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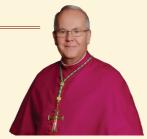
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THURSDAY, APRIL 17, 2025

Anchored in Hope: Living the Promise of the Resurrection

Bishop Bambera's 2025 Easter Message



Dear Friends,

"Why do you seek the living one among the dead? He is not here, but he has been raised."

These words from Saint Luke proclaimed this year during the great Vigil of Easter, point to the foundation of our hope as Christians. They are words that beckon us forth – just as they did for the first followers of Jesus – to confront the reality of His resurrection and the miracle of Easter.

They are also words that have endured for two millennia and have provided consolation and peace for all who have turned to the Church to encounter God's mercy and to find a way forward amid a broken, suffering world.

Sadly, however, not unlike the experience of the early Church, for all that we affirm as Christians, life continues to confront us with suffering and death. We have only to look to the conflicts in the Middle East and Ukraine, to lands around the globe that are enveloped by political unrest and disrespect for human life, to our own country fraught with division, fear and hatred, not to mention to the grief and pain that we so often experience in our families and personal lives. The scope of suffering that is present throughout our world is incomprehensible.

Yet, despite the burdens that are borne by so many, if we are humble and wise enough to open our lives to the power of God, every one of us can point to the life-giving presence of the Risen One in our midst.

Indeed, in announcing the Jubilee Year of Hope that we're blessed to experience this year, Pope Francis invited us to focus on the miracle of Easter.

"The death and resurrection of Jesus," he proclaimed, "is the heart of our faith and the very basis of our hope" as Christians.

As such, in as much as we are the blessed recipients of this hope, Jesus' gift of Himself on the cross also becomes a pattern for our lives as His disciples.

Bishop Bambera's Easter Message Continues on Page 7



The Resurrection is depicted in this 17th-century painting. Easter, the chief feast in the liturgical calendars of all Christian churches, commemorates Jesus Christ's resurrection from the dead. Easter is celebrated April 20 this year. (OSV News artwork/Bridgeman Images)

The Catholic Light

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DIOCESE OF SCRANTON MISSION STATEMENT

We, the Catholic community of the Diocese of Scranton, are called through Baptism to imitate the servant leadership of Jesus Christ. In union with Our Holy Father, the Pope, we proclaim the Gospel faithfully, celebrate the sacraments joyfully, and boldly promote life, justice and peace in northeastern and north central Pennsylvania.

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Paschal Triduum Broadcasts on CTV

Thursday, April 17, 2025

Morning Prayer from the Cathedral of Saint Peter, 8:00 a.m.

Father Jeffrey D. Tudgay, Pastor of the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton, celebrates Morning Prayer on Holy Thursday.

Praying with Jesus in the Garden of Olives, 2:00 p.m.

Accompany the Franciscans of the Holy Land at the Garden of Gethsemane in the Basilica of the Agony for a Holy Hour in Jerusalem.

Solemn Mass of the Lord's Supper from the Cathedral of Saint Peter, 5:30 p.m.

On Holy Thursday, Bishop Joseph C. Bambera celebrates the Solemn Mass of the Lord's Supper live from the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton.

Night Prayer from the Cathedral of Saint Peter, 9:00 p.m.

Father Jeffrey D. Tudgay, Pastor of the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton, celebrates Night Prayer on Holy Thursday.

Friday, April 18, 2025

Morning Prayer from the Cathedral of Saint Peter, 8:00 a.m.

Father Jeffrey D. Tudgay, Pastor of the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton, celebrates Morning Prayer on Good Friday.

Commemoration of the Lord's Passion from Rome, 11:00 a.m. (Rebroadcast at 8:00 p.m.)

Cardinal Claudio Gugerotti presides over the Solemn celebration of the Lord's Passion, live from St. Peter's Basilica in Vatican City.

Commemoration of the Lord's Passion from the Cathedral of Saint Peter, 12:10 p.m.

Bishop Joseph C. Bambera presides over the Solemn commemoration of the Lord's Passion, live from the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton.

Commemoration of the Lord's Passion from Washington, D.C., 3:00 p.m.

From the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C., His Eminence Christophe Cardinal Pierre celebrates the Solemn Mass of the Lord's Passion on Good Friday. (Choral Meditations begin at 2:30 p.m.)

Way of the Cross from the Cathedral of Saint Peter, 5:00 p.m.

From the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton, follow along with the solemn recognition of Jesus' last day on Earth as a man.

Way of the Cross from Rome, 6:30 p.m.

From within Rome's Colosseum, Cardinal Baldassare Reina leads the Via Crucis to meditate upon the 14 stations of the Passion.

Saturday, April 19, 2025

Morning Prayer from the Cathedral of Saint Peter, 8:00 a.m.

Father Jeffrey D. Tudgay, Pastor of the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton, celebrates Morning Prayer on Holy Saturday.

Easter Vigil Mass from Rome, 1:30 p.m.

Live from St. Peter's Basilica in Vatican City, the Easter Vigil Mass will be celebrated, along with blessing the Paschal candle.

Easter Vigil Mass from the Cathedral of Saint Peter, 8:00 p.m.

Bishop Joseph C. Bambera serves as principal celebrant of the Solemn Easter Vigil Mass live from the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton.

Sunday, April 20, 2025

Solemn Mass of Easter Sunday and Urbi et Orbi from Rome, 4:30 a.m. (Rebroadcast at 7 p.m.)

He is Risen! The Solemn Mass of Easter Sunday in Vatican City will be celebrated and Pope Francis' traditional blessing to the world will be read.

Solemn Mass of Easter Sunday from EWTN (Rebroadcast at Midnight)

From Our Lady of the Angels Chapel in Irondale, Alabama, join the Franciscan Missionaries of the Eternal Word for the Solemn Mass of Easter.

Easter Sunday Mass from the Cathedral of Saint Peter, 10:00 a.m. (Rebroadcast at 5 p.m.)

Bishop Joseph C. Bambera serves as principal celebrant of the Easter Sunday Mass from the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton.

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

Live from the Great Upper Church in the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, His Eminence Robert Cardinal McElroy celebrates the Easter Sunday Mass.

During Jubilee Year, Bishop and Diocesan clergy gather in hope for annual Chrism Mass

SCRANTON — As many of the more than 170 active and retired priests and nearly 100 permanent deacons who serve the Diocese of Scranton made their way in procession to the Cathedral of Saint Peter for this year's traditional Pontifical Mass of the Sacred Chrism on the Tuesday of Holy Week, the windy weather could have been likened to power of the Holy Spirit in their midst.

The heavens also looked kindly upon the processing clergy as rain showers gave way to sunny skies in time for their arrival at the venerable gathering.

As principal celebrant and homilist, the Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, warmly welcomed all to the Mother Church of the Diocese.

"What a blessing to see the Church of Scranton gathered from among all its members for this Mass of the Sacred Chrism," Bambera expressed, referring to "my brother priests, our permanent deacons and their wives, Parish Life Coordinators and parish leaders, religious women and men, our seminarians, and especially so many of you from parishes throughout our eleven counties, particularly who are here today."

observance and gathering of Bishop Bambera's message.



During the Liturgy of the Eucharist at the Chrism Mass April 15, 2025, all priests serving in the Diocese of Scranton gather around the altar inside the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton. (Photos/Mike Melisky)

the priests of the Diocese kind each year — celebrates their clerical brotherhood and shared divine vocation.

During the Mass, priests and deacons, along with lay representatives from Diocesan parishes, acknowledged the Bishop's role as the unifying symbol for Church governance and pastoral guidance.

All of the priests also recommitted themselves to their the resurrection of Jesus." office by renewing the promises they made on their ordination day, to the Bishop.

members of our young Church of Hope proclaimed by His The traditional Holy Week became the central theme of

"We profess today that 'in of customarily the largest of its the resurrection,' we have indeed Holy Orders, the Anointing of 'been shown that God is powerful the Sick, and the Rites of the enough' to give us reason to hope Catechumenate. even when we are inclined to yield to despair," the Bishop offered. assistant pastor of the Dunmore "The Jubilee Year of Hope that we celebrate these days affirms this assertion in reminding all of us Lady of Mount Carmel, said the that hope for the Christian is not Chrism Mass is reminiscent of simply optimism, irrepressible idealism or wishful thinking. No, authentic hope is born solely of

Holding to ancient tradition, the Mass of the Sacred Chrism to anoint, heal, and celebrate including their vow of obedience is highlighted by the blessing the sacred mysteries," Father of the Holy Oils used during Brenyah remarked. "Today, the The 2025 Jubilee Year the conferral of sacraments throughout the Church year. sends us out with the sacred Holiness, Pope Francis, soon They include the Oil of the Sick, chrism to heal and baptize." and the Oil of Catechumens,

Baptism, Confirmation,

Father Stephen Brenyah, parish communities of Saints Anthony & Rocco and Our Jesus' gathering with his disciples on that first Holy Thursday night.

"Before He was crucified, Christ sat down at table with His disciples and gave them the power Bishop blesses the holy oils and

Bishop Bambera referred to which are used in the celebration the sacred oils as the vessels of Holy Week."

God's grace and pathways to "the very hope that we all seek."

"My brother priests, we are charged in a unique way to be God's instruments in bringing that grace and life to a suffering world," he said. "From the very day of our priestly ordination, we were both set apart and immersed in the lives of God's people to sow seeds of hope and peace."

A retired priest of the Diocese, having been ordained 53 years ago, Father Joseph Kakareka still feels compelled to be present to concelebrate the annual Chrism Mass with the Bishop and his fellow priests.

"Having concelebrated at this Mass for decades, I feel it is very important to be here year after year because it is just so meaningful to me," Father Kakareka noted.

For Father Brian J.W. Clarke, V.F., pastor of Most Holy Trinity Parish in Cresco, the solemn yet jubilant day is something he looks forward to with great anticipation.

"It is such an honor and pleasure to be with my brother priests, many of whom I otherwise don't get to see during the year," Father Clarke shared. "The renewal of our priestly vows is so special, and such a beautiful way to enter into our



During the Chrism Mass, Bishop Bambera invites all priests to stand and renew their priestly promises, renewing their dedication to Christ and to the service of His people.



During Mass, the Bishop recognized Msgr. John Esseff, 96, who is celebrating his 73rd Chrism Mass.



Bishop Bambera breathes upon the opening of the vessel of the Chrism during the Blessing of the Oils and the Consecration of the Chrism at the Cathedral of Saint Peter April 15, 2025.

On Palm Sunday, recovering pope says to carry the cross with compassion

VATICAN CITY (CNS) - Carrying the cross means more than bearing personal suffering - it means stepping into the pain of others and walking beside them, Pope Francis wrote at the start of Holy Week.

"To carry the cross of Christ is never in vain," he wrote in his homily for Palm Sunday Mass in St. Peter's Square April 13. "It is the most tangible way for us to share in his redemptive love."

The pope, still recovering from respiratory infections, made only a brief appearance in the square at the end of Mass, but his homily was read by Argentine Cardinal Leonardo Sandri, subdean of the College of Cardinals, who celebrated the Mass.

"Have a good Palm Sunday. Have a good Holy Week," the pope said with a strained voice from the stage in St. Peter's Square. He was not using a nasal cannula to receive oxygen during his public appearance unlike the week before when he had come to the square at the end of Mass to a deliver a blessing.

pope in St. Peter's Basilica after the Mass; he 6, prayed before the newly restored tomb of reflect on how they respond to the suffering stopped to pray before the tombs of Sts. Peter, Pope Urban VIII in St. Peter's Basilica April of others - with "anger or pity, compassion mystery," he said, "by becoming each of



Pope Francis greets the faithful as he makes a surprise appearance in St. Peter's Square at the end of Palm Sunday Mass at the Vatican April 13, 2025. (CNS photo/ Lola Gomez)

Despite a two-month convalescence prescribed by his doctors following his release from the hospital March 23, Pope Francis had made several surprise public appearances in the previous week.

He delivered a blessing in St. Peter's Square at the end of the Mass for the Jubilee The Vatican also released a video of the of the Sick and Health Care Workers April

in Rome to pray April 12.

The Palm Sunday laypeople processing into St. Peter's Square holding palm branches, followed by more than 60 cardinals and bishops.

More than 20,000 people, many holding olive branches - a Palm Sunday tradition in Italy - listened as the Passion narrative from St. Luke's Gospel was proclaimed.

In his written homily, Pope Francis reflected on Simon of Cyrene, the man forced by Roman soldiers to carry the cross behind Jesus.

Simon, the pope said, did not speak but simply acted, and in doing so became part of salvation history. "Between him and Jesus, there is no dialogue; not a single word is spoken. Between him and Jesus, there is only the wood of the cross."

Pope Francis invited Christians to Pius X and his successor, Pope Benedict XV. 10 while dressed in casual attire and went to or annoyance" - and to recognize Christ us, for one another, a Simon of Cyrene."

the Basilica of St. Mary Major in the people whose lives are burdened by pain and injustice.

"How many Simons of Cyrene are Mass began with throngs of there in our own day, bearing the cross of Christ on their shoulders!" he wrote. "Can we recognize them? Can we see the Lord in their faces, marred by the burden of war and deprivation?"

> Recognizing those faces, the pope said, must move believers to action.

> "Jesus' passion becomes compassion whenever we hold out our hand to those who feel they cannot go on, when we lift up those who have fallen, when we embrace those who are discouraged," he said.

