



The Catholic Light

DIOCESE OF SCRANTON

Weekly E-Newsletter

November 9, 2023

**Catholic Social Services helping to change the
lives of homeless veterans**



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Your Gift to the *Diocesan Annual Appeal*
helps Catholic Social Services provide housing for
homeless veterans in Kingston and Scranton.

U.S. Navy veteran Joe Bates started serving his country a few years after high school. By the end of his career in 1986, he was writing work packages for fast-attack nuclear submarines.

During the ensuing decades, reality and economic pressures took their course, and Bates ended up homeless. Making ends meet – while trying to save money for an apartment – was just not possible.

“You have to have your first month, your last month, a security deposit and it all adds up,” he said.

After participating in a two-year program with the Veterans Administration, Bates found a new home in the former Saint Hedwig’s School in Kingston.

The building, now owned by Catholic Social Services of the Diocese of Scranton, is known as Saint Hedwig’s Veterans Village.

[Read the Full Story from The Catholic Light](#)

[Click Here to Support the Work of Catholic Social Services with a Gift to the 2023 Diocesan Annual Appeal](#)

**Bishop Bambera celebrates Jubilee Mass
for Women and Men Religious at Cathedral**



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 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.

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.

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.

Read more about the 2023 Jubilee Mass for Women and Men Religious in the Nov. 16 edition of *The Catholic Light*.

Younger U.S. Priests Increasingly Identify As Theologically Conservative, Politically Moderate, ‘First Responders’ To Abuse



A closer look at the largest survey of U.S. Catholic priests in 50 years has revealed “a major shift in how priests view themselves and their priesthood,” said researchers.

Compared to their older peers, younger priests are far more likely to describe themselves as theologically orthodox or conservative, politically

conservative or moderate, and prepared to be “first responders” to the abuse victims they encounter in their ministry. Furthermore, researchers noted “a significant proportion of American priests say that they had ‘personally experienced sexual harassment or abuse or suffered sexual misconduct’ during their formation or time in seminary.”

The findings were detailed in “Polarization, Generational Dynamics, and the Ongoing Impact of the Abuse Crisis: Further Insights from the National Study of Catholic Priests,” a November 2023 report released by The Catholic Project, an initiative from The Catholic University of America designed to foster effective collaboration between the church’s clergy and laity in the wake of the sexual abuse crisis.

[Read the Full Story from Our Sunday Visitor](#)

Ohio Voters Approve Measure To Codify Abortion In State Constitution



Ohio voters Nov. 7 approved Issue 1, a measure that will codify abortion access in the state’s constitution through fetal viability, typically understood to be 24 weeks gestation. The loss marks another electoral

defeat for anti-abortion ballot measures in the wake of the Supreme Court's Dobbs decision.

With 99% of precincts reporting, Ohio voters passed Issue 1, with 56.6% voting "yes" while 43.4% voted "no."

The measure, advanced by the Ohio Physicians for Reproductive Rights and Ohioans for Reproductive Freedom, will legalize abortion up to the point of fetal viability – the gestational maturity at which a baby may be capable of living outside the uterus – and beyond, if a physician decided an abortion was necessary for the sake of the mother's life or health.

[Read the Full Story from Our Sunday Visitor](#)

Pittston Parishes to Host a 'Christmas Celebration' With Renowned Concert Organist



On Sunday, December 10 at 3:00 p.m., the parishes of St. John the Evangelist and St. Joseph Mareello in Pittston 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 St. 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.

[Read the Full Story from The Catholic Light](#)

Jesus Loves Those Who Put Their Trust in Him, Pope Says at Memorial Mass



God seeks and loves those who are humble because it allows him to be a part of their lives, Pope Francis said.

“This is Christian humility, which is not simply one virtue among others, but the basic disposition of life: believing ourselves to be in need of God, making room for him and putting all our trust in him,” the pope said in his homily Nov. 3.

The pope celebrated a memorial Mass in St. Peter's Basilica for Pope Benedict XVI and the six cardinals and 147 bishops who died over the past year. Eighteen of the bishops were from the United States and five were from Canada. Also included was Australian Cardinal George Pell, former prefect of the Vatican's Secretariat for the Economy, who died in January in Rome at the age of 81.

[Read the Full Story from Our Sunday Visitor](#)

Pope Encourages Children to Speak Up, Work for Peace



In a celebration of life, peace, joy and harmony, thousands of children representing young people on every continent greeted Pope Francis during an afternoon event in the Vatican's Paul VI hall.

Children from different parts of the world, such as the Amazon and favelas of Brazil, sang on stage, and Italian pop star Mr. Rain performed his hit single, "Super Heroes."

[Click Here to Read the Full Story from Our Sunday Visitor](#)

**TWEENS & TEENS NEED
OUR LOVE, TOO!**

A watercolor illustration of a green Christmas tree. At the top is a large orange star. The tree is decorated with several items: a pair of black sunglasses, a blue and white patterned headband, a pink flower, a white baseball, a yellow sock, a colorful soccer ball, and a pink mug with a yellow star. A string of red and white beads is wrapped around the tree. At the base of the tree are various items: a purple bottle, a small jar, a makeup palette, a tube of lipstick, a brush, a blue container, a round object with a grid pattern, and a purple box labeled 'SCRUB'. The background is white with some faint text from other pages visible.



**NEED HELP? CALL SANDRA SNYDER AT
570-591-5004 OR EMAIL
SANDRA-SNYDER@DIOCESEOFSCRANTON.ORG**

In just eight weeks, Christmas will be upon us and once again Catholic Social Services is working to deliver hope to children through the annual “Christmas Gifts for Kids” program.

In Scranton, Catholic Social Services is partnering with three other community organizations – Friends of the Poor, Catherine McAuley Center, and the Salvation Army – to make sure no child goes without a gift. Last month, we registered approximately 1,500 families for this program in just **ONE HOUR** – significantly faster than we’ve ever seen before – which is a sign of the growing need in our community.

In Carbondale and Hazleton, Catholic Social Services also runs a “Christmas Gifts for Kids” program, serving hundreds of families in need in each of those communities.

You can help provide gifts to families this Christmas by purchasing a gift from our Amazon Wishlist - and the items will shipped directly to us to hand out in the days before Christmas. The price range for gifts is from \$5 to \$30.

[Click Here to View or Purchase a Gift for a local child from the CSS Amazon Wishlist](#)

Join Us for Theology on Tap Tonight!

DIOCESE OF SCRANTON
YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY

THEOLOGY ON TAP

A Young Adult Speaker Series for 21-40 year olds

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 9TH
7:00PM | \$5 COVER
@ SABATINI'S BOTTLESHOP

Mass Class: The 'What' and 'Why' of Liturgy
Guest Speaker: Fr. Bob Simon

Fr. Bob is the pastor of Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish in Brodheadsville. Ordained to the priesthood in 1990, he has served as Diocesan Director of Parish Ministries and Coordinator of RCIA. Fr. Bob earned an MA in Liturgy from the University of Notre Dame in 1996.



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