

The Catholic Light

DIOCESE OF SCRANTON

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Milestone Moment

Mass celebrates 175th Anniversary of Founding of Sisters of Christian Charity

WILKES-BARRE – Between the beautiful entrance hymn of ‘Exult and Sing,’ and the crowd of more than 300 friends and colleagues looking back at her, Sister Ellen Fischer, S.C.C., admits shedding a few tears as she approached the ambo to deliver the first reading at a Mass of Thanksgiving celebrating the 175th Anniversary of the founding of the Sisters of Christian Charity.

The special Mass also served as a reason to celebrate the religious order’s 150 years of service in the Diocese of Scranton.

“To be honest, I started the liturgy filled with tears as we looked out,” Sister Ellen said. “To see the amount of people here supporting us, people that we have served with through our many, many years, it was just so humbling.”

As she sat in the crowd, Sister Chiara Marie Stimpfle, S.C.C., was similarly overcome with emotion.

“This day has been so beautiful. I wasn’t expecting it to be as beautiful as it was,” Sister Chiara Marie said. “Just seeing all the Sisters here today celebrating and the songs that are so special to our community and congregation – and to have them sung here at Saint Nicholas Church – it



Sisters of Christian Charity participate in a Eucharistic Liturgy to celebrate the 175th anniversary of their Congregation at Saint Nicholas Church in Wilkes-Barre on Saturday, Nov. 4, 2023. (Photo/Mike Melisky)

just deepened and awakened in me more of that call, that charism, to this particular community.”

The special Mass, which took place on Nov. 4, 2023, was held at Saint Nicholas Church, because that is where seven German speaking Sisters of Christian Charity were first welcomed in the Diocese of Scranton.

When Pauline von Mallinckrodt, Foundress of the Sisters of Christian Charity, first came to the United States due to political oppression in Germany in 1873, Father Peter Conrad Nagel, first resident pastor of Saint Nicholas Church, welcomed her to his parish.

Continued on Page 2

Jubilee Mass for Women and Men Religious celebrates 1,865 years of service



Sister Giuseppe DaBella, R.S.M., smiles at the conclusion of the 2023 Jubilee Mass for Women and Men Religious.

SCRANTON – For the last 70 years, Sister Verna Marie Stopper, S.C.C., has selflessly served her community, but through the grace of God, she feels like the lucky one.

“It was the people that made my life. They were always willing to work with me,” she said. “They were willing to work as a team to bring God’s love and blessings to their surroundings.”

For the first ten years of her public ministry, Sister Verna Marie was involved in education. The first seven of those years she taught seventh grade at Saint Ann’s Academy in Wilkes-Barre.

“I called it my ‘seven years of plenty’ because there

was plenty of happiness. God was good during all those years,” she explained.

For the following five decades, Sister Verna Marie worked at Divine Providence Hospital in Williamsport.

“My ministry there was in finance and we had wonderful employees and wonderful people that worked with us,” she added.

Sister Verna Marie was one of 27 women and men religious recognized at the 2023 Jubilee Mass for Women and Men Religious on Nov. 5, 2023, at the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton.

Continued on Page 3



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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175th Anniversary Mass celebrated for Sisters of Christian Charity

Continued from Page 1

Father Nagle was instrumental in having the Sisters go to other German-speaking parishes throughout the Diocese of Scranton.

“We look back in gratitude to Bishop William O’Hara, first Bishop of the Diocese of Scranton, for giving permission in the 1870s for the first Motherhouse, named Mallinckrodt Convent, to be built in the United States in Wilkes-Barre,” Sister Joann Marie Aumand, S.C.C., Provincial Superior, North American Province, explained in a special greeting before Mass began. “Many of you remember and perhaps are even graduates of Saint Ann’s Academy which was part of Mallinckrodt Convent at the time.”

Over the last 150 years, the Sisters of Christian Charity have maintained ministries in many communities throughout the Scranton Diocese, including Wilkes-Barre, Scranton, Williamsport, Muncy, Pittston, Bastress, Honesdale, Dushore, Hazleton, Luzerne, Duryea, Kingston, and Mountain Top.

“Over these 150 years, we’ve been in education, healthcare,

pastoral work, and reaching out to the poor and those who need us,” Sister Joann said. “We respond to the needs that the church has at the particular time.”

The Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, served as principal celebrant for the Mass of Thanksgiving. During his homily, he gave thanks for the blessing of the Sisters of Christian Charity and acknowledged many of their great contributions.

“We are richly blessed in what you have given to us, what you continue to share, and what we hope and pray will be your presence here for many years to come,” Bishop Bambera said.

The bishop also fondly recalled that while he had been taught for 12 years by I.H.M. (Immaculate Heart of Mary) Sisters, during his first assignment as a young priest at Saint Mary of the Assumption Parish in Scranton, it was the Sisters of Christian Charity who gave him the “real education.”

“In many ways, Sisters, you served truly as mentors to me,” Bishop Bambera noted. “You prayed with me and, I know, for me. You became colleagues and dear friends.”

While several dozen Sisters



Sister Maria Angeline Weiss and Sister Mathilde DeLucy lead the Responsorial Psalm during the 175th Anniversary Mass on Nov. 4, 2023.



Bishop Bambera delivers the homily during the Mass.



Several Sisters of Christian Charity listen to Bishop Bambera's homily.

from across the United States attended the anniversary Mass in person, many other Sisters from the Philippines, Germany, Argentina, and Chicago participated by livestream.

Following Mass, a reception was held at Saint Nicholas – Saint Mary School.

Reflecting on the mission of the religious order, Sister Chiara Marie, who recently spent three years teaching at Saint Jude School in Mountain Top, said it is all about bringing God’s love to all people.

“Our primary mission is our consecration to God, that we live in community, and to receive and give God’s love for others. The way we live that out is different, whether it’s teaching, healthcare, or parish work, but we’re all united in that same mission,” she said. “It’s a huge calling and

we don’t do it perfectly, but it is worth striving for!”

The Mass of Thanksgiving was especially significant for another reason.

It also marked the Sisters in the United States coming together and becoming one North American Province.

“Today, we have become one as a North American Province. Our eastern and western regions have become one under one leadership. We’ve been working towards communion for several years and today it’s a reality. A beautiful day – November 4th – Mother Pauline’s first vow day,” Sister Joann said. “It has always been a significant day in the history of our congregation and so we chose this day to celebrate a new beginning of our history in the United States.”



Several Sisters of Christian Charity served as music ministers and instrumentalists for the Anniversary Mass at Saint Nicholas Church.

Jubilee Mass recognizes men and women in consecrated life

Continued from Page 1

The Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, served as principal celebrant and homilist. In welcoming the jubilarians to the Mass, he said the annual celebration is always a highlight of the year.

“This is one of those Masses to which I look forward every year, not only to see dear friends and colleagues from throughout my years as a priest and bishop, but especially to acknowledge the unique and the cherished gifts that you are to our Church,” Bishop Bambera said.

Collectively, the bishop noted this year’s jubilarians have given 1,865 years of service to the Church.

“Your willingness to engage and serve the people of God, especially the marginalized, immigrants, the poor, and all those oppressed ... is a unique and powerful witness to the presence of God at work in our world,” the bishop noted during his homily. “What is so inspiring about your lives is that all that you do in service of God’s people, you do far more often than not in quiet, simple, loving, yet powerful ways – feeding, healing, teaching, praying and building God’s kingdom.”

Sister Theresa Petz, I.H.M., was recognized at the Jubilee Mass for 60 years of service.

“I really wanted to come to thank our Lord,” she said. “I loved teaching and I taught all my life. I was all over, in North Carolina and New York.”

While Sister Joyce Marks, I.H.M., joked that she won’t hit her 50th anniversary until Dec. 16, she said being able to attend Mass with the Bishop was very special.

“It means a lot. We actually started celebrating back at Our Lady of Peace Residence in July,” Sister Joyce explained.

Sister Kathryn Kurdziel, I.H.M., Diocesan Delegate for Religious, congratulated all of the women and men religious celebrating jubilees – and noted two of women have given 80 years to consecrated life.

“We thank them for their original ‘yes’ to the mystery of their call and for their lives of prayer, fidelity, and extraordinary dedication to the mission of the Church and their communities,” Sister Kathy said.



The Jubilee Mass for Women and Men Religious was held on Nov. 5, 2023, at the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton. Participating in the Mass were, front row, from left: Sr. Kathy Kurdziel, I.H.M., Diocesan Delegate for Religious; Sr. Eileen Mary Coleman, I.H.M., 60 years; Sr. Joyce Marks, I.H.M., 50 years; Sr. Benedict Joseph Watters, R.S.M., 75 years; and Sr. Giuseppe DaBella, R.S.M., 75 years. Second row, from left: Sr. Verna Marie Stopper, S.C.C., 70 years; Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton; Sr. Anne Fleming, R.S.M., 75 years; Sr. Miriam Joseph Reinhardt, I.H.M., 60 years; and Sr. Theresa Petz, I.H.M., 60 years. (Photo/Mike Melisky)

2023 Jubilarians

Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (I.H.M.)

80 Years

Sister Jean Toolan, I.H.M.

75 Years

Sister M. Carleen Boehlert, I.H.M.

Sister M. Josaire Brady, I.H.M.

Sister Maureen Cryan, I.H.M.

Sister Mary Jane Maloney, I.H.M.

Sister Mary Joy O'Neill, I.H.M.

Sister Mary Rassley, I.H.M.

Sister M. Mercille Schneider, I.H.M.

60 Years

Sister Mary Ann Adams, I.H.M.

Sister Eileen Mary Coleman, I.H.M.

Sister Dolores Dunn, I.H.M.

Sister Marianne Knight, I.H.M.

Sister Theresa Petz, I.H.M.

Sister Miriam Joseph Reinhardt, I.H.M.

50 Years

Sister Joyce Marks, I.H.M.

Sisters of Mercy of the Americas (R.S.M.)

80 Years

Sister Stephanie Olek, R.S.M.

75 Years

Sister Giuseppe DaBella, R.S.M.

Sister Anne Fleming, R.S.M.

Sister Linus Loesch, R.S.M.

Sister Benedict Joseph Watters, R.S.M.

70 Years

Sister Agnes Therese Brennan, R.S.M.

Sister Ellen Mary Bringenberg, R.S.M.

Sister Jane Frances Kennedy, R.S.M.

60 Years

Sister Elizabeth Ann Brody, R.S.M.

Sister Kathleen Mary Smith, R.S.M.

Sisters of Christian Charity (S.C.C.)

70 Years

Sister Verna Marie Stopper, S.C.C.

Oblates of Saint Joseph (O.S.J.)

70 Years

Rev. Raymond Tabon, O.S.J.

SPEND THIS ADVENT SEASON WITH THE SAINTS



The 2023 Advent Season will run from Sunday, Dec. 3 to Sunday, Dec. 24.

(OSV News) - Advent prepares us for Jesus' coming at Christmas and for his coming into our lives afresh. And no one knows how to get ready to welcome Christ better than the saints.

They express their love for him by putting Him first in their hearts. They make room for Him by clearing out the clutter of sins and faults.

The saints pursue holiness by embracing the Lord's teaching and lifestyle. They respond to His graces by

practicing spiritual disciplines like prayer, Scripture study, fasting and almsgiving. And the saints express their love for God by reaching out to others with the Good News. They especially dedicate themselves to caring for the poor and marginalized.

So, let's make the most of this Advent and spend it with three representative saints, imitating the ways that they opened their hearts to Jesus.

Advent anticipates not only Jesus' coming to us as a baby, but it also expects

his final coming in glory. Since the Father alone knows the day of the end, the Lord cautioned us always to be watchful and to conduct ourselves in uprightness. When Jesus comes as the Bridegroom to wed the church, we do not want to be as unprepared as the five foolish virgins in the parable (see Mt 25:1-13).

So this Advent, following the saints, may we decide always to love God above all and to do the loving thing in every circumstance.

St. Thérèse of Lisieux (1873-1897)

We are attracted to St. Thérèse because she was an ordinary person. Raised in a faithful Catholic family, she was doted on by her father, teased by her sisters and suffered the pain of loss. Her youth was troubled by her mother's death and by two sisters entering the convent. But on Christmas 1887, Thérèse experienced a conversion that released her spiritual sadness. "Love filled my heart, I forgot myself, and henceforth I was happy," she said.



The next year, when Thérèse was only 15, the bishop allowed her to join the Carmelite convent at Lisieux. She wanted to become a missionary and a martyr, but soon realized that neither option was open to a cloistered nun. So she sought the Holy Spirit for another way to serve the Lord Jesus. Reflecting on Scripture, Thérèse learned to do the loving thing in every situation, which she discovered was the fuel that fired the faith of martyrs and saints. Doing the least of actions for love became the secret of her "little way."

What does a 19th-century nun have to do with us? Juggling the duties of family, work or school, navigating freeways and keeping up with the digital world, we don't have much time for pursuing holiness, do we? But that's where Thérèse sets the example for us. Her simplicity shows us that we, too, can be holy.

Venerable Matt Talbot (1856-1925)

For 16 years, Venerable Matt Talbot was a daily drunk. Then one day, an unanticipated conversion transformed him and he became a model penitent following Jesus Christ.

As a child of a poor family in Dublin, Matt had to forgo school for a job. After a year of basic education, he started working for a wine seller. And Matt started drinking heavily at the age of 12.

His father beat him and made him change jobs - but nothing could stop Matt's habit. He said that when he was intoxicated, he occasionally thought about the Blessed Mother and prayed an off-handed Hail Mary. Matt speculated later that she had something to do with his conversion.

One day in 1884 everything suddenly changed. Matt had been out of work several days and expected his buddies to take him drinking. When they snubbed him, he made a decision that transformed his life.

When he arrived at home, his mother said, "You're home early, Matt, and you're sober!" He replied, "Yes, mother, I am and I'm going to take the pledge." The next day he went to confession and took the sobriety pledge for three months.

But Matt extended three months of going without alcohol into 41 years. In 1891, Matt found community support by joining the Franciscan Third Order. He lived the rest of his life quietly, working and praying. St. Paul VI declared him venerable in 1975.

At a time when addictions to alcohol, other drugs and pornography are running rampant, Matt Talbot stands as an exemplar of the ways to freedom and holiness through Jesus.



Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati (1901-1925)

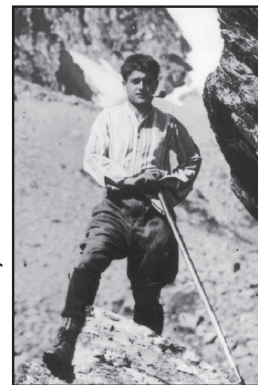
Pope St. John Paul II celebrated Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati as a man of the Beatitudes. Athletic and strong, he devoted himself to the weak and malformed. He was wealthy, but he lived in poverty so he could give everything to the poor. He was gregarious, but a lover of solitude. He was rambunctious, the life of every party, and a practical joker, but at prayer he was solemn, reflective and quiet.

As a teen, Pier Giorgio made friends of the poor in Turin's streets and gave them whatever he had - his money, shoes, or overcoat. "Jesus comes to me every morning in holy Communion," he replied to a friend who asked why. "I repay him in my very small way by visiting the poor. The house may be sordid, but I am going to Christ."

Pier Giorgio saw the need for social change to relieve the causes of poverty. At the university, he decided to major in mechanical engineering so that he could work with miners, who were especially disadvantaged. He was a leader in student political organizations and actively opposed Benito Mussolini and the Fascists.