> At the start of Holy Week, Pope Francis called on Christians to prepare for Easter by becoming companions to one another on the road of suffering and mercy.

> "In order to experience this great miracle of mercy, let us decide how we are meant to carry our own cross during this Holy Week: if not on our shoulders, in our hearts," the pope wrote. "And not only our cross, but also the cross of those who suffer all around us."

"Let us prepare for the Lord's paschal

Bishop Bambera reflects on the power of the Cross at Palm Sunday Mass

SCRANTON – Only a slight breeze Christ from Persia and sought to return it to Garden April 13, 2025, as the Most Rev. of the palms, surrounded by a crowd of faithful who held branches of their own.

With palms in hand, the congregation relic to its rightful place. joined the Bishop in a procession into the Cathedral of Saint Peter, reenacting Christ's triumphant entry into Jerusalem. It was a symbolic start to Holy Week, marking the beginning of a journey that would move from celebration to the solemn remembrance of Jesus' death.

Passion from the Gospel of Luke, Bishop Bambera invited the faithful deeper beyond the palm branches – into the very heart of the Cross.

The Bishop opened his homily with a

was blowing in the Cathedral Prayer Jerusalem's Church of the Holy Sepulcher.

Clothed in royal splendor – gold and Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, jewels - Heraclius found himself unable began Palm Sunday Mass with a blessing to move forward through the gates of Calvary. It wasn't until he removed his lavish garments that he could carry the

> Drawing from the writings of Cardinal Raniero Cantalamessa, longtime preacher to the papal household, the Bishop then reminded the faithful that none of us can approach the Cross while clinging to pride or self-importance.

"We cannot possibly draw near to Following the proclamation of the the crucifix unless we first get rid of our pretensions to greatness, to our rights, and, in other words, to our pride and vanity," the Bishop quoted. "It is simply not possible. We would be invisibly rejected."

Just as the celebrant removes his historical reflection: the story of Emperor shoes and vestments before venerating the Heraclius, who, in the 7th century, Cross on Good Friday, so too must every recaptured the relic of the True Cross of Christian spiritually strip away the layers



After commemorating the Lord's entrance into Jerusalem in the Cathedral Prayer Garden, a procession of liturgical ministers and parishioners walks down Wyoming Avenue in Scranton to the Cathedral of Saint Peter. (Photo/Mike Melisky)

of ego and self-reliance.

enough to admit that we cannot save ourselves," the Bishop said, "will there be love that alone has the power to carry us to a place of life and peace."

As Holy Week begins, Bishop embrace of the Cross."

Bambera urged the faithful to not simply "Only when we are finally humble observe the coming days but enter fully into them.

"For all that we bring (to Holy Week), space in our hearts for the love of Jesus – a may we not forget to enter these sacred days praying for the same spirit of humility that characterized Jesus' life and His

Staging Salvation: Stations of the Cross play out throughout the Diocese



Logan Billig portrays Jesus at the Last Supper during the Living Stations in Conyngham.





The past several decades have seen our solemn Lenten practices and much-anticipated Holy Week observances greatly enhanced by "Living Stations of the Cross" productions that, though now commonplace, continue to emote inspiration and faithful reflection during this sacred season.

Roger Lake and Jeremy Gesualdo, in the scene of Jesus accepting his cross, during the Living Stations at Saint Patrick Parish in Milford.











Left, the Blessed Mother (Alanna Filler) meets Jesus and, right, Simon of Cyrene (Isaac Abad) helps Jesus carry the cross on His way to Calvary.

Representative of the dramatic, live Passion Plays so diligently staged by our youth and those mentors who guide their faith formation, several Living Stations performances have already graced our churches and school auditoriums, with many more taking place throughout Holy Week.

Offered as a gift to their community, members of the Confirmation class and high school students of Saint John Bosco Parish in Conyngham presented their elaborate Living Stations performance on March 21, which encompassed numerous roles and staging effects.

"I enjoyed the Living Stations. I really looked forward to it because I helped in seventh grade and this year I got to be a soldier," eighth grader Stephen Smithnosky said. "All our practices and the performance were fun because our whole class participated. It was so nice to do this with my friends."

Christine Ashton, who designed the costumes for the Saint John Bosco performance, added, "Living Stations provides a very special opportunity for the youth of our parish to grow in their faith and have fun doing it. Watching them take ownership in telling the story of Jesus' Passion, Death and Resurrection fills my heart with unbounded joy every single year."

A week later, nearly 20 sixth and seventh graders from the Saint Boniface Parish, Williamsport, religious education program staged their Living Stations at Saint Lawrence Church in South Williamsport.

Meditations were written from a teen perspective, followed by prayerful responses, and students were provided with detailed insight into Jesus' way on the Via Dolorosa on that first Good Friday in Jerusalem.

As they entered their "walk with Jesus," Karen Balestino, religious education director and program coordinator, said, "We wanted to present the Stations in a more contemporary light to show our students, in a concrete way, what Jesus did for each of them out of love, and that it has real meaning in their lives



At the Living Stations in South Williamsport, Jesus is laid in the tomb. Other actors include Julian Cappel (Nicodemus); Miles Huffman (Joseph of Arimathea); Mari Nasdeo (Mother Mary); and Trey Engel, (Saint John).

right now."

Saint Boniface catechist Arnie Betts further commented, "I was overwhelmed by the willingness of the students to give of their time, share their faith, and walk with Jesus in His final moments. Their endeavors provided a great Lenten experience."

Unless otherwise noted, the surrounding photos were taken from the Living Stations held in Conyngham, courtesy of photographer Jacob Kozlek.





Sixth Station of the Cross, as presented by the Saint Boniface youth: Veronica (Charlotte Beiter) wipes the face of Jesus (Caleb Sampsell), who is helped by Simon of Cyrene (Jacob Danielsen). Portraying the Roman soldiers are Max Roan and Jack Melvin.

Parishes unite to spread Easter joy to children in need

CLARKS SUMMIT Hundreds of young children across the greater Scranton area will wake up to a special surprise Easter morning because of the generosity of local parishes and Catholic schools.

For the last several weeks, many parishes and Catholic schools have been collecting items and making Easter baskets to be distributed by the Friends of the Poor.

Our Lady of the Snows Parish in Clarks Summit and Saint Gregory Parish in Clarks Green are just two places that supported this year's effort.

"Every week, for the past five weeks, we asked parishioners to donate different things that will be used for the baskets," Sue Burke, Director of Faith Formation at Our Lady of the Snows Parish, said.



Sue Burke, Director of Faith Formation at Our Lady of the Snows Parish in Clarks Summit, works with students Caleb Gardner and Lauren Stanton to assemble Easter baskets for the Friends of the Poor on March 29, 2025. (Photo/Dan Piazza)

adults and Confirmation students special time of the year. came together to assemble more

On March 29, several young bring joy to others during such a someone's life in a big way.

than 200 baskets. Many expressed because I know that I'm making I was always excited," Lauren Gardner of Saint Gregory Parish how rewarding it was to be able to other people happy on Easter Stanton of Our Lady of the Snows said.

morning," Caleb Gardner of Saint Parish recalled. "It's nice to know Gregory Parish said.

and give back," Chris O'Boyle added. "It makes me feel good."

The young volunteers enjoyed assembling the baskets because they got to make each one unique, combining different stuffed animals, candy, and toys.

"It is cool because you can mix it up for every other kid," Quinn Davison of Our Lady of the Snows Parish explained.

As the students worked sideby-side, some were reminded how small acts of kindness can impact

"I remember when I woke up "It makes me feel good with stuff from the Easter bunny, to have a nice Easter," Aiden

that other kids will be excited "I think it's nice to help out about something like this."

All the Easter baskets of Our Lady of the Snows Parish assembled by the students of Our Lady of the Snows Parish and Saint Gregory Parish - in addition to other parishes and Catholic Schools around the region - were distributed during the Friends of the Poor's annual Easter food distribution at the Scranton Cultural Center on

> Families who lined up early for the distribution were very thankful for the assistance and the Easter baskets – which reflected a small symbol of the love that God has for each of us.

"We just want everyone

Forget-Me-Not: A parish ministry of love and remembrance

flowers blossom and Easter draws near, volunteers at Our Lady of have been remarkably busy.

Parish volunteers recently assembled dozens of "forgetme-not" gift bags for elderly with letting them know that they and homebound parishioners. On Saturday, April 12, the bags, along with Easter lilies and palms, were delivered to nursing we meet every month, the last homes and residences.

"When we deliver the bags and lilies, we receive a lot of very positive feedback from the parishioners. They're extremely grateful." Chuckra, chairperson of the parish community service team, said. "A family, reminding them that they common comment is 'my parish family always remembers me' and that is very, very great to hear."

Tucked inside thoughtfully prepared

FREELAND – As spring and puzzles that are all carefully selected by parishioners.

Each bag is, in truth, a the Immaculate Conception Parish vessel of love, and a message of remembrance sent to the senior members of the parish.

> "We are very concerned are treasures of the past and this program goes hand-in-hand with an 'Hour of Kindness' where Saturday of the month, and we sign and address greeting cards for our elderly," parish secretary Janet Croshaw explained. "Every month, instead of a bill or junk mail, they also get a lovely message, a lovely greeting card from their parish have not been forgotten."

Croshaw and a small team spearhead the special ministry. the They say it began after realizing bags the parish does a lot of children are more than just essentials - - like collecting coats and only helps assemble the "forgetthey also contain lotions, hand backpacks – but wanted to also do creams, stamps, warm blankets, something for its eldest members.



Dozens of "forget-me-not" bags and Easter lilies, prepared for homebound and nursing home residents of Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception Parish in Freeland await distribution on April 12.

"My mom was in a nursing enjoyed getting that bag of goodies. She called it her bag of goodies. She really enjoyed it," volunteer Sharon Yefchak said. "It's good for us as a parish to reach out to people. It beautiful idea." makes you feel good, and it makes them feel good."

me-not" bags but also helps to deliver them.

"One of the ladies is 97 and home, and they would come, and she she just loves this. She loves the cards she gets, the pictures, because sometimes we'll send pictures with the cards," Turri stated. "The whole congregation can take part in this

This outreach effort has become a lifeline, especially for Parishioner Cheryl Turri not those who can no longer attend Mass in person. Volunteers not only deliver the bags door to door, often staying to chat, pray,

or simply sit in silence. For some recipients, these visits are a rare and treasured connection to the church community they so dearly love.

"I get a lot of pleasure doing this," volunteer Sally Shupp said.

Shupp began helping with the distribution in memory of her mother and father. Shupp, a retired nurse, had a mother who lived in a nursing home and knows that there are many residents that don't get visitors.

"There was just such a want of being remembered, wanting to be complimented, anything that gave them another human connection," she explained.

In the simple act of giving - a lily, a blanket, a prayer - the "forget-me-not" bags have become a radiant sign of Easter hope for so many at Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception Parish.

"I'm hoping that they know that they're not forgotten. We do think of them, and we pray for them," Yefchak said.

La dependencia de Dios se convierte en el 'semillero de la fe'

Mensaje de Pascua del obispo Bambera para 2024

Queridos amigos,

"¿Por qué buscan entre los muertos al que está vivo? No está aquí; ha resucitado."

Estas palabras del Evangelio según San Lucas, proclamadas este año durante la gran Vigilia Pascual, apuntan al fundamento de nuestra esperanza como cristianos. Son palabras que nos invitan a avanzar - tal como lo hicieron con los primeros seguidores de Jesús - a enfrentar la realidad de su resurrección y el milagro de la Pascua.

También son palabras que han perdurado por dos milenios y han brindado consuelo y paz a todos los que han acudido a la Iglesia para encontrar la misericordia de Dios y hallar un camino en medio de un mundo roto v sufriente.

Sin embargo, tristemente, al igual que en la experiencia de la Iglesia primitiva, a pesar de todo lo que afirmamos como cristianos, la vida continúa enfrentándonos con el sufrimiento y la muerte. Basta con mirar los conflictos en Medio Oriente y Ucrania, las tierras del mundo envueltas en inestabilidad política y falta de respeto por la vida humana, o incluso nuestra propia nación, marcada por la división, el miedo y el odio, sin mencionar el dolor y la pena que con tanta frecuencia experimentamos en nuestras familias y en nuestras vidas personales. La magnitud del sufrimiento presente en nuestro mundo es incomprensible.

Y sin embargo, a pesar de las cargas que tantos llevan, si somos lo suficientemente humildes y sabios como para abrir nuestras vidas al poder de Dios, cada uno de nosotros puede reconocer la presencia vivificadora del Resucitado en medio de nosotros. De hecho, al anunciar el Año Jubilar de la Esperanza, que tenemos la

bendición de vivir este año, el Papa Francisco nos invitó a centrar nuestra mirada en el milagro de la Pascua. "La muerte y resurrección de Jesús", proclamó, "es el corazón de nuestra fe y la base misma de nuestra esperanza" como cristianos.

