

(Here all kneel and pause for a short time.)

Now since it was preparation day, in order that the bodies might not remain on the cross on the sabbath, for the sabbath day of that week was a solemn one, the Jews asked Pilate that their legs be broken and that they be taken down. So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and then of the other one who was crucified with Jesus.

But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs, but one soldier thrust his lance into his side, and immediately blood and water flowed out. An eyewitness has testified, and his testimony is true; he knows that he is speaking the truth, so that you also may come to believe.

For this happened so that the Scripture passage might be fulfilled:

Not a bone of it will be broken.

And again another passage says:

They will look upon him whom they have pierced.

After this, Joseph of Arimathea, secretly a disciple of Jesus for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate if he could remove the body of Jesus. And Pilate permitted it. So he came and took his body. Nicodemus, the one who had first come to him at night, also came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes weighing about one hundred pounds. They took the body of Jesus and bound it with burial cloths along with the spices, according to the Jewish burial custom. Now in the place where he had been crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had yet been buried. So they laid Jesus there because of the Jewish preparation day; for the tomb was close by.





Easter Sunday, The Resurrection of the Lord, April 4, 2021



Readings for Holy Saturday (Easter Vigil Mass) can be found at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops website (www.usccb.org)

FIRST READING

Acts 10:34a, 37-43

Peter proceeded to speak and said: “You know what has happened all over Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached, how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power. He went about doing good and healing all those oppressed by the devil, for God was with him.

We are witnesses of all that he did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree. This man God raised on the third day and granted that he be visible, not to all the people, but to us, the witnesses chosen by God in advance, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. He commissioned us to preach to the people and testify that he is the one appointed by God as judge of the living and the dead.

To him all the prophets bear witness, that everyone who believes in him will receive forgiveness of sins through his name.”

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Ps 118:1-2, 16-17, 22-23

Response: This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad (or Alleluia)

SECOND READING

Col 3:1-4 (or I Cor 5:6b-8)

Brothers and sisters: If then you were raised with Christ, seek what is above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Think of what is above, not of what is on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ your life appears, then you too will appear with him in glory.

GOSPEL READING

Jn 20:1-9

On the first day of the week, Mary of Magdala came to the tomb early in the morning, while it was still dark, and saw the stone removed from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and told them, “They have taken the Lord from the tomb, and we don’t know where they put him.”

So Peter and the other disciple went out and came to the tomb. They both ran, but the other disciple ran faster than Peter and arrived at the tomb first; he bent down and saw the burial cloths there, but did not go in.

When Simon Peter arrived after him, he went into the tomb and saw the burial cloths there, and the cloth that had covered his head, not with the burial cloths but rolled up in a separate place.

Then the other disciple also went in, the one who had arrived at the tomb first, and he saw and believed. For they did not yet understand the Scripture that he had to rise from the dead.



Second Sunday of Easter (Divine Mercy Sunday), April 11, 2021



FIRST READING

Acts 4:32-35

The community of believers was of one heart and mind, and no one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they had everything in common. With great power the apostles bore witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great favor was accorded them all.

There was no needy person among them, for those who owned property or houses would sell them, bring the proceeds of the sale, and put them at the feet of the apostles, and they were distributed to each according to need.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Ps 118:2-4, 13-15, 22-24

Response: Give thanks to the Lord for he is good, his love is everlasting (or Alleluia)

SECOND READING

1 Jn 5:1-6

Beloved: Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is begotten by God, and everyone who loves the Father loves also the one begotten by him. In this way we know that we love the children of God when we love God and obey his commandments.

For the love of God is this, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome, for whoever is begotten by God conquers the world. And the victory that conquers the world is our faith. Who indeed is the victor over the world but the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

This is the one who came through water and blood, Jesus Christ, not by water alone, but by water and blood. The Spirit is the one that testifies, and the Spirit is truth.

GOSPEL READING

Jn 20:19-31

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the doors were locked, where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, “Peace be with you.”

When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side.

The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained.”

Thomas, called Didymus, one of the Twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples said to him, “We have seen the Lord.”

But he said to them, “Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands and put my finger into the nailmarks and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.”

Now a week later his disciples were again inside and Thomas was with them. Jesus came, although the doors were locked, and stood in their midst and said, “Peace be with you.”

Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here and see my hands, and bring your hand and put it into my side, and do not be unbelieving, but believe.”

Thomas answered and said to him, “My Lord and my God!”

Jesus said to him, “Have you come to believe because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed.”

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples that are not written in this book. But these are written that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that through this belief you may have life in his name.

The Lord waits for us to offer
him our failings so that he can
help us experience his mercy.

