

The Catholic Light

DIOCESE OF SCRANTON

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Carmelite Nuns arrive in Diocese, plan new Monastery in Pleasant Mount

SOUTH ABINGTON TWP. – On behalf of the faithful of the Diocese of Scranton, the Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, welcomed a community of ten Carmelite nuns to northeastern Pennsylvania on Sunday, Feb. 26, 2023, the First Sunday of Lent.

“I speak on behalf of the people of the Diocese of Scranton in saying ‘welcome Sisters,’” Bishop Bambera said while celebrating Mass with them. “We are so, so honored and blessed to have you be a part of this local church, a part of this Christian community of believers.”

Earlier in the month, the cloistered Carmelite nuns from the Monastery of Our Lady of Mount Carmel and Saint Joseph relocated from Brooklyn, N.Y., to a temporary home at the former Saint Gabriel’s Retreat Center near Clarks Summit.

Their current location is expected to be only temporary because the Carmelite nuns have plans to build a new monastery on land in Pleasant Mount in Wayne County.

“This place has had a tradition of being

a real refuge for many people. I know it may not be part of your tradition but many people have had retreats here. It has been a place of prayer, a place of discernment and just a wonderful place where God’s people have come together,” Bishop Bambera explained to the nuns prior to blessing their current home.

The Discalced Carmelite nuns, who pray for the Church and for the world, especially for the sanctification of priests and the salvation of souls, decided to relocate from Brooklyn because of late night partying by teenagers and young adults in a park next to their former home that was disruptive to their prayer work.

On their website, the nuns wrote the park has “proved to be a real problem and in recent times, even a danger for our Community ... Worse than the noise, however, is the late night carousing, drinking and drugs, as well as the evidence of satanic rituals just feet away from us. Under such conditions it is impossible for our Community to grow



The Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, celebrates Mass with cloistered Carmelite nuns of the Monastery of Our Lady of Mount Carmel and Saint Joseph, on Feb. 26, 2023, in their temporary home at the former Saint Gabriel Retreat Center near Clarks Summit. The nuns recently relocated to the Diocese of Scranton after leaving Brooklyn.

and flourish.”

In beginning his homily for the Carmelite nuns, Bishop Bambera noted

they had been an important part of the Brooklyn diocese for nearly 20 years.

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10 years as pope: Pushing the church to bring the Gospel to the world



Pope Francis blesses a prisoner as he visits the Curran-Fromhold Correctional Facility in Philadelphia in this Sept. 27, 2015 photo. Pope Francis celebrated his 10th anniversary as pope March 13, 2023.

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – Marking the 10th anniversary of his election, Pope Francis concelebrated Mass with cardinals in Rome in the chapel of his residence, the Domus Sanctae Marthae.

The Mass, March 13, was private and the Vatican did not release photos, video or the pope’s homily.

However, according to ANSA, the Italian news agency, the pope noted how cardinals never completely retire and that “even at 80, your advice is always good.”

“May you be enlivened by three feelings: compassion, mercy and

tenderness,” ANSA reported the pope as saying. “I always need you and your advice.”

The anniversary Mass came as Pope Francis has spent the last decade pushing the church to bring the Gospel to the world.

For the last ten years, even when discussing the internal workings of the Vatican, Pope Francis has insisted the church is not the church of Christ if it does not reach out, sharing the “joy of the Gospel” and placing the poor at the center of its attention.

Signals that his papacy would be different started the moment he stepped out

on the balcony of St. Peter’s Basilica the evening of March 13, 2013: He was not wearing a red, ermine-trimmed cape, and he bowed as he asked the crowd to pray that God would bless him.

His decision not to live in the Apostolic Palace, his invitations to Vatican trash collectors and gardeners and other employees to join him for his daily morning Mass, his insistence on going to the Italian island of Lampedusa to celebrate Mass and pray for migrants who had drowned in the Mediterranean captivated the attention of the media.

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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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CHRISM MASS



Faithful urged to participate in Chrism Mass on April 4

The Diocese of Scranton is calling all Catholics to join Bishop Bambera and all of the priests of the Diocese in celebrating the Chrism Mass on Tuesday, April 4, at 4 p.m. in the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton.

During the Chrism Mass, priests of the Diocese publicly renew their commitment to priestly service, and sacred oils used in parishes throughout the year are blessed.

The Chrism Mass is the perfect opportunity for the lay faithful to ask God's blessing on our priests, deacons and religious.

Please save the date and join us at the Cathedral during Holy Week as we share our love for our savior Jesus Christ!

"Their loss is our blessing," Carmelite nuns relocate to Diocese of Scranton

Continued from Page 1

"I know first-hand from Bishop DiMarzio, Bishop Brennan, Bishop Chappetto, Bishop Sanchez and Bishop Octavio, they are sorry to see you leave," he said. "Their loss, as they've said to me, is our blessing and we are so grateful."

Bishop Bambera also reflected on the Gospel passage for the First Sunday in Lent, which was about the temptation of Jesus in the desert.

"He goes into the desert, into the wilderness, probably something like this part of northeastern Pennsylvania or Pleasant Mount, and He prepares for His public ministry," the bishop said. "At that moment, in the quiet solitude of the desert, He begins to reflect and discern all the more intently, more so than He had done throughout his 30 years of life to that point, what the Father was calling Him to do and to be."

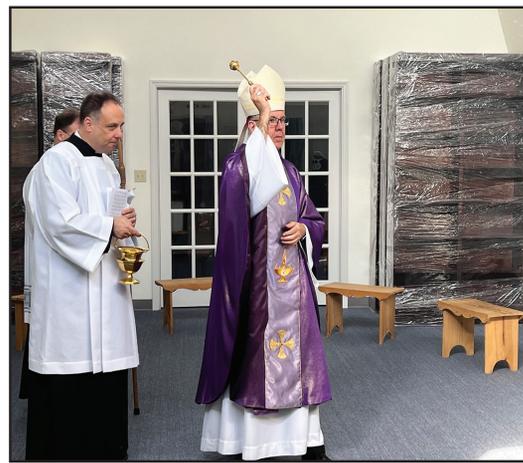
Not unlike what the Sisters have embarked on, the desert was a time of "great transition, reflection and change."

Bishop Bambera told the nuns the real blessing in the Gospel account is that every day each of us is confronted with choices and given the opportunity to hand ourselves over to God and thus be used by God.

"I face choices every day of my ministry as Bishop and I dare say Sisters, you face those choices as well. As the spirit has led you into the wilderness of northeastern Pennsylvania, you face a lot of choices ... We simply need to trust in the power of God."

As he reflected on the former Saint Gabriel Monastery property a little more, Bishop Bambera encouraged the Sisters to trust where God's goodness and mercy leads them.

"This was a monastery for Passionist Sisters. Providentially, I don't know if this is in your plans yet, but they had a place where they baked altar breads. I know that is something that you will, or plan, to do as you did in Brooklyn," Bishop Bambera said. "May we have the humility and the wisdom to pray that the Lord will touch our hearts so that we may trust in God's way, in God's will and in God's plan, and together in the ways given to us by God help to build his kingdom."



Bishop Bambera uses holy water to bless the general living area of the cloistered Carmelite nuns who are temporarily living at the former Saint Gabriel Retreat Center near Clarks Summit.

The Carmelite nuns of the Monastery of Our Lady of Mount Carmel and Saint Joseph are currently raising donations for their new home in the Pleasant Mount area. Plans for new Community call for it to be an authentic Spanish Carmel, like those in which Saint Teresa of Jesus and her daughters lived.

The monastic enclosure is being designed for 24 nuns, a chapel that seats 148 and facilities for baking altar bread and communion wafers that would be sent out for use by parishes across the country.

"The monastery is designed in a Spanish Carmelite style, taking

its inspiration from the monastic home of Saint Teresa in Avila, Spain, Joel Pidel, lead designer, said. "The monastery will even share Avila's distinctive feature of being situated on a hilltop, visible for miles around."

Erik Bootsma is the architect leading the planning and execution of the planned project in Pleasant Mount.

"It is a privilege to help to facilitate the growth of such a vibrant, devout religious order," Bootsma said. "The new Monastery will truly be a beautiful center of prayer, built in stone in the classical style."

As he ended his time with the Carmelite nuns, Bishop Bambera simply told the Sisters they are more welcome in northeastern Pennsylvania than they know.

"We are very touched by your presence and most especially very grateful for your prayers. I know that is the heart of your ministry and we know that we have a special place in that heart," Bishop Bambera said. "Thank you for all that you have done for us and all that you will continue to do. I hope you feel at home here."

To learn more about the plans for the Discalced Carmelite nuns, or to donate to their planned Monastery in Pleasant Mount, visit pleasantmountcarmel.org.

More than 160 local people expected to join the Catholic Church this Easter

Joyous celebration of Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion involved 30 parishes

SCRANTON – After going to church regularly for more than 20 years, Jerry Garner of Lenox Township is now consciously making a decision to join the Catholic faith.

“I think it’s time right now for me to join the church,” he explained. “There has always been an open invitation. I just think it was the right time, the right calling.”

Like thousands of other catechumens, Garner will receive the Sacraments of Initiation – Baptism, Confirmation and the Holy Communion – during the Easter Vigil April 8 at Saint Patrick Parish in Nicholson. He has been participating in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, or RCIA, and feels fully prepared for the faith journey ahead.

“I have been able to get more in touch with Jesus and God and really focus,” he explained. “The process has been terrific. I’m learning a lot more about the church than what I previously knew and it’s been a spiritual journey for me to go through this.”

Clifford Pinner, who will serve as Garner’s godparent, believes there has also been some divine intervention.

“I have three sisters who have been saying novenas for years. The ladies of



The Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, addresses catechumens and their godparents during the Rite of Election at the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton Feb. 26, 2023. (Photo/Mike Melisky)

our parish, after Mass, will also always say to him, ‘When are you going to do it, When are you going to do it,’” Pinner joked.

Garner is one of 162 people from parishes around the Diocese of Scranton who participated in the Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion at the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton on Feb. 26, 2023, the First Sunday in Lent.

During the Rite of Election, catechumens – supported by their sponsors, godparents, family members and parish ministers – freely proclaim their desire to receive the Sacraments of Initiation to Bishop Bambera. The individuals who have never been baptized record their names in the Book of the Elect. After the rite, the bishop signs the book as a witness to their faith.

The Call to Continuing Conversion is similar for candidates – those who have been baptized in another Christian tradition and seek to enter into full communion with the Catholic Church this Easter. They also publicly profess their intention to receive Communion and confirmation.

Cassandra Johnson of Saint Michael Parish in Canton is planning to receive Confirmation this Easter.

“My family has been helping me through everything but mostly it has been the calling from the Lord to come back to be one of His children,” the 15 year old said.

Johnson says she has learned a lot about the Catholic faith through this process.

“We’re learning about each one of the Sacraments and breaking them down. I’m learning a whole lot more than I knew before,” she explained.

The Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, served as presider and homilist for the Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion liturgy. He reminded each person that by answering Jesus’ call they are not only affirming His presence in their life but are also committing themselves to embracing His example of service and selfless love.

“You too are being called by God to be here today, to enter into a relationship that has the power to save you from the brokenness of this world and to give you meaning and peace – to do more for God’s people – and to be more than you imagined that you could be,” Bishop Bambera said.

Joseph Maazola and Cheyenne Swimpson, both of Saint Luke Parish in Stroudsburg, are joining the Church so they can be godparents to their niece who will be baptized in late April.

“It was always something I planned on doing but now is the best time because of my goddaughter. It pushed us to move forward,” Swimpson said. “Every Wednesday we have night class for about three hours. We talk about the church and learn what God has created. It is just a wonderful learning experience. You really get to know yourself too throughout the whole process.”

After studying religions for decades, Barbara Clarke and her husband, Dennis, will also join the Catholic Church this Easter.

After being raised in the United Church of Christ, Barbara feels the Catholic Church is the only one not succumbing to societal pressures.

“A lot of churches are changing to become more worldly and I like that Catholics stay with God’s word and do not cave into worldly pressures,” she said.



Ellen Gomez signs the Book of the Elect for Saint John the Apostle Parish in East Stroudsburg during the Rite of Election at the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton Feb. 26, 2023.



Devin Haverly signs the Book of the Elect for Saint Thomas More Parish in Lake Ariel during the Rite of Election at the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton Feb. 26, 2023.

Lenten Holy Hours bringing faithful closer to Christ



TOWANDA – Hundreds of people have already taken the opportunity to grow closer to Jesus this Lent at a series of Holy Hours with the Most Reverend Joseph C. Bambara, Bishop of Scranton.

If you have not had the opportunity to participate yet, there is still plenty of time!

As we approach the middle of Lent, nearly half of the 12 Holy Hours have already taken place in communities including Carbondale, Cresco, Montoursville, Towanda and Wilkes-Barre. At least six more Lenten Holy Hours will take place before Holy Week begins.

The Lenten Holy Hours are being held to commemorate the diocesan phase of the National Eucharistic Revival, which has the goal of renewing the Church and enkindling a living relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist.

Below is a roundup of some of the Holy Hours that have taken place so far:

CARBONDALE

The Lenten Holy Hours began in the Carbondale deanery on Thursday, Feb. 23, the day after Ash Wednesday, at Saint Rose of Lima Parish.

“This Holy Hour is a great way to start, to begin, the first step, because every journey begins with the first step,” Rev. Seth Wasnock, pastor of Saint Rose of Lima and Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parishes, said.

“To have our Bishop here is just a wonderful experience,” Bernadette Lepre, parishioner of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish, explained.

Each Holy Hour begins with Solemn Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, followed by a period of silent, personal prayer.

“I feel that a Holy Hour is a



Bishop Bambara celebrated a Lenten Holy Hour at Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Montoursville on Wednesday, March 8, 2023.

time for me to have a one-to-one talk with the Lord, to sit and just think of what he wants me to do,” Joan Scavo, parishioner of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish, added.

CRESCO

The faithful of the Stroudsburg deanery gathered at Most Holy Trinity Parish in Cresco on Tuesday, Feb. 28.

“Anytime the Sacrament is exposed, it is a time to be with Christ and be closer to Christ and it’s especially important during Lent,” Michael Ziobro, parishioner of Most Holy Trinity Parish, said. “During our Lenten journey, we’re supposed to be spending more time in prayer and having more quiet time and getting ourselves together.”

Many feel the time is well spent.

“It’s a time of very quiet thought and prayer and this gives our community the opportunity to sit together with these solemn services and pray as we should during Lent,” Midge Barron, parishioner of Most Holy Trinity Parish, added. “The silence of it brings us closer to Christ and I think that is what makes it for me.”

“When the whole deanery is represented and we have multiple congregations joining as one, I think it adds a heightened sense of community to the prayer,” Cheryl Lynott, parishioner of Most Holy Trinity Parish, explained. “It invigorates all of us and I think it’s a special way to pay homage to the Lord.”

MONTOURSVILLE

The faithful of Lycoming and Tioga counties joined together on Wednesday, March 8, at Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Montoursville.