En ese sentido, así como somos los bendecidos destinatarios de esta esperanza, el don que Jesús nos hace de sí mismo en la cruz también se convierte en un modelo para nuestras vidas como discípulos suyos. "Durante este Año Santo", nos ha recordado el Santo Padre, "también estamos llamados a ser signos de esperanza para nuestros hermanos y hermanas que experimentan cualquier forma de dificultad" ... No subestimen "el valor de una sonrisa, un gesto de amistad, una mirada amable, un oído atento, una buena acción, sabiendo que, en el Espíritu de Jesús resucitado, estos pueden convertirse, para quienes los reciben, en ricas semillas de esperanza" - signos de

El poder de Dios para transformar nuestras vidas es inmenso. El sublime don del amor de Dios, manifestado en el Misterio Pascual, revierte por completo la lógica del mundo. Y la Iglesia - el cuerpo de creyentes en el cual y a través del cual Cristo resucitado está presente en nuestro mundo - continúa siendo nuestra mayor esperanza. No por nuestra rectitud, sino por la inmensidad de la misericordia de Dios.

Uno de los mayores signos de la credibilidad de la Iglesia es la presencia de quienes han respondido al llamado del Señor y han abierto su corazón a las aguas vivificantes del Bautismo y a un renovado compromiso de caminar en los pasos de Jesús.

La noche del Sábado Santo, 215 catecúmenos y candidatos de toda la Diócesis de Scranton serán bautizados en la vida, muerte y resurrección de Jesús y se presentarán para la plena comunión en la Iglesia Católica. Estos catecúmenos y candidatos - nuestros familiares, vecinos y amigos - se unirán a decenas de miles de personas en todo el mundo que profesarán públicamente su fe en Jesucristo y asumirán su lugar en su cuerpo, la Iglesia. Su misma presencia entre nosotros afirma la realidad del Dios vivo, que sigue obrando en y a través de sus hijas e hijos, que proclaman su palabra, viven su vida en los sacramentos y encarnan su evangelio en el servicio humilde.

Hermanas y hermanos, estamos inmensamente bendecidos por la misericordiosa presencia de Dios viva entre nosotros. Gracias por su servicio dedicado al Evangelio y por todo lo que hacen para edificar la Iglesia local de Scranton y cuidarse unos a otros en el espíritu de Cristo Resucitado. Sus caminos fieles y generosos, sus oraciones y su servicio a los más pequeños entre nosotros son signos visibles para nuestro mundo de que la presencia de Cristo verdaderamente se ha manifestado a través de la comunión de amor, que es nuestra Iglesia.

Al celebrar la resurrección de Jesús - la gran fiesta de nuestra redención y nuestra razón de esperanza - ¡demos gracias, regocijémonos y alegrémonos!

Fielmente suyo en Cristo Resucitado,

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



La Resurrección está representada en este mosaico del siglo XIX realizado por el artista Bernard Bonnefon. La Pascua, la principal festividad en los calendarios litúrgicos de todas las iglesias cristianas, conmemora resurrección de Jesucristo de entre los muertos.

Bishop's Easter Message

Continued from Page 1

"During this Holy Year," the Holy Father has reminded us, "we are also called to be signs of hope for those of our brothers and sisters who experience hardships of any kind"... Don't underestimate "the value of a smile, a gesture of friendship, a kind look, a ready ear, a good deed, in the knowledge that, in the Spirit of the risen Jesus, these can become, for those who receive them, rich seeds of hope" - signs of the resurrection!

God's power to transform our lives abounds. The sublime gift of God's love, manifested through the Paschal Mystery, turns the logic of our world upside down. And the Church, the body of believers in and through which the risen Christ is present in our world, continues to be our greatest hope - not because of our righteousness but because of the wideness of God's mercy.

One of the greatest signs of the Church's credibility is the presence of those who have responded to the Lord's call and opened their hearts to the life-giving waters of Baptism and a renewed sense of determination to walk in the footsteps of

On Holy Saturday night, 215 catechumens and candidates from throughout the Diocese of Scranton will be baptized into the life, death and resurrection of Jesus and present themselves for full communion in the Catholic Church. These catechumens and candidates - our relatives, neighbors and friends will join with tens of thousands of catechumens and candidates from around the world to publicly profess their faith in Jesus Christ and to assume their place in his body, the Church. Their very presence in our midst affirms the reality of the living God continually at work in and through his daughters and sons who proclaim his word, experience his life in the sacraments and live his gospel in humble service.

Sisters and brothers, we are blessed beyond measure by the merciful presence of God alive in our midst. Thank you for your dedicated service to the Gospel and for all that you do to build up the local Church of Scranton and to care for one another in the spirit of the Risen Christ. Your faithful and selfless ways, your prayers and your service of the least among us are visible signs to our world that Christ's presence has indeed been made manifest through the communion of love, which is our Church.

As we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus - the great feast of our redemption and our reason for hope - may we give thanks, rejoice and be glad!

Faithfully yours in the Risen Christ,

+ Joseph C. Sembers Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, D.D., J.C.L. Bishop of Scranton

A Sign of Hope and Renewal

Mass attendance rose three-percent last year at parishes across the Diocese

SCRANTON - Weekend Mass attendance is trending upward across the Diocese of Scranton, offering encouraging signs of growth and connection within parish communities.

According to recently collected data from all parishes, overall weekend attendance rose by a little more than three percent between 2023 and 2024 - an encouraging sign that parishes continue to welcome more people back following the disruptions of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Each October, parishes record the number of faithful attending every Mass each weekend and report those figures to the Diocese. This year's results show that an average of 46,526 people attended weekend Masses in 2024 – up from 45,124 in 2023.

"This is a hopeful trend, and one we're excited to share," Dominick Costantino, Diocesan Director of Parish Renewal, said. "Seeing more people coming together in worship is about reconnecting, rebuilding, and renewing our faith together."

Diocese of Scranton reporting figures, the overall increase reflects the gradual return of long-time parishioners and the Luke Parish also has a Polish Mass each welcoming of new faces into the pews.

PARISHES LEADING THE WAY SAINT LUKE, STROUDSBURG

increase is reason enough to celebrate, several parishes across the diocese stood out for particularly sizeable increases in attendance.

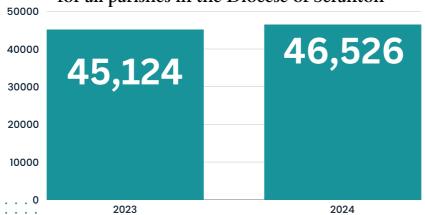
All eight parishes in the Stroudsburg deanery reported increases in Mass attendance in 2024. Saint Luke Parish in Stroudsburg saw the largest reported increase of more than 200 people each weekend. In 2024, the parish had an average weekend Mass attendance of 856 people, compared to 636 people one year prior.

Luke Parish, says a continued focus on and welcoming environment," focusing hospitality is paying off.

"We have greeters at the door. We have monitors with Mass responses so that people who are not familiar with the Catholic Mass can come in and follow



Total Average Weekend Mass Attendance for all parishes in the Diocese of Scranton



said. "We have coffee after the morning Father Williams explained. Mass on Sunday. Once a month, we also With all 106 parishes across the have a hot breakfast that attracts a lot of Council at Saint Matthew Parish add that

> In addition to English Masses, Saint Sunday at 2:00 p.m. that continues to attract new people.

"Our 10:30 a.m. Mass is a full Mass," Father Quinnan added. "We have a fulltime youth minister now who makes a While the overall Mass attendance conscious effort to recruit young song leaders, young lectors, young members of the choir, so it is a conscious effort to integrate young people into the Mass."

SAINT MATTHEW PARISH, EAST STROUDSBURG

Saint Luke's neighbor, Saint Matthew Parish in East Stroudsburg, also reported a significant jump in Mass attendance, from 1,207 people in 2023 to 1,384 in 2024.

Father Don Williams, pastor, works Father Michael Quinnan, pastor, Saint with parish leaders to create a "warm on offering many possibilities for both English and Spanish speaking parishioners of all ages to have a personal encounter with Jesus that is transformative.

along with more ease," Father Quinnan the Masses. We try to welcome everybody,"

Members of the Parish Pastoral engaging people in activities - whether it be in young adult ministries, Adoration, food pantry activities or the parish festival - it makes a significant difference.

"Everyone wants to be a part of something that is alive and vibrant and when the parishioners are given an opportunity to accept the responsibility to be active, to be engaged, to love and care Heart of Jesus Church in Weston. for their neighbor and fellow parishioners, it naturally carries into attending Mass where the greatest example of love is poured out on the altar," Ann Catrillo said. pastor, explained.

"We have increased younger adult Stroudsburg University campus and asking youth to attend our festival," Virginia Matrisciano added.

ST. JOHN THE APOSTLE PARISH, EAST STROUDSBURG

Saint John Parish, also located in attendance to 708 people per weekend in 2024, up from 606 in 2023.

"It is the fruit of many years of effort 75 participants. "We try to be present before and after and planning," Father Gregory Reichlen,

Like the other pastors, Father Reichlen said he believes the work of his parish's hospitality ministry is the primary reason for increasing Mass attendance, but added an emphasis on faith formation, children's ministry, music, preaching, and livestreaming have all played a part.

"I preach in multi-week series. I take a topic, and I go into it deeply week-toweek. People love that. We get constant comments on the preaching and how that brings people back week-to-week. They want to hear the next part of the series," Father Reichlen said.

During Lent, Father Reichlen preached on the topic of humility. Starting this coming weekend on Easter, he will begin a new series on redemption.

"I feel very hopeful that preaching the good news is attractive," he added. "People need hope today and I feel a hopefulness for the whole church that we have good news to share!"

SAINT JOHN BOSCO PARISH. **CONYNGHAM**

Outside of the Poconos, Saint John Bosco Parish in Conyngham also saw a sizeable increase in its Mass attendance, increasing from 736 people in 2023 to 836 people in 2024 at both its primary worship site and secondary worship site, Sacred

"Pre-pandemic, our Mass attendance was about 850. We are basically up to that amount today," Father Ric Polmounter,

Father Polmounter said the parish attendance by being present on the East also participates in the greater Hazleton televised Mass for homebound and shut ins.

> "This began years, actually decades before COVID," he said. "We take our turn every five weeks to tape and celebrate the TV Mass. The owner of the station belongs to our parish."

Outside of weekend Mass attendance, the East Stroudsburg area, increased its Father Polmounter also said Daily Mass averages between 50 and 70 people each weekday and on some Fridays has topped

Continued on Page 23

Bishop Bambera to celebrate annual Mother's Day Adoption Mass May 11



Scranton will celebrate its annual invited to attend. Mother's Day Adoption Mass on Sunday, of Saint Peter in Scranton. This liturgy mothers.

The Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, celebrant and homilist for the Mass.

SCRANTON - The Diocese of is open to the public and all faithful are

CTV: Catholic Television of the May 11, at 10:00 a.m. at the Cathedral Diocese of Scranton will broadcast the Mass live. A livestream will also be prayerfully recognizes all mothers, with a provided on the Diocese of Scranton special emphasis on adoptive and foster website, YouTube channel and across all Diocesan social media platforms.

Mark your calendars for May 11 and Bishop of Scranton, will serve as principal join us for the Mother's Day Adoption Mass as we pray for mothers, near and far, The Mother's Day Adoption Mass including Mary, Mother of the Church.

Registration deadline for 2025 Wedding Anniversary Mass is May 11

SCRANTON - The deadline for couples looking to register for the 2025 Wedding Anniversary Mass is quickly approaching. The Diocesan Office for Parish Life is requesting that all couples confirm their attendance by May 11.

The Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, will celebrate the 2025 Wedding Anniversary Mass at 2:30 p.m. on Sunday, June 1, 2025, at the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton.

Following the Mass, there will be a light reception across the street from the Cathedral at the Diocesan Pastoral Center. of Scranton website (dioceseofscranton.

is invited to attend the Mass and reception.



Any couple that is celebrating their org) and submit your information or 25th or 50th wedding anniversary in 2025 contact Bridget Guarnieri at (570) 207-2213, x1133, or email familylife@ To register, please go to the Diocese dioceseofscranton.org.



BISHOP BAMBERA'S SCHEDULE

April 17 - Mass of the Lord's Supper

Cathedral of Saint Peter, Scranton, 5:30 p.m.

April 18 - Commemoration of the Lord's Passion

Cathedral of Saint Peter, Scranton, 12:10 p.m.

April 19 - Easter Vigil Mass

Cathedral of Saint Peter, Scranton, 8:00 p.m.

April 20 - Easter Sunday Mass

Cathedral of Saint Peter, Scranton, 10:00 a.m.

April 22 - Confirmation for Prince of Peace & Nativity of Our Lord Parishes Nativity of Our Lord Parish, Duryea, 5:00 p.m.

April 23 - School Mass for Wyoming Area Catholic School Exeter, 9:00 a.m.

April 23 - Confirmation for Gate of Heaven & Our Lady of Victory Parishes Gate of Heaven Parish, Dallas, 5:00 p.m.

April 24 - Confirmation for Saint Peter, Holy Child & Saint Thomas Parishes Saint Peter Parish, Wellsboro, 5:00 p.m.

April 27 - Mass at The University of Scranton

Madonna Della Strada Chapel, Scranton, 11:00 a.m.

April 28 - Confirmation for the Parishes of Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Saint Mary of the Lake, Our Lady of the Abingtons & Saint Patrick Nativity of the BVM Parish, Tunkhannock, 6:30 p.m.

April 29 - Confirmation for the Parishes of Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Blessed Sacrament & Holy Cross

Visitation of the BVM Parish, Dickson City, 5:00 p.m.

April 30 - Mass at the Lackawanna County Prison

Scranton, 12:30 p.m.