—Pope Francis, Divine Mercy Sunday, 2020



Third Sunday of Easter, April 18, 2021



FIRST READING

Acts 3:13-15, 17-19

Peter said to the people: “The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus, whom you handed over and denied in Pilate’s presence when he had decided to release him. You denied the Holy and Righteous One and asked that a murderer be released to you. The author of life you put to death, but God raised him from the dead; of this we are witnesses. Now I know, brothers, that you acted out of ignorance, just as your leaders did; but God has thus brought to fulfillment what he had announced beforehand through the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ would suffer. Repent, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be wiped away.”

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

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

Response: Lord, let your face shine on us (or Alleluia)

SECOND READING

1 Jn 2:1-5a

My children, I am writing this to you so that you may not commit sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous one. He is expiation for our sins, and not for our sins only but for those of the whole world. The way we may be sure that we know him is to keep his commandments.

Those who say, “I know him,” but do not keep his commandments are liars, and the truth is not in them. But whoever keeps his word, the love of God is truly perfected in him.

GOSPEL READING

Lk 24:35-48

The two disciples recounted what had taken place on the way, and how Jesus was made known to them in the breaking of bread.

While they were still speaking about this, he stood in their midst and said to them, “Peace be with you.” But they were startled and terrified and thought that they were seeing a ghost.

Then he said to them, “Why are you troubled? And why do questions arise in your hearts? Look at my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me and see, because a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you can see I have.”

And as he said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. While they were still incredulous for joy and were amazed, he asked them, “Have you anything here to eat?”

They gave him a piece of baked fish; he took it and ate it in front of them.

He said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the law of Moses and in the prophets and psalms must be fulfilled.”

Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures. And he said to them, “Thus it is written that the Christ would suffer and rise from the dead on the third day and that repentance, for the forgiveness of sins, would be preached in his name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things.”



Fourth Sunday of Easter, April 25, 2021



FIRST READING

Acts 4:8-12

Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said: “Leaders of the people and elders: If we are being examined today about a good deed done to a cripple, namely, by what means he was saved, then all of you and all the people of Israel should know that it was in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazorean whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead; in his name this man stands before you healed.

He is the stone rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone.

There is no salvation through anyone else, nor is there any other name under heaven given to the human race by which we are to be saved.”

SECOND READING

1 Jn 3:1-2

Beloved: See what love the Father has bestowed on us that we may be called the children of God. Yet so we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him.

Beloved, we are God’s children now; what we shall be has not yet been revealed. We do know that when it is revealed we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

GOSPEL READING

Jn 10:11-18

Jesus said: “I am the good shepherd. A good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. A hired man, who is not a shepherd and whose sheep are not his own, sees a wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away, and the wolf catches and scatters them. This is because he works for pay and has no concern for the sheep.

I am the good shepherd, and I know mine and mine know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I will lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. These also I must lead, and they will hear my voice, and there will be one flock, one shepherd.

This is why the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down on my own. I have power to lay it down, and power to take it up again. This command I have received from my Father.”

**STRENGTHENING
THE CHURCH AT HOME**



**SUPPORT
THE CATHOLIC HOME
MISSIONS APPEAL**

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Catholic Home Missions Appeal to be taken April 24-25, 2021

The Diocese of Scranton will take up the Catholic Home Missions Appeal on the weekend of April 24-25, 2021.

Today, more than 40% of dioceses in the United States and its territories are unable to fund the essential pastoral work their communities need.

This appeal helps our brothers and sisters here in the United States who do not have access to basic pastoral services like Mass, the sacraments, and religious education.

Your support of this appeal helps them meet these faith formation and sacramental needs. Your generous gifts fund religious education, seminary formation, lay ministry training, and other programs that build vibrant faith communities right here in the United States.

When you participate in the Catholic Home Missions Appeal, you join in the Church’s healing mission of mercy to all.

Please prayerfully consider how you can support this appeal on the weekend of April 24-25, 2021. More information can be found at www.usccb.org/home-missions.

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Mission Message

Go Forth

By Father Brian J.T. Clarke
*Diocesan Director,
Pontifical Mission Societies*



Holy Week has been referred to as the week that changed the world. The events of 2,000 years ago, indeed, changed the world as Jesus mounted the wood of the cross, died for our sins, was entombed in an empty cave, and then rose victorious over the grave.

With that change in the trajectory of salvation history, the Church is invited to consider how this Holy Week has both changed the world and changes the world still. Jesus Himself invites us to take up that mantle of being intentional disciples who seek to be changed, and by virtue of that conversion, move others to desire a new life with Christ and His Church.

“As I have done for you, you should also do.” Jesus speaks these words in John’s Gospel after He washed the feet of the disciples in the Upper Room

that first Holy Thursday. Jesus speaks clearly and definitively, the mandate to “love one another” (cf. Jn. 13:16) — hence the reason Holy Thursday is also called Maundy Thursday — that as disciples of Jesus we must do as He has done.