At the same time, he was the organizer of student parties, games and ski trips to the Alps, where he would lead his friends in prayer. Afterward, they relaxed and enjoyed food, wine, cigars and songs.

Pier Giorgio has become the hero of contemporary young Catholics. They recognize his high Christian ideals, still held while pursuing the same pleasures that they enjoy. They gravitate to this charming saint who delighted in reciting the poetry of Dante, praying the rosary in a booming voice and spending a night in adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.



Pittston parishes to host acclaimed organist for 'Christmas Celebration' concert Dec. 10

PITSTON — On Sunday, Dec. 10 at 3:00 p.m., the parishes of Saint John the Evangelist and Saint Joseph Marelo will present “A Christmas Celebration,” a fun, family-friendly Christmas organ concert with guest organist Greg Zelek, principal organist of the Madison Symphony Orchestra in Wisconsin.

The concert will take place at Saint John the Evangelist Church, 35 William Street in Pittston, and will feature festive organ music for the Christmas season and the singing of Christmas carols accompanied by Greg on the church’s recently refurbished 1930 Kilgen organ.

Praised as “extraordinary in the classical music world” and a “musical star,” Zelek is the Principal Organist of the Madison Symphony Orchestra and Curator of the Overture Concert Organ, where he oversees all of the MSO’s organ programming. Since September 2017, Greg has proudly held the Elaine and Nicholas Mischler Curatorship.

In 2016, Greg was chosen by The Diapason magazine as one of the Top “20 Under 30” organists, a feature which selects the most



successful young artists in the field.

For more information about the concert, please contact Saint John’s organist and director of music, Mike Sowa, at the parish office at (570) 654-0053.

Lackawanna, Luzerne parishes collaborating for Advent service

Four regional Catholic parishes in the Diocese of Scranton are continuing their annual tradition of collaboration in presenting two special programs during the Advent season.

“Come, Adore on Bended Knee,” an Advent service of word and song, will be presented at churches in Lackawanna and Luzerne counties during the Second Week of Advent. Both services are open to the public free of charge.

This year marks the 14th year for the collaborative effort among the parishes in the two neighboring counties, who join together to enhance the joyful anticipation of Christmas.

The first service will be held on Sunday, Dec. 10, at 6:30 p.m., hosted at Saint Anthony of Padua Church, 208 Smith St., Dunmore.

The second program will be presented on Thursday, Dec. 14, beginning at 6:30 p.m. at Holy Family Church, 574 Bennett St., Luzerne.

Music for the Advent programs features a combined choir from Holy Family Parish, Luzerne, and Saint Ignatius Loyola Parish, Kingston (Monsignor David Tressler, pastor); and the Dunmore parishes of Saints Anthony and Rocco Parish and Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish (Father David Cappelloni, pastor), as well as several soloists and an instrumental ensemble.

The Directors of Music at the participating parishes are Linda Houck, Joseph Moffitt and Geri Seitzinger, respectively.

“Come, Adore on Bended Knee” offers an opportunity to embrace the season of Advent and its spirit of preparation for Christmas through Scripture readings and musical selections.

For more information about the upcoming events, contact the parish offices at Holy Family (570) 287-6600; Our Lady of Mount Carmel (570) 346-7429; or Saints Anthony and Rocco, (570) 344-1209.

Advent Taizé Prayer set for Wilkes-Barre parish

WILKES-BARRE — Saint Nicholas-Saint Mary Parish will host an Advent Taizé Prayer service on Thursday, Dec. 14, 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, featuring sung repetitive refrains to create a gentle rhythm that invites reflection and meditation.

The unique prayer service is offered to area faithful to enhance

their Advent season of prayer and spiritual preparation for the celebration of Christmas.

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 parish office at (570) 823-7736.



Marywood slates Christmas season celebration

SCRANTON — “Making Spirits Bright,” Marywood University’s annual celebration of the Christmas holiday season through festive programming, community service and spiritual opportunities, will kick off on Wednesday, Dec. 6, with the signature event — Marywood’s Annual Christmas Tree Lighting.

The popular tree lighting ceremony will begin at 4 p.m. in the Rotunda of the Liberal Arts Center on campus. The event is free and open to the public.

The public also may view the Marywood Christmas Tree during open hours at the Liberal Arts Center, Monday through Friday, Dec. 6-22, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Marywood will host an Advent prayer service on Wednesday, Dec. 13, at 6:30 p.m. at the Chapel of Our Lady of Lourdes in the IHM Center, adjacent to the Marywood campus (1512 University Ave.)

The bilingual prayer service is being coordinated by IHM Associates Alejandra Marroquin and Rufino Cano.

Williamsport Deanery holds 40 Hours Eucharistic celebration



Father Glenn E. McCreary, V.E., pastor, Saint Boniface and Saint Lawrence Parishes, incenses a monstrance holding the Blessed Sacrament at Saint Boniface Church in Williamsport on Oct. 26, 2023.

WILLIAMSPORT — Calling it a “beautiful opportunity” to be in the presence of our Lord, Livia Schwartzman was one of many people who participated in a 40 Hours Eucharistic Celebration in the Williamsport Deanery at the end of October.

“It is a perfect opportunity to be centered on Christ and to be fully united to him,” she said.

Schwartzman, a parishioner at Saint Joseph the Worker Parish in Williamsport, was happy to see parishioners from many parishes participate over the course of a three-day period from Oct. 24-26.

“There is a lot of evil and division all over the place and Christ is unifying and we just need to keep coming to Him to see the fruit that He produces,” Schwartzman added.

During the 40 Hours Eucharistic Celebration, people were invited to attend Mass, Daily Adoration and Evening Prayers at three different churches in Lycoming County.

“Forty Hours devotions are three days, three Eucharistic Days, when the Blessed Sacrament after Mass is placed in the monstrance on the altar and people are invited to come in and pray,” Father Glenn McCreary, V.E., pastor, Saint Boniface and Saint Lawrence Parishes, said.

The celebration began on Oct. 24 at Saint Joseph the Worker Parish. It continued the following

day at Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Montoursville and concluded on Oct. 26 at Saint Boniface Parish in Williamsport.

It was held in conjunction with the Second Year of the National Eucharistic Revival, which is specifically focusing on Eucharistic devotions in parishes to help all Catholics grasp more deeply the Mystery of the Eucharist.

Father McCreary said he was very happy with the number of people who turned out each day.

“What is very powerful about this is recognizing that we might be praying in silence before the Blessed Sacrament but there are other people coming in the church. There is a real sense of belonging to that ‘Body of Christ,’ which is the Church.”

Carol Sides, a parishioner of Saint Boniface, was also thrilled that many of her neighbors participated.

“I see some (people) that haven’t been here for a bit and they are coming back,” Sides said.

The long-time parishioner appreciated the 40 Hours Eucharistic Celebration because it gave her an opportunity to think about the gifts God has given to her.

“I think it’s very important that you have private time (with Christ). It’s something that you don’t necessarily put on your schedule for most people, but when you know it’s the day you’re going to be doing this, it’s very special,” Sides explained.

New Adoration Chapel in Pittston to open the weekend of Nov. 25 & 26

PITTSTON — Piously accenting the National Eucharistic Revival currently underway in Catholic churches throughout the United States, the Pittston parish communities of Saint John the Evangelist and Saint Joseph Mareello will unveil a new Adoration Chapel during the weekend celebration of the Solemnity of Christ the King, Nov. 25-26.

Open house events for the chapel of exposition and adoration of the Eucharistic Lord, located in the Monsignor Bendik Pastoral Center at 37 William St., Pittston, will be held following Masses celebrated that weekend at the neighboring parishes.

Father Joseph Elston, pastor of both Saint John the Evangelist and Saint Joseph Mareello parishes, announces the Most Blessed Sacrament will be transferred for the first time into the Adoration Chapel



Blessed Carlo Acutis

in a ceremony following the 11:30 Sunday Mass at Saint John Church.

Parish faithful, adorers and visitors walking through the doors of the new shrine of the Holy Eucharist for the first time will, fittingly, receive a grace-filled welcome by experiencing “Carlo’s Exhibition” — an impressive collection displaying the accounts of nearly 160 Eucharistic miracles that have occurred over the centuries

and granted official approval by the Catholic Church.

The exhibit is named for Blessed Carlo Acutis, an English-born Italian Catholic youth who died from leukemia in 2006 at the age of 15.

Prior to his death, young Carlo received attention throughout the religious world for documenting Eucharistic miracles and the approved Marian apparitions, from numerous countries, and cataloguing them onto a website.

His devotion to the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist became the central theme of the young man’s brief life. Carlo was beatified by the Catholic Church on Oct. 10, 2020 — two days before the 14th anniversary of his death — in the Basilica of Saint Francis in Assisi, Italy, where he is interred in the Church of Saint Mary Major.

EUCHARISTIC REVIVAL DAY



Adoration and Holy Hour

led by

Irish Tenor Mark Forrest

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 26

at

QUEEN OF THE APOSTLES PARISH

715 Hawthorne Street, Avoca, PA

Adoration begins after the 10 a.m. mass.
Holy Hour starts at 7 p.m.

The theme is *Advent's Journey of Hope*.
There will be Music, Meditation and Prayer
with a procession of the Blessed Sacrament.

Reflect on the Gospels, meditate on the music and experience
the presence of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament.



THE HOLY EUCHARIST IS THE CENTER OF ALL THAT WE DO AND ALL THAT WE ARE

*- A Priesthood Perspective by Father Andrew Hvozdevic
Pastor, Gate of Heaven Parish, Dallas & Our Lady of Victory, Harveys Lake*



The Holy Eucharist is the center of all that we do and all that we are. I find it fascinating as I get older to realize how people value the need for the Eucharist in their lives. During the pandemic it became obvious how people felt empty without the Eucharist. Once we were able to return people to church in person, I saw how moved people were upon reception of the Holy Eucharist.

To begin my experience of the Eucharist, I would like to share a little bit about my upbringing. I was raised in an average American family in the 1960s in Wilkes-Barre. Our lives centered very much around our relationship with family and with our church family.

I can recall every Sunday going to Mass as a family and sharing this experience with other friends and family members. When it became time for me to go to school my parents registered both myself and my brother in Sacred Heart Slovak Elementary School in Wilkes-Barre. The school was taught by the Sisters of Saint Cyril and Methodius from Danville.

We would begin every school day by attending 8:00 a.m. Mass, as it was part of our curriculum at the time. Since I lived a distance away from Sacred Heart, I was part of the public school bus system, and we would be transported to school daily. Of course, we would never arrive in time for Mass so when we did arrive, we were told to wait in the back of the church.

If it was the time of the consecration, we had to wait until the consecration was over and then proceed to our pews in the church. This became a part of my



routine so much so that after I made my First Holy Communion, I eagerly wanted to become an altar server. At that time every boy, after receiving their First Holy Communion, was expected to become an altar server.

I recall being very excited about becoming an altar server. There was something about being up close in the sanctuary assisting the priest during the Mass that I found very inviting and that I looked forward to when it was my turn to serve. In addition to serving at Holy Mass, growing up in a traditional Slovak parish we had many opportunities for Eucharistic processions.

When in high school, not only would you be a part of the Eucharistic processions, during 40-hour devotions or other feast day devotions, you would be selected to serve these devotions. This was always a highlight of mine. As a young altar server, you would aspire someday to be selected to serve during these processions and novenas.

I attended Bishop Hoban High School in Wilkes-Barre. There I found it unusual not beginning my day with

Mass as was done for the previous eight years of my Catholic school elementary experience. When we did have school Masses, I found myself once again trying to get as involved as I could either as an altar server or as a member of the choir.

During my time in the seminary as a student at Saint Pius X Seminary in Dalton, and studying for the Diocese of Scranton, Bishop J. Carroll McCormick retired, and Bishop John O'Connor was named the new Ordinary of Scranton.

Within the first several months of his tenure, Bishop O'Connor gathered all the seminarians at Saint Pius X Seminary. He wanted to sit down with each one of us to get to know us. As we each told our life story to the Bishop, he posed the question simply asking, "Why do you think you want to become a priest?"

Being young and hoping to impress the Bishop, the seminarians wanted to share our ideas of why we thought God wanted us to become a priest. Many of these ideas would include visiting the sick, teaching in Catholic schools, visiting prisons, counseling people, and working

Eucharistic Adoration takes place at both of the parishes led by Father Andrew Hvozdevic. At Gate of Heaven Parish, Dallas, far left, a Eucharistic Holy Hour is held every Monday evening. At Our Lady of Victory Parish, Harveys Lake, right, a Eucharistic Holy Hour is held on the First Friday of the month.

with young people.

None of these answers were what the Bishop was anticipating us to say.

After the Bishop met with each of us, I remember him gathering us all back in the community room at Saint Pius X Seminary. He shared with us how impressed he was with our answers of why we thought God was asking us to become a priest. I recall the Bishop stating although many of these ideas are valuable and necessary and would obviously become a part of our ministry as a priest, the reason why God needs priests is because only a priest can say the words of consecration. Only a priest can take a piece of bread and have it become the Body of Christ. Only through the words of consecration from a priest can a cup of wine become the Blood of Christ.

He told us that the church needs priests because the church cannot survive without the Eucharist. Those words stuck with me, I prayed about them during my seminary formation years.

Eucharistic Adoration has always been present in each parish of my priestly assignments. During

my time as pastor at Epiphany Parish in Sayre, my predecessor established Perpetual Eucharistic Adoration, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

When I arrived as Pastor at Epiphany in 2005, I was told that my Holy Hour would be Friday evening at 10:00 p.m. At first, I thought, really, 10:00 p.m. on a Friday evening? However, I found it to be the most refreshing and relaxing way for me to not only end my week of ministry, but to prepare myself for the upcoming weekend Masses.

Upon my appointment as pastor of Gate of Heaven Parish, Dallas, and Our Lady of Victory Parish, Harveys Lake, I was once again touched by the fact that Eucharistic Adoration was a part of both parish schedules. At Gate of Heaven Parish, Eucharistic Holy Hour is held every Monday evening prior to the 7:00 p.m. Mass, and at Our Lady of Victory Parish, Eucharistic Holy Hour is held the first Friday of the month, one hour before the noon Mass. In addition, there are other times throughout the week that both parishes conduct Eucharistic Adoration. I find this to be very pious and very encouraging on the part of both of my parish communities.

Summing up, I would like to share two very important quotes that have stuck with me since I heard them, and I wish for you to reflect on them as well. The first is from Saint Padre Pio, "**A day without the Eucharist is worse than a day without sunshine.**" The second quote is from the late Cardinal Joseph Tomko, "**Ask not what the Eucharist is, but who the Eucharist is.**"

'Leave a Mark' Mass brings together young adults from across the Diocese

SCRANTON – While in his first year studying at Saint Vincent Seminary in Latrobe, seminarian Daniel O'Brien made it a priority to come back to northeastern Pennsylvania to attend the 2023 Leave a Mark Mass at the Cathedral of Saint Peter on Nov. 5, 2023.

The Leave a Mark Mass is an annual opportunity for young Catholics from various parishes around the 11-county Diocese to come together in worship. The name of the Mass comes from remarks of Pope Francis at World Youth Day 2016 in which he told young people they didn't come into this world to 'vegetate' but to 'leave a mark.'