May 1 - School Mass for Epiphany School

Epiphany Parish, Sayre, 10:00 a.m.

May 1 - School Mass for Saint Agnes School

Saints Peter & Paul Parish, Towanda, 12:30 p.m.

May 4 - Scout Mass Celebrated on Third Sunday of Easter

Cathedral of Saint Peter, Scranton, 10:00 a.m.

May 5 - Confirmation for Most Holy Trinity, Holy Name of Mary & Saint Brigid

Most Holy Trinity Parish, Susquehanna, 5:00 p.m.

May 6 - Confirmation for Saint Teresa of Calcutta Parish

Nativity of Our Lord Church, Scranton, 6:30 p.m.

May 8 - Confirmation for Saint Luke Parish

Saint Luke Church, Stroudsburg, 5:00 p.m.

May 10 - Misericordia University Commencement

Dallas, 2:00 p.m.

May 11 - Mother's Day Adoption Mass

Cathedral of Saint Peter, Scranton, 10:00 a.m.

May 11 - 13 - Provincial Meeting of Pennsylvania Bishops

May 13 - Vespers at King's College

Wilkes-Barre, 5:00 p.m.

May 14 - Confirmation for Our Lady of Victory Parish

Our Lady of Victory Church, Tannersville, 5:00 p.m.

May 15 - Confirmation for Saint Jude Parish

Saint Jude Church, Mountain Top, 5:00 p.m.



REFLECTIONS & MEMORIES OF THE MOST HOLY EUCHARIST

A Priesthood Perspective by Father Thomas Augustine-Administrator Pro Tem, Saint Brigid Parish, Friendsville



The statement. "Eucharist is the source and summit of our Christian life." is a core teaching of the Catholic Church, derived from the Second Sacrosanctum Concilium.

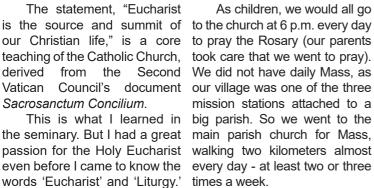
This is what I learned in the seminary. But I had a great passion for the Holy Eucharist even before I came to know the words 'Eucharist' and 'Liturgy.' My love for the Holy Mass and to my altar server days as a vouna bov.

village, Reddipalayam Southern India, consisting of some 21 houses on just one long street, called St. Anthony's Street. As you enter the village, the first thing you see is a small St. Anthony's shrine. As you go further into the village, you will find the small St. Anthony's Church and then a street with ten or 11 houses on both sides.

Surprisingly, today from that little village we have 11 priests and three nuns. In our village, it is considered a great blessing of God to have a priest or nun. The parents usually



Father Augustine's native village, Reddypalayam, India, which only has 21 families. From this small village, there have been 11 priests and three nuns.



The priest came to our Holy Communion goes back village for Sunday Masses and for the days of obligation. I remember how I desired to I hail from a small Catholic serve at the altar after my First Communion. Most boys from the village served on the altar, which is why I believe we have so many priests.

> A priest once asked me, "How is that you have so many priests from India working abroad?"

> I told him that it is because we come from a spiritual country. Though India is predominantly a Hindu country, it is very spiritual. Our lives are entwined with temples, churches, mosques, etc. - all based on our faith. Even family events celebrated at home



Father Augustine's childhood church, Saint Anthony Church, Reddypalayam Village, India.

Seminary teaches theology, but spirituality comes from home. Spirituality is instilled in children as they grow up.

My father and mother were good practicing Catholics. teacher. She taught me all my of the cross, the Our Father. and praying the Rosary, and all the Mass responses. I knew all for First Communion.

Our church bell rang three times a day for the Angelus. We Minor prayed it at home, as did every 6 p.m., my mother would look Rev. for me and made sure that I the evening Rosarv.

I studied in Schools all my life, and our minor seminarians. parish school taught catechism the first hour of every day.

auestions: 'Who such celebrated Mass today? (we the Bishop's residence were story with you.



Members of Father Augustine's native village community pose for a group photo after the celebration of the Eucharist at Saint Anthony Church in Reddypalayam, India.

the color of the vestment?' In the higher classes, they asked about the Gospel and homily.

very spiritual people and very Communion, serving at the altar, and singing in the choir led me could proudly say that my to think about a priestly vocation. mother was my first religion I was asking my parents to send me to the seminary when prayers, starting from the sign I was in just 7th grade. Two of my cousins, Father Suresh and and the Hail Mary, to the Creed Father Sunder Raj, went to the seminary before me and were ordained priests. As I desired my prayers even before I took to be a priest as well, I went off the sacramental prep classes to the seminary to pursue my back home, I visit a few houses priestly vocation.

In India, we start with a Seminary education where we are able to discern. home in our little village. When The bishop who accepted me the bell for the Angelus rang at into the minor seminary, Most Balaswamy, was parish pastor and the priest who went to our village church for baptized me. Usually, our bishop prayed the Morning Prayer and Catholic the Office of Readings with

By that time, I knew how to mark the liturgical books The nuns used to ask and would serve the Bishop's Masses. As our chancery and

had two priests) or 'What was just across the road, the Bishop often walked to the seminary arounds to meet with us.

Because of all this, my love My passion for Mass, Holy for Liturgy and celebration of the Mass grew. I had a great desire to become a priest and offer the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

Now being a priest, when I visit my village, my brothers will be there to receive me, and it gives me great joy to join the village children for the Rosary in the evening and to celebrate Mass every day for them.

After the Mass, as I walk on the way. The whole village is like a big family, and I could feel the joy of our people as they see me during the Mass and the walk back home. There are now three boys from our village in the seminary, and two girls in the convent.

Mγ passion for Eucharist and the Mass and Liturgy, all come from this strong Catholic village and my family. I thank God for giving me such a beautiful atmosphere to grow up, and I thank all of you as well for letting me share my

A saint with a song: Blessed Carlo Acutis set to be canonized April 27

(OSV News) - Blessed Carlo Acutis, the Italian teen set to be canonized April 27, has been hailed as a model for modern youth - and now, the soon-to-be-saint and his devotion to the Eucharist have been honored in a new single and video.

In March, artist Le Concorde released the song "Corpus Christi," along with a video that uses retro pixel art to illustrate Blessed Carlo's fascination with Eucharistic miracles, which he cataloged in a database, drawing on his formidable computer skills.

in London in 1991 and grew up in Milan, Italy - displayed an early attraction to the spiritual life, reciting the rosary and attending Mass daily, serving as a catechist, volunteering at a church soup kitchen Francis in 2018 and beatified in 2020, with credit.



Blessed Carlo Acutis

homework. At the same time, Carlo known for his enthusiasm for typical teenage interests,

and

games, pets, soccer and music.

Carlo died of leukemia in 2006 at age The sunny-faced teen - who was born 15, offering his sufferings for the church the sophistipop genre - the 1980s style and for then-Pope Benedict XVI. The teen's brief life of extraordinary holiness quickly set him on the path to sainthood: He was declared "Venerable" by Pope

tutoring the pope announcing in November 2024 c h i l d r e n that he would elevate Blessed Carlo to necessarily go together for me," he told their sainthood during the April 25-27 Jubilee OSV News. "And I sort of surrendered for Adolescents in Rome.

"Corpus Christi" and its accompanying was video emerged from two sources of inspiration - a rediscovery of the lives of synthesizers layered over keyboard and the saints, and a longtime desire to create an album of "sophistipop" music, said Stephen Becker, the Los Angeles-based such as video Catholic singer-songwriter behind Le Concorde.

> The pairing of personal sanctity with where smooth jazz met glam, art and avant-garde forms of rock - at first seemed unlikely, admitted Becker, who has four critically acclaimed album releases to his

"These two things did not everything before God. I felt like I got a big 'yes.'"

Crafting the song, with Becker's lush rhythm tracks, was akin to fashioning a "bejeweled monstrance" that points to the glory of the Real Presence, he said.

For his part, Becker is trying to spark more conversation, with his song's lyrics making the point explicit: "Tissue torn from yours/Is now a part of mine/Corpus Christi/Carlo cataloging the signs/Corpus Christi..."

To listen to Le Concorde's "Corpus Christi" and to view the song's video, visit leconcordemusic.com.





QUO VADIS DAYS

HIGH SCHOOL SUMMER CAMP

- Location: Marywood University
- · Open to rising sophomores through graduating seniors in high school
- Adventure, Prayer, Dynamic Talks, Mass, Adoration, and Outdoor Activities
- Learn about vocations, better discern where God is calling you, & chat with priests, seminarians, and Bishop Bambera
- Cost is \$25.





REGISTRATION DEADLINE: JUNE 16TH







FIAT DAYS

HIGH SCHOOL SUMMER CAMP

JUNE · Location: Marywood University

• Open to rising sophomores through graduating seniors in high school

· Adventure, Prayer, Dynamic Talks, Mass, Adoration, and Outdoor Activities

· Learn about vocations, better discern where God is calling you, and chat with religious sisters, priests, & Bishop Bambera

Cost is \$25.







Rectory, Set, Cook! breaks record; raises more than \$227,000 in fourth year

SCRANTON - The Diocese of Scranton is proud to announce the results of its fourth annual Rectory, Set, Cook! competition – and this year's event was one for the record books.

Between March 4 and April 10, the popular fundraising competition brought together 32 priests from across the Diocese of Scranton in a spirited battle for culinary glory - all in support of anti-hunger and antihomelessness initiatives through Catholic Social Services.

In a thrilling finale that came down to the wire, with last-minute donations tipping the scales, this year's event raised \$227,162, setting a record amount raised in the competition's history.

"This year's Rectory, Set, Cook! was the most exciting yet," event director Sandra Snyder said. "I love this project because it really unites people and priests in such a special - and fun - way. It's so inspiring to see so many pastor chefs willing to put themselves out there like this for the greater good."

This year's competition came down to the very last minute and a single time-stamped donation at 4:59 p.m. that made the difference between first and second place.

"While the competition is all in good fun, the real winners are the people whose lives will benefit from the outpouring of generosity that we see from the community," Snyder added.

At the close of the competition at 5 p.m. on April 10, 2025, the following six teams had raised the most money and have been named the "2025 Top Chefs."

1. Father Shawn Simchock, Administrator Pro Tem, Saint Ann Parish, Williamsport

Total Raised: \$35,301.75 Recipe: Easter Pizza

2. Father Jim Paisley, Pastor, Saint Ann Basilica Parish, Scranton

Total Raised: \$35,218.31

Recipe: Potat De Denad (Potatoes and Pork)

3. Monsignor Jack Bendik & Father Ken Seegar, from Villa Saint Joseph, Dunmore

Total Raised: \$21,169.89

Recipe: Seafood Pierogies, Apple Pierogies & Mama Bendik's Homemade Applesauce

4. Father Michael Drevitch & Monsignor John parish." Sempa, Corpus Christi, West Pittston (also featuring Cheryl Sempa Radkiewicz, Julia Carsia, Connor Giambra and Christopher Giambra)

Total Raised: \$13,000.85

world-famous Pineapple Jell-O

RECTORY, SET, COOK! 2025 TOP PASTOR CHEFS



Jr., Nora Lambert and Anna Lambert)

Total Raised: \$12,124.44

Recipe: Chicken Parmigiana with angel-hair pasta

6. Father Michael Boris, Assistant Pastor, Our Lady of the Snows Parish, Clarks Summit, and Saint Gregory Parish, Clarks Green

(also featuring Father John Lapera and a team of teaching parishioners/colleagues)

Total Raised: \$11,076.44

Recipe: Pasta with pesto sauce, pizza, and ice cream

meaning of the Lenten season. Our faith calls us to prayer, fasting, and almsgiving and what better way to do our Simchock said. "Not only are we feeding the hungry and sheltering the homeless, but we are also helping out our parishes that need money to get projects done around the

"In spite of all that is going on with our economy these days, there was not a single person approached who did not gladly and generously make a donation to this year's Rectory, Set, Cook! campaign," Father Paisley Recipe: "Can't Leave Alone Bars" & Msgr. Sempa's added. "I could not be more grateful to the 255 donors allows us to continue serving our local communities in who helped me reach and surpass a personal goal of many different and varied ways."

5. Father Jack Lambert, Pastor, Saints Peter \$100,000 raised since the inception of Rectory, Set, Cook! and Paul Parish, Plains (also featuring Gary Lambert May God bless all who contributed to this fight against hunger and homelessness."

> In its inaugural year, 2022, Rectory, Set, Cook! brought in \$171,747. In 2023, the online culinary competition raised a total of \$197,412 and in 2024 it raised \$218,001.

> A number of community businesses help to sponsor Rectory, Set, Cook!, including the program's presenting sponsor, Hawk Family Foundation. All sponsorship dollars raised stay directly with Catholic Social Services to benefit area kitchens, food and clothing pantries, and emergency shelters.

Catholic Social Services will use the money raised "I believe Rectory, Set, Cook! embodies the true to respond to an increasing need for services in the community.

"In January, we officially opened our new, permanent almsgiving during Lent than through this event," Father home for Mother Teresa's Haven in the city of Wilkes-Barre. After years of planning and months of construction, we are now serving our brothers in need every night in a new, modern facility, and better coordinating services with Saint Vincent de Paul Kitchen, which is now directly below the shelter," Joe Mahoney, Chief Executive Officer of Catholic Social Services, explained. "We are so thankful for the tremendous support of everyone who donated to this year's competition because the funding

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT IN THIS YEAR'S CAMPAIGN

All Pastor Chef Videos from Rectory, Set, Cook! IV Are Still Available on the Diocese of Scranton YouTube Channel

Catholic Women's Conference 'Refresh Your Faith' - Heart to Heart Prayer

SCRANTON - Get ready to It's all about heart to heart prayer! Life, is host of the conference.