Rest assured, Jesus is not speaking literally of washing feet here. While our Lord’s action was beautifully hospitable, taking on the role of the slave and servant, there is still more symbolism at work in this act of love by Jesus.

The washing of the disciples’ feet is symbolic both of the need for other believers to be servants, but it is also imperative to imitate our Lord’s ultimate act of love in pouring out our lives for others. Shortly after this pivotal scene of the washing of the feet, we’re told that the group sings hymns and then goes off to the Mount of Olives (cf. Mt. 26:30).

From then on, Jesus enters into His Passion. This connection cannot be overlooked. When our Lord washed the feet of His disciples, He was also showing them how His sacrificial love (*agape* in Greek) will lead to the Cross.

And so it is for us. How will we wash one another’s feet? How

will we love one another? As the saying goes, it’s easy to serve and love those who love us, who care for us. Our Lord points to this in Matthew 5:43-48 in a discourse on love of our enemies.

Let’s be clear about something. We do not get to choose whose feet we wash and whose we don’t. Jesus makes that plain when He washes the feet of the one who would betray Him. Yes, Jesus stooped to wash the feet of Judas, who at that time already committed to his treachery. Jesus bent down before him as well.

And so we must do. We bow before those who hate us. We bow down and wash the feet of the poor who we may prefer to avoid. We bow down before those whose politics differ from ours and with those who persecute us. We bow down most of all to those who are so vulnerable and in need.

Yes, this is the week that changed the world. The Lord clearly wills that this week continue to change the world by His Grace and by our participation in building the kingdom. A sure way for this to happen is simply to love more, to serve more, to inspire more, to sacrifice more, to do as our Lord has done.

Apostleship of Prayer

Papal Intention for April 2021

Fundamental Rights —

We pray for those who risk their lives while fighting for fundamental rights under dictatorships, authoritarian regimes and even in democracies in crisis.

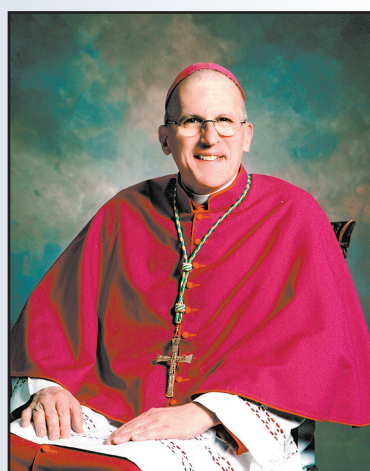
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May the Lord continue to bless you and guide you.



Rev. Scott Pilarz, University of Scranton president, dies from ALS complications

A Mass of Christian Burial was held on Saturday, March 13, 2021, for Rev. Scott R. Pilarz, S.J., President of The University of Scranton, who passed away March 10 from complications related to amyotrophic lateral sclerosis. He was 61.

Father Pilarz served as Scranton's President for two terms: first as the 24th President from 2003-2011; then as the 27th President from 2018-2021. He was the second-longest serving President in Scranton's history. He announced his ALS diagnosis in 2018, committing himself to continued service and to raising awareness about the disease.

During Father Pilarz's second tenure as President at Scranton, he leveraged the University's strengths and responsibilities as a Jesuit and Catholic institution to be a source for understanding and positive change in the community and the wider world. He marshaled resources in response to the national call to action against systemic racism, and formed the Task Force on Healing, Reconciliation and Hope as part of the University's response to the sexual abuse crisis facing the Church. He also established the Gail and Francis Slattery Center for Ignatian Humanities and supported the humanities generally at the University to further advance the liberal arts tradition that is at the core of Jesuit education.

Under his leadership, the University developed and adopted the 2020-2025 Strategic Plan, which includes goals focused on diversity and inclusion, and the humanities. He also led the University's fundraising efforts to strengthen scholarship

endowments to keep Scranton accessible to students and families, and strongly supported efforts to ensure the health and future vitality of Scranton's Catholic and Jesuit mission and identity.

Most recently, Father Pilarz calmly and competently guided the University's response to the pandemic, focusing steadfastly on the school's sacred mission to provide students with a transformational Catholic and Jesuit education. He brought students back to campus during the fall and spring semesters of the 2020-2021 academic year, ensuring extensive health and safety protocols were in place to protect all members of the University community. Throughout the pandemic, he shared his love and support for the University community through pastoral messages of courage, hope and even humor, including classic reflections on campus Christmas tree challenges.

During Father Pilarz's first term as President, the University earned national recognition for academic quality, community engagement and student success, achieving then record admissions and undertaking the largest construction projects in its history. He expanded international mission and service opportunities and programs to enhance its Catholic and Jesuit identity. The University also earned the highly selective Community Engagement Classification designated by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

In a statement, the Most Reverend Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, expressed

remorse on the death of Rev. Pilarz.