"It was wonderful to be able to be back and celebrate with the youth of the Diocese of Scranton," O'Brien said.

A parishioner of Saint John the Evangelist Parish in Pittston, O'Brien entered seminary this fall after graduating from Marywood University. He has been attending the Diocese's annual gathering of the young Church since 2019.

"The Leave a Mark Mass is really one of the best things that our Diocese can do as part of a huge evangelization summit to bring all the youth from the Diocese together under one roof, to celebrate Mass, be in the

presence of the Bishop, and to be in the presence of each other as missionary disciples," O'Brien added.

The Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, served as principal celebrant of the 5 p.m. Mass, which is traditionally held at the start of National Vocation Awareness Week. Father Alex J. Roche, Diocesan Director of Vocations and Seminarians, delivered the homily.

During his remarks, Father Alex said being taught by the Sisters of Christian Charity at Saint Ann Parish in Williamsport played a role in his own vocation story.

"It was in that school and in that church as a young boy that the seeds of my vocation to the priesthood were planted and I could never offer the words to truly express my gratitude to thank the Sisters for their witness they showed me and the trust they inspired in me," he said.

Father Alex encouraged the young people attending the Leave a Mark Mass to identify people they trust and receive faith from them.

"Trust those in your life that carry the peace of God with them. Trust God with your vocation, with your very life, and become people in the world that inspire trust in others," he said.



Father Alex Roche delivers the homily during the Mass.

In addition to praying for vocations to the priesthood, the Leave a Mark Mass is also an opportunity for people to pray for vocations to the diaconate, consecrated life and married life.

"Keep your hearts and your minds open to the word of God prompting you to walk his His disciples, prompting you in the best way that you can to answer His call in whatever way that might be extended to you and to leave your mark for good in Jesus' name," Bishop Bambera said at the conclusion of Mass.

Following the Mass, a social featuring food trucks, live music, games and more was held at the Diocesan Pastoral Center across the street.



Young adults from parishes and Catholic colleges across the Diocese pray together at the 2023 'Leave a Mark' Mass. (Photos/Mike Melisky)

Diana Lozinger, a student at The University of Scranton, first attended the Leave a Mark Mass last year and returned because she thinks young Catholics should be taking a more active role in the church.

"I think there is a growing movement of young people that I've seen, in my own life and even online, that are really committed to the church and I hope that we can continue this movement," Lozinger said.

Ray Sabatini, a young

adult from Saint Jude Parish in Mountain Top, said it doesn't take much to leave a mark for good.

"All we have to do is change one person's life to make a true difference in the world and if we just do that one person at a time, the world would be a much better place," he said.

Events like the Leave a Mark Mass, which are sponsored by the Vocations Office, are made possible because of the gifts to the Diocesan Annual Appeal each

year.



INDIANAPOLIS - Please join us in praying for the 94 pilgrims from the Diocese of Scranton that are currently in Indianapolis for the 2023 National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC).

The event is a unique three-day experience of prayer, community, evangelization, catechesis, service, and empowerment for Catholic teenagers (of high school age) and their adult chaperones.

The theme for NCYC 2023 is "Fully Alive," focusing on the following Scripture passages, "God created mankind in His image; in

the image of God, he created them" (Genesis 1:23-27) and "I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly" (John 10:10).

Parishes that have students attending NCYC this year are: Exaltation of the Holy Cross, Hanover Township; Our Lady Queen of Peace, Brodheadsville; Saint Catherine of Siena, Moscow; Saint Eulalia, Roaring Brook Township; Saint Ignatius Loyola, Kingston; Saint Joseph Marelllo, Pittston; Saint Jude, Mountain Top; Saint Luke, Stroudsburg; and Saint Matthew, East Stroudsburg.



Marywood University students enjoy food and fellowship at a social inside the Diocesan Pastoral Center following the 'Leave a Mark' Mass.



Young adults participate in games of cornhole during the social.

Fiesta de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe se celebrará en muchas parroquias

A través de la intercesión de la “Virgen de Guadalupe”, los preparativos para la Fiesta de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe en diciembre se están llevando a cabo en varias de nuestras parroquias.

Particularmente en las áreas de grandes poblaciones latinas en la Diócesis de Scranton, la celebración anual conmemora la aparición de la Virgen María a un campesino indio mexicano

(ahora venerado como San Juan Diego) en diciembre de 1531 en Tepeyac, cerca de la actual Ciudad de México.

Se cree que la aparición de la Santísima Madre resultó en millones de conversiones al catolicismo, y su mensaje de esperanza continúa inspirando a fieles de ascendencia hispana.

En 1946, el Papa Pío XII declaró a Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe Patrona de

América.

La fiesta de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe el 12 de diciembre culminará una serie de celebraciones que se están planificando en toda la Diócesis, especialmente en aquellas parroquias formadas por importantes comunidades hispanas/latinas.

Todos son bienvenidos a unirse a las siguientes celebraciones:

DIÓCESIS DE SCRANTON
NTRA. SEÑORA DE
GUADALUPE
2023



Ministerio Hispano
Diócesis de Scranton

WILKES BARRE:

PARROQUIA SAN NICOLAS
226 S. WASHINGTON ST. WILKES BARRE, PA 18701

11 DE DICIEMBRE

6:00 P.M. - 9:00 P.M. VIGILIA

12 DE DICIEMBRE

5:00 A.M. MAÑANITAS
SEGUIDO POR UN DESAYUNO

4:00 P.M. PROCESIÓN POR LAS CALLES
COMENZANDO EN EL

38 KETCHUM ST. WILKES BARRE, PA
(FAMILIA DEGANTE)

ACOMPAÑA DE LOS CHINELOS, MORAS Y DANZA
DE LOS TACUATES.

6:00 P.M. MISA SOLEMNE PRESIDIDA POR EL
MONSEÑOR JOSEPH C. BAMBERA, D.D., J.C.L.,
OBISPO DE LA DIÓCESIS DE SCRANTON Y
CONCELEBRADA POR VARIOS SACERDOTES

7:00 P.M. RECEPCIÓN EN LA CAFETERÍA DE LA
ESCUELA. INMEDIATAMENTE DESPUÉS DE LA MISA

MESHOPPEN:

IGLESIA SAN JOAQUIN
STERLING ST. MESHOPPEN, PA 18630

9 DE DICIEMBRE

5:00 P.M. MISA SOLEMNE
RECEPCIÓN DESPUES DE MISA

12 DE DICIEMBRE

6:30 PM NOVENA Y MAÑANITAS



SCRANTON:

SAN PABLO DE LA CRUZ
1217 PROSPECT AVE. SCRANTON, PA 18505

2 DE DICIEMBRE - 9 DE DICIEMBRE

6:30 P.M. NOVENA
7:00 P.M. MISA

10 DE DICIEMBRE

CATEDRAL DE SAN PEDRO
300 WYOMING AVE. SCRANTON, PA
12:15 P.M. MISA SOLEMNE
RECEPCIÓN DESPUÉS DE MISA EN EL CENTRO
PASTORAL DIOCESANO

12 DE DICIEMBRE

3:00 A.M. PROCESIÓN CON IMAGEN DE NTRA. SEÑORA
DE GUADALUPE POR LAS CALLES, COMENZANDO EN
LA CATEDRAL DE SAN PEDRO Y FINALIZANDO EN LA
IGLESIA DE SAN PABLO DE LA CRUZ
4:30 A.M. MAÑANITAS EN SAN PABLO DE LA CRUZ
6:30 A.M. MISA MATUTINA

JERMYN:

SAGRADOS CORAZONES DE JESUS Y MARIA
624 MADISON AVE. JERMYN, PA 18433

DICIEMBRE 10

12 P.M. MISA BILINGUE
RECEPCIÓN DESPUES DE MISA



HAZLETON:

PARROQUIA DE LA ANUNCIACIÓN
122 S. WYOMING ST. HAZLETON, PA 18202

1 DE DICIEMBRE

6:00 P.M. NOVENA

2 DE DICIEMBRE Y 9 DE DICIEMBRE

7:00 P.M. NOVENA Y MISA

3 DE DICIEMBRE

12:00 P.M. NOVENA Y MISA

4 DE DICIEMBRE - 8 DE DICIEMBRE

6:00 P.M. NOVENA Y MISA

10 DE DICIEMBRE

12:00 P.M. MISA SOLEMNE
RECEPCION DESPUES DE LA MISA

12 DE DICIEMBRE

5:00 A.M. MAÑANITAS

WEST HAZLETON:

PARROQUIA SANTO NOMBRE DE JESUS
213 W. GREEN ST. WEST HAZLETON, PA 18202

1 DE DICIEMBRE AL 9 DE DICIEMBRE

7:00 P.M. NOVENA

10 DE DICIEMBRE

12:00 P.M. MISA SOLEMNE
RECEPCION DESPUES DE LA MISA



EAST STROUDSBURG:

PARROQUIA SAN MATEO
78 RIDGEWAY STREET, EAST STROUDSBURG, PA 18301

2 DE DICIEMBRE - 9 DE DICIEMBRE

7:00 P.M. NOVENA

10 DE DICIEMBRE

RECIBIMIENTO DE LA IMAGEN DE NTRA. SEÑORA DE
GUADALUPE DESDE LA BASILICA DE LA CDMX
12:30 P.M. ESTACIONAMIENTO
DE LA FARMACIA RITE AID
128 N COURTLAND ST, EAST STROUDSBURG, PA 18301

2:00 P.M. MISA SOLEMNE
RECEPCIÓN DESPUES DE MISA EN EL SALON
PARROQUIAL

11 DE DICIEMBRE

8:00 P.M. TRADICIONALES MAÑANITAS Y VIGILIA
EN HONOR A LA VIRGEN DE GUADALUPE

12 DE DICIEMBRE

7:00 P.M. MISA EN HONOR
A NUESTRA SEÑORA DE GUADALUPE

BRODHEADSVILLE:

NUESTRA SEÑORA REINA DE LA PAZ
1402 US-209, BRODHEADSVILLE, PA 18322

DICIEMBRE 10

1 P.M. MISA SOLEMNE

Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe to be celebrated in many parishes across the Diocese of Scranton

Many parishes, especially those with significant Hispanic and Latino communities will be celebrating the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe during the month of December. All of the information above is available in English on the Diocese of Scranton website at dioceseofscranton.org

ROARING BROOK TOWNSHIP – A faith formation grant from the Diocesan Annual Appeal is helping the leadership at Saint Eulalia Parish meet the needs of its people.

“In a recent parish survey, one of the top needs identified by the parishioners was their desire to learn more about their faith. On top of that list, they wanted to learn more about the bible,” Deacon Nick Rocco said.

On Nov. 9, Deacon Nick began an eight-part bible study series, ‘Unlocking the Mystery of the Bible,’ which was attended by more than 25 participants ranging from teenagers to parents and grandparents.

Because part of the program is video-based, Saint Eulalia Parish wanted to upgrade its technology before beginning the series and applied for a \$2,750 faith formation grant from the 2023 Diocesan Annual Appeal.

“The faith formation grant that we received from the Diocesan Annual Appeal allowed us to upgrade the audio



Deacon Nick Rocco leads a bible study program at Saint Eulalia Parish on Nov. 9.

and video system that we use for our religious education programs. A larger screen with a proper audio system with internet capabilities was necessary for our parish to take advantage of all the great resources available for ongoing faith formation,” Deacon Nick added. “Not only is everyone in the room now able to see and hear the program that they are watching, but those with hearing difficulties are now able to read the closed captioning on the screen because it is now

large enough for them to be able to read it from across the room.”

In addition to the upgraded audio and video system, part of the grant money the parish received was used for a pilgrimage to Our Lady of Martyrs Shrine.

This year, 43 parishes across the Diocese of Scranton received a faith formation grant. Parishes applying for funding needed to lay out specific objectives of their initiatives in one of the four following categories:

- Promotion of Life-Long Discipleship
- Inviting and Welcoming Home Catholic/non-Catholics into the parish
- Providing spiritual support to families, singles, youth and young adults
- Using technology and media to grow faith formation events

While Saint Eulalia’s ‘Unlocking the Mystery of the Bible’ series will continue on Nov. 16 and 30, Jan. 4, 11, 18 and 25, and Feb. 1, Deacon Nick believes it is already successful.

“All present not only loved the first session, but they also commented on how

nice it was to watch it on our new A/V system – a huge upgrade from what we had,” he said. “As the facilitator of the course and the deacon of the parish, I am beyond thrilled with all the capabilities that this new system has to offer and look forward to offering more faith formation programs for years to come.”

THANK YOU!

Because of your generosity, the 2023 Diocesan Annual Appeal has reached 50% of its \$4.5 million goal. Our current parish goal report is on the following page.

Because of your support, our Diocese is able to support programs and services that no one parish can do alone - including educating seminarians, operating Kitchens and emergency homeless shelters and spreading the Good News of the Gospel through Catholic Television.

If you have not donated yet, please visit annualappeal.org or call (570) 207-2250.

Parishes that Received a Faith Formation Grant from the 2023 Diocesan Annual Appeal

All Saints Parish, Plymouth	\$2,676.23
Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen of Peace Parish, Hawley	\$3,201.00
Christ the King Parish, Archbald	\$1,850.00
Epiphany Parish, Sayre	\$1,554.25
Holy Rosary Parish, Hazleton	\$750.00
Mary, Mother of God Parish, Scranton	\$1,500.00
Most Holy Trinity Parish, Susquehanna	\$2,500.00
Most Holy Trinity Parish, Cresco	\$4,875.00
Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish, Dushore	\$600.00
Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, Montoursville	\$4,469.98
Our Lady of the Snows Parish, Clarks Summit	\$1,300.00
Our Lady of Victory Parish, Tannersville	\$4,200.00
Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish, Dupont	\$5,000.00
Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary Parish, Jermyn	\$3,500.00
Saint Ann Parish, Shohola	\$1,700.00
Saint Ann Parish, Williamsport	\$3,000.00
Saint Brigid Parish, Friendsville	\$2,364.20
Saint Eulalia Parish, Roaring Brook Township	\$2,750.00
Saint Gregory Parish, Clarks Green	\$2,500.00
Saint John Bosco Parish, Conyngham	\$1,000.00
Saint John Parish, East Stroudsburg	\$5,000.00
Saint John the Evangelist Parish, Pittston	\$4,570.00
Saint John the Evangelist Parish, Honesdale	\$3,000.00
Saint John Vianney Parish, Montdale	\$2,650.00
Saint Joseph the Worker Parish, Williamsport	\$4,250.00

Saint Luke Parish, Stroudsburg	\$2,597.40
Saint Nicholas - Saint Mary Parish, Wilkes-Barre	\$1,100.00
Saint Therese Parish, Shavertown	\$2,200.00
Saint Thomas More Parish, Lake Ariel	\$3,100.00
Saint Vincent de Paul Parish, Milford	\$4,300.00
Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish, Dickson City	\$930.00

LINKED PARISHES THAT WILL SHARE FUNDING

Our Lady of the Abingtons Parish, Dalton	
Saint Mary of the Lake Parish, Lake Winola	
Saint Patrick Parish, Nicholson	\$3,546.00
Saint Boniface Parish, Williamsport	
Saint Lawrence Parish, South Williamsport	\$4,000.00
Saint John Neumann Parish, Scranton	
Saint Paul of the Cross Parish, Scranton	\$5,000.00
Saint Joseph Parish, Matamoras	
Saint Patrick Parish, Milford	\$5,122.00
Saint Thomas the Apostle Parish, Elkland	
Holy Child Parish, Mansfield	
Saint Peter Parish, Wellsboro	\$11,516.51