The 2025 Catholic Women's special Friday night program available on June 6.

ages no matter where they are in ministry resource. their lives' journey with God.

power of God's love and mercy," co-chair, said.

This year's theme is Heart to Heart Prayer.

searching for ways to enhance their prayer lives and grow suggestions from attendees," Mary Carroll Donahoe, conference cochair, added. "We are responding by bringing together a lineup of amazing speakers to inspire a prayerful life."

Tickets for the full day, Saturday, June 7 conference are \$55 per person before May 15. (Note the price will increase to \$70 after May 15)

Back by popular demand is the additional Friday evening program held June 6 in the Marywood chapel with dinner and keynote speaker Kara Kardell and Father Bryan Wright.

Tickets for the Friday evening event are \$40 before May 15. (Note the price will increase to \$55 after May 15)

Packages with overnight to the address indicated. accommodations, that include both events are also available.

The Saturday conference will begin with the Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, celebrating Mass for attendees.

Mary Clare Hallman, invigorate and enrich your faith: Diocesan Secretary for Parish

This year's Refresh Your Conference is set for Saturday, Faith: Heart to Heart Prayer June 7, in Nazareth Hall at conference offers a powerhouse Marywood University with a of inspirational keynote speakers.

Kara Kardell who has worked in ministry for over The full-day conference, in 10 years co-founded the Lay partnership with the Diocese of Apostolate "Draw Near" where Scranton, is in its seventh year she, along with her best friend, and brings together over 400 host a podcast, lead retreats and hundred faith-filled women of all worship music, and run an online

Keynote Speaker Sarah Hart, "We want every woman to who will also provide music for know and experience the endless the conference, is a Grammy nominated composer/producer, Deborah Kennedy, conference recording artist, author, speaker, and worship leader.

Special guest Sister Maria Kateri of the Sisters of Life, "Many of our attendees are traveled the world uniting her pro-life involvement with God's call. She entered the Sisters of deeper in their faith, according to Life and celebrated 27 years in vows this past February.

> Guest speaker Reverend Bryan Wright, Pastor, Holy Child Parish in Mansfield, was ordained in 2000. Father Wright went from planning on being a carpenter like Saint Joseph to experiencing a higher calling to serve our Lord through the priesthood.

> The day also includes a continental breakfast, buffet opportunities lunch, confession, and recitation of the rosary with inspirational music by Sarah Hart. Attendees may also enjoy shopping at the Catholic Marketplace.

> For more information and to register, visit www.cwcnepa.com, use the OR code below, or fill out the form on this page and mail it





OPTION 1: \$40

Friday Evening Only, June 6: 4:00-8:00 p.m. (No Accommodations) Buffet Dinner & Talk by Kara Kardell

OPTION 2: \$55

Saturday, June 7: 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. All Day Conference at Marywood University

OPTION 3

\$125 per person (Double Room) or \$150 per person (Single Room)

Full Package/Both Events, Registration, Meals & Overnight Dormatory Accommodations (Includes Sheets and Towels)

NAME:ADDRESS:		
EMAIL:PHONE:		
PARISH:		
Option 1: Friday Evening Only	Option 2: Saturday	Option 3: Full Package

Conference Only \$55

Make Check Payable to: Diocese of Scranton Mail to: Refresh Your Faith Conference, PO Box 202, Dunmore, PA 18512

\$40

Option 3: Full Package Single Room: \$150 pp Double Room: \$125 pp Name of Roommate (if applicable)



Thanks to Your Generosity, Gifts to the Catholic Ministries Appeal Have Now Topped **\$4 million**. We are currently at 89% of our Goal. Visit AnnualAppeal.org or call (570) 207-2250 to make a gift!

PARISH GOAL REPORT TO DATE (APRIL 12, 2025)

All Saints Parish - Plymouth		
Annunciation Parish - Hazleton		
Ascension Parish - Forest City		
Blessed Sacrament Parish - Throop		
BVM Queen of Peace Parish - Hawley		
Christ the King Parish - Archbald		
Orman Obrieti Deviete West Bitteter		
Corpus Christi Parish - West Pittston		
Divine Mercy Parish - Scranton		
Epiphany Parish - Sayre		
Exaltation of the Holy Cross Parish - Hanover Twp		
Gate of Heaven Parish - Dallas		
Good Shepherd Parish - Drums		
Holy Child Parish - Mansfield		
Holy Cross Parish - Olyphant		
Holy Family Parish - Luzerne		
Holy Name of Jesus Parish - West Hazleton		
Holy Name of Mary Parish - Montrose		
Holy Rosary Parish - Hazleton		
Holy Spirit Parish - Mocanaqua		
Immaculate Conception Parish - Scranton		
Immaculate Conception Parish - Williamsport		
Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish - Dushore		
Mary, Mother of God Parish - Scranton		
Most Holy Trinity Parish - Cresco		
Most Holy Trinity Parish - Susquehanna		
Most Precious Blood Parish - Hazleton		
Nativity of Our Lord Parish - Duryea		
Nativity of the BVM Parish - Tunkhannock		
Our Lady Help of Christians Parish - Dorrance		
Our Lady of Hope Parish - Wilkes-Barre		
Our Lady of Lourdes Parish - Montoursville		
Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish - Dunmore		
Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish - Lake Silkworth		
Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish - Wyalusing		
Our Lady of the Abingtons Parish - Dalton		
Our Lady of the Eucharist Parish - Pittston		
Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception - Freeland		
Our Lady of the Rosary Parish - Carbondale		
Our Lady of the Snows Parish - Clarks Summit		
Our Lady of Victory Parish - Harveys Lake		
Our Lady of Victory Parish - Tannersville		
Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish - Brodheadsville		
Prince of Peace Parish - Old Forge		
Queen of Angels Parish - Jessup		
Over of Heaven Device Healeton		
Queen of Heaven Parish - Hazleton		
Queen of the Apostles Parish - Avoca		
Resurrection Parish - Muncy		
Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish - Dupont		
Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish - Peckville		
SS Anthony & Rocco Parish - Dunmore		
SS Cyril & Methodius Parish - Hazleton		
SS Peter & Paul Parish - Plains		
SS Peter & Paul Parish - Towanda		
St. Andrew Parish - Wilkes-Barre		
St. Ann Basilica Parish - Scranton		
Ct. / till Dadilloa Fallon - Octaliton		

\$18.491.00 / \$31.286.00 (59%) \$19.595.00 / \$42.838.00 (46%) \$22.595.00 / \$22.965.00 (98%) \$16,712.50 / \$19,093.00 (88%) \$50,767.00 / \$52,577.00 (97%) \$62,942.00 / \$79,534.00 (79%) \$56,425.00 / \$76,066.00 (74%) \$59,369.98 / \$46,472.00 (128%) \$69,171.00 / \$53,497.00 (129%) \$28,675.00 / \$23,844.00 (120%) \$32,539.41 / \$38,351.00 (85%) \$12,005.00 / \$32,364.00 (37%) \$22,415.00 / \$26,929.00 (83%) \$34,130.50 / \$43,621.00 (78%) \$35,305.00 / \$30,097.00 (117%) \$7,235.00 / \$25,791.00 (28%) \$27,171.00 / \$19,324.00 (141%) \$19,468.00 / \$25,047.00 (78%) \$17,275.00 / \$21,374.00 (81%) \$41,636.00 / \$49,769.00 (84%) \$22,447.00 / \$29,111.00 (77%) \$37,873.09 / \$35,273.00 (107%) \$51,806.00 / \$51,626.00 (100%) \$37,045.00 / \$48,549.00 (76%) \$32,758.20 / \$28,616.00 (114%) \$32,796.00 / \$36,585.00 (90%) \$46,896.00 / \$44,982.00 (104%) \$30,585.00 / \$33,004.00 (93%) \$20,750.00 / \$19,021.00 (109%) \$29,081.00 / \$36,122.00 (81%) \$32,150.00 / \$41,857.00 (77%) \$35,720.00 / \$58,784.00 (61%) \$21.344.00 / \$24.387.00 (88%) \$8,955.00 / \$18,963.00 (47%) \$7,596.00 / \$12,849.00 (59%) \$11,910.00 / \$21,763.00 (55%) \$14,976.00 / \$29,784.00 (50%) \$58,726.07 / \$78,343.00 (75%) \$64,256.02 / \$91,891.00 (70%) \$23,308.00 / \$35,213.00 (66%) \$54,917.00 / \$52,332.00 (105%) \$67,701.50 / \$69,328.00 (98%) \$14,655.00 / \$26,615.00 (55%) \$12,340.00 / \$25,877.00 (48%) \$21,852.00 / \$32,404.00 (67%) \$18,838.59 / \$35,752.00 (52%) \$25,345.00 / \$43,961.00 (58%) \$19,000.00 / \$32,953.00 (58%) \$64,849.98 / \$50,990.00 (127%) \$32,049.00 / \$52,831.00 (61%) \$40,739.00 / \$46,735.00 (87%) \$53,126.00 / \$60,932.00 (87%) \$60,853.00 / \$28,529.00 (213%) \$6,195.00 / \$19,046.00 (33%) \$37,624.00 / \$55,819.00 (67%)

St. Ann Parish - Shohola..... St. Ann Parish - Williamsport..... St. Boniface Parish - Williamsport..... St. Brigid Parish - Friendsville..... St. Catherine of Siena Parish - Moscow....... St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish - Swoyersville.. St. Elizabeth Parish - Bear Creek..... St. Eulalia Parish - Roaring Brook Township.... St. Faustina Kowalska Parish - Nanticoke....... St. Frances X. Cabrini Parish - Carverton....... St. Gregory Parish - Clarks Green..... St. Ignatius Loyola Parish - Kingston..... St. John Bosco Parish - Conyngham..... St. John Neumann Parish - Lords Valley...... St. John Parish - E. Stroudsburg..... St. John the Baptist Parish - Larksville..... St. John the Evangelist Parish - Honesdale..... St. John the Evangelist Parish - Pittston...... St. John Vianney Parish - Montdale..... St. Joseph Marello Parish - Pittston..... St. Joseph Parish - Matamoras..... St. Joseph the Worker Parish - Williamsport.... St. Jude Parish - Mountain Top..... St. Katharine Drexel Parish - Pleasant Mount... St. Lawrence Parish - S. Williamsport..... St. Leo Parish - Ashley..... St. Luke Parish - Jersey Shore..... St. Luke Parish - Stroudsburg..... St. Maria Goretti Parish - Laflin..... St. Mary of the Lake Parish - Lake Winola...... St. Mary Parish - Waymart..... St. Matthew Parish - E. Stroudsburg..... St. Maximilian Kolbe Parish - Pocono Pines.... St. Michael Parish - Canton..... St. Michael Parish - Scranton..... St. Monica Parish - West Wyoming..... St. Nicholas-St. Mary Parish - Wilkes-Barre St. Patrick Parish - Milford..... St. Patrick Parish - Nicholson..... St. Patrick Parish - Scranton..... St. Patrick Parish - White Haven..... St. Paul Parish - Scranton..... St. Peter Parish - Wellsboro..... St. Peter's Cathedral - Scranton..... St. Rita Parish - Gouldsboro..... St. Robert Bellarmine Parish - Wilkes-Barre.... St. Teresa of Calcutta Parish - Scranton...... St. Therese Parish - Shavertown..... St. Thomas More Parish - Lake Ariel..... St. Thomas the Apostle Parish - Elkland...... St. Vincent de Paul Parish - Milford..... Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary - Dickson City

\$20,629.96 / \$19,945.00 (103%) \$51.971.00 / \$48.050.00 (108%) \$53,919.00 / \$51,636.00 (104%) \$39,017.65 / \$23,474.00 (166%) \$81,000.48 / \$62,284.00 (130%) \$48,207.05 / \$55,801.00 (86%) \$11,997.81 / \$17,694.00 (68%) \$22,620.00 / \$54,380.00 (42%) \$29,478.00 / \$56,918.00 (52%) \$19,575.51 / \$16,889.00 (116%) \$91,989.00 / \$86,601.00 (106%) \$66,812.49 / \$78,424.00 (85%) \$69,972.50 / \$60,677.00 (115%) \$21,750.00 / \$21,487.00 (101%) \$41,115.00 / \$52,044.00 (79%) \$18,238.00 / \$33,560.00 (54%) \$62,395.00 / \$59,874.00 (104%) \$55,349.00 / \$53,607.00 (103%) \$31,273.00 / \$38,560.00 (81%) \$31,819.00 / \$40,660.00 (78%) \$39,782.00 / \$23,046.00 (173%) \$81,276.00 / \$78,712.00 (103%) \$101,334.00 / \$97,156.00 (104%) \$20,355.00 / \$15,070.00 (135%) \$22,200.00 / \$22,478.00 (99%) \$23,115.00 / \$38,760.00 (60%) \$11,780.00 / \$20,244.00 (58%) \$121,884.00 / \$92,320.00 (132%) \$28,045.00 / \$40,587.00 (69%) \$5,885.00 / \$12,951.00 (45%) \$23,510.00 / \$16,306.00 (144%) \$67,229.11 / \$68,474.00 (98%) \$21,711.00 / \$34,389.00 (63%) \$15,345.00 / \$19,238.00 (80%) \$12,028.86 / \$23,868.00 (50%) \$25,722.00 / \$24,486.00 (105%) \$81,991.34 / \$90,962.00 (90%) \$48,961.40 / \$20,273.00 (242%) \$7,334.98 / \$13,120.00 (56%) \$24,336.00 / \$67,467.00 (36%) \$6,990.00 / \$21,328.00 (33%) \$40,172.00 / \$55,312.00 (73%) \$29,853.00 / \$35,673.00 (84%) \$84,851.39 / \$51,364.00 (165%) \$9,090.00 / \$12,326.00 (74%) \$32,130.00 / \$31,555.00 (102%) \$41,306.00 / \$62,962.00 (66%) \$89,626.66 / \$72,531.00 (124%) \$39,928.00 / \$50,146.00 (80%) \$8,400.00 / \$11,501.00 (73%) \$20,782.73 / \$36,520.00 (57%) \$61,077.98 / \$47,831.00 (128%)

TOTAL TO DATE (as of April 12, 2025)

\$4,005,212.24 / \$4,500,000 (89%)

'March Madness' event supports Wyoming Valley Catholic Youth Center

WILKES-BARRE - More than 200 people came out April 5 to support the 17th annual March Madness fundraiser for the Wyoming Valley Catholic Youth Center (CYC) in Wilkes-Barre.