"On behalf of the clergy and faithful in the Diocese of Scranton – I wish to express our deepest condolences to The University of Scranton community and the family of Rev. Scott Pilarz, SJ, upon learning of his passing.

"Returning to The University of Scranton to serve a second term as President showed the tremendous love that Father Pilarz had for this community. Since first coming to know him personally in 2003, I have witnessed first-hand his commitment to Jesuit ideals, the mission of The University of Scranton and most especially to the students and faculty of the university. His deep faith, humanity, insight and vision were blessings and gifts he shared freely with all of us. I will miss him as a friend and colleague in ministry.

"I pray that Father Pilarz's family, friends and the entire University of Scranton community may find peace and comfort in the consoling love of Jesus Christ during this time of tremendous sadness."

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Mueller Family McDonald's donates \$10,000 to Diocese of Scranton Scholarship Foundation



The Mueller Family McDonald's recently presented a \$10,000 donation to the Diocese of Scranton Scholarship Foundation. Participating in the check presentation are, from left: Kristen Donohue, Superintendent of Catholic Schools; Most Reverend Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton; Carol Mueller, Mueller Family McDonald's; Christina Curran, Mueller Family McDonald's; and Jason Morrison, Diocesan Secretary of Catholic Education/Chief Executive Officer.

SCRANTON – On March 3, 2021, Mrs. Carol Mueller and Christina Mueller of the Mueller Family McDonald's presented a check for \$10,000 to Diocese of Scranton Scholarship Foundation.

The donation was the result of the fourth-annual 'Fry Fundraiser' that kicked off National Catholic Schools Week Jan. 31, 2021 and ended Feb. 21, 2021. All sixteen Mueller Family McDonald's participated by donating a portion of every large order of french fries sold during that period.

Due to COVID-19 protocols, the Mueller Family McDonald's were unable to host the traditional 'School Activity Nights,' so instead embarked upon a Facebook campaign. The campaign featured short videos highlighting how the Diocese of Scranton is working to maintain the superior educational standard in spite of a global pandemic.

"Since we couldn't host events inside our restaurants, we tried to think outside the box. We were blessed to work with the great people at the Diocese to bring the Catholic School experience to our Facebook fans! As a result, donations actually increased," Carol Mueller explained.

"We are so grateful to the Mueller family for their generosity and commitment to supporting families in need. This support is needed more than ever and ensures an excellent faith-based education is affordable and available to those desiring to attend one of our schools," Jason Morrison, Diocesan Secretary of Catholic Education/Chief Executive Officer, said.

With restaurants located in Scranton, Wilkes-Barre, Shavertown, Mountain Top, Old Forge, Clarks Summit, Dickson City, Eynon, Carbondale, Tunkhannock, Honesdale, Allentown and Bethlehem, the Mueller Family McDonald's are deeply invested in their communities.

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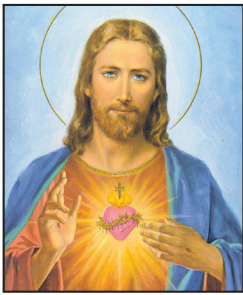
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Blue Army Reparation Vigil



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 **May 7** at Saint Joseph’s Oblate Seminary, 1880 Highway 315, Laffin (Pittston).

The Reparation Vigil for April will not be held since the First Friday of the month falls on Good Friday (April 2).

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.

IHM Sisters prayer evening April 14

SCRANTON — The Immaculate Heart of Mary Sisters will continue their monthly “Evenings of Prayer with the Sisters of IHM” on Wednesday, April 14.

The ongoing series of prayer devotions celebrates the 175th anniversary of the founding of the Congregation of Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary in 1845, with each month’s service focusing on a specific theme relating to IHM history and the religious community’s charism.

Due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, 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 theme for the April 14 Evening of Prayer is “Prayer for our Earth and the Environment.”

For more information, contact the IHM Sisters in Scranton at (570) 346-5404 or communications@sistersofihm.org.

Novena devotees honor Saint Joseph

Continued from Page 10

“The Masses at the Oblates are very serene and you feel good about going to church during this pandemic,” Liberski said. “If I can’t make it to the (chapel) or watch it on TV, I can hear it on JMJ. The Oblates of Saint Joseph is very conducive to prayer and helps you feel God is close to you.”

A parishioner of Saints Peter & Paul in Plains, Maureen Kelly referred to the Oblates chapel in Laffin as “a special holy place with kind and compassionate priests.”

“We are so fortunate to have the annual novena to Saint Joseph celebrated in our area,” Kelly said, noting the widespread devotion to the guardian and protector of the

Child Jesus and Blessed Mother. “Saint Joseph is known as the patron saint of workers and people in our area relate to that title. He answers our prayers so often, and with this being the ‘Year of Saint Joseph’ I feel it is his time to do great things in our world.”

