



# ***The Catholic Light***

DIOCESE OF SCRANTON

**Weekly E-Newsletter**

**February 15, 2024**

**'Through the desert, God leads us to  
Freedom'**

*Bishop Bambera's 2024 Lenten Message*



Dear Brothers and Sisters,

In his 2024 Lenten message to the Church, Pope Francis invites us to reflect upon the desert experience that is so prevalent in the life of Jesus and throughout the sacred scriptures. “Lent is the season of grace in which the desert can become once more – in the words of the prophet Hosea – the place of our first love (cf. Hos 2:16-17). God shapes his people, he enables us to leave our slavery behind and experience a Passover from death to life.”

Essentially, the sacred season of Lent encourages us to step apart from the frenetic pace of life that has consumed us and to reflect – in the desert of our hearts – what it means to be a disciple of Jesus and to embrace his life and saving grace. In the midst of a world fraught with upheaval and pain as a result of wars, political and social polarization, and far too many “isms” and “phobias” that have proliferated throughout the globe, resulting in discrimination, hatred, pain and suffering, we need to step apart to assess our own role in contributing to the breakdown of peace and respect for the lives that God has placed within our own. “If our celebration of Lent is to be fruitful,” Pope Francis asserts, “the first step is to desire to open our eyes to reality.”

In the liturgy of Ash Wednesday every year, we listen to the words of the prophet Joel, who sets the stage not only for the season of Lent but for our response to the Lord’s call to discipleship. And he does so by challenging us to change our lives – not merely by performing religious gestures and practices – but by peering intensely into our hearts to insure that our spirit is honest and pure and open to the transforming power and presence of God. Saint Matthew, in that same liturgy, reinforces the words of the prophet as he calls us to pray, fast, and to give alms in support of the poor – not because such behavior will make us righteous – but because such acts for the true follower of Jesus are simply the consequence of faithful lives rooted in Jesus, who teaches us how best to live.

Pope Francis puts these three pillars of our lives as followers of Jesus into perspective. “Today, the cry of so many of our oppressed brothers and sisters rises to heaven. Let us ask ourselves: Do we hear that cry? Does it trouble us? Does it move us? ... It is time to act ... Love of God and love of neighbor are one love ... For this reason, prayer, almsgiving and fasting are not three unrelated acts, but a single movement of openness and self-emptying, in which we cast out the idols that weigh us down, the attachments that imprison us ... In the presence of God, we become brothers and sisters, more sensitive to one another. In place of threats and

enemies, we discover companions and fellow travelers. This is God's dream, the promised land to which we journey once we have left our slavery behind."

By providing greater opportunities for prayer and reflection, Lent then becomes both a time for personal conversion and a favorable season for opening the doors to all those in need and recognizing in them the face of Christ as it challenges us to consider the gift and blessing of the Sacrament of Baptism in our lives.

On the First Sunday of Lent, we will welcome catechumens into the ranks of the elect; those from our midst who have begun the journey of conversion and who will soon experience the saving power of Jesus in the Easter mysteries of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist. Their "yes" to the Lord's call gives us hope and should encourage us to recommit ourselves to the vows that were made at our own baptisms. Their "yes" reminds us that we too are called to look beyond ourselves to something more in life.

As we continue to give thanks for the singular gift of God's presence in the Holy Eucharist during the third year of Eucharistic Revival in our land, I will once again celebrate a Holy Hour before the Blessed Sacrament in each of our twelve deaneries throughout the weeks of Lent. I look forward to praying with many of you as we seek God's healing grace.

Finally, I encourage all of us to avail ourselves of the Lord's mercy and healing in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

My friends, in the desert of our hearts, Lent calls us to reflect upon our relationship with God and to recognize that God is ever faithful and present, particularly amid the challenges that envelop our broken world and fragile lives. May we be humble enough to open our lives to God's merciful presence and walk with him on the life-giving journey of conversion and renewal.

Please know of my prayers for a fruitful observance of Lent.

Faithfully yours in Christ,

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

[Read and Share Bishop Bambera's Lenten Message from the Diocese of Scranton](#)



## Catholic Television to broadcast Cathedral devotions during Lent

For it is written: **WORSHIP** the Lord your God, and serve Him only. When you call to me, and come to **PRAY** to me, I will answer you. You will seek me and find me, says the LORD. I will be found by you, and now says the LORD, return to me with your whole heart. Weeping and mourning, the Lord your God, shall you worship, and you shall come to me, says the LORD. My Beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased, listen to me, says the LORD, with your judgment, so that those who do not see might see, and those who do see might become blind. He cried out in a loud voice, "Hear, come to me, My God, and why have you abandoned me?" For the time has come, the time of God has come near. **REPENT** and believe the good news! But when you **GIVE** to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. **GATHER** the people and consecrate the assembly. †

# EVENING PRAYER

*with Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament*

## SUNDAYS DURING LENT

February 18	March 10
February 25	March 17
March 3	March 24

**Cathedral of Saint Peter | 6:15 p.m.**

EVENING PRAYER WILL BE BROADCAST EACH SUNDAY  
LIVE ON CATHOLIC TELEVISION

During Lent, the Cathedral of Saint Peter offers several ways in which the faithful can deepen their relationship with Jesus and come to know Him in a more intimate way.