	<i>Progress to Parish Goal</i>
All Saints Parish - Plymouth.....	\$16,636.00 / \$37,000.00 (48%)
Annunciation Parish - Hazleton.....	\$10,649.00 / \$33,000.00 (32%)
Ascension Parish - Forest City.....	\$12,110.00 / \$25,000.00 (48%)
Blessed Sacrament Parish - Throop.....	\$14,350.00 / \$16,000.00 (90%)
BVM Queen of Peace Parish - Hawley.....	\$35,909.00 / \$76,000.00 (47%)
Christ the King Parish - Archbald.....	\$35,036.00 / \$67,000.00 (52%)
Corpus Christi Parish - West Pittston.....	\$25,125.00 / \$30,000.00 (84%)
Divine Mercy Parish - Scranton.....	\$33,077.00 / \$63,000.00 (53%)
Epiphany Parish - Sayre.....	\$44,032.00 / \$85,000.00 (52%)
Exaltation of the Holy Cross Parish - Hanover Twp..	\$6,695.00 / \$15,000.00 (45%)
Gate of Heaven Parish - Dallas.....	\$22,585.00 / \$47,000.00 (48%)
Good Shepherd Parish - Drums.....	\$7,880.00 / \$24,000.00 (33%)
Holy Child Parish - Mansfield.....	\$18,144.00 / \$28,000.00 (65%)
Holy Cross Parish - Olyphant.....	\$25,757.00 / \$47,000.00 (55%)
Holy Family Parish - Luzerne.....	\$10,640.00 / \$40,000.00 (27%)
Holy Name of Jesus Parish - West Hazleton.....	\$3,660.00 / \$21,000.00 (17%)
Holy Name of Mary Parish - Montrose.....	\$8,125.00 / \$16,000.00 (51%)
Holy Rosary Parish - Hazleton.....	\$12,040.00 / \$17,000.00 (71%)
Holy Spirit Parish - Mocanaqua.....	\$7,310.00 / \$28,000.00 (26%)
Immaculate Conception Parish - Williamsport.....	\$7,534.00 / \$26,000.00 (29%)
Immaculate Conception Parish - Scranton.....	\$25,137.00 / \$40,000.00 (63%)
Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish - Dushore.....	\$23,155.00 / \$38,000.00 (61%)
Mary, Mother of God Parish - Scranton.....	\$39,836.50 / \$56,000.00 (71%)
Most Holy Trinity Parish - Cresco.....	\$22,570.00 / \$49,000.00 (46%)
Most Holy Trinity Parish - Susquehanna.....	\$6,723.00 / \$30,000.00 (22%)
Most Precious Blood Parish - Hazleton.....	\$12,118.00 / \$36,000.00 (34%)
Nativity of Our Lord Parish - Duryea.....	\$30,715.00 / \$40,000.00 (77%)
Nativity of the BVM Parish - Tunkhannock.....	\$18,715.00 / \$32,000.00 (58%)
Our Lady Help of Christians Parish - Dorrance.....	\$14,240.00 / \$18,000.00 (79%)
Our Lady of Fatima Parish - Wilkes-Barre.....	\$13,375.00 / \$30,000.00 (45%)
Our Lady of Hope Parish - Wilkes-Barre.....	\$18,115.00 / \$35,000.00 (52%)
Our Lady of Lourdes Parish - Montoursville.....	\$20,357.00 / \$41,000.00 (50%)
Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish - Carbondale..	\$5,305.00 / \$23,000.00 (23%)
Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish - Dunmore.....	\$28,026.50 / \$56,000.00 (50%)
Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish - Lake Silkworth..	\$10,250.00 / \$19,000.00 (54%)
Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish - Wyalusing...	\$4,325.00 / \$10,000.00 (43%)
Our Lady of the Abingtons Parish - Dalton.....	\$4,985.00 / \$16,000.00 (31%)
Our Lady of the Eucharist Parish - Pittston.....	\$7,015.00 / \$16,000.00 (44%)
Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception - Freeland..	\$8,026.00 / \$26,000.00 (31%)
Our Lady of the Snows Parish - Clarks Summit....	\$42,960.00 / \$87,000.00 (49%)
Our Lady of Victory Parish - Harveys Lake.....	\$13,299.60 / \$37,000.00 (36%)
Our Lady of Victory Parish - Tannersville.....	\$28,896.00 / \$52,000.00 (56%)
Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish - Brodheadsville..	\$39,095.30 / \$58,000.00 (67%)
Prince of Peace Parish - Old Forge.....	\$9,335.00 / \$28,000.00 (33%)
Queen of Angels Parish - Jessup.....	\$9,216.00 / \$26,000.00 (35%)
Queen of Heaven Parish - Hazleton.....	\$7,855.00 / \$29,000.00 (27%)
Queen of the Apostles Parish - Avoca.....	\$12,500.75 / \$23,000.00 (54%)
Resurrection Parish - Muncy.....	\$10,365.00 / \$33,000.00 (31%)
Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish - Dupont.....	\$10,885.45 / \$30,000.00 (36%)
Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish - Peckville.....	\$33,993.50 / \$41,000.00 (83%)
Sacred Hearts of Jesus & Mary Parish - Jermyn...	\$7,301.00 / \$21,000.00 (35%)
SS Anthony & Rocco Parish - Dunmore.....	\$18,710.00 / \$47,000.00 (40%)
SS Cyril & Methodius Parish - Hazleton.....	\$26,436.50 / \$43,000.00 (62%)
SS Peter & Paul Parish - Plains.....	\$36,615.00 / \$50,000.00 (73%)
SS Peter & Paul Parish - Scranton.....	\$8,640.00 / \$13,000.00 (66%)
SS Peter & Paul Parish - Towanda.....	\$28,360.00 / \$31,000.00 (91%)
St. Andrew Parish - Wilkes-Barre.....	\$4,740.00 / \$17,000.00 (28%)

	<i>Progress to Parish Goal</i>
St. Ann Basilica - Scranton.....	\$12,310.00 / \$30,000.00 (41%)
St. Ann Parish - Shohola.....	\$7,440.00 / \$20,000.00 (37%)
St. Ann Parish - Williamsport.....	\$25,285.00 / \$59,000.00 (43%)
St. Barbara Parish - Exeter.....	\$12,950.00 / \$31,000.00 (42%)
St. Boniface Parish - Williamsport.....	\$24,100.00 / \$60,000.00 (40%)
St. Brigid Parish - Friendsville.....	\$20,235.00 / \$22,000.00 (92%)
St. Catherine of Siena Parish - Moscow.....	\$58,280.75 / \$63,000.00 (93%)
St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish - Swoyersville..	\$29,375.00 / \$44,000.00 (67%)
St. Elizabeth Parish - Bear Creek.....	\$4,750.00 / \$24,000.00 (20%)
St. Eulalia Parish - Roaring Brook Township....	\$12,465.00 / \$40,000.00 (31%)
St. Faustina Kowalska Parish - Nanticoke.....	\$20,975.97 / \$47,000.00 (45%)
St. Frances X. Cabrini Parish - Carverton.....	\$10,654.92 / \$13,000.00 (82%)
St. Gregory Parish - Clarks Green.....	\$55,399.00 / \$74,000.00 (75%)
St. Ignatius Loyola Parish - Kingston.....	\$28,526.30 / \$77,000.00 (37%)
St. John Bosco Parish - Conyngham.....	\$32,813.15 / \$58,000.00 (57%)
St. John Neumann Parish - Lords Valley.....	\$12,235.00 / \$28,000.00 (44%)
St. John Neumann Parish - Scranton.....	\$13,218.00 / \$52,000.00 (25%)
St. John Parish - E. Stroudsburg.....	\$29,183.00 / \$57,000.00 (51%)
St. John the Baptist Parish - Larksville.....	\$9,860.00 / \$21,000.00 (47%)
St. John the Evangelist Parish - Honesdale....	\$40,302.00 / \$64,000.00 (63%)
St. John the Evangelist Parish - Pittston.....	\$23,335.00 / \$54,000.00 (43%)
St. John Vianney Parish - Montdale.....	\$19,990.00 / \$30,000.00 (67%)
St. Joseph Mareello Parish - Pittston.....	\$16,133.00 / \$27,000.00 (60%)
St. Joseph Parish - Matamoras.....	\$23,403.00 / \$37,000.00 (63%)
St. Joseph the Worker Parish - Williamsport....	\$21,735.00 / \$55,000.00 (29%)
St. Jude Parish - Mountain Top.....	\$55,655.00 / \$79,000.00 (70%)
St. Katharine Drexel Parish - Pleasant Mount..	\$11,595.00 / \$13,000.00 (90%)
St. Lawrence Parish - S. Williamsport.....	\$17,000.00 / \$26,000.00 (65%)
St. Leo Parish - Ashley.....	\$12,2856.00 / \$33,000.00 (37%)
St. Lucy Parish - Scranton.....	\$3,402.00 / \$19,000.00 (18%)
St. Luke Parish - Jersey Shore.....	\$6,915.00 / \$16,000.00 (43%)
St. Luke Parish - Stroudsburg.....	\$60,463.00 / \$114,000.00 (53%)
St. Maria Goretti Parish - Laflin.....	\$16,485.00 / \$42,000.00 (39%)
St. Mary of the Lake Parish - Lake Winola.....	\$4,670.00 / \$12,000.00 (39%)
St. Mary Parish - Waymart.....	\$19,255.00 / \$17,000.00 (113%)
St. Matthew Parish - E. Stroudsburg.....	\$36,679.00 / \$60,000.00 (61%)
St. Maximilian Kolbe Parish - Pocono Pines....	\$9,872.00 / \$24,000.00 (41%)
St. Michael Parish - Canton.....	\$4,855.00 / \$12,000.00 (40%)
St. Michael Parish - Scranton.....	\$1,835.00 / \$9,000.00 (20%)
St. Monica Parish - West Wyoming.....	\$20,020.00 / \$31,000.00 (65%)
St. Nicholas Parish - Wilkes-Barre.....	\$28,600.00 / \$52,000.00 (55%)
St. Patrick Parish - Milford.....	\$24,820.00 / \$33,000.00 (75%)
St. Patrick Parish - Nicholson.....	\$5,675.00 / \$9,000.00 (63%)
St. Patrick Parish - Scranton.....	\$14,328.00 / \$42,000.00 (34%)
St. Patrick Parish - White Haven.....	\$4,135.00 / \$16,000.00 (26%)
St. Paul of the Cross Parish - Scranton.....	\$10,715.00 / \$52,000.00 (21%)
St. Paul Parish - Scranton.....	\$31,365.00 / \$66,000.00 (48%)
St. Peter Parish - Wellsboro.....	\$18,895.00 / \$43,000.00 (44%)
St. Peter's Cathedral - Scranton.....	\$66,042.00 / \$71,000.00 (93%)
St. Rita Parish - Gouldsboro.....	\$2,775.00 / \$14,000.00 (20%)
St. Robert Bellarmine Parish - Wilkes-Barre....	\$16,525.00 / \$34,000.00 (49%)
St. Rose of Lima Parish - Carbondale.....	\$29,869.00 / \$62,000.00 (48%)
St. Therese Parish - Shavertown.....	\$37,200.00 / \$71,000.00 (52%)
St. Thomas More Parish - Lake Ariel.....	\$26,136.00 / \$49,000.00 (53%)
St. Thomas the Apostle Parish - Elkland.....	\$2,425.00 / \$13,000.00 (19%)
St. Vincent de Paul Parish - Milford.....	\$31,350.00 / \$35,000.00 (90%)
Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary - Dickson City	\$34,995.75 / \$55,000.00 (64%)

Synod synthesis shows agreement, divergences, including on 'synodality'

VATICAN CITY (CNS) - A report summarizing discussions at the assembly of the Synod of Bishops said the church may need more welcoming pastoral approaches, especially to people who feel excluded, but also acknowledged fears of betraying traditional church teachings and practices.

Among the topics addressed in the report were clerical sexual abuse, women's roles in the church, outreach to poor and the concept of "synodality" itself.

The assembly, with 364 voting members - 365 counting Pope Francis - met in working sessions six days a week Oct. 4-28 after a three-day retreat outside of Rome. The assembly's closing Mass was held Oct. 29.

After the voting on the synthesis concluded, the pope said he wanted to remind everyone that "the protagonist of the synod is the Holy Spirit." He briefly thanked the synod officers and joined members of the assembly in giving thanks to God.

The assembly's discussions set the stage for a year-long period of reflection that will culminate in the second and final synod assembly in late 2024 on the same topic.

The 41-page synthesis report, voted on paragraph-by-paragraph Oct. 28, described its purpose as presenting "convergences, matters

for consideration and proposals that emerged from the dialogue" on issues discussed under the headings of synodality, communion, mission and participation.

Every item in the report was approved by at least two-thirds of the members present and voting, synod officials said. They published a complete list of the votes.

Within the synod topics, members looked at the role of women in the church, including in decision making, and at the possibility of ordaining women deacons. The report asked for more "theological and pastoral research on the access of women to the diaconate," including a review of the conclusions of commissions Pope Francis set up in 2016 and 2020.

The paragraph, one of several on the theme of women deacons, was approved 279-67, which was more than the needed two-thirds support but still garnered among the highest negative votes.

Among members of the assembly, the report said, some thought the idea of women deacons would be a break with tradition, while others insisted it would "restore the practice of the Early Church," including at the time of the New Testament, which mentions women deacons.

"Others still, discern it as an appropriate and necessary response to the signs of the times, faithful to



Pope Francis gives his blessing at the conclusion of the assembly of the Synod of Bishops' last working session Oct. 28, 2023, in the Paul VI Hall at the Vatican. (CNS photo/Vatican Media)

the Tradition, and one that would find an echo in the hearts of many who seek new energy and vitality in the Church," it said. But, the report added, some members thought that would "marry the Church to the spirit of the age."

The paragraph on how different members explained their support of or opposition to women deacons also was approved by more than two-thirds of the voting members, but it received more negative votes than any other item, passing 277 to 69.

Assembly members also discussed pastoral approaches to welcoming and including in the life of parishes people who have felt excluded, including the poor, people with disabilities, LGBTQ+ Catholics and Catholics whose marriages are not recognized by the church.

The synthesis report did not use the term "LGBTQ+" or even "homosexuality" and spoke only generally of issues related to "matters of identity and sexuality."

Jesuit Father James Martin, a synod member involved in outreach to LGBTQ+ Catholics, told Catholic News Service, "From what I understand, there was too much pushback to make using the term 'LGBTQ' viable, even though it was contained in the

'Instrumentum Laboris,'" or synod working document.

"This opposition came up often in the plenary sessions, along with others who argued from the other side, that is, for greater inclusion and for seeing LGBTQ people as people and not an ideology," he said.

The synthesis said that "to develop authentic ecclesial discernment in these and other areas, it is necessary to approach these questions in the light of the Word of God and Church teaching, properly informed and reflected upon."

"In order to avoid repeating vacuous formulas, we need to provide an opportunity for a dialogue involving the human and social sciences, as well as philosophical and theological reflection," it added.

The divergences in the assembly, it said, reflected opposing concerns: that "if we use doctrine harshly and with a judgmental attitude, we betray the Gospel; if we practice mercy 'on the cheap,' we do not convey God's love."