Kelly is also appreciative of the devotions regularly held at the seminary, including the weekly Holy Hour for Vocations and Novena to Saint Joseph and Saint Joseph Marelllo, the Italian bishop who founded the Oblates religious order nearly 150 years ago.

“It always makes me smile when I am riding on the highway and look over and see the beautiful grounds of the Oblates, with Saint Joseph the Worker on the building,” she added.



CTV: CATHOLIC TELEVISION

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APRIL SCHEDULE

CTV LOCAL ORIGATION 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) | EWTN NEWS IN DEPTH |
| 1:30 AM | | | | | | | |
| 2:00 AM | ICONS SPOTLIGHT | EWTN GALLERY | EWTN NEWS NIGHTLY (Encore) | | | | |
| 2:30 AM | THEY MIGHT BE SAINTS | | EWTN GALLERY | EWTN GALLERY | EWTN GALLERY | EWTN GALLERY | EWTN GALLERY |
| 3:00 AM | EWTN GALLERY | EWTN RELIGIOUS CATALOGUE | SPECIALS | REFLECTIONS | LIFE ON THE ROCK | BATTLE READY | LITURGY OF THE HOURS |
| 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 | HOPE TO DIE | | | BOB AND PENNY LORD | WEB OF FAITH 2.0 |
| 4:30 AM | | (4:35)SUNDAY BEST WITH FR GROESCHEL | GOD'S BLUEPRINT FOR A HAPPY LIFE | (4:40)REGINA COELI FROM NAZARETH | FORGOTTEN HERITAGE | LIFE IS WORTH LIVING | GK CHESTERTON |
| 5:00 AM | BOB AND PENNY LORD PRESENT | EWTN BOOKMARK | THE CHURCH UNIVERSAL | SUFFERING AND WHAT TO DO WITH IT | LIVING RIGHT WITH DR. RAY | EWTN SPECIALS | CATHOLIC BEGINNINGS |
| 5:30 AM | THE REFORMATION | CATHOLIC VIEW FOR WOMEN | REAL LIFE CATHOLIC | CATHOLIC SPHERE | | | CATHOLICS COME HOME |
| 6:00 AM | REGINA COELI 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 | HOLY LAND ROSARY | | | | | | |
| 7:50 AM | THE HOLY ROSARY | LITANY OF BLESSED VIRGIN MARY | LITANY OF THE HOLY NAME | LITANY OF ST. JOSEPH | LITANY OF THE PRECIOUS BLOOD | LITANY OF SACRED HEART | THE HOLY ROSARY |
| 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) | CAT CHAT |
| 10:00 AM | SUNDAY MASS ST. PETER'S CATHEDRAL | RELIGIOUS CATALOG | | MOTHER ANGELICA LIVE | LIVE WITH PASSION | FOCUS | MOTHER ANGELICA LIVE CLASSICS |
| 10:30 AM | | CHOICES WE FACE | ST ANN'S WEEKLY NOVENA | | CHOICES WE FACE | AT HOME WITH JIM AND JOY CALL IN | ANIMATED STORIES FROM THE BIBLE |
| 11:00 AM | EWTN NEWS IN-DEPTH | OFOD OR SPECIALS | TERESA OF AVILA | SAINTS FOR TODAY | EUCCHARISTIC JOURNEY | AT HOME WITH JIM AND JOY | AT HOME WITH JIM AND JOY |
| 11:30 AM | | THEY MIGHT BE SAINTS | | | | | 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 | CTVSPECIALS / OFOD | WOMEN OF GRACE HOUR LONG | EWTN BOOKMARK |
| 2:00 PM | | CALLED TO COMMUNION | SCRIPTURE AND TRADITION | FR. SPITZER'S UNIVERSE | THE JOURNEY HOME | | LIFE ON THE ROCK |
| 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 FROM LOURDES |
| 4:00 PM | VATICANO | THE HOLY ROSARY DIOCESAN DATEBOOK | | | | | SUNDAY VIGIL MASS ST. PETER'S CATHEDRAL |
| 4:30 PM | SAVORING OUR FAITH | LUCY AND FRIENDS | BUG TIME ADVENTURES | TRUTH IN THE HEART | MY CATHOLIC FAMILY | THE FRIAR | |
| 5:00 PM | THE CHURCH UNIVERSAL | EWTN BOOKMARK | THE CHOICES WE FACE | EWTN RELIGIOUS CATALOGUE | GOD'S BLUEPRINT FOR A HAPPY LIFE | THEY MIGHT BE SAINTS | THE REFORMATION |
| 5:30 PM | SUNDAY PASSIONIST MASS | SPECIALS | | | | | HOPE TO DIE |
| 6:00 PM | SUNDAY MASS FROM ST. PETERS CATHEDRAL | EWTN NEWS NIGHTLY (Live) | | | | | THE JUORNEY 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 | WEEKLY NOVENA TO ST. ANN | |
| 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 | | | | | JOURNEY THROUGH THE SCRIPTURES |

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Vatican statistics show continued growth in number of Catholics worldwide

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – The number of Catholics and permanent deacons in the world has shown steady growth, while the number of religious men and women continued to decrease, according to Vatican statistics.