“To be here with the Bishop tonight is just so special to me. I’ve never ever been here with a Bishop,” Sharon O’Malley, parishioner of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, said.

As the faithful gazed upon the consecrated host on the altar – many said they prayed about the great mystery of God’s love revealed to us in Christ.

“A Holy Hour is a great way to slow down from the pace of life, which these days seems to be crazier than ever,” Keith Kuzio, parishioner of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, added. “It is time to just be with our Lord in His peace and

His love and to feel the grace that comes to us from the Eucharist and His sacrifice for us.”

Rev. Michael S. McCormick, host pastor, said a Lent without Jesus is a waste of time but a Lent with Jesus is worth the world.

“It is such a glorious gift that He has given us and to know that He is with us, in Adoration, we know that He is there substantially. He’s really, really present – body, blood, soul and divinity,” Rev. McCormick said.

TOWANDA

As Father Kevin Miller, dean of the Sayre Deanery, welcomed the faithful to Saints Peter & Paul Parish in Towanda, he encouraged people to let Jesus’ holiness penetrate their souls and minds.

“It’s wonderful because you put everything else out of your mind and you just are in the moment and journeying with Christ,” Karen Stroud, parishioner of Saints Peter & Paul Parish, said.

Some people who attended had never participated in a Holy Hour before.

“This was really the first Holy Hour I’ve attended,” Patti Meredith, parishioner of Saints Peter and Paul Parish, said. “I thought the sense of community, where people came from other towns and priests were here from other towns and the Bishop was here providing a beautiful message.”

The Holy Hour was also a family affair for the Tavani family, who attended together.

“I think it is always nice to spend time in front of the Blessed Sacrament. The opportunity is usually time for private, quiet, meditative prayer,” Heidi Tavani said.

For Heidi’s daughter, Hannah, the Holy Hour emphasized the universality of the Church.

“I think Lent is sometimes overemphasizing, ‘What are you giving up?’ I think sometimes the prayer aspect of Lent gets overlooked so I think having the opportunity to have a Holy Hour in front of the Blessed Sacrament, during Lent, before Easter, helps emphasize the importance of prayer, leading up to Easter,” she said.

UPCOMING LENTEN HOLY HOURS

Monday, March 20, 7 p.m.
St. Gregory Parish, Clarks Green

Wednesday, March 22, 7 p.m.
Corpus Christi Parish, West Pittston

Thursday, March 23, 7 p.m.
SS. Cyril and Methodius Parish, Hazleton

Monday, March 27, 7 p.m.
Queen of Peace Parish, Hawley

Tuesday, March 28, 7 p.m.
SS. Anthony and Rocco Parish, Dunmore

Wednesday, March 29, 7 p.m.
St. John the Baptist Parish, Larksville

Join Us at the Altar of Repose on Holy Thursday

“Why are you sleeping?” he asked them.

“Get up and pray so that you will not fall into temptation” (Luke 22:46)

At the Mass of the Lord’s Supper on Holy Thursday, the Church celebrates the institution of the Eucharist and Christ giving the Twelve Apostles and their successors the authority to be ministers of the Sacrament. At the end of Mass, the Eucharist is taken in solemn procession to an Altar of Repose.

At the Altar of Repose, parishioners keep vigil in silent prayer and adoration, recalling our Lord’s agony in the Garden of Gethsemane and his rebuke to his disciples: “What? Could you not watch one hour with me?”

On Holy Thursday in particular, Catholics are encouraged to pray for priests and seminarians – that they be holy messengers of hope, reconciliation and peace.

This Holy Thursday, April 6, the Diocese of Scranton is inviting you to participate on a prayer journey and is asking you to share that journey on social media.

Invite your family, friends or assemble a group of people from your parish (young adults are especially encouraged to participate) to visit the Altar of Repose in several different churches in your community. Below are a listing of parishes that invite you to visit the Altar of Repose:

Lackawanna County

Saint Eulalia Parish

214 Blue Shutters Road
Roaring Brook Township
Until 11 p.m.

Saint John Vianney Parish

704 Montdale Road
Scott Township
7-10 p.m.

Saint Patrick Parish

1403 Jackson Street
West Scranton
8-9:30 p.m.

Saint Paul Parish

1510 Penn Avenue
Scranton
Starting at 8 p.m.

SS. Anthony & Rocco Parish

(Saint Anthony Church)
208 Smith Street
Dunmore
8-10 p.m.

SS. Peter & Paul Parish

1309 W. Locust Street
West Scranton
Until 10 p.m.

Visitation of BVM Parish

1090 Carmalt Street
Dickson City
7-10 p.m.

Luzerne County

All Saints Parish

66 Willow Street
Plymouth
8-10 p.m.

Gate of Heaven Parish

40 Machell Avenue
Dallas
8-10 p.m. in gym

Holy Family Parish

574 Bennett Street
Luzerne
8-10 p.m.

Holy Name of Jesus

213 W. Green Street
Hazleton
Until 10 p.m.

Holy Rosary Parish

240 S. Poplar Street
Hazleton
Until 10 p.m.

Nativity of Our Lord Parish

127 Stephenson Street
Duryea
8-10:15 p.m.

Our Lady of the Eucharist

535 N. Main Street
Pittston
8-9 p.m.

Our Lady of Victory Parish

16 2nd Street
Harvey’s Lake
8-10 p.m.

Queen of Heaven Parish

750 N. Vine Street
Hazleton
8-10 p.m.

Saint Andrew Parish

316 Parish Street
Wilkes-Barre
Church open until 9:30 p.m.

Get up and

Pray

Join Us on Holy Thursday!

Saint Ignatius Loyola

339 N. Maple Avenue
Kingston
8-10 p.m.

Saint John the Baptist

126 Nesbitt Street
Larksville
6-9:30 p.m.

Saint John Bosco Parish

573 State Route 93
Conyngham (Sugarloaf)
8-10 p.m. in Gym Chapel

Saint John the Evangelist

35 William Street
Pittston
8:30-10 p.m.

Saint Joseph Mareello Parish

237 William Street
Pittston
8-10 p.m.

Saint Maria Goretti

42 Redwood Drive
Lafin
8-10 p.m.

Saint Robert Bellarmine Parish

143 W. Division Street
Wilkes-Barre
8-9:30 p.m.

Saint Therese Parish

64 Davis Street
Shavertown
8-10 p.m. in Church Hall

Lycoming County

Saint Ann Parish

1220 Northway Road
Williamsport
8-10:45 p.m.

Saint Luke Church

118 Kendall Avenue
Jersey Shore
8-10 p.m.

Saint Joseph the Worker

702 W. 4th Street
Williamsport
Mass at 7 p.m.

Monroe County

Church of Saint Luke

818 Main Street
Stroudsburg
8:30-10 p.m.

Saint Matthew Parish

78 Ridgeway Street
East Stroudsburg
7:30 p.m. - Midnight

Susquehanna County

Holy Name of Mary Parish

278 S. Main Street
Montrose
7-8 p.m.

Wayne County

Saint John the Evangelist Parish

(St. Mary Magdalen Church)
416 Church Street
Honesdale
Until 11 p.m.

Saint Mary Parish

242 Carbondale Road
Waymart
7-10 p.m.

Saint Thomas More

105 Gravity Road
Lake Ariel
Details to come

Wyoming County

Nativity BVM Parish

99 E. Tioga Street
Tunkhannock
8-10 p.m.

Editor’s Note: All parishes were invited to submit their times prior to press time. If additional parishes add times, that information will be available on dioceseofscranton.org



MEMORY - IT'S MORE THAN WE THINK!

*- A Priesthood Perspective by Father Joseph Evanko -
Pastor, Saint Jude Parish, Mountain Top,
and Our Lady Help of Christians Parish, Dorrance*



An overwhelming thought — I, a sinner, having the revelation of God's Love and Mercy have been called by name in Christ to live His Kind of Life.

I must live the Mass and bring Christ to the world by expressions of my life."

When I ponder the Eucharistic Revival we are presently experiencing I think it is important for us to remember who taught us and more importantly who witnessed for us the "par excellence," the "source and summit" of our lives. Who are those people for you? When we truly believe in the Real Presence of the Blessed Sacrament we live the Mass and bring Christ to the world. We never do that alone. We are gifted by the Grace of the Sacraments and gifted by those, even as sinners, who bring expressions of Christ to us.

Family life and parish life are intimately connected. The challenge of every parish as we actively gather for Eucharist is to live out the Paschal

Mystery of Jesus Christ when we are sent forth from the Church to our homes and beyond. The challenge of every person as we develop a deeper union with Christ in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament is to experience the living, suffering, death and Resurrection of Jesus in every relationship. The theological act of memory is about what and who Jesus Christ is — God, Savior, Redeemer, Brother, All in All. When we do the action of Anamnesis then we participate in connecting the past, present and future together in the Most Sacred Moment beyond all time. When we are aware of the Mystery and believe in the Eucharist we follow the call to be who God created us to BE!

In many of his homilies on the Eucharist, my Uncle Cyril spoke of the "AWE" we must have to believe:

"In the Gospel it is impossible for us not to be filled with wonder and awe. Jesus says, 'I am the living bread come down from heaven; if you eat this Flesh and drink this Blood, you will have eternal life.'

We don't quite understand and wonder about the Holy Eucharist. But if we believe in the Eucharist, no explanation is necessary because we are filled with awe. This awe is present when Jesus nourishes all who come to Him in faith through Communion.

Pope John Paul II reminded us in (Sollicitudo Rei Socialis): 'All of us who take part in the Eucharist are called to discover, through this

sacrament, the profound meaning of our actions in the world. And receive from it, the strength, to commit ourselves, ever more generously, following the example of Christ, who in this sacrament lays down His life for His friends.'

Pope John Paul II reminds us that it is not enough to look upon the Body of Christ, not enough to receive the Body of Christ, but we must become The Body of Christ.

Can you imagine that day! We will be a Church, not only believing in the Real Presence but Showing the Real Presence. We will be a Church, not only receiving the Body of Christ but becoming the Body of Christ. Today, I challenge you, as you approach this altar for Communion, not only to receive the Eucharist but be Eucharist to all people."



Deacon Cyril Kowalchick

Early on in the study of the Eucharist we learn about something called "Anamnesis." It is a Greek work that means a calling to mind, remembrance or memorial as in 1 Corinthians 11:24. We hear and pray it in every Eucharistic Prayer, "Do this in memory of me." It is a particular part of the Eucharistic Prayer that focuses us on the saving events of Christ's life. Generally, it reminds us that what we do as the Body of Christ is in memory of Him who saves us. This is exactly why we gather. We gather as an assembly in Christ to be who we receive, "The Body of Christ."

One of the very first persons to teach me this was my Uncle Cyril Kowalchick, who was ordained a Permanent Deacon in the Diocese of Scranton. He was also my Baptismal Godfather and Confirmation Sponsor. He had a love of the Church that still witnesses for me the gift of the Eucharist. Since his passing, I have had the opportunity to slowly and prayerfully go through his homilies and personal reflections. They continue to be a source of inspiration, hope and revival. In a journal entry on the Solemnity of Christ the King (1980) he wrote the following:

"The Power whereby I live and act is His Power and the reasons I do things are His Reasons, the Spirit, that energizes me, is His Spirit, the love that I express to God and Man, is His Love — not in external imitations but in a union of Life.

"I do it to glorify and adore God"

Decorating committee members using talents to beautify churches at Easter

CRESCO – With a little more than three weeks left until Easter, many parish decorating committees will be working overtime to make sure their worship spaces are beautiful.

At Most Holy Trinity Parish in Cresco, which will celebrate Easter in its brand new home for the first time, volunteers have been preparing for several months.

"I do it to glorify and adore God, to show him that I am thankful for my gifts," parishioner Madeleine Forssell said.

Forsell helps to coordinate a large team of dozens of volunteers who constantly work to keep the church, its narthex and meeting areas properly decorated for each liturgical season.

"We get inspiration from Pinterest and Facebook or we capitalize on ideas or pictures that we see," she explained. "We try to

enhance the beauty that is already here. When we decorate this place, it'll take your breath away."

Rev. Brian J.W. Clarke, pastor, Most Holy Trinity Parish, said the decorating committee had 42 people volunteering at Christmas.

"There is just so much enthusiasm. Madeleine brings in people of all different age groups and abilities. She gets everyone included. Once they start working together and can see that they have a part to contribute, it just blossoms," Father Clarke said.

Arlene Calemno of Mount Pocono volunteers with the group because she loves to see the finished products.

"These ladies are incredible. They are unbelievable. They work so hard and really do a wonderful job," she explained.



Barb Page, left, helps to organize decorations for Easter along with Julie Conroy and Arlene Calemno at Most Holy Trinity Parish in Cresco on Feb. 15, 2023. (Photo/Eric Deabill)

"Christmas was absolutely gorgeous. Everything was just so beautiful," fellow volunteer Julie Conroy of Canadensis, added. "There are quite a few people that get involved and everybody does

a little something."

Most Holy Trinity Parish was formed as a consolidation of three area parishes so the decorating committee has plenty of supplies to work with.

"This is a family. Your church should be part of your extended family. Wherever they need me, that is where I go," volunteer Ayleen Rios of Tobyhanna, emphasized. "Everybody has a talent and you just have to find where their niche is and fit them in!"

The Most Holy Trinity Parish decorating committee invites everyone to see their work beginning Palm Sunday when there will be special palm decorations adorning each pew and then the following Sunday where Easter lilies will be prominently featured throughout the parish.

Pope says Lent is time to let go of the frivolous, to choose truth, love

SCRANTON – As hundreds of people gathered to begin the Lenten season at the Cathedral of Saint Peter on Ash Wednesday, they were reminded of their need for God and encouraged to trust more deeply in God's merciful presence.

"Saint Matthew, in today's Gospel, reinforces the words of the prophet Joel and sets forth in practical terms the lifestyle that we are called to embrace as authentic disciples of the Lord Jesus," the Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, said during his homily. "Pray, fast, and give alms in support of the poor. But do so not because such behavior will make us appear to be righteous. Do so because such acts for a Christian are the consequence of faithful lives rooted in Jesus, who teaches us how best to live."



The faithful receive ashes during the 12:10 p.m. Daily Mass at the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton on Feb. 22, 2023. (Photos/Mike Melisky)

Bishop Bambera told those who had gathered for the rite of the imposition of ashes that the Lenten journey draws each one of us to the very heart of what it means to be a Christian.

"Through baptism, we are brought into the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, which, in turn, invites us to trust in the power of God more deeply and equips us for mission – the



proclamation of the "Good News" of Jesus – and the service of our sisters and brothers," the bishop explained.

As Pope Francis marked the beginning of Lent at Rome's Basilica of Santa Sabina, he told the faithful that Lent is the time to let go of the frivolous.

Lent is the time, Pope Francis said, "to proclaim that God alone is Lord, to drop the pretense of



being self-sufficient and the need to put ourselves at the center of things, to be the top of the class, to think that by our own abilities we can succeed in life and transform the world around us."