Still, it said, "in different ways, people who feel marginalized or excluded from the Church because of their marriage status, identity or sexuality, also ask to be heard and accompanied. There was a

deep sense of love, mercy and compassion felt in the Assembly for those who are or feel hurt or neglected by the Church, who want a place to call 'home' where they can feel safe, be heard and respected, without fear of feeling judged."

The report emphasized the "listening" that took place on the local, national and continental levels before the assembly and the "conversations in the Spirit" that took place during it, which involved each person speaking in his or her small group, other participants at first commenting only on what struck them, silent reflection and then discussion.

In several places throughout the report, assembly members insisted that greater efforts must be made to listen to the survivors of clerical sexual abuse and those who have endured spiritual or psychological abuse.

"Openness to listening and accompanying all, including those who have suffered abuse and hurt in the Church, has made visible many who have long felt invisible," it said. "The long journey toward reconciliation and justice, including addressing the structural conditions that abetted such abuse, remains before us, and requires concrete gestures of penitence."

Members of the assembly said the process helped them experience the church as "God's home and family, a Church that is closer to the lives of her people, less bureaucratic and more relational."

However, it said, the terms "synodal" and "synodality," which "have been associated with this experience and desire," need further clarification, including theological clarification and, perhaps, in canon law.

Some participants, it said, questioned how an assembly where about 21% of participants were lay women, lay men, religious and priests could be termed a Synod of Bishops.



Leaders of the assembly of the Synod of Bishops start a working session in the Vatican's Paul VI Audience Hall Oct. 18, 2023. (CNS photo/Lola Gomez)

Top 5 Takeaways from the Synod Synthesis Report and Why They Matter

(OSV News) - The Synod on Synodality's first session at the Vatican has concluded, with its results wrapped up in a 41-page "half-time report" for the entire church to digest, reflect on and give feedback about ahead of the synod's final session in Rome next October.

The report, a synthesis of the Oct. 4-29 meeting, is fundamentally an instrument for discernment, and it is designed to elicit further reflection and response from the whole church. The synod's next session in Rome will have the task of making decisions about what concrete proposals to present before the pope. Ultimately, the pope will decide what to implement coming out of the Synod on Synodality.

1. Synodality is about the church's evangelizing mission, and baptism is why synodal governance matters.

The synod relates that "synodality is ordered to mission," recognizing that the church's members - with diverse backgrounds, languages and cultures - share the "common grace of baptism." The synod's themes of "communion, participation, mission" are the hallmarks for how the entire people of God in a synodal church - the laity, consecrated religious, deacons and priests with the bishops united with the pope - relate to each other and live together the call to holiness, proclaiming Jesus Christ's good news to the world.

The synod explicitly says its work is rooted in the church's dynamic and living tradition in the context of the Second Vatican Council's teaching. But the synod also recognizes much remains to be done to clarify what "synodality" means, and to develop it into real processes and structures.

Part of that is figuring out how decisions are made in the church in a way that is faithful to its nature - including discerning how episcopal collegiality is exercised in a synodal church - because the church's members have "differentiated co-responsibility for the common mission of evangelization."

2. The synod calls for formation in "authentic discipleship," united by the Eucharist and nourished by the Word.

The synod stresses that all the church's members are called to be "all disciples, all missionaries" who have the "responsibility of demonstrating and transmitting the love and tenderness of God to a wounded humanity." In other words, living discipleship is at the heart of being Catholic.

The synod suggested deepening the notion that a "mature exercise of the 'sensus fidei' requires not only reception of baptism but a life lived in authentic discipleship that develops the grace of baptism." The synod recognizes this can help discern where the Holy Spirit is at work, as opposed to where the baptized are just advocating dominant thinking, cultural conditions or "matters inconsistent with the Gospel."

In this regard, the synod stresses that "the Eucharist shapes synodality," and so the Mass should be celebrated "with an authentic sense of friendship in Christ" that reflects beauty and simplicity. The synod proposes "liturgy celebrated with authenticity is the first and fundamental school of discipleship."

It also proposes enriching Catholic life beyond the Mass with alternative forms of liturgical prayer, as well as popular piety, particularly Marian devotion - both of which form the faithful and can also help others outside the church encounter the Lord.

3. Synodality is not about having more meetings, but it is about discerning together how to go on mission at each level of the church.

The synod also emphasizes that synodality in the church calls Catholics to discern intentionally as a community how Jesus is calling them to live out their mission. It's not about self-referential meetings, but rather a style of carrying out "evangelical proclamation, service to those experiencing poverty, care for our common home and theological research."

The document emphasizes the need for formation, and also making spaces to receive the church's teaching, and discern how to act on it. The church's social doctrine needs to be understood by the faithful so they can build up the kingdom of God.

Synodality is about gathering the disciple community together to discern what is their mission and how Jesus is sending them on mission. Any effective structural change to make

the church's members "co-responsible" presupposes "profound spiritual conversion," both personal and communal, in order to carry out Jesus' mission.

At the same time, the synod calls for further consideration on how the church's theology and modern developments in science can dialogue, and effective ways to do that for the church's discernment, particularly on complicated or controversial questions. Above all, the synod says, "Jesus' actions, assimilated in prayer and conversion of heart, show us the way forward."

4. A synodal church must reflect on what formation its priests, deacons and laity need to carry out their mission together.

The synod recognizes bishops and priests face disproportionate burdens of responsibility for the church's mission. It also identifies clericalism as opposed to Jesus' model of ministerial service, leading to "authoritarian attitudes," and vocations stifled by privilege and power that refuse accountability.

The synod suggests extensive discussion and consideration of revising priestly formation to address this. Instead of forming priests in an "artificial environment separate from the ordinary lives of the faith," they should develop through "close contact with the People of God and through concrete service learning experiences."

The synod recognized there is universal agreement that priestly celibacy is "richly prophetic and a profound witness to Christ." But it also suggested further consideration of whether it is appropriate for the Latin Church alone to continue to insist on it - the Eastern Churches (Catholic and Orthodox) have a tradition of celibate and married clergy - when there are ecclesial and cultural contexts that make it more difficult for the church's mission.

The synod is calling for a deepening reflection on the vocation of the deacon, "above all in the exercise of charity."

The synod indicated the importance of expanding women's access to theological formation, their inclusion in decision-making and responsibility in pastoral care and ministry, and even the exploration of new ministries where women could decisively contribute. It noted the debate over women and the diaconal ministry, and expressed openness to continuing research and examining what has been done so far.

It also touched on lay ministry and called for more creativity in how these roles are thought of and lived at the service of mission: for example, developing the ministry of lector beyond its liturgical role, such as preaching in appropriate contexts. It also envisioned possibly a lay ministry taken up by married couples to support married and family life.

5. Disciples listen to people and accompany them like Christ in whatever their personal, familial or social situations.

The synod says "listening is the word that best expresses our experience. This is listening given and received." Listening really is where the church discerns the mission Jesus is calling his disciples and their particular communities.

It also emphasized the church needs to give its closeness, listening and accompaniment to those who feel alone in remaining faithful to the church's teaching on marriage and sexual ethics, as well as to those on the margins because of "their marriage status, identity or sexuality."

The synod suggests further consideration of the point that listening "does not mean compromising proclamation of the Gospel or endorsing any opinion or position proposed" - but rather being like Jesus, who listens and loves unconditionally to share his good news.

It also emphasized the church needs to extend its closeness to the lonely/abandoned, the elderly and sick. The synod document called for further discernment about "Eucharistic hospitality."

Thousands attend third annual PA March for Life in Harrisburg

Pro-life advocates criticize governor's plan regarding crisis pregnancy center funding

HARRISBURG – More than 5,000 pro-life advocates converged on the State Capitol on Oct. 16, 2023, to march and rally in support of the unborn.

Many in attendance also decried a decision by Gov. Josh Shapiro to discontinue a contract with Real Alternatives, an organization that provides counseling, referrals, and other services through partnerships with crisis pregnancy centers, by Dec. 31, 2023.

“When did it become okay to celebrate cutting off a lifeline to people in their most vulnerable state, making a decision that could benefit not one, but two lives? It is completely disgusting,” Sen. Kristin Phillips-Hill, R-York, said.

At a pre-march rally, many speakers emphasized how Real Alternatives funding supports Catholic social service organizations and facilities that house pregnant women.

“Our opposition used to say, ‘Safe, Legal and Rare.’ Now, they say, ‘Abortion: Whenever, Wherever and However,’” State Representative Josh Kail, R-Beaver/Washington, said. “It is not us that will end up winning this fight, it is all of you out there, your energy, your willingness to be here, your willingness to organize, to talk to your neighbors and to get out there and vote.”

Abortion is legal in Pennsylvania up to 24 weeks. With Democrats holding a majority in the state House, there seems little chance anti-abortion legislation would be considered through the end of the 2023-24 session.

After federal protections afforded by Roe v. Wade were overturned last year by the U.S. Supreme Court, states are now in control of abortion access.

“Women really do deserve better than abortion. They deserve love. They deserve support. We need to empower women and families to choose life,” Dawn Fitzpatrick, Executive Director of March for Life, said.

The Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, was one of several bishops who attended and participated in the third annual PA March for Life. He was joined by other Bishops from Allentown, Harrisburg, Greensburg and Philadelphia.



More than 5,000 people filled the steps of the State Capitol in Harrisburg Oct. 16 for the third annual PA March for Life.

Several busloads of parishioners from across the Diocese of Scranton also attended the march.

“I think it’s amazing how many people showed up to support life from the beginning of conception to the last heartbeat,” Kiera Leyden, a parishioner of Saint Matthew Parish in East Stroudsburg, said.

This was the first time Leyden attended the PA March for Life.

“I thoroughly dislike the fact that the state wants to close the centers that are helping those that need the help,” she added. “It is wrong. My sister had so much help from pregnancy resource centers. They really helped her because the options she had were abortion, which she didn’t even consider, and adoption, which she didn’t consider that an option, because she wanted to raise her daughter.”

The funding for Real Alternatives was also an issue on the minds of Norbert and Nona Josten, who have travelled from their home in Tioga County for the last three years to attend the PA March for Life.

“Our current administration is hostile to life and hostile to families and we have to be more present in our activities so that we can get the message across,” Norbert said. “We need to bring home the vote.”

Bishop Bambera has spoken about the local impact of the cuts to Real Alternatives funding in several recent homilies, in his Respect Life message

in the October edition of *The Catholic Light*, and at the recent Pennsylvanians for Human Life Breakfast in Scranton. If the Real Alternatives funding contract is not renewed, Catholic Social Services could lose approximately 80-percent of the funding it takes to operate Shepherd’s Maternity House in East Stroudsburg.

“It’s huge and it impacts us in real tangible way in a lot of the wonderful programs of which we’re so proud in our own diocese,”

Bishop Bambera said.

Following the march itself, Maryann Lawhon, Executive Director of ‘The Voice

of John,’ was one of many people who met privately with state lawmakers to advocate for Real Alternatives funding to remain in place.

“We know that we have to stay steadfast,” she said about public advocacy efforts.

Reflecting on the impressive crowd of thousands at the PA March for Life – the largest yet – the long-time, pro-life advocate was inspired by all of the young faces in the crowd.

“What is so impressive to me was to see all the high schools that were represented throughout Pennsylvania, all across the state, and it’s such a wonderful feeling for me, who has been doing this (work) for 50 years to see that there is a new generation of kids who are passionate and so eager to spread truth and realize the damages of abortion,” Lawhon said.

LOCAL IMPACT OF REAL ALTERNATIVES CONTRACT LOSS

SCRANTON - If the funding contract with Real Alternatives ends in December, the change would have a direct impact on the work of Catholic Social Services of the Diocese of Scranton.

Catholic Social Services is one of the agencies that benefits from Real Alternatives’ network of 350 counselors at 83 pro-life social service agencies, pregnancy support centers, maternity homes, and adoption agencies throughout the Commonwealth.

Real Alternatives provides approximately 80-percent of the funding needed to operate Shepherd’s Maternity House in East Stroudsburg. Shepherd’s Maternity House provides transitional housing for pregnant women and their newborn babies. Mothers can stay at the facility for up to 18 months while receiving care, counseling and education as an alternative to abortion. The women are taught parenting skills, life skills and receive job training.

You are urged to contact your state lawmakers (including the PA leadership below) and stress that funding for Real Alternatives and the families they serve must be restored.



Shepherd's Maternity House

Governor Josh Shapiro
governor.pa.gov/contact

President Pro Tempore Kim Ward
kward@pasen.gov

Senate Majority Leader Joe Pittman
jpittman@pasen.gov

Senate Majority Appropriations Chairman Scott Martin
smartin@pasen.gov

Pope calls for access to humanitarian aid in Gaza, Sudan

VATICAN CITY (CNS) - World leaders must ensure that humanitarian aid reaches the people affected by the ongoing wars in Gaza and Sudan, Pope Francis said.

"In Gaza, let the wounded be rescued immediately, let civilians be protected, let far more humanitarian aid be allowed to reach that stricken population," he said after praying the Angelus in St. Peter's Square Nov. 12. "May the hostages be freed, including the elderly and children."

Hamas militants held 239 Israeli hostages in Gaza as of Nov. 12. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Nov. 11 that a cease-fire in Gaza would be possible only after a release of all the hostages.

Yet the next day the pope publicly asked that "the weapons be stopped."

"They will never lead to peace," he said. "And may the conflict not widen. Enough! Enough, brothers!"

"Every human being - Christian, Jewish, Muslim - of any people or religion, every human being is sacred, is precious in the eyes of God and has the right to live in peace," the pope added, asking people to "pray and work tirelessly so that the sense of humanity may prevail over hardness of heart."

He also appealed to leaders to support access to humanitarian aid in Sudan, where a civil conflict that began in April has led



A house burns following an Israeli strike in Khan Younis, in the southern Gaza Strip, Nov. 7, 2023, amid the ongoing conflict between Israel and Palestinian Islamist groups. (OSV News photo/Bassam Masoud, Reuters)

to the deaths of more than 9,000 people and displaced 5.6 million. The pope asked Sudanese leaders to "work in search of peaceful solutions" with the help of the international community.

"I am close to the sufferings of those dear populations of Sudan," he said. "Let us not forget these brothers and sisters of ours who are in distress."

Noting the many Ukrainian flags waved by visitors in St. Peter's Square, the pope greeted a group of pilgrims celebrating 400 years since the martyrdom of St. Josaphat - a Basilian monk born in Ukraine - and asked that people not forget "tormented Ukraine."

Patriarchs, church leaders urge Holy Land's Christians to 'stand strong' in Advent message

JERUSALEM (OSV News) - Christmas in Bethlehem and the Holy Land this year will be one of solemnity, prayer and fasting as the Patriarchs and Heads of the Churches in Jerusalem called upon the faithful to forgo any "unnecessarily festive activities" during the Christmas season this year and to "stand strong" with those facing the afflictions of war, focusing more on the spiritual meaning of Christmas.

"Since the start of the war, there has been an atmosphere of sadness and pain. Thousands of innocent civilians, including women and children, have died or suffered serious injuries," they said in a Nov. 10

statement on the "Celebration of Advent and Christmas in the Midst of the War." "Many more grieve over the loss of their homes, their loved ones, or the uncertain fate of those dear to them. Throughout the region, even more have lost their work and are suffering from serious economic challenges."