At the end of 2019, the worldwide Catholic population exceeded 1.34 billion, which continued to be about 17.7% of the world's population, said an article published March 26 in the Vatican newspaper, *L'Osservatore Romano*.

It marked an increase of 16 million Catholics – a 1.12% increase compared to 2018

while the world's population grew by 1.08%. The article contained a handful of the statistics in the Statistical Yearbook of the Church, which reported worldwide church figures as of Dec. 31, 2019.

It also announced the publication of the 2021 "Annuario Pontificio," a volume containing information about every Vatican office, as well as every diocese and religious order in the world. According to the statistical yearbook, the number of Catholics increased in every continent except Europe.

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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No one can be excluded from the care, love of the church, cardinal says

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – While the Catholic Church cannot bless unions that are not sacramental marriages, the church will always welcome and accompany everyone, no matter their situation in life, said the prefect of the Dicastery for Laity, the Family and Life.

“Nobody must ever be excluded from the pastoral care and love and concern of the church,” said the prefect, Cardinal Kevin J. Farrell, March 18 during an online Vatican news conference, presenting details of the “Amoris Laetitia Family Year,” which starts March 19.

The cardinal’s comments were in response to a question about the “disappointment” expressed in parts of the world regarding a recent statement by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, which said any form of blessing a same-sex union is “illicit.”

That statement, released March 15 and approved by Pope Francis, reiterated that homosexual men and women must be respected, but that it was not licit to impart a blessing on relationships or partnerships “that involve sexual activity outside of marriage -- i.e., outside the indissoluble union of a man and a woman open in itself to the transmission of life -- as is the case of the unions between persons of the same sex.”

While such unions may not be blessed, people may still receive a blessing as individuals, the statement said.

When asked if the unfavorable reaction by some to the doctrinal congregation’s statement could



Cardinal Kevin Farrell

have any consequences on the dicastery’s work and plans for promoting a year dedicated to the family and conjugal love, Cardinal Farrell said, “I think that it is very important that we all understand that the pastoral life of the church is open to all people.”

“It is essential and very important that we always open our arms to receive and to accompany all people in their different stages of life and in their different life situations,” he said.

What is not clear to most people and must be understood, he said, is that when the church talks about marriage, it is referring specifically to sacramental marriage. A blessing, he said, “is a sacramental that is related to the sacrament of marriage.”

But, he said, while the church can bless only a sacramental marriage, that does not mean only those who are married in the church “receive the benefits of the pastoral care of the church.”

People live and experience so many different situations, and no matter where they are in life, even when they cannot participate fully in the life of the church, “that

does not mean that they are not to be accompanied by us and by the people of parishes,” the cardinal said.

“We accompany all people,” the cardinal said.

While special emphasis will be made on the beauty and importance of Christian marriage during the “Amoris Laetitia Family Year,” he said the many dioceses, associations, programs and movements that work with same-sex couples “will always work with them and accompany them.”

“There are situations where there are people who are divorced and remarried. The church will accompany them with the hope that one day they will live totally in accordance with the church’s teaching.”

“But I do want to insist that nobody, nobody must ever be excluded from the pastoral care and love and concern of the church,” he said.



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Papal charity to run vaccination clinic

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – The Office of Papal Charities has purchased enough doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine to offer inoculations in Rome to 1,200 of “the poorest and most marginalized people who, because of their situation, are the most exposed” to the coronavirus.

The office said in a statement March 26 that the first doses would be administered during Holy Week in the atrium of the Vatican audience hall, which is

where Vatican employees have been receiving the Pfizer shots since mid-January.

Soon after Pope Francis and retired Pope Benedict XVI received their first Pfizer shots in mid-January, Pope Francis asked the Vatican health service to not only vaccinate Vatican residents and employees, but also the poor who live in three homeless shelters nearby. Fifty residents were vaccinated, the almoner’s office said.