"How many distractions and trifles distract us from the things that really count? How often do we get caught up in our own wants and needs, lose sight of the heart of the matter, and

fail to embrace the true meaning of our lives in this world!" he added.

"Lent is a time of truth, a time to drop the masks we put on each day to appear perfect in the eyes of the world," he said, and to "reject lies and hypocrisy. Not the lies and hypocrisies of others, but our own."

Pope Francis also asked that the faithful use the 40 days of Lent to: "rediscover the joy, not of accumulating material goods, but of caring for those who are poor and afflicted"; to put God at the center of one's life and pray and dialogue with him from the heart; and to become free "from the dictatorship of full schedules, crowded agendas and superficial needs, and choose the things that truly matter."

Nearly 600 young adults honored for service in parishes and schools

SCRANTON – They serve as volunteer faith formation teachers, assist at Mass as lectors and altar servers, and provide food to the hungry and less fortunate in their communities among many other things.

Over the last two weeks, nearly 600 young adults from parishes and Catholic schools across the Diocese of Scranton were recognized with the 2023 Bishop's Youth Award.

Nominated by their pastor, parish life coordinator, youth minister, director of religious education or principal, the award honors those students in eighth and 12th grade who show exemplary practice of faith and/or commitment to service.

"I feel honored. I'm proud to get it," Gabrielle Gottlieb, a high school senior from Saints Peter & Paul Parish in Plains, said.

Gottlieb is a volunteer faith formation teacher for kindergarten students and volunteers to help Treasures, the clothing boutique at her parish, as often as possible.

"I just love helping out in the community," she explained. "I want to be a teacher when I graduate so I am getting used to that. I just love teaching little ones."

All of the Bishop's Youth Award recipients were invited to special Masses on Tuesday,



Gabrielle Gottlieb of SS. Peter & Paul Parish, Plains, receives her award from Bishop Bambera.



Eighth grade recipients of the 2023 Bishop's Youth Award pray during the Liturgy of the Eucharist at the first Mass held at the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton on March 7, 2023. (Photos/Mike Melisky)



Sofia Marica of Epiphany Parish, Sayre, receives her award from Bishop Bambera.

March 7, and Wednesday, March 15, at the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton.

"There are few Masses that take place in this Cathedral throughout the entire year that have this many people," the Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, said in welcoming the students during the first Mass. "It is a testimony to all of you."

The honorees and their proud families filled the Cathedral during both Masses.

"I'm really excited. My entire life I have been a part of my parish and it has been a big part of me, so being able to get this award means a lot to me," Sofia Marica,

an eighth grader from Epiphany Parish in Sayre, said. "I'm a lector. I help with our parish's free meals. I help out with children's programs where we do activities directed towards our Lord."

"For my senior project, I'm helping out at Sojourner Truth which is a place for those experiencing homelessness. At church, I volunteer at dinners and help wherever I can. I'm involved in Key Club which is doing a food drive," Lily Reid, a senior at Saint John Neumann Regional Academy in Williamsport, explained. "I love helping people. I want to major in psychology and hopefully continue helping people."

Abigayle Cryan, a senior at Holy Redeemer High School in Wilkes-Barre, served as a cantor for the first Bishop's Youth Awards Mass. She is heavily involved in her parish's music program, but is also involved in her school's Student Leadership Council that helps beautify the school and visits local soup kitchens.

"I first joined my church choir in first grade so I've been able to build up my confidence. I started as a cantor from seventh

grade on in church," she said.

Melanie Rdesinski, a high school senior, has been an altar server since seventh grade and participates in the Christmas choir at Saint Luke Parish in Jersey Shore.

"I'm a little proud, in an offset sort of way," she said humbly. "I didn't know about it until two weeks ago when my pastor said something."

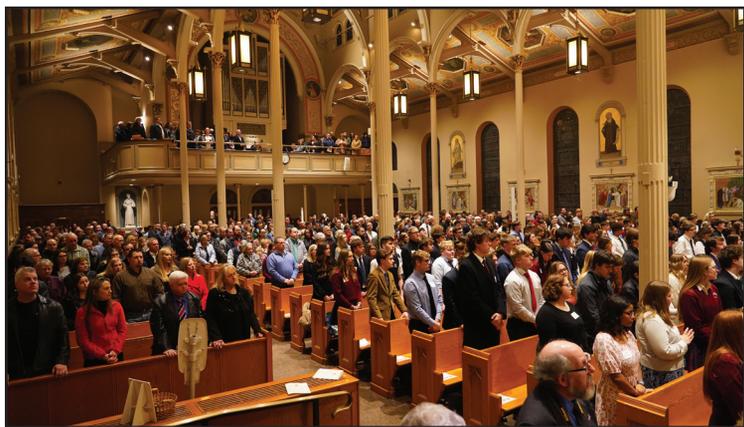
When asked what he gets out of performing community service projects, Conor Buckley, a parishioner of Our Lady Help of Christians Parish in Dorrance, answered easily.

"It is important to see the happiness in other people. Making people feel good makes me feel good," he explained.

As he ended each Mass, Bishop Bambera thanked the recipients and encouraged them to continue making a difference in the world.

"Thank you for living your faith. Thank you for being a witness to what you believe. Thank you, at times, for taking a stand on issues that might not necessarily resonate with the rest of your classmates or the world. Thank you for serving individuals who are struggling and on the margins of our world, the poor or individuals, who for one reason or another are shut out of peoples' lives," Bishop Bambera said.

The Bishop's Youth Awards have been given out annually since 1996.



The Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton was at capacity during the first Bishop's Youth Awards Mass March 7, 2023.



Rev. Joseph J. Evanko, V.E., Pastor, Saint Jude Parish, Mountain Top, shows a photo of Blessed Carlo Acutis, a Catholic Italian teenager who died in 2006 and was beatified in 2020 during his homily on March 7, 2023.

Pope, cardinals concelebrate Mass for pope's 10th anniversary

Continued from Page 1

But not everyone was pleased with the seeming ease with which he set aside pomp and protocol. And tensions within the Catholic community grew as he expressed openness to LGBTQ Catholics and to those living in what the church considers irregular marriage situations and when he said in an interview in 2013 that the church cannot talk only about abortion, gay marriage and contraception.

One kind of summary of his first 10 years as pope can be found in numbers: He has made 40 trips abroad, visiting 60 countries; in eight consistories he created 95 cardinals under the age of 80 and eligible to vote in a conclave and paid tribute to 26 churchmen over the age of 80; and he has presided over the canonizations of 911 new saints, including a group of more than 800 martyrs, but also Sts. John Paul II, John XXIII and Paul VI.

In his first major document, the apostolic exhortation "The Joy of the Gospel," he laid out a program for his papacy, looking inside the church and outside at the world to see what needed to be done to "encourage and guide the whole church in a new phase of evangelization, one marked by enthusiasm and vitality."

The document included a discussion of the need to reform church institutions to highlight their missionary role; to encourage pastoral workers to listen to and stand with the people they were ministering to - his famous line about having "the smell of the sheep"; to deepen an understanding of the church as "the entire people of God" and not as an institution or, worse, a club of the elect; to integrate the poor into the church and society, rather than simply see them as objects of assistance; and to promote peace and dialogue.

Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin of Newark, New Jersey, told CNS he believes the first 10 years of Pope Francis' pontificate have been preparation for "what's happening right now, and that's the synodal conversation."

The Second Vatican Council called Catholics to read the "signs of the times" and respond. And, the cardinal said, "this notion that we don't have automatically prepared prescriptions for every challenge that faces us leads us to a fundamental tenet of our belief," which is belief "in the Holy Spirit, the lord and giver of life."

The synod process, which began with listening to people around the globe and will move toward two assemblies mainly of bishops, is about listening to the Holy Spirit.

While the synod involves meetings, Cardinal Tobin said, "synodality is a way of being church. It's an ancient way of being church that is being recovered and lived in the circumstances in which we face

ourselves today. And so, to my mind, that's sort of the capstone of what Pope Francis has been working for over the last decade."

"I've called synodality his long game," the cardinal said. "He's convinced that the

changed circumstances of our world and our world going forward demand a new appreciation for the role of the Holy Spirit and a way to access that gift that is given to all of us by virtue of our baptism."



10 YEARS OF FRANCIS

A TIMELINE OF SIGNIFICANT EVENTS OF POPE FRANCIS' PONTIFICATE

2013



● **MARCH 13**

Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio of Buenos Aires, Argentina, is elected pope on the second day of the conclave, becoming the first pope from the Southern Hemisphere and the first non-European elected in almost 1,300 years. The Jesuit was also the first member of his order to be elected pope and the first member of any religious order elected in nearly two centuries.



● **JULY 8**

Pope Francis makes his first trip outside of Rome, choosing to go to the Italian island of Lampedusa to underline the plight of migrants crossing the Mediterranean and the countless lives lost at sea.

2014



● **JUNE 8**

Pope Francis, Israeli President Shimon Peres, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, Orthodox Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople and others come together in the Vatican Gardens for an unprecedented gathering to pray for peace in the Holy Land.

2015



● **SEPT. 19-27**

Pope Francis travels to Cuba then to Washington, D.C., New York and Philadelphia during his first visit to the United States. He addressed Congress, the United Nations and the World Meeting and Families, canonized St. Junipero Serra and visited the 9/11 memorial in New York.



● **DEC. 8**

Pope Francis opens the Holy Door of St. Peter's Basilica to inaugurate a Holy Year of Mercy. He invited churches around the world to designate a holy door as a reminder of his call for reconciliation.

2016



● **FEB. 12-17**

Pope Francis, on his way to Mexico, stops in Cuba to meet Russian Orthodox Patriarch Kirill of Moscow at the Havana airport and sign a joint declaration in the presence of Cuban President Raul Castro. In Mexico, he celebrated Mass in Ciudad Juárez, which borders El Paso, Texas. Hundreds of thousands of people attended the Mass, which included faithful on both sides of the border.

2017



● **APRIL 13**

Pope Francis goes to a maximum security to celebrate the Holy Thursday Mass of the Lord's Supper and washes the feet of 12 prisoners, including three women and a Muslim man, who was preparing for baptism. The celebration continued a practice he began as archbishop of Buenos Aires and performed every Holy Thursday as pope: including Catholics and non-Catholics, men and women, especially those who are marginalized in the foot-washing rite.

2018



● **APRIL 21**

Pope Francis appoints three women as consultants to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, the first time women and laypeople were named as active contributors -- not support staff. They joined a growing number of women the pope has named to top-level positions at the Vatican.



● **AUG. 2**

Pope Francis orders the revision of the Catechism of the Catholic Church to describe the death penalty as morally inadmissible and to affirm that the church "works with determination for its abolition worldwide."

2019



● **FEB. 4**

Pope Francis and Sheikh Ahmad el-Tayeb, grand imam of Egypt's Al-Azhar mosque and university, sign the document on "Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together" during an interreligious meeting in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.



● **FEB. 21-24**

Pope Francis convenes a global summit on child protection and abuse, bringing together nearly 200 church leaders -- presidents of bishops' conferences, the heads of the Eastern Catholic churches, superiors of men's and women's religious orders, survivors and Roman Curia officials. The summit at the Vatican included a penitential liturgy.

2020



● **MARCH 27**

In the midst of the coronavirus pandemic, Pope Francis prays and delivers his extraordinary blessing "urbi et orbi" (to the city and the world) during an evening prayer service from St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican. St. Peter's Square was empty, and the service was livestreamed.

2021



● **MARCH 5-8**

Pope visits Iraq amidst sporadic violence continuing in the country and COVID-19. He honored those who remained faithful and worked to rebuild the country.



● **JULY 4**

The pope undergoes a three-hour scheduled surgery at a Rome hospital to remove part of his colon. Officials said it was required to treat diverticulitis, when bulging pouches in the lining of the intestine or colon become inflamed or infected. Throughout his pontificate he has suffered bouts of painful sciatica, and knee problems led him to start using a wheelchair in 2022.

2022



● **JULY 24-29**

Pope Francis makes "a penitential trip" to Canada to meet with, listen to and apologize to members of Canada's First Nation, Métis and Inuit communities, especially those who experienced abuse or attempts at forced assimilation at church-run residential schools.

2023



● **JAN. 5**

Pope Francis presides over the funeral Mass for Pope Benedict XVI in St. Peter's Square. It was the first time in more than 200 years that a pope celebrated the funeral of his predecessor.



● **MARCH 13**

Pope Francis celebrates his 10th anniversary as pope.

OSV news

Photos and text: CNS

Saint Francis Kitchen extends 'Community Outreach' meal to North Pocono region

ROARING BROOK TWP.— Saint Eulalia Parish and Saint Francis of Assisi Kitchen are joining forces to make sure no one in the North Pocono area goes hungry.

Starting Feb. 7, 2023, a free community meal is now being hosted in the parish hall of the Roaring Brook Township parish every Tuesday from noon until 12:30 p.m.

The warm, nutritious meal is prepared by Saint Francis Kitchen in Scranton and served by parish volunteers. Each week the meal includes meat, vegetables, fruit salad, garden salad, lemonade and dessert.

"It's local people serving local people. The kitchen provides the food, the van and the driver and a lot of the material things," Rob Williams, Executive Director of Saint Francis of Assisi Kitchen, explained. "We send one person from Scranton but they provide 10-12 local volunteers to serve the meal. All of the hospitality and all the meal service happens with local people serving local people."

More than sixty volunteers from the parish have stepped forward to help.



Volunteers from Saint Eulalia Parish serve a free, nutritious meal to people in the community on Tuesday, Feb. 14, 2023.

"I have been very blessed in my life. Right now is my time to give back," Donna Caputo, a volunteer from Saint Eulalia Parish, said. "We don't realize that there are people in our own community who need help and I never really saw that until now."

The idea for the partnership started when Saint Eulalia parishioners realized that the nearby North Pocono food bank served more than 200 local families a month and nearly 30 percent of students in the public school system receive free or

reduced lunches.

"There was just a desire to serve and give," Rev. David Cramer, Pastor of Saint Eulalia Parish, explained.

Dozens of people have taken advantage of the free meal each Tuesday since the effort launched. Some people come out to help them stretch their food budget while others just enjoy the hospitality and camaraderie.

"I think it's wonderful. It is very kind of the parish to put this on for the people," Cathy Manley said. "They can't do enough for



The free community meal at Saint Eulalia Parish is open to everyone in the community. It is held every Tuesday from noon to 12:30 p.m.

you. It is unbelievable. You walk in the door and they greet you. They can't help you enough."

"The meals are so great. They are full servings of chicken parmesan. I have never eaten so well," Katie Babilon added. "The volunteers are really friendly. They really help out. They fill your plate."

Saint Eulalia Parish is the newest stop for the Saint Francis of Assisi Kitchen Community Outreach Program. On Wednesdays, the Kitchen provides 130 meals to Holy Cross Parish

in Olyphant and on Thursdays, it provides 170 servings to Saint Rose of Lima Parish and the nearby high rises in Carbondale.