They said that though the sacred Advent season is normally one of joy, they said, "these are not normal times."

"We call upon our congregations to stand strong with those facing such afflictions by this year foregoing any unnecessarily festive activities," the church leaders said.



BISHOP BAMBERA'S SCHEDULE

- November 12-16** - United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Meeting
Baltimore
- November 18** - Saint Vincent de Paul Kitchen 40th Anniversary Celebration
Wilkes-Barre, 6:00 p.m.
- November 22** - Blessing of Food Baskets for Family to Family Program
Scranton Cultural Center, Scranton, 8:30 a.m.
- November 26** - Solemnity of Christ the King Mass
Cathedral of Saint Peter, Scranton, 10:00 a.m.
- November 28** - Saint John Neumann School System Mass
Saint Boniface Church, Williamsport, 10:00 a.m.
- November 29** - La Salle Academy School Mass
Queen of Angels Parish, Jessup, 9:00 a.m.
- November 30** - Good Shepherd Academy School Mass
Saint Ignatius of Loyola Church, Kingston, 9:00 a.m.
- December 3** - First Sunday of Advent Mass
Cathedral of Saint Peter, Scranton, 10:00 a.m.
- December 6** - Holy Cross High School Mass
Dunmore, 9:00 a.m.
- December 9** - Mass at the State Correctional Institution - Waymart
Waymart, 9:00 a.m.
- December 10** - Our Lady of Guadalupe Mass
Cathedral of Saint Peter, Scranton, 12:15 p.m.
- December 12** - Saint Clare/Saint Paul School Mass
Saint Paul Church, Scranton, 9:00 a.m.
- December 12** - Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe Mass
Saint Nicholas Church, Wilkes-Barre, 6:00 p.m.
- December 21** - Advent Mass for Chancery Staff
Cathedral of Saint Peter, Scranton, 12:10 p.m.
- December 24** - Christmas Eve Vigil Mass
Cathedral of Saint Peter, Scranton, 4:00 p.m.
- December 25** - Midnight Mass
Cathedral of Saint Peter, Scranton, Midnight
- December 25** - Christmas Day Mass
Gino Merli Veterans Center, Scranton, 9:30 a.m.

**Looking for a Mass time near you?
Use the "Find a Mass" or "Find a Parish" feature on the
Diocese of Scranton website!**

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.



Fourth grade students at **Our Lady of Peace School in Clarks Green** used the scientific method to investigate reactions between light and heat energy in their glow sticks.



Collin and Charlie Hair along with their mother, Denise, celebrate their grandfather Chuck Hair's years of service at the Veterans Day celebration at **Saint Jude School in Mountain Top**. Mr. Hair served in the U.S. Air Force from 1982-2004.



Sixth grade students at **Saint Clare/Saint Paul School in Scranton** recently participated in a Math Decimal Division Scavenger Hunt.



Congratulations to Gracie Hogan, a student at **Saint Agnes School in Towanda**, who won second place in the Bradford County Republican essay contest, "How Having Chores at Home Gets Us Ready for the Real World." She is shown with her teacher Mrs. Philippi.



Students, faculty & staff, as well as the community of **La Salle Academy in Jessup**, raised more than \$2,000 for Julia, an LSA alumnus who is battling cancer.



For the entire month of October, the classrooms of **Holy Family Academy in Hazleton** were filled with spooky mansions, created by the second grade class.

Students and faculty from **Notre Dame Elementary and Notre Dame Jr./Sr. High Schools in East Stroudsburg** welcomed the Most Reverend Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, for a special Mass in October. During his homily, Bishop told the students, "You never know what God is calling you to be so open your heart to His word."





Eighth grade students at **Saint Mary of Mount Carmel School in Dunmore** discussed ways to build each other up and why it's okay to make mistakes using our diocesan-wide SEL program, FRIENDZY.



Students in third grade at **Holy Rosary School in Duryea** recited the rosary as requested by Pope Francis for peace in the Middle East.



Students at **Saint John Neumann Elementary School in Williamsport** have been painting rocks for the past few weeks to create a Rock Rosary Garden for their playground. After they were finished, the Rock Rosary was blessed in a special ceremony.



Students in the **Holy Cross and Holy Redeemer School Systems** competed in the annual Fall Forensics competition, focusing on the Oral Interpretation of Poetry. Two students from **Wyoming Area Catholic School in Exeter** took first place in their division: Grace Kelly, First Place Junior Varsity, and Molly Pokrinchak, First Place Varsity.



The students at **Holy Redeemer High School in Wilkes-Barre** lead the music during their All Souls Day Mass.



The community of **Epiphany School in Sayre** celebrated Mass in honor of Mrs. Brenda Quattrini, who was recently awarded the Saint John Paul II Award for 25 years of service to Catholic education.



Students at **Saint John Neumann High School in Williamsport** celebrated Red Ribbon Week by "Being the Light in Somebody's Darkness" by having a Glow Party.



Students at **All Saints Academy in Scranton** were enjoying their after-school Chess Club, moderated with Sister Elizabeth.



Students from **Good Shepherd Academy in Kingston** recently competed against 18 other teams in the Scranton Preparatory School Young Scholars program. The team of Sienna Curry, Grace Hamill, Chase Liska and Connor Makarewicz finished in first place.

Saint Vincent de Paul Kitchen in Wilkes-Barre celebrating 40 years of compassionate service

WILKES-BARRE — When the late Scranton Bishop J. Carroll McCormick dedicated the new Saint Vincent de Paul Kitchen as a program of Catholic Social Services of the Diocese of Scranton on May 19, 1983, he urged the people of the Wyoming Valley to “accept the challenge to love those whom the world has scorned.”

Two weeks later, Saint Vincent de Paul Kitchen at 39 East Jackson St. in downtown Wilkes-Barre served its first meal on June 2, 1983. Monsignor Donald McAndrews, the executive director of Catholic Social Services in the Diocese who envisioned such a haven of charity for the area’s needy, looked on with pride as a legacy was born.

For the past 40 years, Saint Vincent de Paul Kitchen has provided a safe space for people in need to enjoy a hot meal, warm clothes, kindness, compassion and companionship.

That first simple meal served

to some 100 underprivileged members of the community will be fondly recalled and celebrated when “A Bountiful Harvest,” the Kitchen’s 40th anniversary event under the major sponsorship of McCarthy Tire Service, will take place this Saturday evening, Nov. 18, at The Westmoreland Club in Wilkes-Barre.

The celebratory gala — fittingly slated for the weekend before Thanksgiving — will serve as an evening of gratitude and giving, featuring a cocktail party, piano music and auction, including a \$5,000 cash raffle.

Serving as event chairman is Gary Lambert Jr., a member of the Kitchen Advisory Board since June who recalls earning high school “service hours” as a volunteer at Saint Vincent de Paul. The evening’s program will honor three longtime board members for their charitable and distinguished service to the Kitchen apostolate, as well as the community at large.

Among the honorees are



Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, enjoys lunch with patrons of Saint Vincent de Paul Kitchen before greeting some of the facility’s dedicated volunteers in 2011.



Lambert’s grandmother, Cecelia “Cece” McCarthy; Rose Marie Panzitta; and John Graham.

As it has done since its humble beginnings 40 years ago, Saint Vincent de Paul’s doors are open to the less fortunate in the community every day of the year, including weekends and holidays. The serving of nutritious lunchtime meals begins each morning at 11 a.m. and ends at 12:30 p.m. Today an average of about 300 meals are prepared daily.

In addition to the Kitchen, the Saint Vincent de Paul Food Pantry is open every Tuesday and Thursday from 9 to 11 a.m.

Dr. David Shemo, a Wilkes-Barre area dentist who serves as president of the Saint Vincent de Paul Kitchen Advisory Board, expressed his pride and that of his fellow board members in celebrating the Kitchen’s time-honored apostolic work — and those community members responsible for it — on the occasion of the milestone anniversary.

“Over the course of the past 40 years, Saint Vincent de Paul has served literally millions of hot meals to our community,” Dr. Shemo said. “Its enduring success is a living testament to the generosity of our community. We are honored to help those in need and look forward to continuing to welcome patrons to the Kitchen for many years to come.”

Mike Cianciotta, director of Saint Vincent de Paul Kitchen, said the facility provides a basic necessity to those it serves, adding that there are those who erroneously believe most of Saint Vincent’s clients are homeless.

“The idea that only homeless people need this place is a total misconception,” Cianciotta said. “Those who come to the Kitchen are retired and are on fixed incomes. Some may suffer from a mental or physical disability which prevents them from working, and many are actually the working poor.”

During his 12 years of supervising the charitable operations at Saint Vincent de Paul, Cianciotta continues to see an increase in need for what the Kitchen provides.

“I’m still in awe of the generosity of the community, as well as seeing God’s hand at work in providing all of our needs,” he

noted. “My prayers are that the Kitchen will be here for many more years, providing for the less fortunate.”



A memorial plaque honoring the late Dianne Colleran for her more than 15 years of volunteer service at the Saint Vincent de Paul Clothing Room was dedicated at the Wilkes-Barre Kitchen shortly after her sudden passing in May.



This photo from the July 18, 1985, issue of *The Catholic Light* shows the leaders of the annual “Sponsor For A Day” campaign to benefit the Saint Vincent de Paul Kitchen that year. From left: Monsignor Donald McAndrews, executive director of Scranton Catholic Social Services; Joseph Frank, chairman of the Saint Vincent de Paul Advisory Board; Mercy Sister Lucille Brislin, Kitchen coordinator; and Thomas Medico, drive chairman.



Catholic Social Services assists religious Sister with becoming U.S. citizen



Sister Jude Njeri, L.S.O.S.F., left, celebrates with Fikile Ryder, Director of Community for Catholic Social Services of the Diocese of Scranton, outside the federal courthouse in Scranton on Sept. 15, 2023. Just a short time earlier, Sister Jude participated in a Naturalization ceremony to officially become a United States citizen. (Photo/Eric Deabill)

SCRANTON — During her more than 20 years ministering to people in churches and nursing homes across the country, Sister Jude Njeri, L.S.O.S.F., a native of Kenya, said the United States had started to feel like “another home.”

On Sept. 15, 2023, it officially became her home, as Sister Jude took the Oath of Citizenship at a naturalization ceremony inside the federal courthouse in Scranton.

“This is a land of opportunities,” Sister Jude said immediately after becoming an American citizen. “My heart is very light. It has given me strength, another push, to go on. I still have time in my life to give.”

As a member of the Little Sisters of Saint Francis, Sister Jude has spent time ministering to people in Wisconsin, Minnesota, and New York, in addition to the greater Scranton area. As two decades began to pass, she started doing research on how to become a U.S. citizen.

“At first I thought it would be very expensive. People were telling me you need a lawyer and

lawyers cost money,” she said.

One night, she woke up from a sound sleep, and thought that Catholic Social Services of the Diocese of Scranton might be able to assist her.

She was correct.

“I went to visit Fikile and she helped me,” Sister Jude explained. “Catholic Social Services is there to reach out to us who need it and I’m so grateful!”

Fikile Ryder, MSCJ, is Catholic Social Services’ Director of Community and is an accredited immigration counselor for the U.S. Department of Justice. She worked closely with Sister Jude to make sure the process went smoothly.

“With us (Catholic Social Services) being recognized, and myself being accredited with the Department of Justice, I am authorized to practice immigration law. With that, I’m able to file applications like citizenship and also represent them in front of the Department of Homeland Security,” Ryder said.

Continued on Page 24

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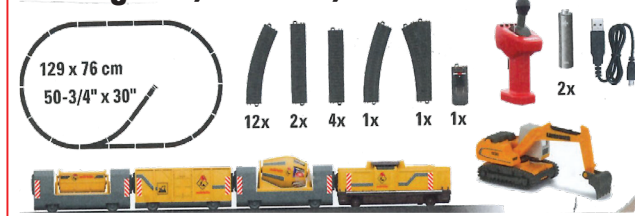
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Men's conference offers opportunity for attendees to renew their faith

WILKES-BARRE

Hundreds of men gathered at Holy Redeemer High School on Oct. 7, 2023, to take part in the 8th annual 'Be A Catholic Man' conference.

The day of prayer and fellowship was an opportunity for the attendees to renew their faith and commitment to serving the church.

"The speakers that the team is able to pull together are 'lights out,'" Paul Binner, Sr., of Tunkhannock, said. "They really help me connect with my faith at a deeper level, to hear their stories,



Above: Attendees of the 'Be A Catholic Man' Conference listen to Rev. John Anthony Boughton, C.F.R., speak during the Oct. 7, 2023 event.

Below: Chris Calore, a member of the conference planning committee, prays during Mass celebrated by Bishop Bambera. (Photos/Mike Melisky)



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to see the witness of their lives. It's just very inspiring and it carries me through to the next conference."

Conference speakers this year included Mark Houck and Sam Blair, a former Navy Seal Officer, who urged the men attending the conference to love the Lord unconditionally.

"The Lord doesn't want a Sunday relationship with us. He wants a moment-to-moment relationship with us," Blair explained. "I think a lot of us have decided that we're going to do a Sunday relationship and that's it."

Rev. John Anthony Boughton, C.F.R., spoke about the power of the Rosary and the importance of going to confession at least once a month.

"Confession is critical because it keeps our communication line with the Lord open wide," Rev. Boughton said.

The priest of the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal compared confession to cleaning out your house.

"It's like sweeping the house. Even if it doesn't look that dirty, you always find dust in it. Even if the dust looks the same, who cares! You dust it out. If you do that, you keep your soul in a state of grace and



you're able to hear the voice of the Lord more clearly, you're able to see the road ahead that He has for you and you're able to make decisions that are godly decisions," he added.

John Guarnieri, a parishioner of Saint Jude Parish in Mountain Top, attended the conference to "learn and hopefully take a deeper step into the faith."

The conference concluded with the celebration of Mass with the Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, as principal celebrant. During his homily, he thanked all those who attended the conference.

"You are surely a sign of hope for our Church and for our world today, as we far too often confront countless obstacles and open hostility to the faith we profess and hold dear," Bishop Bambera said.

Table of Plenty: Scranton Thanksgiving Community Program ready to serve friends in need

SCRANTON — The Friends of the Poor apostolate is proud to announce, once again, its three community-based programs to help feed — in body & soul — the region's less fortunate this Thanksgiving.

The 47th annual holiday program is incorporating new collaborative partners to aid the Friends of the Poor's Thanksgiving Dinner for Adults & Elderly, Family to Family Thanksgiving Food Basket Program, and the kick-off Interfaith Prayer Service.

"The Thanksgiving Community Program has never been one to operate in a silo," Meghan Loftus, president and CEO of Friends of the Poor, said. "From its humble beginnings feeding a few dozen community members, our program has relied on the generosity of area individuals, businesses and institutions to make the holiday special for those who often go without."

Nearly 50 years later, the



For their 47th Annual Thanksgiving Community Program, the Friends of the Poor has gratefully welcomed Catherine McAuley Center and the Weinberg Northeast Regional Food Bank as new official sponsors in aiding the enormous effort to feed the needy this holiday season. Pictured proud to serve side-by-side with Meghan Loftus (center), president and CEO of Friends of the Poor, are, at left, Krista Somers Murray, McAuley Center executive director, and Jennifer Warabak, executive director of the Weinberg Food Bank.

same remains true today as efforts have been well underway to prepare and serve 3,500 meals and provide another 3,500 families with Thanksgiving groceries.