The event, which was held at the Westmoreland Club, featured two NCAA Final Four games on a large screen, in addition to great food, camaraderie, and charitable giving.

"In the last 17 years, we've raised over \$1.5 million to benefit the CYC, which goes directly to providing scholarships to underprivileged kids in Luzerne County," Mark Soprano, CYC Executive Director, said. "We never want a child turned away from services because of financial problems."



Supporters of the Wyoming Valley Catholic Youth Center gather April 5, 2025, for the annual 'March Madness' fundraiser at the Westmoreland Club in Wilkes-Barre. (Photo/Dan Piazza)

hour, single-site childcare center in Luzerne County. The facility serves nearly 10,000 meals attendance, Ed DeMichele, who

Each month, the CYC The CYC is the largest 24- its daycare/school-aged program. addition to its daycare/school- CYC Board, has been personally

aged programs, this past winter impacted by the facility. 478 children participated in youth facility's Olympic-size pool.

"Many of the children that are in our programs now have been with us for a number of years," Soprano added.

Guests at the March Madness event enjoyed more than just basketball – the event also featured a silent auction which featured more than 150 items up for bid.

"It is a good opportunity to come together. People have a good time while they're supporting a cause they can really get behind," attendee Alan Pugh said.

Like many people served 687 children last year in to the children in its care. In serves as the chairperson of the

"The Catholic Youth Center basketball leagues and hundreds has been a part of my life since I of others benefited from the was 12 years old. My father died when I was 15, and it became an inspiration to me. I worked there for 15 years throughout my youth, throughout my young adulthood, and it has been an integral part of my whole being," he said. "I wouldn't be here today if it wasn't for them."

> Just like the teams that won the NCAA Final Four games that evening - the Wyoming Valley Catholic Youth Center was a winner - because of the people that supported the March Madness event.

> "We get calls on this event months in advance," Soprano stated. "It just keeps growing year

High school students gain leadership insights at ISLI retreat

DALTON - More than 40 high school students from parishes around the Diocese of Scranton came together in late March to participate in a threeday retreat focused on building leadership skills.

The International Student (ISLI) Institute Leadership retreat was held March 21-23 at Transfiguration Retreat Center in Lackawanna County.

The peer-facilitated, faithbased retreat empowered the students with skills to excel in both the leadership and membership roles of task-oriented groups.

"We're learning how to support each other, definitely communicate, and see how kids our own age take the Lord and put Him in their everyday life," participant Stephanie Kucharski

Kucharski, a parishioner of Nativity of Our Lord Parish in Duryea, attended the retreat other students her own age.



ISLI participants play an interactive game as part of their group training on March 22, 2025. (Photo/Dan Piazza)

other kids have the same values as me is definitely important,"

Through of series workshops. discussions. and team-building exercises, participants focused on key leadership qualities including self-confidence, positive thinking, support, and awareness, among I'm glad I did. I met so many new others.

"Communication because she wanted to learn from important in a group setting with the same interests as me. because without that, you don't I've met people from different "Coming here and seeing that know your groups feelings,"

participant Alaina Reese, parishioner of Saint Maria Goretti Parish in Laflin, explained.

Osipower, Kevin parishioner of Saint Therese Parish in Shavertown, admitted being nervous about the weekend retreat before it began.

"I took a step of faith and people with the same values as me, I met so many new people strong moral foundation. areas, different backgrounds,



Participants in the March 2025 ISLI retreat pose for a group photo with Father Andrew Kurovsky, pastor, Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish, Peckville, following the program's closing Mass on March 23, 2025.

experience, and I don't regret it at Saint Matthew Parish in East all," the Luzerne County teenager

In addition to games and small group discussions, the students also had the chance to engage in spiritual reflection during Mass and other prayer opportunities, reinforcing the retreat's focus on developing not only leadership skills but also a

through ISLI. It has been a part ISLI retreat is being planned for of me since I was a baby," Finn the near future.

everything. It has just been a great Naughton, a participant from Stroudsburg, said. "I'm very happy to be here."

> The ISLI retreat organized by the Diocesan Office for Parish Life. While participants paid a registration fee, support for the program also came from the annual Catholic Ministries Appeal.

For any high school student who was not able to participate "My whole family has gone in the March ISLI retreat, another

Young adults recognized for contributing to parish and community life

SCRANTON volunteering as altar servers and lectors, to serving as religious education teachers, and assisting at parish festivals, the young adults of our community make a profound difference through their service.

This year, more than 500 students in 8th and 12th grades were honored with the Bishop's Youth Award during three special Masses held on consecutive Sundays in Lent.

Each Mass filled Cathedral of Saint Peter to capacity as family and friends gathered to celebrate the outstanding contributions of these dedicated young people.

"It truly just demonstrates how many extraordinary young kids there are that demonstrate their faith very well," Sienna Simmons, an eighth-grade award recipient from Saint Peter Parish in Wellsboro, said.

Since 1996, the Bishop's Youth Award has been presented to students who have demonstrated faith through volunteer service in their parish, Catholic school, or community.

hard-working young individual Bishop Bambera said.



Sienna Simmons, an eighth-grade award recipient from Saint Peter Parish in Wellsboro, receives her Bishop's Youth Award on March 23, 2025.

that likes to take part in their parish community," A.J. Piestrak, homily was given by a priest selected for the honor because a twelfth-grade award recipient from Holy Cross Parish in region. Olyphant, added.

Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, presided over all three Masses, and took the opportunity on each occasion to express his gratitude Brigid Parish, Friendsville, spoke how their volunteer work has to the recipients.

"We honor and recognize for their commitment to live their faith and to respond to the invitation that the Lord Jesus "It's a great honor to be here gives to us all to walk as His today to be recognized by the disciples, to serve one another, church and by the diocese as a and to provide hope to our world,"



Luke Zipprich, Kali Harvatine, and Albert Davis, award recipients from Saint Patrick Parish in Nicholson, participate in the Liturgy of the Eucharist during the Bishop's Youth Award Mass on April 6, 2025.



Young adults and their families from parishes in the northern region of the Diocese of Scranton filled the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton to capacity on April 6, 2025, to celebrate the third and final Bishop's Youth Awards Mass of this year. (Photos/Mike Melisky)

currently serving a parish in that they were getting to know Jesus.

The Most Rev. Joseph C. March 23 for the eastern and live our faith, and want to be western regions of the Diocese, close to Jesus," Father Edwards Thomas Augustine, Father Administrator Pro Tem, Saint about life being a journey.

"You are not walking alone. the Church. exceptional dedication to their these young men and women You are walking with Jesus. He is walking with you," Father recipient from Queen of the Augustine said. "The love of God, the power of God, as long as it's with you, you'll never lose volunteer with religious education. anything. God always will be with you, and he will give you the people in my parish," Fox adult," the Pike County teenager every grace to find true success."

> During the second Mass on March 30 for the southern region of the Diocese, Father Philbert Takyi-Nketiah, Administrator, Holy Spirit Parish, Mocanaqua, called on the students to be ambassadors for Christ.

> "Each of you, in your actions, your ways, in your choices, have the responsibility to reflect God's love, God's compassion, and truth to the world around you," Father Philbert stated.

> During the final Mass on April 6 for the northern region of the Diocese, Father Cyril Edwards, Pastor, Mary, Mother of God Parish, Scranton, told

During each Mass, the the award recipients they were

"We have great hope that you During the first Mass on will continue to build our church. explained.

> Many awardees expressed strengthened their connection to recipient from Saint Joseph

Damien Fox, a 12th-grade words to heart. Apostles Parish in Avoca, spoke about his role as a lector and

said. "The people in your church said.



Damien Fox, a 12th-grade award recipient from Queen of the **Apostles Parish in Avoca, receives** his Bishop's Youth Award on March 30, 2025.

are your family. You may not be blood-related, but you are family."

As each Mass concluded, Bishop Bambera offered a final word of encouragement, urging them to continue serving their community, loving one another, and "being witnesses of Jesus Christ in all that you do."

Ella Carroll, a 12th-grade Parish in Matamoras, took those

"God is always the answer to the issues that you're having. Practicing your faith as a young person will help you develop and "It helps me connect with use that faith in your future as an



Father Thomas Augustine, Administrator Pro Tem, Saint Brigid Parish in Friendsville, delivers the homily during the first Bishop's Youth Award Mass on March 23, 2025.



During this Jubilee Year of Hope, we talked with several recipients of the Bishop's Youth Award about how they are involved in their parish or Catholic school, and most importantly, what they get from serving others.



Ava DeMichele Saint Therese Parish, Shavertown

"I have been altar serving since I was in elementary school and I try my best to go to Mass every week ... Having a relationship with God is so beautiful and such a special thing. I try to talk about my faith and show people the best I can that it's a really wonderful thing."



Ella Salak Saint Eulalia Parish, Roaring Brook Township

"I volunteer as a catechist for the kindergarten class in religious education and I'm also a part of the welcome weekend receptions at my church. Seeing my students is the best part of my weekend because I know that I'm making an impact on them."



Antonio Ingargiola SS Anthony & Rocco Parish, Dunmore

"Right after First Holy
Communion, being able to altar
serve was the most exciting
thing ever. I also volunteer at
our picnic to help out with the
kids' games, and I am also a
sacristan ... It is always such a joy
on the weekends to be able to
help my parish any way I can."



Eve Corazza Saint John Bosco Parish, Conyngham

"I help in the faith formation program in my church. I've been helping out since 9th grade but I've been helping with Vacation Bible Camps since middle school ... I think it's really rewarding to see the kids grow up and go through each level and eventually get to Confirmation and it's just really rewarding to see how much they grow and to know that you have a part in that."



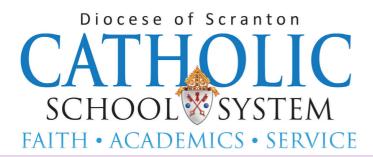
Benjamin White Prince of Peace Parish, Old Forge

"I've been an altar server since third grade. I normally take the Cross up every single week and I think doing that has really defined my faith. It is beautiful. I love it. I will probably go for Eucharist Minister training soon. I want to do that."



Nico Warhola Our Lady of the Rosary Parish, Carbondale

"I am a lector for Saint Rose Church and have been for almost two years now. I like to read at Mass in school (Holy Cross High School) whenever I get the opportunity ... I think it's important to be the example of the church now."



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.

Using the little boy from the Loaves & Fishes gospel reading as an example, the Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, recently shared with students and faculty at five Diocesan schools how their commitment to serving others is how miracles happen. "We are called through the Eucharist to love, feed, forgive and care for one another and become what we receive — the Body and Blood of Jesus," explained Bishop Bambera.







Good Shepherd Academy, Kingston

Saint Jude School, Mountain Top

Notre Dame Jr./Sr. High School, **East Stroudsburg**



Saint Clare/Saint Paul School, Scranton



Notre Dame Elementary School, East Stroudsburg



Students and teachers from Holy Redeemer High School in Wilkes-Barre made a Jubilee Year pilgrimage to Saint Nicholas Church in Wilkes-Barre to fulfill the requirements needed to receive an Indulgence for the Jubilee Year. The school journeyed as pilgrims to this designated location to attend Mass, pray, and receive the Eucharist. Attendees will receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation within 20 days of this visit, which is the third step. They had already completed the fourth component needed for the Indulgence by saying prayers for our Holy Father, Pope Francis.



Kindergarteners at Saint John Neumann Elementary School in Williamsport have learned why Jesus was named the "Good Shepherd" in their religion class.



Students at Saint Nicholas/Saint Mary School in Wilkes-Barre began preparing for Holy Week with a presentation of "The Living Stations" to family and friends alike.



Students from Saint Agnes School in Towanda clicked their heels and were magically transported to Kansas and the Emerald City during an April weekend, performing "The Wizard of Oz" youth edition to the delight of theatergoers.