"I love these collaborations with the parishes because it helps us to extend our reach and multiply the impact that we can have," Williams said.

Saint Eulalia Parish is located at 214 Blue Shutters Road in Roaring Brook Township. If the North Pocono School District cancels or delays classes on any given Tuesday, there will be no meal served.



On March 6, 2023, a check for \$3,070 was presented to Shepherd's Maternity House. From left, former Shepherd's Maternity House board member and Saint Matthew's Pro-Life Committee member Dr. Nancy Gabana; St. Matthew's Pro-Life Committee member Gerry Burns; Kathy Chelednik, Shepherd's Maternity House supervisor; and Rev. Don Williams, Pastor, Saint Matthew Parish.

Baby bottle fundraiser raises \$6,140 in Monroe County

EAST STROUDSBURG – The Pro-Life committee of Saint Matthew Parish and Knights of Columbus Council 11434 co-sponsored a baby bottle fundraiser that raised \$6,140 to benefit Shepherd's Maternity House and the Pregnancy Resource Center of the Poconos. Both organizations support pregnant women in Monroe County.

The fundraiser started the first Sunday of Advent and donations continued to come in throughout the month of January.



On March 1, 2023, a check for \$3,070 was presented to Pregnancy Resource Center of the Poconos. From left, John DeRobertis; Alice Marchesani; Dr. Chris Lynch, Knights of Columbus Council 11434 Grand Knight; Lori DiTaranto; Rev. Don Williams, Pastor, Saint Matthew Parish; Gerry Burns; Pat Murray and Frank Leo. Absent from the photo is fundraising co-chair and Knights District Deputy Bill Carlin.

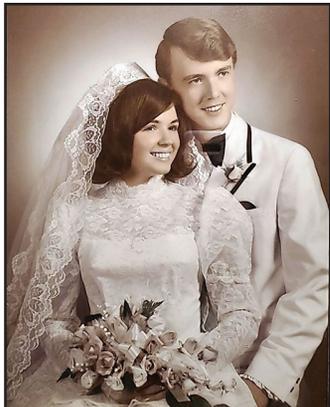
Bishop to celebrate Wedding Anniversary

Mass on Sunday, June 4

SCRANTON - Registration is now open for the Diocese of Scranton's annual Wedding Anniversary Mass. Following the Mass, a reception is traditionally held across the street at the Diocesan Pastoral Center.

The Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, will celebrate this year's Mass on Sunday, June 4, 2023, at 2:30 p.m. at the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton.

The Wedding Anniversary Mass recognizes couples who are celebrating their 25th and 50th wedding anniversaries during the 2023 calendar year.



Any couples celebrating their 25th or 50th anniversaries are encouraged to register for this special Mass as soon as possible.

Registrations can be completed online at dioceseofscranton.org or by calling the Diocesan Office for Parish Life at (570) 207-2213.



BISHOP BAMBERA'S SCHEDULE

March 16-17 - USCCB Bishops' Committee for Ecumenical & Interreligious Affairs Meeting, Chicago

March 18 - Friendly Sons of Saint Patrick Dinner
Mohegan Pennsylvania

March 20 - Mass for the Feast of Saint Joseph
Oblates of Saint Joseph, Laflin, Noon

March 20 - Lenten Holy Hour for the Clarks Summit Deanery
Church of Saint Gregory, Clarks Green, 7:00 p.m.

March 22 - Lenten Holy Hour for the Pittston Deanery
Corpus Christi Parish, West Pittston, 7:00 p.m.

March 23 - Lenten Holy Hour for the Hazleton Deanery
SS. Cyril & Methodius Church, Hazleton, 7:00 p.m.

March 26 - Masses at Saint John Church
East Stroudsburg, 8:30 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.

March 27 - Lenten Holy Hour for the Honesdale Deanery
Queen of Peace Church, Hawley, 7:00 p.m.

March 28 - School Mass for Wyoming Area Catholic School
Exeter, 9:00 a.m.

March 28 - Lenten Holy Hour for the Dunmore Deanery
SS. Anthony & Rocco Parish, Dunmore, 7:00 p.m.

March 29 - Lenten Holy Hour for the Kingston Deanery
Saint John the Baptist Church, Larksville, 7:00 p.m.

March 30 - School Mass for Saint Nicholas/Saint Mary School
Saint Nicholas Church, Wilkes-Barre, 9:00 a.m.

April 1 - Catholic Men's Retreat Mass
Dalton, 7:00 a.m.

April 2 - Palm Sunday Mass
Cathedral of Saint Peter, Scranton, 12:15 p.m.

April 4 - Chrism Mass
Cathedral of Saint Peter, Scranton, 4:00 p.m.

April 6 - Mass of the Lord's Supper
Cathedral of Saint Peter, Scranton, 5:30 p.m.

April 7 - Commemoration of the Lord's Passion
Cathedral of Saint Peter, Scranton, 12:10 p.m.

April 8 - Easter Vigil Mass
Cathedral of Saint Peter, Scranton, 8:00 p.m.

April 9 - Easter Sunday Mass
Cathedral of Saint Peter, Scranton, 10:00 a.m.

April 11 - School Mass for Saint Jude School
Saint Jude Church, Mountain Top, 9:00 a.m.

"The Light is ON for You" continues throughout March

The Church encourages us to make confession a regular part of our spiritual life, especially during the holy season of Lent, as we reflect on our baptism and repentance.

Parishes in the Diocese of Scranton continue to participate in "The Light is ON for You" initiative. Every Monday evening during the Lenten season through the Monday of the last full week of Lent, March 27, confessions are being heard in every parish from 5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. so that Catholics can come to (or return to) this incredible source of God's grace, mercy and healing.



APPOINTMENTS

His Excellency, Bishop Joseph C. Bambera, announces the following appointments, effective as indicated

Reverend Binesh Joseph Kanjirakattu, from residence, Ascension Parish, Forest City, and Saint Katharine Drexel Parish, Pleasant Mount, to Assistant Pastor *pro tem*, Holy Rosary Parish, Hazleton, and Holy Name of Jesus Parish, West Hazleton, effective February 16, 2023.

Reverend Edison Gregorio Arreaga Arce, from Ministry with the Passionist Congregation, Ecuador, to Parochial Vicar, Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish, Brodheadsville, effective March 6, 2023.

Reverend Lee Havey, C.P., from Ministry with the Passionist Congregation, to Parochial Vicar, Saint Ann Basilica Parish, Scranton, effective March 8, 2023.

Reverend Michael J. Piccola, to Administrator *pro tem*, Holy Rosary Parish, Hazleton, and Holy Name of Jesus Parish, West Hazleton. Father will remain Pastor, Saints Cyril and Methodius Parish, Hazleton, effective February 16, 2023.

Catholic Social Services welcomes new Director of Community Fikile Ryder, native of Zimbabwe, to lead Immigration and Refugee Services

**Helping, welcoming
others creates a
culture of fraternity,
pope says**

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – Taking in and welcoming others must be done without expecting anything from them in return, Pope Francis said.

It is “this gratuitousness” that creates a culture of friendship and fraternity, he said March 9 at the Vatican.

“We often talk about the contribution that migrants give or can give to the communities that receive them. This is true and important. But the fundamental criterion lies not in how useful the person is, but in the intrinsic value” of the human person, he said.

People deserve “to be welcomed not so much for what they have or can have or can give, but for who they are,” the pope said during an audience with people taking part in a weeklong course offered by the Fraterna Domus retreat center in Sacrofano outside of Rome.

Sharing a number of passages from “Fratelli Tutti,” his encyclical on fraternity and social friendship, the pope said “love calls for growth in openness and the ability to accept others as part of a continuing adventure that makes every periphery converge in a greater sense of mutual belonging.” As Jesus said, “You are all brothers.”

The more a community is “imbued with this attitude of openness and welcome,” he said, the more it becomes capable of “integrating all its members, even those who, for various reasons, are ‘existential foreigners’ or ‘hidden exiles’ as sometimes, for example, people with disabilities or the elderly find themselves to be.”

“The aspect of gratuitousness is essential to generate fraternity and social friendship,” the pope said.



Fikile Ryder, MSCJ, has is the new Director of Community for Catholic Social Services of the Diocese of Scranton. Ryder will be responsible for Immigration and Refugee Resettlement Services. (Photo/Eric Deabill)

SCRANTON – After working for the last seven years as a Department of Justice Immigration Counselor & Immigration Program Coordinator for Catholic Charities of Southern Colorado, Fikile Ryder, MSCJ, is bringing her knowledge and expertise to Catholic Social Services of the Diocese of Scranton.

Ryder started as the new full-time Director of Community for Catholic Social Services in October 2022. As part of that position, she will be responsible for Immigration and Refugee Resettlement Services.

“The work is very rewarding. I am an immigrant myself so I’ve been in the same shoes of those that I represent. I know how they feel,” she explained.

Ryder will oversee five immigration and refugee support programs for Catholic Social Services, many of which were inactive until recently because no employees possessed full accreditation with the U.S. Department of Justice.

“Our agency (Catholic Social Services) is recognized with the Department of Justice. With the immigration program itself, people who work in that program have to be accredited in order for them to do the legal part of the immigration process. If someone leaves the organization, then that accreditation is terminated,” she explained.

Joe Mahoney, Diocesan Secretary for Catholic Human Services and Chief Executive Officer of Catholic Social Services, said his agency’s work is rooted in the Gospel and Catholic social teaching, which emphasizes that migrants, refugees and asylum seekers are to be cared for with dignity and respect.

“I have known and worked with Fikile for years and she

is a tremendous addition to our area,” Mahoney said. “She brings amazing skills and diverse experiences and I think we are lucky to be able to hire her.”

Born in Zimbabwe, Ryder first came to the United States in 2003 with a temporary work visa after being offered a job in Virginia to work with a child who had autism. When her contract ended in 2009, she returned to Africa but her boyfriend at the time from America went to Zimbabwe and asked her to marry him.

She then came back to the United States in 2011 with her green card.

“My immigration process was done by Catholic Charities in Pueblo, Colorado, and took about eight months,” Ryder explained.

Thankful for the assistance of Catholic Charities, she started volunteering with the agency and was later hired as an administrative assistant. She worked her way up to a fully-accredited Immigration Counselor and Immigration Program Coordinator.

“The accreditation allows me to do everything that an attorney can do, an immigration attorney, like filing paperwork, giving legal advice, legal representation,” Ryder explained. “I can go to the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) with the clients and speak on their behalf.”

One of the newest refugee support service programs that Ryder now oversees for Catholic Social Services deals specifically with paroled Ukrainians who are referred from either Luzerne or Lackawanna Counties. The main job is to help the individuals find and maintain employment.

“We screen them to find out what kind of skills they have, what kind of availability they have and we also screen them on the barriers that will prevent them from finding a job,” she said. “The main goal is to have them be self-sufficient.”

Under its Resettlement & Replacement Program, Catholic Social Services helped welcome a family of six to northeastern

Pennsylvania on January 24. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops funds that program.

“They are with us for 90 days. We have to make sure they have a home, the kids are enrolled in school and we find them a job. Any needs they have, we help them in those 90 days,” Ryder explained.

While she admits she didn’t know much about Scranton before taking her new position, she has been pleasantly surprised how many immigrants and refugees are settling locally.

“I was shocked at how many refugees from Africa are here,” she said. “They like Scranton because it is more affordable. We’ve had people come in from New Jersey and New York wanting to settle here because the cost of living is way too much there.”

As she looks towards the future, Ryder says she hopes to educate people on who refugees are and why they are coming to the United States – whether it is because they’re fleeing war or persecution. She would also like to begin a volunteer program for the community and work with parishes and schools.

“We have a lot of work and we cannot do it by ourselves,” Ryder said. “It would be very helpful to work with our parishes. When I was in Colorado, I collaborated with parishes who provided space for me so that I could do ‘Know Your Rights’ presentations, consultations and case management services right there in the church.”

For more information on Immigration and Refugee Resettlement Services provided by Catholic Social Services, contact Fikile Ryder at (570) 207-2283, x2121 in Scranton and (570) 455-1521, x4304 in Hazleton.

Catholic Social Services answers Christ’s Call by helping Ukrainian refugees

SCRANTON – Twenty-four long days and nights.

That is how long Khalil Yademovich Madadov spent seeking safety in the basement of his home in Eastern Ukraine after the Russian invasion of his country began Feb. 24, 2022. Joined by his wife, Leila, and their three young children in the makeshift shelter, the 37 year old described it as a terrifying time.

“I gathered my family at 4 a.m. and ran to the basement,” he said. “Only I went out to look for food and water.”

Madadov moved to Ukraine at the age of six and spent 30 years going to school, university, and making a living as a potato and tomato farmer. He says his life was “perfect” until Russia began launching attacks on his country.

“I began praying to God to help me and show me how to protect my family,” Madadov explained. “Good news came when we heard about a program called ‘Uniting for Ukraine,’ a program that saved our lives.”

In April 2022, the United States announced the ‘Uniting for Ukraine’ program. It provides a pathway for Ukrainian citizens and their immediate family members to come to the United



Khalil Yademovich Madadov, fourth from left, and his family arrived in the United States in June 2022 after the Russian invasion of Ukraine began. With the help of Catholic Social Services, the family has found housing in the Midtown Apartments in Scranton and their children are now enrolled in school. (Photo/Eric Deabill)

States and stay temporarily for a two-year period of parole. Ukrainians participating in the program must have a supporter in the United States who agrees to provide them with financial support for the duration of their stay in the United States.

Madadov’s sister, Lola Ahmetbeg, has lived in the U.S. since 2006 and is serving as sponsors for Madadov and his family.

After traveling four days by bus from

Ukraine to Turkey, Madadov and his family finally arrived in the United States last June, four months after the war began.

“I took a very deep breath. I knew then that my family was safe and I was safe,” he explained.

After arriving in Scranton, Madadov and his family turned to Catholic Social Services of the Diocese of Scranton for assistance.

Through Refugee Support Services, Catholic Social Services was able to help the family find affordable housing in the Midtown Apartments, enroll their two oldest children in school and help Khalil get the proper work authorization paperwork so he could get a job as a warehouse packer.

“Catholic Social Services helped us find the resources we need to succeed in this new country,” Madadov said gratefully. “Thank you for everything you have done for us!”

Gulnar Siddiqi, the case manager who has been helping the family, said Catholic Social Services is always willing to help people in the community.

“I was a refugee when I came to the United States and Catholic Social Services helped me so it is time that we have to stand up for each other and hold each other’s hands,” Siddiqi said.

With the continued assistance of Catholic Social Services, Khalil Madadov says he feels very comfortable in the United States at this time.

“Our neighborhood is good. We like it here very much,” he said. “Thank you very much Catholic Social Services!”

Catholic Social Services to recognize longtime Hazleton director in April

HAZLETON – After serving the people of Hazleton for nearly 35 years – including 28 years as director of Catholic Social Services’ Hazleton Office – Neil Oberto has decided to step back.