A sponsored work of the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary religious community, Friends of the Poor this year officially welcomes the Catherine McAuley Center and Weinberg Northeast Regional Food Bank as partners in service for the Thanksgiving Community Program.

"This further proves that we are stronger together than we ever could be alone," Loftus commented, noting that the McAuley Center will offer support staff for each event to help accommodate the projected increase in need, and the Weinberg Food Bank will provide the turkeys for the cooked Thanksgiving take-out meal.

The Thanksgiving program series of events begins on Friday, Nov. 17, at 7 p.m. with the Interfaith Prayer Service hosted at Temple Hesed, 1 Knox Road, Scranton. All are welcome to attend and participate in the prayer service celebrating gratitude as the cornerstone of the area's faith traditions and the true meaning of

the holiday.

On Sunday, Nov. 19, University of Scranton students will get hands-on insight into the inner workings of the Family to Family program, as the University's Center for Service and Social Justice will provide Thanksgiving menu items to 200 families in the Hilltop and Valley View housing developments within the Scranton Housing Authority.

The traditional Thanksgiving Dinner for Adults & Elderly will be distributed, take-out style, for the fourth year in a row on Tuesday, Nov. 21, outside the Scranton Cultural Center, 420 North Washington Ave., Scranton., from 2:30 to 5:30 p.m.

Anyone in need of a cooked Thanksgiving meal is welcome to drive-thru or walk-up for the packaged dinner. No pre-registration or proof of income is required. During this time the 400 & 500 blocks of North Washington and Vine streets will be closed for traffic control.

Patrons are requested to arrive no sooner than 2 p.m. to facilitate the delivery of approximately 1,500 meals to pre-registered,

low-income seniors with continued assistance from the dedicated volunteer drivers from the Junior League of Scranton.

The following morning, Thanksgiving Eve, Wednesday, Nov. 22, the Family to Family Thanksgiving Food Basket Program, under the direction of the Robeson Family, will pick up where the dinner left off.

Beginning at 9 a.m., various grocery items that will allow families to prepare a traditional Thanksgiving meal in their homes will be provided in front of the Scranton Cultural Center on North Washington Ave. until 5 p.m., or while supplies last.

Also a drive-thru event with no need for pre-registration or proof of income, this event will include a dedicated tent with supplies and volunteers to assist those arriving for walk-up service.

"We've all seen an incredible increase in need in our area over the last several years," Loftus concluded. "The number of families seeking assistance from Friends of the Poor every day is astonishing, and the holidays add to that number."

47th Annual THANKSGIVING COMMUNITY PROGRAM



SCRANTON AREA MINISTERIUM
Interfaith Prayer Service
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Temple Hesed, 1 Knox Rd, Scranton



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Tuesday, Nov 21st, 2:30-5:30pm
Scranton Cultural Center, N Washington & Vine
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FAMILY TO FAMILY
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MISSION MESSAGE

‘Where are the Other Nine?’

By Deacon Edward Kelly
Interim Director,
Pontifical Mission Societies



my legs, smiling, happy and thankful that they had a school to go to and knowing that they would get a hot meal of rice and beans. I watched these beautiful Haitian kids get in line to receive their hot meal and sit down together. I looked down across one of the tables only to see every head bowed, praying the grace, remembering and taking the time to thank God for that one hot meal — the only meal many of them would get that day.

I don't think that I have missed a grace before a meal since I first saw that. Not because of me, but that is what those poor kids from Haiti taught me.

On my visit to Africa, the two words I heard most often in Swahili were “Asante Sana,” which means “thank you very much.” Two of the most profound words that one human being can say to another are “thank you.” The most grateful person you know is probably the holiest person you know. To say thank you is to realize that what you are and what you have are the results of goodness far beyond yourself.

Let us look to the thankful leper — the “other,” “the foreigner” — as a source of wisdom. In this life there is so much to be thankful for and certain things just need to be said, and every one of us needs to say them: “Thank you, thank you, thank you, God.”

Jesus seemed to think so. He wondered out loud: “Has none but this foreigner returned to give thanks to God? Where are the other nine?”

Next Thursday, Americans will celebrate the holiday called Thanksgiving. It is a time to take inventory of all our blessings and then turn to God to give thanks for these blessings.

One of my favorite Gospels is often proclaimed on Thanksgiving Day — “The Ten Lepers” (Luke 17:11-19). After being healed, only one leper out of ten, a Samaritan, stops, turns around and returns to Jesus to give thanks. The most unlikely of the ten — “the foreigner,” “the outcast,” “the other,” and perhaps “the poorest” — teaches us how faith can heal and save us.

Jesus often uses unlikely people, in unlikely circumstances, in unlikely places, who are on the fringe, almost invisible, to teach us about faith. I know, for me, when

I travel to mission lands that is precisely what I have learned from the poorest of the poor.

On one of my visits to Haiti I got to know the cook in the volunteer house, Hands Together, where we stayed with Father Tom Hagen. Her name was Julia. Every time I looked at Julia she had a smile on her face. Looking through American eyes, I could not understand the source of her joy.

Before I departed Haiti, I approached Julia to say goodbye and I asked her this question: “Julia, why are you so happy?” She gave me an answer I will never forget: “Understand, most of my family members and most of my friends are *both* poor and sick at the same time. Me and my three kids, we're just poor so I thank God every day for the blessing of health and it makes me happy to have a job so I can support my three kids and help some of my family members and friends.”

What a lesson in Thanksgiving coming from “the other,” “the foreigner,” “the poorest of the poor.”

On the same visit to Haiti, I remember entering an elementary school in Cite Soleil. The Haitian kids came right up to me, hugging



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Catholic Sister becomes U.S. citizen with help of CSS

Continued from Page 19

Ryder was one of many people who filled the courtroom in September to see Sister Jude – and roughly 30 other people – receive their naturalization certificates.

“It’s an amazing feeling and congratulations to everybody who became United States citizens,” she added.

Ryder says citizenship is often the last step on many people’s immigration journey – but a very important step.

“When you become a U.S. citizen, you’re able to vote, you’re able to apply for federal jobs, you’re able to go in different countries without needing VISAs, just using your U.S. passport,” Ryder said.

As one of the newest U.S. citizens, Sister Jude returned to her home at the Mercy Center in Dallas following the ceremony, feeling both happy and proud.

“I feel like I could fly,” she said with a smile. “I’m just floating on the air!”

For more information on the programs or services offered by Catholic Social Services, visit dioceseofscranton.org.

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 Respecto 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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Collection for Religious Retirement Fund Dec. 9-10

The Diocese of Scranton will hold the Retirement Fund for Religious collection Dec. 9-10. The parish-based appeal is coordinated by the National Religious Retirement Office (NRRO) in Washington, D.C. Proceeds help religious communities across the country to care for aging members.

Last year, the Diocese of Scranton donated more than \$72,800 to the collection.

"We are privileged to support those who have dedicated their lives to tireless service," NRRO Executive Director John Knutsen said. "We are immensely grateful for the continuing generosity of U.S. Catholic donors to this vital cause."

Hundreds of U.S. religious communities face a large gap between the needs of their older members and the funds available to support them.

Historically, Catholic sisters, brothers and religious order priests — known collectively as women



and men religious — served for little to no pay. As a result, many communities now lack adequate retirement savings.

At the same time, health-care expenses continue to rise, and an increasing number of older religious require specialized services. NRRO data show that nearly 25,000 women and men religious in the United States are older than age 70. The total cost for their care exceeds \$1 billion annually.

To help address the deficit in retirement funding among U.S.

religious orders, Catholic bishops of the United States initiated the Retirement Fund for Religious collection in 1988.

Distributions are sent to each eligible order's central house and provide supplemental funding for necessities, such as medications and nursing care. Donations also underwrite resources that help religious communities improve eldercare and plan for long-term retirement needs.

The 2022 appeal raised \$27.6 million, with funding distributed to 297 U.S. religious communities.

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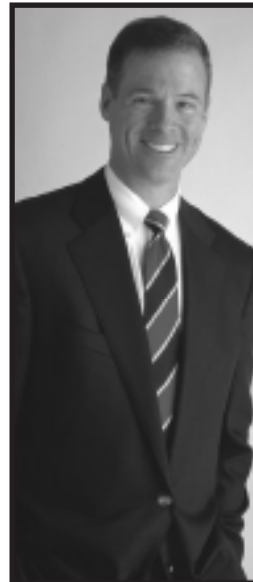
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Prayer Requests for Priests

The Daily Prayer Request for Priests schedule is as follows:

November 16, Bishop Emeritus Joseph F. Martino; November 17, Father Paschal Mbagwu; November 18, Father Michael McCormick; November 19, Father Glenn McCreary, V.E.; November 20, Saint Joseph Oblate Father Paul McDonnell; November 21, Holy Cross Father Russ McDougall; November 22, Father Patrick McDowell; November 23, Father James McGahagan; November 24, Father Gerard McGlone; November 25, Monsignor Stephen McGough; November 26, Father John McHale; November 27, Father Connell McHugh; November 28, Jesuit Father Bernard McIlhenny; November 29, Jesuit Father Ronald McKinney; November 30, Father Patrick McLaughlin; December 1, Pope Francis; December 2, Bishop Joseph C. Bambera; December 3, Father Edward Michelin; December 4, Father Kevin Miller; December 5, Jesuit Father J. Patrick Mohr; December 6, Father Joseph Mosley; December 7, Father Joseph Motsay; December 8, Father Thomas Muldowney; December 9, Father Kevin Mulhern; December 10, Father Paul Mullen; December 11, Father James Nash; December 12, Jesuit Father Eugene Nolan; December 13, Father Theodore Obaza; December 14, Holy Cross Father Thomas O'Hara; December 15, Father Peter O'Rourke; December 16, Father James Paisley; December 17, Father Francis Pauselli; December 18, Father Jaime Perez Restrepo; December 19, Father Carmen Perry; December 20, Father Thomas Petro.

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USCCB president calls for continued prayers in world where 'peace seems so far away'

BALTIMORE(OSVNews)- The president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops Nov. 14 urged his brother bishops and all the Catholic faithful to "continue to pray" when "peace seems so far away" in today's world.

"Our thoughts readily turn to the Holy Land, sacred to all three monotheistic religions," Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio of the U.S. Archdiocese of the Military Services said in his presidential address.

"We recognize and defend the right of Israel to exist and to enjoy a place among the nations. At the same time, we know that the Palestinians, who represent the majority of Christians in the Holy Land while still being a minority themselves, have a right to a land

that is their own," he said. "The Holy See has long advocated for that right and we also plead for them."

Archbishop Broglio noted that organizations such as the Knights and Ladies of the Holy Sepulchre and the Catholic Near East Welfare Association "make concrete our commitment to those who suffer and involve Catholics in our nation in a personal way in the suffering of the Holy Land and among her neighbors."

Those neighbors include Syria, which he said has been almost "forgotten in the deliberations of the powerful," and Lebanon, which has long shouldered the burden of millions of refugees, he noted. The archbishop also highlighted the

struggle of "our Ukrainian sisters and brothers" against "unjust aggression," the oppression against the church in Nicaragua and the imprisonment of Bishop Rolando Álvarez there, the "delicate nature" of the Catholic Church's situation in Myanmar and the ongoing crisis in Haiti.

"Unfortunately, it would be easy to continue with a list of areas of conflict in our world," he said.

"Certainly, we pray that the Prince of Peace might enlighten those who determine the fate of nations," he said. Archbishop Broglio reminded the bishops how they prayed for peace at their opening Mass Nov. 13, "and I know that we are ready to advocate for lasting peace."

He praised the USCCB's Committee on International Justice and Peace for working "tirelessly ... to keep the bishops abreast of the developments in these situations and to encourage, within the limits of what is possible, avenues of dialogue and assistance."

"As successors of the apostles, we participate in the mandate that Christ gave at the Ascension: 'Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching

them to observe all that I have commanded you,'" he said. "It continues to be a daunting task."

The archbishop also talked about his time as a delegate to the first session of the Synod on Synodality Oct. 4-29 at the Vatican; the synod's second session will be next October.

"Different cultures and different perceptions always enrich," he said. "It is ... important to listen to each other. Personally, I saw many old friends and met new ones. I was also painfully reminded of the needs of so many younger churches."

He also noted that he sees collegiality and "many synodal realities" that exist now in the U.S. church through the deliberations of the USCCB's various committees and how their members interact for the sake of the wider church and in the work of presbyteral and pastoral councils.

"That is not to say that we do not have to grow and open ourselves to new possibilities, but we recognize and build on what is already present," he said. "We open our hearts to the action of the Holy Spirit and we listen to that voice."

He spoke of the National Eucharistic Revival and the U.S.

church's effort "to call our daughters and sons home to the fullness of life in Christ in the sacraments," and praised other initiatives with this as their goal, including the Fellowship of Catholic University Students, NET Ministries, Cursillo and so many others.

"On behalf of all the bishops, I thank those who strive to instill vibrancy, commitment and renewal into our faith communities while reaching out to the peripheries at the same time," he said.

"On the front lines of these efforts are our committed priests on fire with the Gospel," he said. "They are our first collaborators and we are so dependent on their tireless efforts." The archbishop said he is encouraged by "young men preparing in the seminaries" for the priesthood, calling them "a sign of hope for the future."

"We are unified in our commitment to Jesus Christ and his Gospel," he told his brother bishops. "We may approach the mission in different ways, but we are convinced that our mandate is to bring everyone to an experience of Jesus Christ who leaves no one indifferent or the same."

He said he hoped the bishops' plenary assembly, with its full agenda and opportunities "for fraternal exchanges," would "enrich each of us and send us home with renewed zeal for the mission we have in common."

The USCCB president encouraged them to return "emboldened" by the zeal of St. Frances Xavier Cabrini, the first U.S. canonized saint known for her care of the poor, marginalized populations and immigrants, who "never really let anything stop her." Archbishop Broglio concluded his address with a reference to the Book of Revelation, "Whoever has ears ought to hear what the Spirit says to the churches."

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Enthronement Mass slated for Christ the King feast

LAFLIN — The Diocesan Enthronement Guild of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary will host a special Mass of Enthronement to celebrate the Solemnity of Christ the King on Sunday, Nov. 26.

The Mass commemorating the annual feast day that marks the end of the Church's liturgical year will be celebrated at 3 p.m. in the chapel of the Oblates of Saint Joseph Seminary, Route 315, Laflin.

Saint Joseph Oblate Father Joseph Sibilano, who resides at the seminary, will serve as principal



Father Joseph Sibilano, OSJ

celebrant for the liturgy.

Music ministry for the liturgical celebration will be provided by Ernie Pappa and Vanessa James. The

prelude of contemporary music will be offered prior to the Mass, beginning at 2:30 p.m. Refreshments will be provided

following the Mass.

The Enthronement of the Sacred Heart apostolate enables families and individuals to consecrate their homes to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Homes that have been enthroned become an extension of the liturgy, whereby faithful can follow up their Eucharistic devotion in church with prayerful devotion in their own private settings.

Anyone interested in enthroning their home and family to the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary may register to receive an Enthronement packet by contacting Maria Pappa, coordinator of the Enthronement Guild, at (570) 241-8171. Enthronement renewals are also available.

All are welcome to attend the Christ the King celebration.