CTV: Catholic Television of the Diocese of Scranton will make many of these opportunities available to the faithful through television broadcasts and livestream opportunities.

Every Sunday during Lent, the Cathedral will be hosting Adoration and Evening Prayer following the 5 p.m. Mass.

Evening Prayer is part of the Liturgy of the Hours, also known as the Divine Office. In the Liturgy of the Hours, the Church fulfills Jesus' command to "pray always."

Through this prayer, the people of God sanctify the day by continual praise of God and prayers of intercession for the needs of the world. During Lent, CTV plans to broadcast both the Sunday 5 p.m. Mass live as well as the Sunday Evening Prayer that will begin directly thereafter (around 6:15 p.m.).

The first broadcast of the Sunday 5 p.m. Mass and Evening Prayer will take place on Sunday, Feb. 18, 2024.

[Click Here for Information on Other Devotions Being Broadcast,  
Including Stations of the Cross and the Rite of Election](#)

## **Lenten Holy Hours with Bishop Bambera begin this evening in Luzerne**



DIOCESE OF SCRANTON  
KINGSTON DEANERY

# **LENTEN HOLY HOUR**

*with* **Bishop Bambera**

**Thursday, February 15  
at 7:00 P.M.**

**Holy Family Parish**  
574 Bennett Street  
Luzerne, PA 18709

 NATIONAL  
**Eucharistic  
Revival**



DIOCESE OF SCRANTON  
STROUDSBURG DEANERY

# LENTEN HOLY HOUR

*with* Bishop Bambera

**Tuesday, February 20  
at 7:00 P.M.**

**Our Lady of Victory Parish  
327 Cherry Lane Road  
Tannersville, PA 18372**



NATIONAL  
**Eucharistic  
Revival**



DIOCESE OF SCRANTON  
HAZLETON DEANERY

# LENTEN HOLY HOUR

*with* Bishop Bambera

**Wednesday, February 21  
at 7:00 P.M.**

**Most Precious Blood Parish  
131 East Fourth Street  
Hazleton, PA 18201**



NATIONAL  
**Eucharistic  
Revival**





DIOCESE OF SCRANTON  
CARBONDALE DEANERY

# LENTEN HOLY HOUR

*with* **Bishop Bambera**

**Thursday, February 22  
at 7:00 P.M.**

**Christ the King Parish  
429 Church Street  
Archbald, PA 18403**



NATIONAL  
**Eucharistic  
Revival**

Over the course of the next week, Bishop Bambera is expected to visit at least four deaneries to celebrate Lenten Holy Hours with the faithful.

All people are encouraged to participate in these special opportunities of prayer and devotion, drawing ever closer to the Lord during this Lenten season.

The Lenten Holy Hours begin this evening, Thursday, at Holy Family Parish in Luzerne.

The Holy Hours next week will take place at Our Lady of Victory Parish in Tannersville on Tuesday (2/20); Most Precious Blood Parish in Hazleton on Wednesday (2/21); and Christ the King Parish in Archbald on Thursday (2/22).

[Click Here for the Full Schedule of 2024 Lenten Holy Hours Across the Diocese of Scranton](#)

## **'Road to Resurrection' series to be held in Lackawanna & Lycoming Counties**

The parishes of the Scranton and Williamsport Deaneries are inviting the faithful to participate in 'Road to Resurrection' events this Lent.

In Scranton, the faithful will be able to immerse themselves in scripture from the Gospels as they are guided through the events surrounding Jesus' death and resurrection.

In the Lycoming County area, the weekly prayer opportunities will feature Eucharistic Adoration, Benediction and Vespers.



# Road to Resurrection

## Scranton Deanery 2024

**Thursdays at 7:00 p.m.**

**Feb. 22 - Saint Paul Parish**  
*1510 Penn Avenue, Scranton*

**Feb. 29 - Immaculate Conception**  
*800 Taylor Avenue, Scranton*

**March 7 - Mary Mother of God Parish**  
*316 William Street, Scranton*

**March 14 - Prince of Peace Parish**  
*123 W. Grace Street, Old Forge*

**March 21 - Divine Mercy Parish**  
*312 Davis Street, Scranton*

# ROAD TO RESURRECTION

LYCOMING COUNTY CATHOLIC CHURCHES



**Feb. 21 - Immaculate Conception, Bastress**  
**Feb. 28 - Saint Joseph the Worker, Williamsport**  
**March 6 - Church of the Resurrection, Muncy**  
**March 13 - Saint Lawrence Church, South Williamsport**  
**March 20 - Saint Ann Church, Williamsport**  
**March 27 - Saint Boniface Church, Williamsport**

*Each Weekly Opportunity begins at 7 p.m.*

**Prayer Service for Peace in Ukraine,  
marking two years since invasion, to be  
held Feb. 25 in Scranton**



## **Prayer Service for Peace and to Commemorate the Second Year of War in Ukraine**

Sunday, February 25, 2024 2:30 p.m.  
Cathedral of Saint Peter, 315 Wyoming Avenue, Scranton

It has been nearly two years since the Russian invasion of Ukraine began – and all people of goodwill are invited to join together to pray for an end to the war later this month.