On Jan. 31, 2023, Oberto officially retired from his position, although he simply refers to the decision as a “transition” to be able to dedicate more time to his family.

“I have been truly blessed,” Oberto said in discussing his change with *The Catholic Light*. “My family (which includes his wife, four daughters and several grandchildren) came along for the ride this entire time.”

To honor Oberto’s dedication to the mission of Catholic Social Services and



Neil Oberto, the longtime director of Catholic Social Services’ Hazleton Office, stands inside Saint Joseph Food Pantry during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2000. After nearly 35 years working for Catholic Social Services, Oberto retired at the end of January 2023.

the people of the Hazleton area, Catholic Social Services will honor him at a retirement celebration/dinner on April 29 at 6:30 p.m. at the Hazleton Art League.

Information on how to purchase tickets will be available soon on the Diocese of Scranton’s website or by calling the Catholic Social Services Office in

Hazleton.

Oberto started his career with Catholic Social Services in October 1988 after previously working with Luzerne County Children & Youth. While the Hazleton native said he was hired for a counseling position, the job description incorporated much more.

“I was taking on counseling cases but also I was taking on social welfare cases,” he explained. “It was everything. You did everything.”

Oberto took over as director of the Catholic Social Services Hazleton Office in 1995. He saw programs begin, grow and change over all that time.

Continued on Page 19

Father Michael Finn, Exeter parish Pastor Emeritus, dies in Scranton

PITTSTON — Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, served as principal celebrant of a Pontifical Mass of Christian Burial for Father Michael E. Finn on Feb. 23 at Saint John the Evangelist Church in Pittston.

Father Finn, who was Pastor Emeritus of Saint Barbara Parish in Exeter, died Feb. 18 at Commonwealth Regional Hospital, Scranton, at the age of 72.

Born in Pittston on March 1, 1950, son of the late Patrick and Sally McLane Finn, Father Finn was a graduate of Pittston High School. He later attended Saint Mary's College in Lebanon, KY, and graduated from The University of Scranton.

He began his preparatory studies for the priesthood for the Diocese of Scranton at Saint Pius X Seminary in Dalton and completed his theological training and priestly formation at Christ the King Seminary, Olean, N.Y.

Following his ordination as a diocesan priest on May 7, 1977,

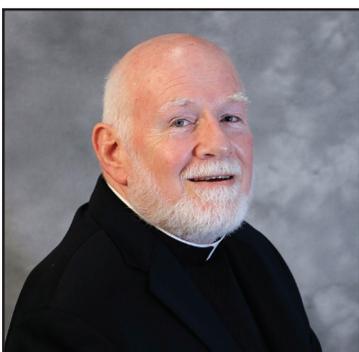
in the Cathedral of Saint Peter by Most Rev. J. Carroll McCormick, late Bishop of Scranton, Father Finn received a summer appointment as assistant pastor *pro tem* at Saint Ann Church in Shohola.

Three months later, the newly ordained priest was assigned as assistant pastor at Saint Matthew Parish, East Stroudsburg, where he served until September 1983, when he was named assistant pastor at Our Lady of the Snows Parish in Clarks Summit.

In July 1990, Father Finn received his first pastorate, at Holy Child Church in Mansfield, and was subsequently assigned as pastor of Saint Catherine of Siena Parish, Moscow, in July 1994.

He would serve as the Moscow pastor for 13 years until 2007, when he assumed the pastorate of Saint Thomas More Parish in Lake Ariel.

Father Finn received his final pastoral appointment in July 2013, at which time he was named pastor of Saint Barbara Parish in Exeter. He would serve for nine years in



Father Michael E. Finn

the pastorate in Exeter, where he remained in active ministry until his retirement and appointment as Pastor Emeritus in May 2022.

In addition to his parochial duties, Father Finn also served the Scranton Diocese as regional coordinator of Religious Education for Monroe and Pike counties; deanery coordinator for Pope Saint John Paul II's visit to the United States in 1979; and Dean of the Tioga County and Dunmore deaneries.

During his priesthood, Father Finn's great love of Sacred

Scriptures eventually led to a sabbatical leave for studies in the Holy Land. Accordingly, he became a well-known guide and leader for tour groups visiting the Holy Land.

"Welcome home, Mike," Monsignor John Bendik began the funeral homily for his dear priest-friend, whose home parish was Saint John the Evangelist.

Remarking about Father Finn's affinity for Sacred Scriptures and his passion for visiting the Holy Land on numerous occasions, Monsignor Bendik noted, "I had the privilege of visiting him there. He joined us as pilgrims and shared his insight into some of the special (places) where Jesus preached and walked."

The homilist told the congregation that he included the Beatitudes story among the funeral Mass readings because, "Father Mike loved this Gospel. He did what Jesus did. Jesus never wrote down his sermons, but he 'read' every one of them."

Monsignor Bendik explained, "Jesus read the hearts and souls of the people and saw their blessings. Father Mike read the eyes of his parishioners as he looked out at them and told them how blessed they were because they were followers of Jesus."

"He taught them how to live the message of the Gospel and be faithful disciples, and for that you loved him," he concluded.

Surviving are three sisters, Ann Teresa Engleman and Kathleen Masulis, both of Pittston; and Patricia Medico (Charles), Laffin; two brothers, Edward Finn (Peg), Brigantine, N.J., and W. Gordon Finn, Pittston; a sister-in-law, Cheryl Finn, Plains; numerous nieces and nephews and cousins.

In addition to his parents, Father Finn was preceded in death by two brothers-in-law, Edward Masulis and George Engleman; and a nephew, Brian Engleman.

Interment was held at Saint John the Evangelist Cemetery, Pittston.

Mayor of Ballina, Ireland, acknowledged during Saint Patrick's Parade Day Mass

SCRANTON — Before the 61st annual Saint Patrick's Parade took to the streets of downtown Scranton March 11, 2023, hundreds gathered to celebrate their faith and devotion to the patron saint of Ireland at the Cathedral of Saint Peter.

The Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, served as principal celebrant and homilist for the Parade Day Mass. As he began his homily, the bishop addressed the morning's weather.

"Not a few of us breathed a sigh of relief this morning as we dodged another proverbial bullet and snowstorm," Bishop Bambera joked.

Between delays and cancellations associated with the COVID-19 pandemic and a nor'easter last year that pushed the parade back a week



Mayor Mark Duffy of Ballina, Ireland, center, participates in the annual Parade Day Mass at the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton March 11, 2023. (Photo/Mike Melisky)

— coincidentally to the Feast of Saint Joseph — there have been a lot of challenges.

"My theory is the Scranton parade woes made it all the way to the halls of heaven. Neither Saint Joseph nor Saint Patrick

were willing to share center stage again, so here we are, just where we belong!" the bishop said to laughter.

During Mass, the bishop also acknowledged two special guests from Ballina, Ireland, in

attendance at the Parade Day Mass. Ballina is Scranton's sister city in Ireland.

"It is incredibly heartwarming to see the welcome that we've been given. We're following the same tracks that our ancestors would have travelled in much more difficult times so it's a privilege to be here in times of celebration," Ballina mayor Mark Duffy said.

As the second youngest of 13 kids, Mayor Duffy explained the importance of Saint Patrick in his life. He attended Mass at Saint Patrick's Church growing up and his home address is Saint Patrick's Way in Ballina.

He said attending Mass at the Cathedral of Saint Peter before the parade was "very emotional."

"Coming in the doors of the church, you see the colors and

the life and the vibrancy of this building. It is breathtaking. When you come into this church, to hear the quality of the music and the service and the welcome that the Bishop gave us, it is really a lifetime memory being created," Mayor Duffy added.

Bishop Bambera also reflected on the importance of Saint Patrick and the legacy he left.

"By his work, Saint Patrick fathered a people and a culture. From a little green island on the edge of the Atlantic, the message of God's mercy and love was generously shared," Bishop Bambera stated. "Countless numbers of lives have been touched. Our nation has been blessed. And we are all richer in our faith because of God's gift of Saint Patrick to our Church and to our world."

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.



“We live out our faith by how we serve one another.” That was the message from the Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, to the students, faculty and community of **Our Lady of Peace School in Clarks Green** and **Saint Clare/Saint Paul School in Scranton** at recent school Masses. The Bishop shared that during his summer trip to Ghana, he was touched by how the school children simplified Jesus’ teaching that God loves everyone and we return God’s love by being kind and respectful to our neighbors.



Students at **Saint Agnes School in Towanda** dressed like their favorite saints.



Mr. Joe Bayley, the maintenance man at **Saint Jude School in Mountain Top**, spoke with the pre-Kindergarten classes about tools and simple machines, as they learn about doing God’s work. In this photo, he helps student Sharon Atwal use a wrench to tighten a bolt.



Mrs. Ondish, the third grade teacher at **Holy Family Academy in Hazleton**, welcomed students to school dressed as Cat in the Hat during “Read Across America Week.”



The sixth grade class at **Saint John Neumann Elementary School in Williamsport** celebrated Black History Month by decorating their door for Frederick Douglass' birthday and showing how he impacted America.



Gio Hadlock, a Kindergarten student at **Saint Mary of Mount Carmel School in Dunmore**, celebrates the 100th Day of School.



Dominique Bridgeforth, a senior at **Notre Dame Jr./Sr. High School in East Stroudsburg**, distributes ashes to seventh grader Andrew Ahnert during the school's Ash Wednesday liturgy.



Mrs. Chase shared a story with the students from pre-K to second grade during the school's "Read Across America Week" celebration at **All Saints Academy in Scranton**.



Holy Rosary School in Duryea held its traditional "Bury the Alleluia" ceremony as they began their Lenten season of sacrifice.



Students from **Holy Cross High School in Dunmore** spent their Valentine's Day offering LOVE through acts of service this year. The student body created "Bags of Love," including a sandwich, drink and fruit, which were donated to Saint Francis of Assisi Kitchen in Scranton.



Kindergarten and pre-K students at **Epiphany School in Sayre** celebrated "Read Across America Week" with a Bookapalooza and picnic. As an extra surprise, their sixth grade buddies dressed as Dr. Seuss characters.

As part of the STREAM Initiative, the eighth grade class at **Good Shepherd Academy in Kingston** chose kindergarten "Reading Buddies." The "buddies" chose to read and discuss the Science of "The Very Hungry Caterpillar" and discussed listening skills, accurate recording, critical analysis, and drawing conclusions.





The Kindergarten class at **Notre Dame Elementary School in East Stroudsburg** crafted special crowns to wear to celebrate the 100th day of school.



Advanced Placement (AP) Biology students from **Holy Redeemer High School in Wilkes-Barre** perform hands-on science experiments as they embrace the scientific method learning process.



The first grade class at **Saint John Neumann Elementary School in Williamsport** celebrated “Read Across America Week” by doing classroom reading activities and pairing up to read to one another.



Mary Goffredo, a second grade student at **Wyoming Area Catholic School in Exeter**, won the school’s February “Caught Being Good” basket with a gift card to Barnes & Noble. Throughout the month, students who are kind and caught being good receive a ‘smile ticket’ and a chance to win each month’s themed basket.

Mueller Family McDonald’s donate \$11,500 to the Diocese of Scranton Scholarship Foundation



SCRANTON – Christina Mueller of the Mueller Family McDonald’s presented a \$11,500 check to the Diocese of Scranton Scholarship Foundation on March 2, 2023.

The donation was a result of the sixth annual Fry Fundraiser that kicked off National Catholic Schools Week Jan. 29 and ended Feb. 19, 2023. All nineteen Mueller Family McDonald’s participated by donating a portion of every large order of french fries sold during that period.

“We are so happy to be able to partner with the Diocese of Scranton to provide scholarship money for Catholic schools. We couldn’t be happier to be participating. We really enjoyed all of the Activity Nights and the engagement of our restaurants with the schools,” Christina Mueller said.

The Diocese of Scranton Scholarship Foundation helps students in our 19 schools experience a Catholic education and achieve their God-given potential in an academically excellent, safe, and spiritual environment.

Present at the check presentation were, from left, Kristen Donohue, Diocesan Secretary of Catholic Education/Superintendent; Christina Mueller, Mueller Family McDonald’s; and the Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton.

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Catholic Social Services prepared for increasing need with end of pandemic SNAP benefits

SCRANTON — Catholic Social Services of the Diocese of Scranton is preparing to assist more individuals and families with putting food on the table after a pandemic-era program that provided extra payments to Americans who quality of food stamps ended on March 1.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Congress permitted states to issue extra money to food stamp recipients under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP, a move advocates said would help



The Saint Joseph Food Pantry in Hazleton is one of the Catholic Social Services facilities ready to meet increasing needs with the reduction in SNAP benefits.

“In speaking to one of our senior citizen clients recently about the change, they were concerned about not having enough food for the month,” Mike Cianciotta, manager of the Saint Vincent de Paul Pantry in Wilkes-Barre, said. “I reassured them that we will be increasing the amount of products we provide at our food bank.”

Since the beginning of the pandemic, Catholic Social Services has continued to respond to increasing need at its food pantries.

For example, between January 2022 and 2023, the Carbondale food pantry saw nearly a 20-percent increase in the number of families served — going from 687 to 835 families in each respective month.

low-income families who lost their jobs amid the crisis.

The change affects Pennsylvania’s 1.9 million SNAP recipients. The average eligible household will lose \$95 a month for groceries and comes at a time when many grocery items — including milk, eggs and wheat — remain high due to inflation.

“We are already starting to see an abundance of new individuals and families,” LeeAnn Lywiski, manager of the Saint Joseph Food Pantry in Hazleton, said. “In one day alone, we registered 15 new families.”

Catholic Social Services operates food pantries in Carbondale, Hazleton and Wilkes-Barre and partners with Saint Francis Kitchen in Scranton, which operates the Saint Francis Client-Choice Food Pantry.

Catholic Social Services pantry managers expect people to have a lot of anxiousness and anxiety but want to reassure those in need their agency is ready to help people access the food they need and deserve.

“We are dedicated to making sure every client that walks through the door is served with the utmost respect. We strive to make sure our brothers and sisters feel better about their situation when they walk out our door,” Kara Gnall, Carbondale office supervisor, explained.

In Scranton, the numbers are even more startling.

Prior to the pandemic, the Saint Francis Client-Choice Food Pantry served approximately 300 families each month. Now, the facility is consisting hitting the 700 family mark.

“We get new families every day. We have committed to having fresh produce, milk, eggs and meat when we can. I am anticipating an even larger uptick” manager Adam Lynch said. “We have a Food Policy Council meeting once a month to discuss changes and what is coming next and this was in our last discussion, the food stamps and benefits changing and the need that will be increasing.”

Continued on Page 19

YOU Can Feed and Clothe People In Need!

More than 250 men, women and children rely on Saint Francis of Assisi Kitchen for a daily meal, food for their household, and clothing to keep warm.