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Williamsport Students for Life 'Spring' into selfless service



Williamsport Students for Life from Saint Joseph the Worker Parish participated in the National Pro-Life Sidewalk Chalk Day on March 23. Nine young people gathered for a meal, discussion on the right-to-life movement and spent an hour "chalking" their corner of Williamsport with messages of hope, encouragement and pro-life values. The students' artwork has been entered into a youth competition on sidewalk chalk designs. Over the recent Palm Sunday weekend, the students also delivered Easter baskets to homebound parishioners at Saint Joseph the Worker, who appreciated the holiday treats of flowers, candy and handpainted birdhouses created by the parish youth.



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.



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Vatican calls for action to assist people displaced by climate change

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Whether people admit it or not, climate change and environmental destruction are forcing millions from their homes, and Catholics have a responsibility to assist them, Pope Francis wrote in the preface to a new document.

"When people are driven out because their local environment has become uninhabitable, it might look like a process of nature, something inevitable," the pope wrote. "Yet the deteriorating climate is very often the result of poor choices and destructive activity, of selfishness and neglect, that set humankind at odds with creation, our common home."

The papal preface appears in "Pastoral Orientations on Climate Displaced People," a document released March 30 by the Migrants and Refugees Section of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development.

In addition to offering parishes, dioceses and national bishops' conferences suggestions for offering pastoral care to people forced to move because of rising sea levels, desertification and increasingly strong storms, the document encourages Catholics to study and track climate change and to change their lifestyles to help mitigate some of its effects.

'Francis Factor' still resonates eight years into his papacy

WASHINGTON (CNS) — The qualities embodied in Pope Francis' papacy that led to the coinage of the term "Francis Factor" to define them still exist, according to participants on a panel during a March 18 dialogue.

"The overwhelming poverty in Latin America, the majority of the poor in Latin and Central America and the Caribbean — that is very significant in shaping his worldview, his ministry and his pastoral outreach," said Michelle Gonzalez Maldonado, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at The University of Scranton and the daughter of Cuban immigrants. "That has framed so much of his papacy."

Gonzalez Maldonado was among the participants in the dialogue, "The Francis Factor at Eight Years: Global Impacts, U.S. Challenges," the annual Dahlgren Dialogue sponsored by Georgetown University's Initiative on Catholic Social Thought.

Panelists — including Cardinal Sean P. O'Malley of Boston, a member of Pope Francis' Council of Cardinals, a group of key advisers — described how the Francis Factor existed early in his papacy.

During the conclave at which he was elected, Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio of Buenos Aires "challenged us to be outward looking. That really captured the imagination of the cardinals," Cardinal O'Malley said.



Michelle Gonzalez Maldonado of The University of Scranton participates in Georgetown University's March 18, 2021, roundtable dialogue on "The Francis Factor at Eight Years: Global Impacts, U.S. Challenges."

Gonzalez Maldonado remembered teaching in Rome and being at lunch with a Muslim former student of hers when word came of the white smoke appearing, signaling the election of a new pope.

"Seeing the diversity of the races in the square" and the languages heard, "I felt so blessed and moved by the experience, and equally blessed and moved by my former student, who felt like she was part of an important event in human history," Gonzalez Maldonado said.

"For me, that's something definitive of Francis, who has opened up the Catholic Church in so many ways."

That Pope Francis hails from Latin America, "the largest population of the faithful, globally," Gonzalez Maldonado said, "means that we're being acknowledged and recognized."

She added, "When he talks about the fact that racism is a virus that mutates, and it never disappears, it goes into hiding ... part of that is understanding our history in the church, our institutions."

Teaching as she does in Scranton, the hometown of President Joe Biden, Gonzalez Maldonado said there can be policy consensus between the Vatican and Washington.

"An important place where we can see the church — and we have seen the church — be a prophetic voice is for the children and the men and women who are seeking asylum in this country. The Biden administration can really listen and be informed" by the church, she said.

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Around the Diocese

"Bunnypalooza" Easter Egg Hunt — **APRIL 3**, hosted by the Knights of Columbus St. Ann's Council 12572, Scranton; begins at 11 a.m. in the parking lot and field behind St. Ann's Basilica Shrine in West Scranton. Easter Egg event includes children's prizes, refreshments and visit from the Easter Bunny. All COVID precautions will be followed.

Weekly Novena Devotion to Saint Anthony of Padua — **APRIL 6-JUNE 8**, hosted by Our Lady of Hope Parish, 40 Park Ave., Wilkes-Barre; 13-week Saint Anthony Novena devotion held on consecutive Tuesday evenings, beginning at 5:30 p.m. in the parish

church. Novena theme: "Venerable Matt Talbot: Patron Saint of Those Battling Alcohol Addiction." All faithful are welcome; social distancing and facial coverings required. For more information, call (570) 824-7832.

Take-Out Spaghetti Dinner — **APRIL 10**, sponsored by Knights of Columbus Council 356 in Great Bend; held from 4 to 7 p.m. at the Knights' Hall, 65 Kilrow St., Great Bend. Cost: adults, \$8; children, \$4. To reserve advanced orders, call (570) 879-4875. Walk-ins are welcome. Dinner held on the second Saturday of the month, September thru May.