Each year, students at Epiphany School in Sayre host a Lenten food drive to help the less fortunate in their community. Third graders are pictured standing proudly next to the 472 cans of fruit they helped sort and count.



Bryson O'Donovan, pre-k student at Wyoming Area Catholic School in Exeter, stands in front of the school's Saint Patrick's Day tree holding his "Lucky Duck," which made him a winner in the PTG's March contest.



As a thank you for sending cards to the station and always supporting the department, Chief Derek Fozard and Officer Jason Krawczyk from the Jessup Police Department visited and deputized students at La Salle Academy in Jessup.



J.J. Rupprecht, a sixth grade student at Holy Rosary School in Duryea, designed special t-shirts for the class to wear as they celebrated Pi Day 2025.



Showing students that reading can be fun and exciting, the team at Saint Mary of Mount Carmel School in Dunmore energizes students with "Flashlight Friday Reading."



Students from All Saints Academy in Scranton had the privilege of a "blue dress down day" in support of Autism Awareness.

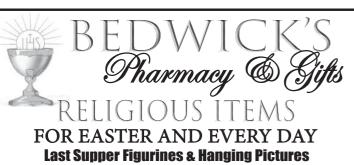


On a beautiful spring day, students at Saint John Neumann Jr./Sr. High School in Williamsport soaked up the sun while soaking in knowledge with time spent in an outdoor classroom.



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Catholic colleges set to stage spring commencements

University will honor three Doctor of Humane Letters degree. prominent Religious Sisters of Mercy whose lives and work HOME and Woman of Hope, Sister exemplify the mission of mercy, Mary has pioneered programs for justice and service at its spring the homeless, and in 2009, was 2025 commencement ceremonies on Saturday, May 10, capping the institution's 100th anniversary year.

A distinguished theologian, Ana Maria Pineda will address the Misericordia undergraduates

during their graduation exercises on Saturday afternoon at 2 p.m. on campus. The university will honor her lifelong service and scholarship with



Sister Pineda, **RSM**

an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters at the ceremonies.

Mercy Sister Mary Scullion will serve as keynote speaker for Misericordia's post-graduate exercises earlier in the day at 10 a.m. on campus, during which

DALLAS — Misericordia she will be conferred an honorary

As co-founder of Project named one of Time magazine's "World's Most Influential People."

Commencement weekend will also include the bestowing of the Catherine McAuley Medal, educator and advocate for Hispanic Misericordia's highest honor, upon ministry in America, Mercy Sister Mercy Sister Catherine McGroarty in recognition of her 18 years of service to the university.

Notre Dame president to address King's grads

Holy Cross Father John Jenkins, Ph.D., who served four terms as the 17th president of the a Super Bowl University of Notre Dame before returning to teaching and ministry in 2024, will deliver the keynote address to more than 400 students at the 76th annual King's College commencement on Friday, May 16, at the Mohegan Arena at Casey

Plaza, Wilkes-Barre Twp.

King's College and Notre Dame are sister institutions. founded as Catholic schools of Father John higher education animated and



Jenkins, CSC

guided by the Congregation of the Holy Cross.

During the ceremony, Father honorary Doctor of Humanities contributions to the institutions' Delaware. shared Holy Cross mission.

His tenure as Notre Dame president from 2005 to 2024 was highlighted by the university being invited to join the Association of American Universities, a consortium of the nation's leading public and private research universities.

Marywood graduation slates former NFL great

Former Philadelphia Eagles quarterback Ron Jaworski, who is also well known as an NFL football analyst, successful entrepreneur, and admired philanthropist, will be the principal commencement speaker at the graduation ceremony of Marywood University on Saturday, May 17, at 1 p.m. at the

Mohegan Arena at Casey Plaza, Wilkes-Barre Twp.

Following a distinguished 17 - y e a r NFL career, punctuated by appearance, Pro



Ron Jaworski

Bowl selection, MVP award, and induction in the Eagles Hall of Fame, Jaworski took to the airwaves as a multi-platform pro football broadcaster and analyst.

Known affectionately by his playing nickname "Jaws" and the moniker the "CEO-Ouarterback," Jaworski remains committed to civic activity and philanthropy and has received numerous recognitions for his community service.

He and his wife Liz created the Jaws Youth Playbook Foundation, which focuses on a mission to improve the overall health and wellness of at-risk youth, primarily in the Greater Philadelphia region.

Jaworski also owns Business Club of America, a relationship Jenkins will be bestowed an marking company, and operates eight signature golf courses in degree for his extensive Pennsylvania, New Jersey and

Continued on Next Page



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Have You Included the Diocese of Scranton in Your Will or Estate Plan?

Your legacy of faith can support the mission of the Diocese of Scranton for generations to come. If you have already planned a charitable bequest, consider using the following suggested wording:

"I, (your name), of (city, state, zip), give and bequeath to the Catholic Foundation for the Diocese of Scranton, (written amount, percentage of estate, or description of specific property) for its unrestricted use and purpose (or, if applicable, to support a specific parish or ministry)."

We encourage you to consult your professional advisor to guide your planning.

May God bless you for your generosity and commitment to sustaining the Diocese of Scranton.

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Catholic colleges plan spring commencement ceremonies

U of S alumna speaker for University graduation

University of Scranton CBS News as an intern at 19, graduate Nicole Young, a 16-time working in Emmy Award-winning senior Washington, producer for "60 Minutes," will D.C., London be the principal speaker at The and New York. University of Scranton's 2025 She joined undergraduate ceremony on "60 Minutes" Sunday, May 18, at 11 a.m. at the in 2004 as an Mohegan Arena at Casey Plaza, assistant to Wilkes-Barre Twp.

After graduating from Scott Pelley Scranton in 2000 with a bachelor's and became a degree in communication, Young producer a few earned a master's degree in years later. international journalism from City

University of London.

correspondent



Nicole

Young

has been the producer behind Young began her career at many of the major segments for the newsmagazine. Among her numerous accolades are 16 News and Documentary Emmy Awards, three Alfred I. DuPont-Columbia Awards, eight Writers Guild Awards and five Edward R. Murrow Awards.

> In addition to producing stories for "60 Minutes," Young also leads special projects for the news program.

She serves her alma mater as a member of the Board of Trustees and was awarded an honorary Over the years, Young degree from Scranton in 2020.

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K of C hosting emergency preparedness program May 7 in Milford

of Columbus John Paul II hosted on Wednesday, May 7, at respectively, to inform residents Council 13935, in cooperation 6 p.m. in the social hall of Saint about being prepared for different with borough and community Patrick Parish, 200 E. High St., types of emergencies. emergency managers, are hosting Milford. a practical preparation event for interested residents.

presentations by David Ruby For more information, visit www. The community emergency and Eric Passaro, borough and kofc13935.org/emergency.

MILFORD — Knights preparedness program will be community emergency managers,

Raffle drawing for a first aid The event will include kit and refreshments will follow.



Prayers © Devotions to Our Lady of Fatima, Queen of Peace

Tuesday, May 13th, 7 p.m. OUR LADY OF VICTORY CHURCH, HARVEYS LAKE



"The Most Holy Virgin in these last times in which we live has given a new efficacy to the recitation of the Rosary to such an extent that there is no problem, no matter how difficult it is, whether temporal or above all spiritual in the personal life of each one of us, of our families....of the life of peoples and nations that cannot be solved by the Rosary. There is no problem. I tell you, no matter how difficult it is, that we cannot resolve by the prayer of the Holy Rosary."

- Sister Maria Lucia of Fatima

DEVOTIONS TO OUR LADY OF FATIMA WILL BE HELD THE 13TH OF EACH MONTH THROUGH OCTOBER. JOIN OUR PRAYERS FOR PEACE IN THE WORLD!

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MISSION MESSAGE

A Missionary's Journey of Faith and Hope: Father Ruffino **Ezama's Story**

By Ines San Martin, Vice President of Marketing & Communions, National Propagation of the Faith Office

community deeply shaped by their times of our lives till the end of days." presence, his life bears the indelible to share God's love with the world.

father on Christmas Eve, a tragedy that transformed his understanding of and life in abundance." faith. "While growing up, I used to think the most important feast in the Church was Christmas, because there was the possibility of having a good meal and drinking a soda. Yet that Dec. 25, when the whole world was around the crib celebrating the birth

Father Ruffino Ezama's journey of Jesus Christ, my siblings, mum and as a missionary began in the heart relatives were around dad's casket. of Northern Uganda, a land that Through this sorrow, I understood the welcomed the Comboni Missionaries newly born Jesus, Emmanuel — God over a century ago. Born into a with us as a God who is with us all the

Later, he would discover that marks of their service. He was "the most important feast is Easter, baptized by a Comboni missionary, when we celebrate the suffering, death confirmed by a Comboni bishop, and and resurrection of Jesus Christ." educated at a school they founded. Consoled by his mother's unwavering Through their example — and his faith, Father Ruffino found hope in mother's faith — he found his calling the promise of Easter and discovered his vocation: to bring life to those But his journey wasn't without experiencing death, whether physical, challenges. Father Ruffino lost his moral, or spiritual. "As we read in John 10:10, I have come to bring life

> One formative moment in Father Ruffino's life came from a classmate named Taban, a South Sudanese refugee. When asked how often his family attended Mass, Taban's response shook Father Ruffino: "Once every eight or nine months." This scarcity of priests and sacraments planted a seed in his heart — a desire to bring the Eucharist and the hope of Christ to those who hunger for it.

Though his faith was strong, Father Ruffino acknowledges, even today, that one of the biggest challenges he has had to face because of his YES to his call to the priesthood was "being far from home, family, friends and loved. After the death of Dad, Mum was all for me. My joy was immense in her presence. Yet the moment I joined the minor seminary, I found a loving Mother in the Blessed Virgin Mary. Mother Mary gave her only begotten Son for the salvation of the world. My mother offered me to the Church as a missionary with joy."

"As the missionary is aware that evangelization implies following Christ even to the greatest testimony

of love, he accepts situations of persecution and is even ready to unite the sacrifice of his own life to that of Christ," Father Ruffino says, quoting the Rule of the Cambony missionaries.

Ordained as a priest in 1994, Father Ezama has served in various capacities across Africa, including in Uganda and the Togo-Ghana-Benin Province. In January 2020, he became the first African Provincial Superior of the North American Province of the Comboni Missionaries, overseeing missions in the United States and Canada. His work reflects the principles of the Society of Saint Peter Apostle, which supports the formation of priests and religious in mission territories.

Today, Father Ruffino embodies the Comboni Missionaries' vision of empowering local communities to become agents of change. Whether ministering in Uganda or the United States, his mission is clear: to help others recognize their God-given talents and use them for the good of their neighbors.

Inspired by Saint Daniel Camboni's principle of "save Africa with Africa," Father Ruffino's missionary endeavors have been centered in empowering the people to whom God has sent you to minister so that they become the change agents of their fellow brothers and sisters. "It becomes a moment of enabling the people to tap on their talents, potentials for the good of others. This applies anywhere I have been sent."

Sometimes, missionaries need a little financial help to help others tap into their talents.

Father Ruffino offers this encouragement for those who may never set foot in mission lands: "If you do not go to the missions by giving your lives, go to the missions through your prayers and financial support." Your contributions make it possible for missionaries like him to bring hope and healing to the world's most remote corners.

As we journey through Lent, a time of reflection and renewal, Father Ruffino's story invites us to consider how we can share God's merciful love with others. Through your support, you are part of a legacy that transforms lives and builds faith, one soul at a time.



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Moving forward in faith: Parish Mass attendance increasing

Continued from Page 8

The upward trend in Mass attendance is especially of recent years.

to recover from the longterm impacts of the pandemic, disrupted isolated members of the faith community.

"When people see their families, peers, and parish leaders actively living the faith, they want to be a part of it," Costantino said. "That is what we are witnessing here."

are encouraged to intentionally reach out to parishioners that they might not have seen since the pandemic.

"A personalized letter, a personal invitation or phone call significant given the challenges from a ministry leader or the pastor or deacon, or an Easter gift Many parishes continue can make a lasting impact and bring even more of the faithful back to worship," he added. "New and innovative ministry Mass attendance habits and and outreach efforts can bring even more people to our church campuses."

As parishes look to the future, there is a shared sense of optimism. Through outreach and hospitality efforts, pastoral care, and the steady witness of faithfilled communities, they believe Costantino adds that parishes the Diocese of Scranton will continue to grow stronger - one weekend at a time.



Parishioners from Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish in Wyalusing held a Palm Sunday procession April 13 from the parish hall to the church commemorating Jesus Christ's triumphant entry into Jerusalem. Father Jose Kuriappilly, pastor, and Jesus on a donkey led the group as palm branches waved and the faithful sang 'Hosanna.' Like many parishes, the Bradford County parish saw an increase in Mass attendance last year, increasing from 99 people in 2023 to 105 people in 2024.

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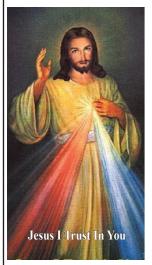
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Divine Mercy Sunday

APRIL 27, 2025

Divine Mercy Parish, 312 Davis Street, Scranton, PA



Rev. Paul A. McDonnell, O.S.J, Pastor Rev. Mr. Martin Castaldi, Deacon Rev. Mr. Carmine Mendicino, Deacon

SCHEDULE

12:30 PM

Rosary and Sacrament of Reconciliation (Mercy Story) 2:00 PM Liturgy (Mass) **Exposition of Blessed Sacrament**

3:00 PM Chaplet of Divine Mercy Solemn Benediction Procession with the Blessed Sacrament Blessing with Relic of St. Faustina Veneration of the Divine Mercy Painting

Refreshments will be available - Handicap Accessible & plenty of parking available

Everything needed to fulfill the request of Jesus for complete forgiveness of sins and all punishment due for those sins, available on this day.