These services include the daily midday meal and three evening suppers at the Kitchen in Scranton as well as weekly meals in Carbondale and Olyphant at parish locations and high-rise housing buildings. The Kitchen also operates a Client-Choice Food Pantry and a Free Clothing Store. In 2023 the Kitchen will launch a free mobile clothing trailer to bring clothing items to those in need in surrounding communities. Also, the weekly meal service will expand to Elmhurst.

All of this is only possible through the dedicated service of our staff and volunteers, and your generous financial support for the annual Host-for-a-Day campaign. For a donation of \$100 or more, an individual, a family, a business, a community organization or faith-based group can help sponsor a day’s meal at the Kitchen and be recognized as a “host” of that meal.



Now more than ever, our brothers and sisters in need are relying on us for help. Thanks to the generosity of individuals and organizations in our community, Saint Francis of Assisi Kitchen continues to serve the most needy among us with hot, nutritious meals and other services each day.

All past contributors to the campaign are receiving an appeal directly from the Kitchen through the mail. Donations can also be made by:

Calling the Kitchen at 570-342-5556, online at stfranciskitchen.org

or sending a check to: Saint Francis of Assisi Kitchen,
500 Penn Avenue, Scranton, PA 18509.

Thank You For Your Support!

The culmination of the campaign will return to an in-person celebration at Fiorelli’s in Peckville on Wednesday, May 3, at 6 p.m. RSVPs are required by April 3. Those who would like to sponsor the reception are asked to call the Kitchen at 570-342-5556.



Oberto retires from Catholic Social Services after nearly 35 years

Continued from Page 13

“When I started, our food pantry was a closet,” he reminisced. “Then the food closet turned into a walk-in closet ... then the food pantry went from a walk-in closet to what was a former auditorium in the school ... and then it had the whole lower level of the church.”

During all of his time, Oberto stressed his love for the Mountain City and its “close-knit” social service agencies that have worked together with the “CAN DO” attitude.

“We addressed needs as we needed to address them,” he stressed.

From programs involving adoption and foster care to maternal health and homeless, Oberto helped to oversee it all over the years.

“One of the things we tried to maintain throughout the years was a strong working relationship with the churches because we saw the work as living a call to service,” Oberto added.

Despite working with countless advisory and

governing boards, volunteers, staff members and community partners, Oberto feels his biggest accomplishment will always be serving the people.

“The most important thing would be the individuals and families themselves who sought support, no matter what that need may have been. Hopefully, in some way, we were able to help make a difference,” Oberto stated. “The work itself was based on respecting the God-given dignity and self-worth of those served, no matter what the circumstances may have been, and through that, I hope those being served recognized their own human value.”

Until his final day on the job, Oberto said he was also “personally enriched” by those served – and that is why he continued to emphasize that he is “truly blessed.”

Danielle Matarella, who worked with Oberto for several years, is now serving as the Greater Hazleton Regional Coordinator for Catholic Social Services. Anyone in need of assistance can contact her at (570) 455-1521.

SNAP changes to impact millions in PA

Continued from Page 18

The federal reductions to SNAP benefits is the first of two major changes taking effect.

Additionally, the 2023 cost of living adjustment for Social Security Income (SSI), which is set by the federal government, prompted an 8.7 percent increase to SSI income. SNAP eligibility thresholds – also set at the federal level – did not rise proportionally. Because of this, approximately 249,000 Pennsylvania households will experience a decrease in their base SNAP benefits by an average of \$40 per household, which also took effect March 1. Approximately 5,000 to 20,000 households will

lose SNAP altogether due to the SSI increase. These federal reductions will primarily affect older Pennsylvanians and seniors.

Catholic Social Services is only able to meet the increasing needs in our community because of generous donors who support its live-saving work.

“Northeastern Pennsylvania has always been known as the Valley with a Heart and because of many kind-hearted people, who donate \$20, \$50 or whatever they can, we are able to make sure food and other resources are available,” Joe Mahoney, Diocesan Secretary for Catholic Human Services and Chief Executive Officer of Catholic Social Services, emphasized.

Be a Friendly Face Get compensated for helping older adults for a few hours a week

Friendly Faces members provide light care services and receive compensation for the time they spend helping older adults in Lackawanna County lead the lives they choose.



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A Program of Telespond in Cooperation with the Lackawanna County Area Agency on Aging

If you'd like to learn more about participating in the Friendly Faces program, even if you are already taking care of a loved one, call Telespond at 570-346-7860 and ask for the Friendly Faces program coordinator.

"Son of the Father" Men's Lenten Retreat to be held March 31-April 1

DALTON - The "Be a Catholic Man" group is hosting an overnight Lenten Retreat from March 31 to April 1 at Holy Transfiguration Retreat Center in Dalton.

The experience will include various talks, Adoration, Confession and a Mass offered by

the Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton.

Also expected to participate in the retreat as speakers are Msgr. John Esseff, a Diocese of Scranton priest who served as retreat director and confessor to Saint Mother Teresa of Calcutta among many other apostles over

his 95 years. Monsignor will celebrate 70 years as a priest this May.

Rev. Pio Mandato, FMHJ, a Franciscan priest living as a missionary hermit; Rev. Kevin Miller, pastor of Most Holy Trinity Parish and Saint Brigid Parish; and Jesse Martin, associate publisher at Decided Excellence Catholic Media are also scheduled to participate.

The retreat will begin at 6 p.m. on March 31 and conclude after the Divine Mercy Chaplet around 2 p.m. on April 1.

The cost of the Lenten retreat is \$75 which includes overnight accommodations and two meals.

The retreat is being planned as a great way for all men to begin their Holy Week. All faithful, Catholic men are invited to attend this special spiritual opportunity.

For more information or to register for the retreat, visit beacatholicman.com.

Catholic Women's Conference planned for June 10



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With the Holy Spirit**

**Catholic Women's Conference
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April 18 - 6 PM-8 PM
St. Mary's Center,
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Scranton, PA**

Brief Talk by Reverend John Kowalczyk and Q&A by Rev. Kowalczyk, Dr. Kenneth Lilik, and Dr. Frank Schell

Tickets \$20
Register at www.prolifescranton.org
or Call (570) 343-5099

Light refreshments will be served.



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Before



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SCRANTON - Planning is already underway for the 2023 Catholic Women's Conference which will be held on Saturday, June 10, 2023, at Marywood University.

The theme for this year's conference is "With the Holy Spirit."

The conference's keynote speaker will be Kathleen McCarthy. McCarthy is a published author, Catholic radio broadcaster and has been a Catholic lay evangelist for more than 40 years.

Johnnette Benkovic Williams, founder and president of Women of Grace, will be the featured speaker at the conference. Women of Grace is a Catholic apostolate for women featuring a number of

outreaches including conferences, media, study groups and more.

Music for the conference will be provided by Maria Salamida, a graduate of Franciscan University in 2020, who currently works at the university as Coordinator of Liturgical Music.

In addition to speakers, the annual conference will feature the celebration of Mass with the Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton and the opportunity for the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

The registration fee for the 2023 Catholic Women's Conference is \$55. Student tickets (under 22 years of age) are \$20. Tickets can be purchased online at cwcnepa.com

ISLI retreat returns after pandemic hiatus

DALTON – Teddy Novak, a senior at Holy Cross High School, first experienced the International Student Leadership Institute (ISLI) as a freshman right before the COVID-19 pandemic hit in February 2020.

He had such a good time he knew he wanted to go back. He was thrilled that ISLI was able to make its triumphant return after a three-year hiatus last month.

“I had to come back and re-experience it,” he said.

ISLI is a peer-facilitated, faith-based leadership retreat designed by Fr. Thomas Chambers, C.S.C., at the University of Notre Dame. The retreat is designed to help high school students gain the knowledge and skills necessary to excel in both the leadership and membership roles of task-oriented groups.

“We break up into small groups and form circles and have reflective conversations,” Novak explained. “We reflect on who we are right now, who we have been and who we want to be.”



High school students participate in a small group activity as part of the International Student Leadership Institute on Feb. 17, 2023.

Annie Reilly, a parishioner of Saint Paul Parish in Scranton and freshman at Scranton Preparatory School, attended ISLI for the first time this winter.

“We did a lot of group projects,” she said. “We had a lot of tasks around five main ideas that included support, awareness, self-confidence, positive thinking and values.”

Reilly said the weekend retreat helped her grow in her leadership abilities.

“I came in personally knowing absolutely no one so they really helped me make friendships and meet new people,” she said. “I watched my facilitators and how they led our group. I feel like I’ve grown as a person and definitely as a leader too.”

During the weekend, the students participate in activities that help them learn about positive communication, develop self-motivational skills, learn problem solving, and examine different leadership styles.

The students also celebrate Mass together and participate in Adoration.

“I’m planning on coming again in the summer and coming back next year,” Reilly added. “I’ve already recommended it to multiple friends to come with me during the summer so I definitely recommend it for other people.”

The next ISLI retreat is scheduled to take place from June 20-23 at Marywood University in Lackawanna County.

Ecumenical luncheon held in Pittston

LAFLIN - More than 20 pastors representing local Christian denominations in northeastern Pennsylvania gathered at the Oblates of Saint Joseph Seminary in Pittston on Thursday, March 9, 2023, to take part in a “Journey Toward Unity” Pastor’s Luncheon.

Those who came together for the luncheon share a common desire to foster an ecumenical, loving, and supportive community of clergy in northeastern Pennsylvania.

Presentations were made by Deacon Darrell Wentworth (Virginia Beach) and Professor Matteo Calisi (Bari, Italy). Through their word and witness, these two internationally known speakers encouraged those in attendance to promote cooperation and unity among all



A pastor’s luncheon, “Journey Toward Unity,” was held at the Oblates of Saint Joseph Seminary in Pittston on March 9, 2023. (Photo/Dan Gallagher)

Christians in answer to Christ’s prayer, “That they may all be one.” (John 17:21)

Over the last 50 years Christian theologians have made great strides in overcoming

theological disagreements. During the luncheon, presenters showcased the importance of the grassroots to engage in relational ecumenism to show the culture that Jesus is alive in us.

Annual Saint Joseph Day
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St. Joseph Melkite Greek-Catholic Church

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MISSION MESSAGE

Lent – A Season of Blessing

*By Deacon Edward Kelly
Interim Director,
Pontifical Mission Societies*




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On the Second Sunday of Lent this year, we heard from the Book of Genesis: “Go forth from the land of your kinsfolk and from your father’s house to a land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, so that you will be a blessing.”

It must have been extremely difficult for Abraham in his old age to pick up and leave his native land and his people to go to some unknown place. Abraham had to change his plans, let go of his fears, and completely trust in God. He did — and God blessed him and he became a blessing.

Refugees around the world can easily identify with the sacrifice that Abraham made because they too have strong attachments to

their homelands. Land keeps the members of an ethnic group together. Land is security; it is wealth; it is home.

Too often today good faithful people are challenged by poverty, natural disasters, hatred, violence, war, oppression and persecution and find themselves leaving the land they love. Although displaced and forced to flee from their home, they still have another *home* — the Church. People who are hungry or who have no place to lay their head find comfort in the Church.

Missionaries supported by the Pontifical Mission Societies reach out to help feed them, to bring them basic health care, to provide temporary shelter, in short, to bring the love of Jesus to them reminding them that they are not alone. While we assist them in their needs, they remind us that we are all members of God’s family. The prayer we pray at every Mass comes alive — the *Our Father* — and as we pray for them they pray for us.

Pope Francis observes in *Evangelii Gaudium*, “Whenever our interior life becomes caught up in its own interests and concerns, there is no longer room for others, no place for the poor. God’s voice is no longer heard, the quiet joy of his love is no longer felt, and the desire to do good fades.”

The blessing embodied in the

Abrahamic mission, is also our blessing. When we pay attention to the whole world, we come to see those who might otherwise be overlooked. And if we open our eyes, our hearts are moved to respond. We become a blessing and, in turn, are blessed. That’s mission! Mission teaches us things that we cannot learn at school. What the missionary Saint Columban taught is true: “A life unlike your own can be your teacher.”

As we move through the holy season of Lent, let us recall both how much we are blessed and how we bless others. When was the last time someone blessed you, the last time someone told you that they appreciate that you are in their life and are grateful for your sacrifices? Now ask yourself: When is the last time *you* blessed someone else, the last time you made a sacrifice for someone you love or even for someone you don’t even know?

Lent is the season of blessing — the season of fasting, prayer, and almsgiving. We at the Pontifical Mission Societies would like to thank all of you for your prayers, sacrifices, and generous donations which truly are a blessing to the poorest of the poor all around the world. And remember, because of these blessings you are blessed and you will take that blessing to all eternity.



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Study: Trusted relationships with priests key to vocations

(OSV News) -- A new study cites trusted relationships with parish priests as a deciding factor in cultivating vocations and reducing the priest-to-parishioner ratio as essential for making such encounters possible.

The 2023 "State of Priestly Vocations in the United States" by Texas-based Vocation Ministry concludes that "the overall role of priests in fostering vocations is significant," with "around 70% of those ordained" reporting that they were invited by a priest to consider the calling.

"We know the priest is the number one factor for a young man

saying 'yes' to the priesthood," Vocation Ministry founder Rhonda Gruenewald told OSV News.

But as ordination numbers decline while many parishes close or merge, priests are becoming responsible for a greater number of parishioners, Gruenewald said. With increased administrative and pastoral responsibilities, clergy often have little time and energy to mentor teens and young men who might be interested in religious life.

"If that (priest-to-parishioner) number is lower, then priests can create relationships that foster vocations," said Gruenewald, whose report draws on data from

the Official Catholic Directory along with input from vocation directors and seminarians from around the country.

According to the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate at Georgetown University (CARA), in 2022 there were 34,344 priests (24,110 diocesan, 10,234 religious) and 452 priestly ordinations in the U.S., serving 16,429 parishes and 66.5 million "parish-connected" Catholics. Just 66% of the diocesan priests were in active ministry, with an average of one active diocesan priest per parish.



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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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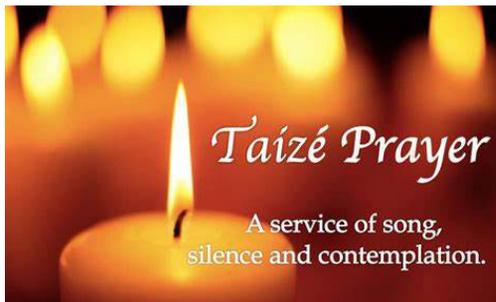
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Taizé Lenten Prayer at Wilkes-Barre church

WILKES-BARRE — Saint Nicholas Parish will host a Taizé Prayer “Around the Cross” Lenten service on Thursday, March 16, at 6:30 p.m. in the upper church of Saint Nicholas Church, 226 South Washington St., Wilkes-Barre.

Taizé is a meditative style of communal prayer, with sung repetitive refrains to create a gentle rhythm and a means to reflection and meditation.



The unique prayer service is offered to area faithful to enhance their Lenten experience and spiritual preparation for the

celebration of Easter.

Music ministry for the prayer service will be provided by Rob Yenkowski, director of music at King’s College, Wilkes-Barre, and the King’s Cantores Christi Regis performance choir.