On Sunday, Feb. 25, 2024, a ‘Prayer Service for Peace and to Commemorate the Second Year of War in Ukraine’ will be held at the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton at 2:30 p.m.

The Prayer Service will be led by Father Myron Myronyuk, Pastor, Saint Vladimir Ukrainian Catholic Church of Scranton, and the Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton.

“We want to remind people that our brothers and sisters are still suffering tremendously in Ukraine,” Father Myron said. “I know that many people are tired of war, but it is still going on. We are still losing a lot of lives and that is why we will have this opportunity to think about it, pray for our soldiers, and offer continued support for them.”



While in-person attendance is highly encouraged, the Prayer Service will also be broadcast live on CTV: Catholic Television of the Diocese of Scranton and livestream on the Diocese of Scranton website, YouTube channel, and social media platforms.

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

## **Rectory, Set, Cook! III is now underway!**

**37**  
collared  
cooks  
on  
30 teams

In an epic  
food fight  
vs.  
hunger and  
homelessness!

Which  
priests  
will  
rise  
to the  
top?

**RECTORY, SET, COOK! 2024**  
**COLLARS + SCHOLARS**

Support the anti-hunger and anti-homelessness initiatives  
of Catholic Social Services of the Diocese of Scranton  
by voting before 5 p.m. on March 26, 2024!  
Follow Diocese of Scranton on Facebook  
for updates and incentives.

PRESENTED BY THE  
**HawkFamily**  
FOUNDATION

For sponsorship or other information, call Sandra Snyder  
at 570-591-5004  
or email [Sandra-Snyder@dioceseofscranton.org](mailto:Sandra-Snyder@dioceseofscranton.org).

For the third year in a row, priests from across the Diocese of Scranton have taken to the kitchen, recording themselves cooking a favorite recipe,

to raise money for anti-hunger, anti-homelessness initiatives of Catholic Social Services.

Rectory, Set, Cook! III began on Feb. 13 and will run for six weeks, wrapping up on March 26.

“I’m on the phone at least once a week with Catholic Social Services for something – somebody needing heating oil, somebody needing food,” Father Mike Kloton, Pastor, Good Shepherd Parish, Drums, and Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception Parish, Freeland, said. “The employee who works the phones there recognizes my number!”

A total of 37 priests have participated in this year’s fundraiser – making a total of 30 videos. Some of the priests are being assisted by Catholic school students and other young people because the theme of this year’s effort is “Collars and Scholars.”

[Click Here to Watch all of the Rectory, Set, Cook Videos and Vote for Your Favorite!](#)

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**Mass for Persons with Disabilities showcases  
'abilities' of all people**



Practice certainly paid off for Gerard Wazeter, who served as a lector for the Mass for Persons with Disabilities which was held on Feb. 11, 2024.

“I practiced a lot. I felt comfortable,” he said.

This year was the fourth time the Trucksville resident attended the special Mass at the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton. He also served as lector several years ago.

“It made me feel great,” Wazeter added. “It made me feel special.”

The Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, served as principal celebrant and homilist for the celebration on the Sixth Sunday in Ordinary

Time. In his homily, he noted how Pope Francis offered his monthly prayer intention for people with disabilities in December.

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

## **Study examines common features in families where children grew into Catholic adults**



Only about 15% of U.S. adults who were raised Catholic said they had remained practicing Catholics attending weekly Mass into adulthood, according to data from the General Social Survey conducted by the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago.

But what were some of the things that distinguished the families of those children who remained practicing Catholics as adults from those who left the faith entirely? Seeking answers to this question, researchers at Georgetown University's Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate and the Peyton Institute for Domestic Church Life conducted the "Future Faithful Families Project" study.



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

## As Lent begins next week, we are encouraged to focus on 'almsgiving'



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*Fueling Vocations through Prayer*

**Four parish Vocation Centers being established in the Diocese of Scranton**

LAFLIN – Each of us has a vocation to which God is calling us. When it comes to a young man considering the possibility of priesthood, that discernment process can be a journey within a journey. After several years of discussion and planning, the first Diocesan vocation center began at Saint Matthew Parish in Laflin. The second was created in Hazleton. Christ the King Parish, Archbold, and Annunciation Parish, Hazleton, are also part of this initiative.

**Your Gift to the *Diocesan Annual Appeal* helps the Diocesan Office for Communications spread the Good News through *The Catholic Light* newspaper**

During Lent, we are reminded that the foundational call of Christians to charity is a frequent theme of the Gospels. We are asked to focus more intently on 'almsgiving,' which means donating money or goods to the poor and performing other acts of charity.

From helping to support seminarians and retired priests, to supporting Catholic education and Communication efforts, to helping Catholic Social Services serve thousands of our neighbors - the work supported by the Diocesan Annual Appeal is more than any one parish can do on its own!

Please prayerfully consider a gift today and click on the link below or call (570) 207-2250.

[Click Here to Give a Gift to the Diocesan Annual Appeal Now!](#)

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