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While the COVID-19 pandemic continues to affect our community, one of the realities that hasn't changed is the fact that many people don't have the resources to feed themselves or their families.



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During the pandemic, the Kitchen has been providing meals in take-out containers to ensure that anyone who needs a meal receives one in a safe manner.

The annual Host-for-a-Day Campaign enables the Kitchen to continue its mission. For a donation of \$100 or more, an individual, family, business, community organization or faith-based group can help to sponsor the day's meal.

You can be a Host-for-a-Day:

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Or you may send your gift to:
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Donations can also be made online at: www.stfranciskitchen.org

Thank you for your generosity!

This year the Appreciation Reception that concludes the campaign will be marked with a Virtual Celebration consisting of a pre-recorded program. The release date will be Wednesday, April 28, at 6 p.m. on: facebook.com/stfranciskitchen. To help sponsor the Virtual Reception, call the Kitchen at 570-342-5556



Vatican releases book commemorating pope's prayer at start of pandemic



Pope Francis prays in front of the "Miraculous Crucifix" from the Church of St. Marcellus in Rome during a prayer service in an empty Saint Peter's Square at the Vatican in this photo from March 27, 2020. (CNS photo/Vatican Media)

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – One year ago, Pope Francis stood in a rain-drenched, empty St. Peter's Square praying for God's comfort as the world began experiencing the growing severity of the COVID-19 pandemic.

that event with a book of texts and images "encapsulating the meaning of that extraordinary moment of prayer," the Dicastery for Communication said in a March 24 press release.

The English version of the book titled, "Why are You

Afraid? Have You No Faith?" is jointly published by the Vatican publishing house and *Our Sunday Visitor*.

The book includes Pope Francis' recent reflections about that evening and what was going through his mind.

He said he thought about "the empty square, people united at a distance," and about the sculpture in the square of a boat carrying migrants, which made him think how "we are all on the boat."

"The whole drama is in front of the boat: the plague, the loneliness, in silence," and he

thought about how "everything was united: the people, the boat and everyone's suffering," he said.

Even though the square was completely empty of people due to the nationwide shelter-in-place order, he said, Jesus and Mary were present, which he wanted symbolized by displaying the "Miraculous Crucifix" from Rome's Church of St. Marcellus and the icon of "Salus Populi Romani" (health of the Roman people) from the Basilica of St. Mary Major.

And, he said, "I was in contact with the people. There was no

moment I was alone."

When asked what gave him strength and hope during the intense moments of the hourlong prayer and blessing, the pope said, "Kissing the feet of the crucified Christ always gives me hope."

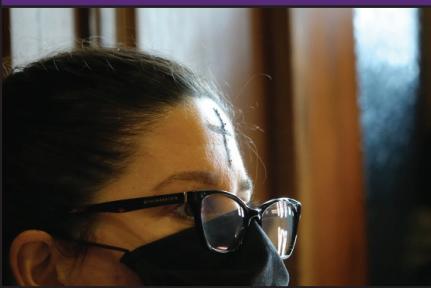
"He knows what it means to walk, and he knows all about quarantine because they put two nails there to keep him there," he said.

"Jesus' feet are a compass for people's lives, when to walk and when to stand still. The Lord's feet are very touching for me," the pope said.

The Catholic Light

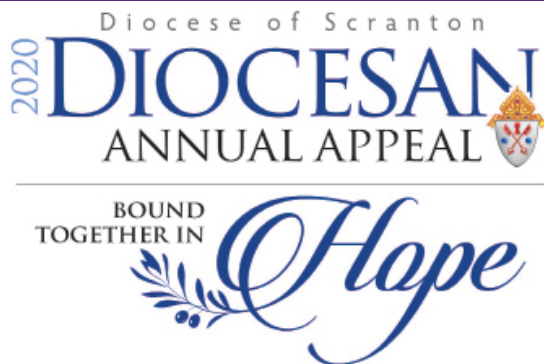
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-Pope Francis' 2021 Lenten Message

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Ministry to families must meet their real needs, pope says

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – The Catholic Church cannot claim to safeguard marriage and family life if it simply repeats its traditional teaching without supporting, encouraging and caring for real families, especially when they struggle to live up to that teaching, Pope Francis said.

"It's not enough to repeat the value and importance of doctrine if we don't safeguard the beauty of the family and if we don't compassionately take care of its fragility and its wounds," the pope said March 19 in a message to a Rome conference marking the fifth anniversary of "Amoris Laetitia," his 2016 exhortation of marriage and family life. The conference kicked off celebrations of the "Amoris Laetitia Family Year," which will conclude on June 26, 2022.



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