Faithful are invited to participate free of charge; a free-will offering be accepted.

For more information, call the rectory office at (570) 823-7736.

Bishop to preside at OSJ Saint Joseph feast day celebration

LAFKIN — Bishop Joseph C. Bambera will serve as principal celebrant for the concluding celebration of the Solemnity of Saint Joseph – spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary and patron of the Universal Church – on Monday, March 20, at noon in the Chapel of the Oblates of Saint Joseph religious congregation in Laffin.

The feast day Mass will culminate the annual Solemn Novena to Saint Joseph currently being hosted by the Oblates of Saint Joseph in the Pittston area.

The Oblates’ nine-day Novena honoring their patron saint began March 11 and continues through Sunday, March 19.

The Novena is offered at the Oblates Chapel, located on Route 315, Laffin. Masses and devotions



are celebrated daily at noon and 7 p.m.

The noon-time Novena liturgies are livestream on the Oblates seminary Facebook page and broadcast live on JMJ Catholic Radio (104.5 FM).

Serving as this year’s guest preacher for the Saint Joseph Novena is Passionist Father Mark

Ward of Saint Ann Monastery, West Scranton.

Prior to the celebration of all Masses, sacramental confessions are heard and the Rosary is prayed.

A blessing with a first-class relic of Saint Joseph Marelo, founder of the Congregation of the Oblates of Saint Joseph, follows the Novena devotions.

All faithful are welcome to attend. For more information, contact the OSJ administrative office at (570) 654-7542.

Marian Devotion event on March 20

Fostering prayerful devotion to Jesus and Mary through recitation of the Rosary, Marian Devotion Ministries in the Diocese of Scranton continues to lead its Fatima Rosary Journey.

Prayer rallies and Rosary evenings are hosted throughout the Diocese and include the Rosary with chanted Scriptural mysteries, Fatima prayers and hymns.

The next Marian Devotion event is scheduled as follows:

Third Monday Marian Devotion — March 20, from 6 to 7 p.m., at the Oblates of Saint Joseph Chapel, Route 315, Laffin, followed by celebration of Mass.

To host an event or for more information, contact Ernie Pappa at (570) 241-8171 or email: singtomary@aol.com.



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Prayer Requests for Priests

The Daily Prayer Request for Priests schedule is as follows:

March 16, Capuchin Franciscan Father Pio Mandato; March 17, Father Michael Marchetti; March 18, Jesuit Father Joseph Marina; March 19, Jesuit Father Leonard Martin; March 20, Bishop Emeritus Joseph F. Martino; March 21, Father Paschal Mbagwu; March 22, Passionist Father Thomas McCann; March 23, Father Michael McCormick; March 24, Father Glenn McCreary, V.E.; March 25, Saint Joseph Oblate Father Paul McDonnell; March 26, Holy Cross Father Russ McDougall; March 27, Father Patrick McDowell; March 28, Father James McGahagan; March 29, Father Gerard McGlone; March 30, Monsignor Stephen McGough; March 31, Father John McHale; April 1, Pope Francis; April 2, Bishop Joseph C. Bambera; April 3, Father Connell McHugh; April 4, Jesuit Father Bernard McIlhenny; April 5, Jesuit Father Ronald McKinney; April 6, Father Patrick McLaughlin; April 7, Father Edward Michellini; April 8, Father Kevin Miller; April 9, Jesuit Father Patrick Mohr; April 10, Father Joseph Mosley; April 11, Father Joseph Motsay; April 12, Father Thomas Muldowney; April 13, Father Kevin Mulhern; April 14, Father Paul Mullen.



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Papal Intention for April 2023

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Canton parish to host presentation on Shroud of Turin

CANTON — The Knights of Columbus of Saint Michael Parish will host a one-hour presentation on the venerable Shroud of Turin on Saturday, March 25, at the Canton church.

Following the 4 p.m. vigil Mass at Saint Michael Church, the program on the mysterious burial cloth by Alex Piechochi will be offered at 5 p.m. in the parish's social hall. The public is welcome

free of charge.

Piechochi's detailed discourse, which will be accompanied by a full size replica of the Shroud, will explore the circuitous history and intriguing facts associated with the much-scrutinized fabric that for centuries has been piously believed in the Christian world to be the sacred wrapping of the crucified Lord.

A light meal and fellowship will follow the Shroud presentation. For more information, call the parish office at (570) 673-5253.

'Gorzkie Zale' Polish Lenten service planned for March 26

The parish community of Exaltation of the Holy Cross Church, 420 Main Road, Buttonwood section of Hanover Township, invites all faithful to participate in a Polish Lenten service on Sunday, March 26, the Fifth Sunday of Lent.

The 11th annual presentation of "Gorzkie Zale" (Bitter Lamentations), a moving Lenten service more than 300 years old, will be held in the church beginning at 3 p.m. The devotion will conclude with benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.

The service, which recounts the Passion of Jesus — from his arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane to his redeeming death on the cross — will be conducted by Father Richard Cirba, host pastor, and Father James McGahagan.

Musical accompaniment will be provided by Dominick

Costantino Jr. and the music ministry of Exaltation of the Holy Cross Parish, assisted by singers throughout the Diocese.

Incorporating prose and verse, chant and reading, prayer and meditation, the inspirational devotion reflects on the mystery of Christian redemption.

The Lamentations highlight the emotional nature of Polish spirituality, inviting all to share in the Lord's Passion as seen through the eyes of his Mother Mary.

The devotional service can be experienced by all through the use of bilingual booklets, with both Polish and English lyrics. A light social will follow the devotion.

Anyone wishing to participate with the choir may contact Mr. Costantino at (570) 706-6951.

For more information, call (570) 899-5080.

Blue Army Reparation Vigil

Due to the First Friday of April falling on Good Friday this year, 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 5** at Saint Joseph's Oblate Chapel, 1880 Highway 315, Laflin (Pittston).

Devotions begin Friday evening at 8 p.m. with recitation 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 and exposition of the Blessed Sacrament 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.

Music for the First Friday devotion is provided by Marian Devotion Ministries, led by Ernie Pappa.

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Who makes house calls?

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

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

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



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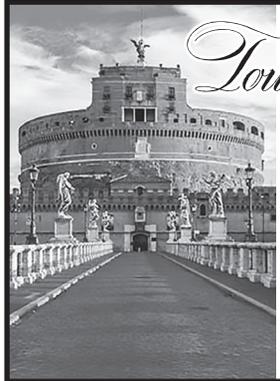
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May 29: Gettysburg Battlefield Tour, Museums, 2 meals - \$199

Call 570-821-3892 for more information.

Catholic Happenings Around the Diocese

Sixth Annual Parish Homemade Pierogi Sale — **MARCH 16-31**, sponsored by St. Catherine of Siena Parish, 220 Church St., Moscow; potato cheese or cabbage pierogi and haluski (cabbage & noodles) sold Monday thru Friday, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., and after all weekend Masses in Kelly Hall, located in the lower level of St. Catherine Church. Cost: pierogi, \$9 for baker's dozen; haluski, \$7 per quart. For orders, call Mary Ann (570) 266-3198 or Betty Ann (570) 842-6195.

Weekly Eucharistic Adoration — **MARCH 17**, hosted by St. Thomas More Parish at Lake

Ariel; exposition and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament is held every Friday from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. in the Chapel of St. Thomas More Church, 105 Gravity Road, Lake Ariel. Weekly adoration of the Eucharistic Lord includes recitation of the Divine Mercy Chaplet during the 3 p.m. hour, evening prayers at 5:30 p.m., concluding with benediction of the Blessed Sacrament at 6 p.m. All faithful are welcome.

Lenten Friday Potato Pancake Sale — **MARCH 17**, held from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. at St. Maria Goretti Church, Laffin Road, Laffin; sale is take-out only. Cost:

three potato pancakes for \$5.
Lenten Friday Pierogi Sales — **MARCH 17**, sponsored by Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish in Tunkhannock; packages of frozen potato & cheese pierogi sold every Friday during Lent from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. in Father Nallin Hall, located behind Nativity BVM Church, 99 E. Tioga St., Tunkhannock. Cost: \$8 per dozen. For more information, call (570) 836-3275.

Saint Patrick's Day Dinner — **MARCH 17**, sponsored by St. Lawrence Parish in South Williamsport; dine-in and take-out service available from 4 to 6:30 p.m. in the parish hall, 800 West Central Ave., South Williamsport. Dinner includes corned beef, ham & cabbage with potatoes, carrots, Irish soda bread and various desserts; hot dogs available for children. Patrons may provide their beverages of choice. Cost: adults, \$14; children, \$5. For more information, contact the parish office at (570) 326-1544 or stboniface@comcast.net.

Continued on next page

Healing Mass March 24 at Maronite Church

SCRANTON — Saint Ann Maronite Catholic Church, 1320 Price St., Scranton, will host a Saint Charbel Healing Mass on Friday, March 24.

The devotion begins at 4:30 p.m. with meditative prayers of the Lenten Friday Stations of the Cross, followed by adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and sacramental confessions with Monsignor John Esseff, Father Tony Youssef and Father Adib Salameh.

The Healing Mass celebration begins at 6 p.m., and will include the Anointing of the Sick and a special blessing of the holy relics of Saint Charbel.

All faithful are welcome.

PHL 'Sing for Life' Concert April 18

SCRANTON — The Scranton Chapter of Pennsylvanians for Human Life will sponsor its second annual "Sing for Life" concert and lecture on Tuesday, April 18, at 6 p.m. at Saint Mary's Center in downtown Scranton.

Ernie Pappa and Vanessa James of the Sacred Heart Singers in the Scranton Diocese will perform for the musical portion of the pro-life event, providing a selection of upbeat contemporary Christian songs and other popular favorites.

Featured speaker for the evening will be Very Rev. Archpriest John Kowalczyk, rector of Saint Michael Orthodox Church, Jermyn. Following his brief talk, Father Kowalczyk will lead an open dialogue session that will include Dr. Kenneth Lilik and Dr. Frank Schell.

Admission cost for the concert program is \$20 per person, including desserts and beverages.

For reservations, contact (570) 343-5099 or pahumanlife@yahoo.com.

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WINE TASTING & LUNCH AT BELHURST CASTLE • Aug. 3 \$199

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TURNING STONE CASINO • Aug. 20 \$99

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WILDWOOD CREST, NJ • Sept. 10-13 \$629

SALEM & BOSTON • Oct. 22-24 \$629
 MIRACLE OF CHRISTMAS, SIGHT & SOUND • Nov. 9 \$189 • Nov. 18 \$209

KOZIAR CHRISTMAS VILLAGE & OUTLETS • Nov. 26 \$179

Catholic Happenings Around the Scranton Diocese

Gift Card Raffle Fundraiser

— **MARCH 17-APRIL 9**, sponsored by the Youth/Young Adult Ministry of Exaltation of the Holy Cross Parish, 420 Main Road, Hanover Township; numbered tickets on raffle calendar matching the PA Lottery Evening drawing win \$75 or \$25 in gift cards. Raffle tickets cost \$20 each; all tickets are eligible to win special live Facebook drawing prizes. Easter Sunday grand prize drawing includes \$950 in gift cards. Raffle drawing chances may be ordered online at www.exhc.org or by calling (570) 328-4004.

Pysanky Egg Workshop

— **MARCH 18 & 19**, sponsored by the Ladies of Mary Society

at Exaltation of the Holy Cross Parish, 420 Main Road, Hanover Township; workshop offered on Saturday at noon and Sunday at 2 p.m. Cost: \$30, includes step-by-step instructions, all supplies and soda & water beverages. Baked goods and light refreshments may be purchased. Take-out kits available for \$20 each. For more information & reservations, contact Nichole Lasecki-Scalia at (570) 574-4453 or nicholelasecki6@gmail.com.

Weekend Pierogi & Soup Sales — **MARCH 18 & 19**, sponsored by SS. Peter & Paul Parish, 1309 West Locust St., West Scranton; pierogi and variety of soups are sold following Masses

every weekend on Saturday at 4 p.m. and Sunday at 11 a.m. Cost per order: pierogi, \$10/dozen; soups, \$8/quart.

Annual Saint Joseph Day Breakfast — **MARCH 19**, hosted by the Women's Society at St. Joseph Melkite Greek-Catholic Church, 130 N. Saint Frances Cabrini Ave., West Scranton (off lower Jackson Street); breakfast served from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Menu includes eggs, homemade pancakes, home fries, olives, honey-baked ham, breads, juice & coffee/tea. Cost: adults, \$12; children (ages six to 10), \$6. Take-out orders cost \$10/\$6 each (no beverages). Traditional St. Joseph Bread available in two-loaf packages for \$5. Breakfast tickets available at the door. For information, contact the rectory office (570) 343-6092 or at melkite.scranton@gmail.com.

Charismatic Renewal Regional Prayer Meeting — **MARCH 20**, sponsored by the Diocese of Scranton Catholic Charismatic Renewal; begins at 7:30 p.m. in the church hall at Queen of the Apostles Parish, 715 Hawthorne St., Avoca. Featured speaker: Karen McLain, diocesan liaison to the Catholic Charismatic Renewal and coordinator of the CCR Conference. Music will be led by Ted Mike; refreshments provided. All are welcome.

Tuesday Novena Devotion to Saint Anthony of Padua — **MARCH 21-JUNE 13**, hosted by Our Lady of Hope Parish, 40 Park Ave., Wilkes-Barre; 13-week Saint Anthony Novena devotion held on Tuesday evenings, beginning at 5:30 p.m. in the parish church. Novena theme: "Reflections on Life After Death." All faithful are welcome; for more information, call (570) 824-7832.

Parish Book Club Gatherings — **MARCH 22**, hosted by Visitation of the Blessed Virgin

Mary Parish in Dickson City; book club meets weekly on Wednesday at 6:30 p.m. in the parish center on Dundaff St. Featured book: *This is Happiness* by Niall Williams. Weekly gatherings also include soup servings. For more information, call (570) 489-2091.

Dinner & Program: "Pure Presence of Christ" — **MARCH 23**, sponsored by Altar & Rosary Society of Gate of Heaven Parish in Dallas; covered-dish dinner and program begins 6 p.m. in the parish center, 40 Machell Ave., Dallas. Featured presentation: "The Pure Presence of Christ"; guest speaker: Christopher Carr, Ph.D., religious studies professor at Misericordia University. All are welcome. For reservations, call (570) 675-2121.

Continued on page 31

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Fr. Cyril Edwards is the pastor of Mary, Mother of God Parish in North Scranton, and the chaplain of Holy Cross High School in Dunmore. He also serves as the Episcopal Vicar for the Northern Pastoral Region. Fr. Edwards can be seen rooting on the Holy Cross Crusaders or shouting 'GO BIRDS' during football season.