Advent Scripture series at Drums parish

DRUMS — A series of Advent Scripture sessions on the Infancy Gospels will be hosted at Good Shepherd Church in Drums on two consecutive Wednesday mornings, Nov. 29 and Dec. 6, at 9 a.m. in the parish hall.

Father Connell McHugh, pastor emeritus of Good Shepherd Parish, will offer presentations on the Infancy Gospels of Saint Luke and Saint Matthew, discussing the

major figures of the narratives and how the two versions of the events leading to Christ's birth lend to the overall theology of the saints' Gospels.

The Advent Scripture series is open to the public free of charge; registration is encouraged as notes will be provided.

To register, contact the Good Shepherd Parish office at (570) 788-3141.

Marian Devotion Rosary prayer service listed

Fostering prayerful devotion to Jesus and the Blessed Virgin Mary through recitation of the Holy Rosary, Marian Devotion Ministries in the Diocese of Scranton continues to host its 2023 Fatima Journey.

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

Fatima prayers and hymns.

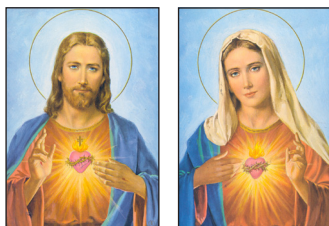
An upcoming Marian Devotion event is scheduled as follows:

Monday Rosary Evening of Marian Devotion — Nov. 20, at 6 p.m. at the Oblates of Saint Joseph Chapel, Route 315, Laflin.

For more information, contact Ernie Pappa at (570) 241-8171 or email: singtomary@aol.com.

Blue Army Reparation Vigil

The next monthly First Friday Reparation Vigil, dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Immaculate Heart of Mary and sponsored by the Blue Army, will be held **Dec. 1** 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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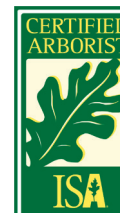
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Saint Faustina Kowalska Parish 'National Night of Prayer for Life' to begin on Marian feast

NANTICOKE — Saint Faustina Kowalska Parish, 520 South Hanover St., Nanticoke, will serve as the host for a National Night of Prayer for Life that is being held in conjunction with the upcoming Solemnity of the

Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The four-hour devotion begins on the Immaculate Conception feast on Friday, Dec. 8, at 9 p.m. and continues until 1 a.m. on Saturday, Dec. 9, the Feast of Blessed Juan

Diego, which commemorates the first apparition of Our Lady of Guadalupe to the Mexican peasant farmer in 1531.

Observed to atone for the sin of abortion that claims the lives of thousands of children in the

womb each year in the United States, the National Night of Prayer for Life service at the Saint Faustina Kowalska parish church will include Eucharistic adoration,

Rosary recitation, and prayers of reparation and healing for the nation and the world.

For more information, call (570) 332-2963.

Jermyn Knights continue 'Coats for Kids' campaign



Knights of Columbus from the Padre Pio Assembly 2768 at Sacred Hearts of Jesus & Mary Parish in Jermyn once again took part in the fraternal organization's annual "Coats for Kids" program, donating winter coats worth \$500 to students at the Mayfield Campus of Lakeland Elementary School. The K of C Assembly dedicated their charitable efforts in memory of Michael Polednak, a fellow Knight who passed away in June. Pictured displaying some of the warm winter wear for children are, from left: Kevin Sullivan, principal of the Lakeland Elementary Mayfield Campus; and the Knights' Faithful Navigator Tony Spataro and Faithful Scribe Ted Prusinski.

'Voice of John' announces winners of pro-life Christmas Card contest

HAZLETON — The "Voice of John" Pro-Life Ministry is pleased to announce the winners of its 2023 Christmas Card Contest.

John Frank, event chairperson, expressed his gratitude to the many students throughout the area who submitted their entries reflecting on the true meaning of Christmas.

The card depicts an image of the Christ Child created by artist Mary Lou Smith from Saint Gregory Parish in Clarks Green.

Among the highlights of their contemplations on the Nativity of the Lord, students captured the depth of the Christmas Season — Hope, Humility, Peace & Light, Gifts of Christ's Birth & His Life, Role of Mary: Mother of Christ.

Winner of this year's competition is Marian Catholic High School freshman student Noah Bauder, who captured the journey from the Nativity stable to the Eucharistic table — The Light of Christ shining in all of us.

The second-place winner, Olivia Fritz, a seventh grade student at Crestwood Middle School and a member of the Faith Formation Class at Saint Patrick Parish in White Haven, demonstrated her talent in both design and verse.

Garnering third place honors is Rocco Griguoli of Most Precious Blood Parish, Hazleton. The Marian Catholic High School freshman poetically expressed the joy of Christmas and the Glory of the King of Kings.

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Catholic Happenings Around the Scranton Diocese

Weekly Eucharistic Adoration — NOV. 17, hosted by St. Thomas More Parish in 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.

Parish Christmas Craft Show — NOV. 18, sponsored by St. Joseph the Worker Parish in Williamsport; held from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Fleming Parish Center, 720 West Fourth St., Williamsport. Food items also available for purchase.

Parish Pasta Dinner — NOV. 19, sponsored by Divine Mercy Parish, located at 312 Davis St., Minooka section of Scranton; complete pasta dinner served from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the parish hall. Cost: adults, \$15; children (under age 9), \$7. Tickets available by contacting the parish office at (570) 344-1724.

Parish Cash Bingo — NOV. 19, to benefit Prince of Peace Parish in Old Forge; hosted at the Eagle McClure Fire Department, 375 Milwaukee Ave., Old Forge. Doors open at 11 a.m.; bingo games start at 1 p.m. Event includes 20 regular games with \$100 cash prizes, plus five specials with \$250 jackpots; basket raffle drawing and snack bar. Admission cost: \$30; additional game booklets \$10 each. Advance tickets available at weekend Masses or by contacting the parish rectory office (570) 457-5900.

Sunday Pierogi & Soup Sale — NOV. 19, sponsored by SS. Peter & Paul Church, 1309 West Locus St., West Scranton; packages of homemade pierogi sold every weekend before and after the parish's 11 a.m. Mass on Sunday. Cost: \$10 per dozen. Soups sold following the Sunday Mass include: beef vegetable, Italian Wedding, cream of broccoli, beef barley vegetable and pasta fagioli.

Tuesday Eucharistic Adoration — NOV. 21, hosted by St. Peter Parish in Wellsboro; weekly exposition & adoration of the Blessed Sacrament offered every Tuesday from 1 to 6 p.m. at the Church of St. Peter, 47 Central Ave., Wellsboro. All faithful are welcome to spend time in prayerful meditation and reflection in the presence of the Eucharistic Lord.

Tuesday Novena Devotion to Saint Anthony of Padua — NOV. 21-DEC. 19, hosted by Our Lady of Hope Parish, 40 Park Ave., Wilkes-Barre; Saint Anthony Novena devotions held on Tuesday evenings, beginning at 5:30 p.m. in the parish church. Novena theme: "The Holy Eucharist: The Real Presence of Christ." Novena services include blessing with the Saint Anthony relic. All faithful are welcome; for more information, call (570) 824-7832.

November Remembrance Service: "A Light Will Shine" — NOV. 25, hosted by St. Maximilian Kolbe Parish in Pocono Pines; begins at 5 p.m. at Our Lady of the Lake Church, 5112 Pocono Crest Road, Pocono Pines. Memorial service commemorating November as the month dedicated to the souls of the faithful departed allows those mourning the loss of loved ones to light a votive candle, spend

time in silent prayer and participate in a candlelight Rosary. All are welcome.

Christ the King Solemnity Eucharistic Adoration — NOV. 26, hosted by the parish community of St. Nicholas-St. Mary in Wilkes-Barre; exposition and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament honoring the Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe, will be held from 1 to 4 p.m. at St. Mary Immaculate Conception Church, 134 South Washington St., Wilkes-Barre. The Eucharistic adoration will conclude with benediction of the Blessed Sacrament at 4 p.m. All are welcome during the hours of adoration to spend time in prayer, praise and meditation before the Eucharistic Lord; for more information, contact the parish office at (570) 823-7736.

Sunday Evening of Prayer & Meditation: "Come Walk With Me" — NOV. 26, hosted by Queen of the Apostles Parish in Avoca; program of music, meditation and prayer begins at 7 p.m. at the parish worship site of St. Mary Church, 715 Hawthorne St., Avoca. Evening of spiritual reflection features guest presenter and acclaimed Irish tenor Mark Forrest. Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament held in the church following the Sunday

morning Mass at 10 a.m. For more information, contact the parish office at (570) 457-3412.

Breakfast with Santa — NOV. 26, hosted by the Knights of Columbus, St. Ann's Basilica Council 12572, Scranton; held from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the Shrine dining room at St. Ann Basilica, 1239 Saint Ann's St., West Scranton. Breakfast menu includes eggs, pancakes, hash browns, sausage links, juice, milk, coffee & tea. Family Christmas event features photos with Santa (donation suggested) and basket raffles, including a grand basket with \$250 worth of home and holiday items. Cost: adults, \$8 in advance or \$9 at door; children (ages two and

Continued on Page 30

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Catholic Happenings Around the Diocese

Continued from Page 29

older), \$6 and \$7. Advance tickets available after all weekend Masses, at the St. Ann Parish rectory and monastery gift shop, and online at ScrantonKnights.com.

“Soup & Saints” Offering — NOV. 29, DEC. 6 & 13, hosted by Epiphany Parish in Sayre; all are welcome to gather each week at 6 p.m. in the church hall for a soup meal and group viewing of the “Pivotal Player” series offered by the Word on Fire Institute. Weekly episodes feature

St. Francis of Assisi (Nov. 29), Flannery O’Connor (Dec. 6), and St. Catherine of Siena (Dec. 13).

Knights of Columbus Blood Drive — DEC. 1, sponsored by the Knights of Columbus, Father Rechsteiner Assembly 942 in Williamsport; blood drive will be held from 1:30 to 6 p.m. at the Church of the Resurrection, 75 Musser Lane, Muncy. Donors are requested to schedule an appointment by visiting www.redercrossblood.org.

Eucharistic Revival Day — DEC. 2, sponsored by the Catholic Charismatic Renewal of the Diocese of Scranton in preparation for the Season of Advent; daylong program begins with registration at 8:30 a.m. and includes a continental breakfast at 9 a.m. and noon luncheon. Guest presenter: Father John Gordon, Secretary for Evangelization in the Archdiocese of Newark, N.J., who will offer reflections on the Holy Eucharist. Celebration of the Vigil Mass for the First Sunday of Advent will be offered at 4 p.m. to conclude the day. Cost to attend the event is \$25; reservations may be made at ccrscranton.org or by contacting Joyce at (570) 735-1068.

Parish Rummage Sale — DEC. 2, sponsored by St. Joseph the Worker Parish in Williamsport; held from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Fleming Parish Center, 720 West Fourth St., Williamsport. Numerous food and bake sale items available for purchase.

Breakfast with Santa — DEC. 9, sponsored by Holy Cross Parish, Olyphant, and Blessed Sacrament Parish, Throop; held from 9 to 10:30 a.m. in Kelly Hall at Holy Cross Parish. Breakfast menu: eggs, pancakes, bacon, hash

browns, coffee, milk & orange juice. Event also includes visit from Santa, basket raffle, cash prize drawing, and Ugly Christmas Sweater Contest for all parents & adults in attendance. Breakfast cost: adults, \$8 (pre-sale) & \$9 (at door); children, \$5 & \$6. Advance tickets available at the parish office and following all weekend Masses at Holy Cross Parish.

Christmas Cookie Walk — DEC. 16, hosted by St. Nicholas of Myra Byzantine Catholic Church, 320 Vine St., Old Forge; the holiday cookie sale will be held from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Patrons may fill a box of cookies for purchase from a various assortment of traditional and ethnic Christmas cookies; cost: \$10 per pound. No pre-orders will be accepted.

12th Annual Christmas Cookie Walk — DEC. 16, hosted by Exaltation of the Holy Cross Parish, 420 Main Road, Hanover Twp.; held from 10 a.m. to noon. Cost: \$10 for container of 20 cookies; \$40, large platter (80 cookies); and \$55, extra-large platter (120 cookies). Complimentary coffee, tea and cocoa will be provided. All orders must be placed by Dec. 9; call (570) 814-6444 or visit: www.exhc.org.

Twelve Days of Christmas Cash Raffle — DEC. 25-JAN. 5, sponsored by Exaltation of the Holy Cross Parish in Hanover Twp.; cash prizes will be drawn daily on Facebook. Each ticket costs \$20 for chances to win \$10,000 in cash prizes. For more information & tickets, call (570) 823-6242 or visit: www.exhc.org.



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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Young Adult Discernment Retreat to be held in December

NANTICOKE - Registration is now open for a Young Adult Discernment Retreat that will take place Dec. 8-9.

Rev. Michael Boris, Assistant Pastor of Saint Gregory Parish, Clarks Green, and Our Lady of the Snows Parish, Clarks Summit, will teach attendees how developing a Eucharistic spirituality can help discern a vocation and listen to the voice of Jesus!

During the retreat, those who attend will be invited to develop a better understanding of the Mass, Adoration and prayer, and the Church as the Body of Christ.

The retreat will take place at Holy Family Retreat Center, 151 Old Newport Street, Nanticoke.

The cost of the retreat is \$20. To register, visit the Diocese of Scranton's website at dioceseofscranton.org.

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Share joy of God's love, pope tells youth

VATICAN CITY (CNS) - Embrace God's unconditional love and live in a way that is based on and radiates hope, Pope Francis told Catholic young people.

Christian hope "is the celebration of the love of the risen Christ, who is always at our side, even when he seems far from us," the pope said in his annual message for local celebrations of World Youth Day.

Hope is nurtured by prayer and

the concrete choices one makes every day, he said in the message, published Nov. 14 at the Vatican.

"I urge all of you to choose a style of life grounded in hope," he wrote.

For example, instead of sharing negative things on social media, share things that inspire hope.

"Each day, try to share a word of hope with others. Try to sow seeds of hope in the lives of your friends and everyone around you," the pope wrote.



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Vatican Nativity scene to honor 800th anniversary of Saint Francis' creche

VATICAN CITY (CNS) - On the 800th anniversary of St. Francis of Assisi setting up the first Nativity scene, the creche in St. Peter's Square in 2023 will come from the Diocese of Rieti, Italy, and pay tribute to the scene set up in the diocese in 1223.

St. Francis' Nativity scene in a cave in Greccio featured live animals, but the one set to be unveiled in St. Peter's Square Dec. 9 will not, according to a press release from the Vatican City State governor's office.

But the scene still will be very simple: Mary and Joseph and the



Pope Francis prays during a visit to the Chapel of the Nativity, a grotto in Greccio, Italy, where tradition says the first Nativity scene was assembled by St. Francis of Assisi in 1223. (CNS photo/Vatican Media)

baby Jesus, some shepherds and figures representing the nobleman Giovanni Velita, his wife Alticama,

and three Franciscan friars who, at St. Francis' behest, put a hay-filled manger, an ox and a donkey in a grotto where the local faithful could come to pray and to imagine the poverty and simplicity into which Jesus was born.

At the center of the scene, there will be a copy of the fresco that now decorates that grotto in Greccio. One half shows St. Francis kneeling in adoration of the baby Jesus while Franciscan friars celebrate Mass; the other half shows Mary feeding the newborn savior while St. Joseph, the ox and the donkey look on.

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