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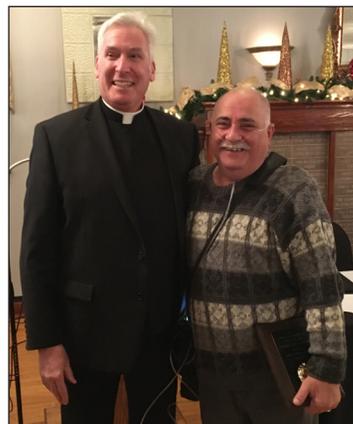
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MARCH SCHEDULE

| | 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 | | EWTN GALLERY | EWTN NEWS NIGHTLY (Encore) | | | | |
| 2:00 AM | LIVING DIVINE MERCY | | EWTN GALLERY | EWTN GALLERY | EWTN GALLERY | EWTN GALLERY | EWTN GALLERY |
| 2:30 AM | DOCTORS OF THE CHURCH | | | | | | |
| 3:00 AM | | EWTN RELIGIOUS CATALOG | SPECIALS | GOSPEL GLIMPSES | LIFE ON THE ROCK | PHILOSOPHER'S BENCH | FINDING GOD IN ALL THINGS |
| 3:30 AM | LENTEN PARISH MISSION | DEFENDING LIFE | | PAPAL AUDIENCE(3:15) | AT HOME WITH JIM AND JOY (Call in thurs) | | AT HOME WITH JIM AND JOY |
| 4:00 AM | | CHURCH UNIVERSAL | LORD HAVE MERCY | REFLECTIONS (4:15) | BOB AND PENNY LORD | THE CHURCH AND THE POOR | SAVORING OUR FAITH |
| 4:30 AM | EWTN LIVE (Encore) | SUNDAY BEST WITH FR GROESCHEL | WORK OUT YOUR SALVATION | THE HERESIES | THEY MIGHT BE SAINTS | BATTLE READY | ICONS |
| 5:00 AM | THE REFORMATION | EWTN BOOKMARK | THE PHILOSOPHER'S BENCH | DOMINICAN SISTERS | LIVING RIGHT WITH DR. RAY | DOCTORS OF THE CHURCH | FROM THE HEART WITH MOTHER ANGELICA |
| 5:30 AM | AID TO THE CHURCH IN NEED | CATHOLIC VIEW FOR WOMEN | LIFE IS WORTH LIVING | WALSINGHAM STORIES | | WORK OUT YOUR SALVATION | CATHOLICS COME HOME |
| 6:00 AM | ANGELUS WITH POPE FRANCIS | EWTN ORIGINAL PRODUCTIONS | | | | | |
| 6:30 AM | LENT: A SEASON OF GRACE | G.K. CHESTERTON | CHURCH AND THE POOR | THE MIRACLE HUNTER | 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 | | | | | | THE HOLY ROSARY |
| 7:50 AM | THE HOLY LAND ROSARY | LITANY OF BLESSED VIRGIN MARY | LITANY OF THE HOLY NAME | LITANY OF ST JOSEPH | LITANY OF THE PRECIOUS BLOOD | LITANY OF SACRED HEART | LITANY OF DIVINE CHILD |
| 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) | LENTEN REFLECTIONS |
| 10:00 AM | SUNDAY MASS ST. PETER'S CATHEDRAL | RELIGIOUS CATALOG | | | | | |
| 10:30 AM | | CHOICES WE FACE | MOTHER ANGELICA LIVE | LIVE WITH PASSION | FOCUS | CATHOLIC CLASSICS | MY CATHOLIC FAMILY |
| 11:00 AM | | OFOD/LIVE WITH PASSION/SPECIALS | | ST ANN'S WEEKLY NOVENA | MUSIC AND THE SPOKEN WORD | AT HOME WITH JIM AND JOY | AT HOME WITH JIM AND JOY |
| 11:30 AM | EWTN NEWS IN-DEPTH | EVENING PRAYER ENCORE | INSIDE THE BIBLE | ST. LUKE'S GOSPEL | EVENING PRAYER ENCORE | LUKE: MEEK SCRIBE OF CHRIST | BOB & PENNY LORD PRESENT |
| 12:00 PM | SUNDAY MASS (Encore) | THE DAILY MASS FROM ST. PETER'S CATHEDRAL, LIVE AT 12:10 p.m. | | | | | EWTN DAILY MASS (Encore) |
| 12:30 PM | | "DIOCESAN DATEBOOK" airs before and after Mass. | | | | | |
| 1:00 PM | (1:20PM) LITANY OF THE SACRED HEART | WOMEN OF GRACE | | | | STATIONS OF CROSS LIVE | EWTN RELIGIOUS CATALOGUE |
| 1:30 PM | | AT HOME WITH JIM & JOY | PRO LIFE WEEKLY | AT HOME WITH JIM & JOY | CHOICES WE FACE/OFOD | MARRIAGE...FOR BETTER FOREVER | DOMINICAN SISTERS OF MERCY |
| 2:00 PM | IN CONCERT | CALLED TO COMMUNION | SCRIPTURE AND TRADITION | FR. SPITZER'S UNIVERSE | THE JOURNEY HOME | LIFE ON THE ROCK | EWTN ON LOCATION |
| 2:30 PM | | | | | | | |
| 3:00 PM | THE CHAPLET OF DIVINE MERCY IN SONG | | | | | | |
| 3:20 PM | LIVE ADORATION FROM EWTN CHAPEL | | | | | | |
| 3:30 PM | LENTEN REFLECTIONS | THE DAILY MASS FROM ST. PETER'S CATHEDRAL, (Encore) | | | | | ROSARY FROM LOURDES |
| 4:00 PM | VATICANO | THE HOLY ROSARY | | | | STATIONS OF CROSS ENCORE | SUNDAY VIGIL MASS ST. PETER'S CATHEDRAL |
| 4:30 PM | SAVORING OUR FAITH | IMAGE OF GOD | ADVENTURE CATECHISM/ LUKAS STORYTELLER | TRUTH IN THE HEART | CAT CHAT | THE ROAMIN' CATHOLIC | |
| 5:00 PM | (DURING LENT)SUNDAY MASS AND EVENING PRAYER LIVE FROM ST PETER'S CATHEDRAL | EWTN BOOKMARK | THE CHOICES WE FACE | EWTN RELIGIOUS CATALOGUE | WEB OF FAITH 2.0 | DOCTORS OF THE CHURCH | GRAB YOUR CATECHISM |
| 5:30 PM | | SPECIALS | | | | | LORD HAVE MERCY |
| 6:00 PM | | EWTN NEWS NIGHTLY (Live) | | | | | THE MIRACLE HUNTER |
| 6:30 PM | SUNDAY PASSIONIST MASS | LIFE IS WORTH LIVING | THE HERESIES | LIVING DIVINE MERCY | VATICANO | SETTING CAPTIVES FREE | FINDING GOD IN ALL THINGS |
| 7:00 PM | THE DAILY MASS FROM ST. PETER'S CATHEDRAL, (Encore) | | | | | | DAILY MASS |
| 7:30 PM | SUNDAY MASS ENCORE (EWTN) | THE HOLY ROSARY | | | | STATIONS OF CROSS ENCORE | |
| 8:00 PM | (8:20) LITANY OF SACRED HEART | THE JOURNEY HOME (Live) | OFOD OR EVENING PRAYER | EWTN LIVE | THE WORLD OVER (Live) | EWTN NEWS IN DEPTH | EWTN CINEMA |
| 8:30 PM | CATHOLICS COME HOME | | MUSIC AND THE 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 | CHOICES WE FACE | FOCUS | LIVE WITH PASSION | WEEKLY NOVENA TO ST. ANN | HOLY ROSARY WITH MOTHER ANGELICA |
| 10:00 PM | | 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 | EWTN SPECIALS | | | | CATHOLIC SPHERE | ICONS SPOTLIGHT | |
| 11:00 PM | THE PHILOSOPHER'S BENCH | WOMEN OF GRACE | | | | | DEFENDING LIFE |
| 11:30 PM | CATHOLIC VIEW FOR WOMEN | REAL LIFE CATHOLIC | BEHOLD A MAN | LENTEN REFLECTIONS | BATTLE READY | CARPENTER'S SHOP | EWTN BOOKMARK |

Dunmore HNS hosts Communion Breakfast



The Holy Name Society of Saints Anthony and Rocco Parish in Dunmore hosted its 65th annual Communion Breakfast on Feb. 19 at La Buona Vita banquet hall in the borough. The event began with the 8:30 a.m. Mass at Saint Anthony of Padua Church, celebrated by Father David Cappelloni, host pastor, who also offered the invocation and benediction for the Communion Breakfast. Honored during the event as the recipient of the society's Pio M. Ferrario Christian Witness Award was well-known community activist Thomas "Chick" DePietro. Current Diocese of Scranton seminarian Thomas Dzwonczyk of North Abington Township served as principal speaker for the breakfast program. Pictured in the accompanying photos are Father Cappelloni presenting the prestigious Ferrario Award to Mr. DePietro, and Seminarian Dzwonczyk addressing those in attendance.

Saint Casimir feast celebrated in Pittston



Members of Knights of Lithuania Council 143 in Pittston celebrated the Feast of Saint Casimir with a Mass on March 5 at Saint John the Evangelist Church. A luncheon and meeting of the Council's Amber District followed the service in the Monsignor Bendik Center. Council 143 members, Amber District officers and clergy pictured are, front row, from left: Tom Wierbowski, Judy Stodolny, Mary Claire Voveris, Marilyn Fitzgerald, Dennis Palladino, Janet Palladino, Eileen Kelly, Jean Mihalick and Barbara Miller. Second row: John Kovaleski, Irene Kovaleski, Mike Loncoski, Cathy Talarico, Rob Kiska, Mary Portelli, June Supey, Sylvia Waxmonsky, Don Waxmonsky, Father Joseph Elston, host pastor; Deacon David Marx and Tom Miller. Third row: Greg Wolovich Jr., Bill Sodnik and Joe Francik. Absent from photo was Camille Stanis.

Catholic Happenings Around the Diocese

Designer Purse Bingo — **MARCH 25**, sponsored by St. Maria Goretti Parish in Laffin; doors open at 11 a.m. in the parish center, 42 Redwood Drive, Laffin. Bingo games held from 1 to 4 p.m. Admission fee: \$30, includes \$5 food voucher and 20 games (extra games available for added cost). Food and beverages available for purchase; event also includes basket raffle & bake sale. For tickets, contact the parish office at (570) 655-8956.

Tenebrae Service — **MARCH 26**, hosted by St. Boniface Parish in Williamsport; traditional Lenten service begins at 4 p.m. in St. Boniface Church, 326 Washington Blvd., Williamsport. Tenebrae presentation, featuring the St. Boniface Choir, offers dramatic and inspirational music and scripture reflecting Jesus' final moments before his crucifixion. All are welcome free of charge.

Lenten Friday Take-Out Food Sale — **MARCH 31**, sponsored by the Ladies of Mary Society at Exaltation of the Holy Cross Parish, 420 Main Road, Buttonwood, Hanover Township; take-out only sale held from 2 to 6 p.m. in the parish hall. Menu items include: pagach (onions optional), \$4 per slice; clam chowder, \$10/

quart; and haluski, \$7/quart. All orders must be placed in advance by March 18. Contact www.exhc.org or call (570) 824-5941.

Lenten Friday Fish Bake — **MARCH 31**, sponsored by St. Joseph the Worker Parish in Williamsport; take-out fish dinners sold from noon to 5:30 p.m. (or until sold out) in the parish's Fleming Center, 720 West Fourth St., Williamsport. Dinners include baked fish, macaroni & cheese, green beans, stewed tomatoes, cole slaw/bread and dessert cake. Cost: \$12 per dinner.

Lenten Friday Soup & Food Sale — **MARCH 31**, sponsored by the Social Concerns/Respect Life Ministry at Queen of the Apostles Parish in Avoca; pick-up of advance orders available from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. and 4:30 to 6 p.m. in the parish hall, 742 Spring St., Avoca. Menu items include: red/white clam chowder, \$10/quart; vodka sauce, \$10/quart; and haluski, \$7/quart. Order deadline is Sunday, March 26; call Carol at (570) 457-8843, or Ruth at (570) 457-2111.

Palm Sunday Paschal Seder Supper — **APRIL 2**, hosted by St. Martha Church, 260 Bonnieville Road, Fairmount Springs; traditional meal recounting the

Suicide Grief Support series set for April

SCRANTON — The Catholic Mental Health Ministry in the Diocese of Scranton announces a series of monthly suicide grief support meetings will be offered at two parish locations in the Diocese beginning in April.

Based on the eight-part film series, "When a Loved One Dies by Suicide," the grief support gathering will be hosted at Saint Ann Monastery Basilica Parish in West Scranton, starting on Thursday, April 20.

The meetings, which will be held at 6:30 p.m., will continue on

the third Thursday of each month through November.

For more information, contact deaconed@stpeterscathedral.org.

The Catholic parishes of Ascension, Forest City, and Saint Katharine Drexel, Pleasant Mount, will co-host the suicide grief support series beginning on Tuesday, April 18.

The series gatherings will continue at 6:30 p.m. on the third Tuesday of each month through November. For more information, contact carl.albright49@gmail.com.

Jewish Passover begins at 5 p.m. Supper includes roast lamb, green beans, matzo (unleavened bread), and haroses (apple & walnut salad); event incorporates Scripture readings, prayers and songs focusing on the Christian significance of the Passover celebration. Requested donation: \$10; reservations due by March 27. Call Janet (570) 864-2494; Rebecca (570) 256-7329; or email rdmicca@aol.com.

Palm Sunday Breakfast — **APRIL 2**, sponsored by the Knights of Columbus, Jessup/Peckville Council 10729; family breakfast served from 8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in Holy Ghost Hall at La Salle Academy, 309 First Ave., Jessup. Cost: adults, \$12; children (ages 12 & under), \$6. Tickets available from K of C Council members.



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Holy Week/Easter Services Schedule

CTV: Catholic Television of the Diocese of Scranton, will broadcast the following Holy Week and Easter services from the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton, celebrated by the Most Reverend Joseph C. Bambera, D.D., J.C.L., Bishop of Scranton.

Palm Sunday Mass, April 2 at 12:15 p.m.

Chrism Mass, Tuesday, April 4 at 4 p.m.

Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday, April 6, at 5:30 p.m.

Good Friday Commemoration of the Lord's Passion, April 7 at 12:10 p.m.

Easter Vigil Mass on Holy Saturday, April 8 at 8:00 p.m.

Easter Sunday Mass, April 9 at 10:00 a.m.; encore at 5:30 p.m.



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May the blessings of God
keep you happy and healthy on
St. Patrick's Day
and always!



WANTED WWII MILITARY SOUVENIRS

**Paying CASH on the spot
for U.S./German/Japanese:**

Medals, Uniforms, Helmets, Hats, Armbands, Flags,
Daggers, Swords, Bayonets, Knives, Pistols, Rifles,
Equipment, Pictures, Letters, Currency, Coins, etc...

Contact Sam at (570) 814-8287
Please leave a message if I'm unavailable.

(I am a private collector not a dealer and would be honored to purchase
your military souvenirs to display in my collection.)