All are invited to join in the celebration of

- DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY -

For further information please call the parish office at 570-344-1724

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More than 250 men, women and children rely on Saint Francis of Assisi Kitchen each day for hot, nutritious meals, food for their households and clothing for all seasons.

You can support this mission through the annual Host-for-a-Day campaign. For a donation of \$100 or more, an individual, a family, a business, a community organization



or faith-based group can help sponsor a day's meal at the Kitchen and be recognized as a "host" of that meal. Major sponsorship levels are also available beginning at \$500.

Recent contributors to the Host-for-a-Day campaign are receiving an appeal directly from the Kitchen through the mail or will be contacted by a member of the Advisory Board. Donations can also be made by:

Calling the Kitchen at 570-342-5556, online at stfranciskitchen.org, facebook.com/stfranciskitchen, text SFAK to 26989, or sending a check to Saint Francis of Assisi Kitchen, 500 Penn Avenue, Scranton PA 18509

Thank You For Your Support!

The culmination of the campaign will be celebrated at Fiorelli's in Peckville on Wednesday, April 30, at 6 p.m. RSVPs are required by April 15. Those who would like to sponsor the reception are asked to call the Kitchen at 570-342-5556.



Ladies of Charity plan **Enrollment Day event**

LAFLIN — The Wyoming Chapter of the Ladies of Charity, sponsored by Catholic Social Services of the Scranton Diocese, will host a Day of Enrollment luncheon & program on Saturday,



Father Charles Connor

May 3, at the Oblates of Saint Joseph Seminary, 1880 Route 315, Laflin.

T h e gathering, which begins at

9 a.m., will host Father Charles Connor, priest-historian of the Scranton Diocese, as special guest speaker for the day's program.

The Enrollment Day event will also offer the Sacrament of Reconciliation (confessions), recitation of the Holy Rosary, and celebration of Mass.

Cost for the luncheon is \$20. For reservations, checks made payable to Ladies of Charity should be mailed to: M. Magda, 80 E. Carey St., Wilkes-Barre, PA 18705. Payments must be postmarked by April 25.

IN MEMORIAM

Immaculate Heart of Mary Sister M. Marguerita Carbone

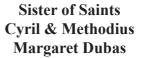
Entered Life: December 6, 1927 Entered Eternal Life: March 1, 2025





Immaculate Heart of Mary Sister M. Myra Gilbart

Entered Life: June 6, 1934 Entered Eternal Life: March 6, 2025



Entered Life: September 25, 1942 Entered Eternal Life: March 8, 2025





Immaculate Heart of Mary Sister Barbara Jablonski

Entered Life: April 5, 1942 Entered Eternal Life: March 20, 2025



Religious Sister of Mercy Mary Timothy Galbraith

Entered Eternal Life: March 20, 2025



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- Early Bird Registration: \$30.00 per person last day for Early bird Registration is April 30th
- Regular Registration: \$40.00 per person last day to register is May 22

Learn more or register at the link listed below and linked via the QR code. Sponsored by the NEPA Chapter of Catholic Mental Health Ministers



2025

www.catholicmhm.org/scranton



Wyalusing parish plans daylong Mission retreat

WYALUSING — Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish in Wyalusing will host a parish Mission day on Saturday, May 17, focusing on the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus.

"The Sacred Heart of Jesus: Enthronement in our Parish. Homes & Hearts" will serve as the theme for the daylong retreat experience, encouraging families to enthrone their homes to the Sacred Heart.

Serving as guest speaker for the parish Mission will be Emily Jaminet, national executive director of the Sacred Heart Enthronement Network in Columbus, Ohio.

A noted Catholic author and presenter, Jaminet recently penned her latest book, Holy Habits from the Sacred Heart.

The Mission schedule begins with celebration of Mass at 9 a.m., and includes two talks by



Emily Jaminet

the featured speaker, recitation of the Rosary and Angelus, lunch, and closing prayer & final blessing.

For more information and reservations, contact Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish at (570) 746-1006 or olophparish@ gmail.com.

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June 8-11 & Sept. 14-17-\$409 \$30 Slotplay & \$75 Food credit.

Resorts World Catskills Casino July 27, Oct. 5 (\$25 Slot & \$15 food credit) \$63

Wind Creek Casino • May 4 Aug. 30-\$58 (\$25 Slotplay)

Finger Lakes Luncheon Cruise June 14 • Live music from the Motown Disco era of the 60's & 70's plus cheese & wine tasting at Magnus Ridge winery. • \$224

Branson, MO • June 21-29 6 fabulous shows incl. Showboat Branson Belle, St. Louis Zoo, Gateway Arch & Titanic Museum. Nature Park Tram tour w/picnic lunch, 12 meals & more. • \$2,049

Hidden Gems Of Ohio

July 12-15 • Tour of Castle Noel Christmas Museum & Ohio State Reformatory, an open-air safari ride, show at Ohio Star Theater, 6 meals & more • \$998

Seneca Allegany Resort Casino & High Stakes Bingo Overnight a AAA Four Diamond Hotel July 20-21 • \$75 Slotplay plus \$20 food credit • \$249

Dutch Apple Dinner Theater "The Buddy Holly Story" Sept. 6 • Includes a buffet, visit to Village Farm Mkt. • \$199

Wildwood Crest, NJ • Sept. 7-10 Oceanfront property, 6 meals incl. a pizza party with a DJ. Visits to Cape May & Atlantic City • \$699

THE GREEN DRAGON Farmers & Flea Market

Sept. 26, Over 100 local vendors, great bargains, plus a unique dining experience on an Amish dairy farm • \$149

Autumn in New England, **Vermont & New Hampshire** Sept. 28-Oct. 2 • Luncheon cruise, train ride, maple syrup demonstration, 9 meals • \$1,299

"Noah's Ark" Sight & Sound Oct. 4 • Front Center Seats plus an Amish meal • \$219

Myrtle Beach/Jekyll Island, **GA & Savannah**

Oct. 11-19 • Plantation tour. riverboat luncheon cruise, visit to St. Augustine, FL, lighthouse and a tram tour, 12 meals • \$2369

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Prayer Requests for Priests

The Daily Prayer Request for Priests schedule is as follows:

Angelo Rizzo; April 18, Father May 9, Saint Joseph Oblate Father Toomey; May 16, Father Rawel Alex Roche; April 19, Monsignor Raymond Tabon; May 10, Father Toppo; May 17, Father Sudhir Walter Rossi; April 20, Monsignor Philbert Takyi-Nketiah; May 11, Toppo; May 18, Father Peter Dale Rupert; April 21, Holy Cross Father John Terry; May 12, Father Tran; May 19, Monsignor David Father Brogan Ryan; April 22, Fidel Ticona; May 13, Father Peter Tressler; May 20, Father Jeffrey Father Dominic Sabi; April 23, Tomczak; May 14, Jesuit Father Tudgay, J.V., V.E. Father Arbogaste Satoun; April 24, Father Kenneth Seegar; April 25, Monsignor John Sempa; April 26, Father Gerald Shantillo, V.G.; April 27, Saint Joseph Oblate Father Joseph Sibilano; April 28, Monsignor Constantine Siconolfi; April 29, Father Shawn Simchock; April 30, Father Robert Simon; May 1, Pope Francis; May 2, Bishop Joseph C. Bambera; May 3. Father Andrew Sinnott: May 4, Father Joseph Sitko; May 5, Father Phillip Sladicka; May 6, Father Stephen Stavoy; May 7, Father Scott Sterowski; May 8,

April 17, Jesuit Father Jesuit Father Daniel Sweeney; Sean Toole; May 15, Father Daniel

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Mass for Survivors of Abuse held

of Scranton, celebrated a Healing month of child abuse prevention. Peter on April 10, 2025.

"We lift them up to the Lord for their forgiveness. in prayer and we pray for God's lives," Bishop Bambera said.

the Bishop

SCRANTON - The Most celebrated a Mass during the Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop month of April, recognized as the Mass for Survivors of Sexual The Bishop apologized for the Abuse at the Cathedral of Saint pain that has been inflicted on "far too many" people and asked

"Those who have experienced mercy and presence within their abuse understand the Cross of Jesus far more than most of us." This is the seventh straight the Bishop added. "May they, and has each of us, come to understand



that in uniting our Crosses with Jesus, we're promised the blessing of His unconditional love."

In ending the Mass, Bishop Bambera stressed we "must never forget or allow time to numb us to the pain that was inflicted on innocent lives."

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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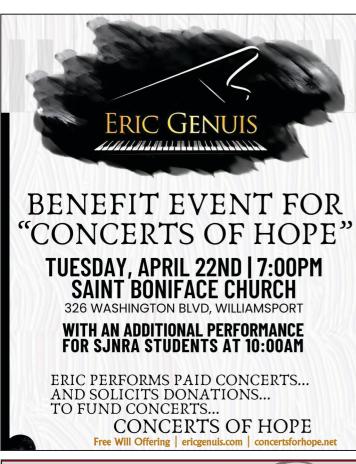
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Scranton parish Mass to mark Nurses Week

SCRANTON — Divine Mercy Parish in Scranton's Minooka section will host a special Mass to celebrate National Nurses Week during May 6-12.

The 4 p.m. Vigil Mass on Saturday, May 10, in the parish's Saint Joseph Church, 312 Davis St., Scranton, will highlight the weeklong observance honoring the nursing profession.

Father Thomas Muldowney will serve as special guest celebrant for the Eucharistic liturgy, which also coincides with May's designation as Mental Health Awareness Month.

All faithful are welcome to join fellow nurses and the parish community to worship and pray for God's blessings and guidance for those healthcare professionals who advocate and care for patients, families and each other.

Apostleship of Prayer

Papal Intention for May 2025

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Kitchen Kettle Village, Lancaster **County •** Aug. 23 - \$99

Leisurely browse over 40+ unique shops in a quaint village. A Hershey Farms Smorgasbord is included.

"Noah" Sight & Sound, Lancaster

Sept. 12 - \$135/\$189 All Aboard the Ark! One season only! **Excellent Front Center Seats.** Incl. Hershey Farms Smorgasbord.

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American Music Theater, Lancaster "Deck the Halls" • Dec. 13 - \$149

A musical Christmas show that takes place at the St. Nicholas Hotel. Includes a Hershey Farms Smorgasbord.

Knights honor 'Saint Joseph Day' with new patronal statue



Knights of Columbus John Paul II Council 13935 accentuated the recent Feast of Saint Joseph celebration at Saint Joseph Church in Matamoras by processing in for the solemnity Mass with their newly acquired statue of the parish patron. The Saint Joseph statue, which made its public debut at the feast day liturgy, is a traditional depiction of Saint Joseph the Worker holding a carpenter's square and lilies — symbols of his vocation, purity and role as the humble guardian of the Holy Family.





Pittston church hosting Marywood choral group

PITTSTON — The Chamber Singers of Marywood University, under the direction of Dr. Rick Hoffenberg, will present a Spring Concert on Sunday, April 27, at 3 p.m. in Saint John the Evangelist Church, 35 William St., Pittston.

The concert program will feature music by several renowned composers, as well as a set of vocal jazz.

In 2022, the Marywood Chamber Singers were one of six choirs nationwide to win awards in their division of The American Prize in Choral Performance.

The university choral group was also invited to be the featured performers at the National Meeting of the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities in Washington, D.C.



Catholic Happenings Around the Scranton Diocese

Weekly Bereavement Support Group Sessions — APRIL 21-MAY 19, sponsored by St. John Neumann Parish in Lords Valley; bereavement support group meets on consecutive Monday afternoons from 2 to 3:30 p.m. in St. John parish hall, 705 Route 739, Lords Valley. Weekly gatherings address topics dealing with the grief process to enable participants to find healing following the loss of a loved one. All are welcome; advance registration required at stvgriefgroup@att.net or by calling the parish office (570) 775-6791.

Adoration — APRIL 22, 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.

to Saint Anthony of Padua — APRIL 22-JUNE 19, hosted by Our Lady of Hope Parish, 40 Park Ave., Wilkes-Barre; weekly Saint Anthony Novena devotions held on Tuesday evenings, beginning at 5:30 p.m. in the parish church. Suffering & The Saints." Novena services include blessing with the Saint Anthony relic. All faithful are welcome; for more information, call (570) 824-7832.

Our Lady of Perpetual Help Weekly Rosary — APRIL 23, hosted at SS. Peter & Paul Church, 1309 West Locust St., West Scranton; weekly Rosary devotion to Our Lady of Perpetual Help offered every Wednesday morning following the 9 a.m. Mass. All are welcome.

Sale — APRIL 23, sponsored by SS. Peter & Paul Church, 1309 West Locust St., West Scranton; sales held each week following the church's Wednesday 9 a.m. Mass and Sunday 11 a.m. Mass. Packages of homemade pierogi cost \$10 per dozen; soups include shellfish bisque (\$15/quart) and clam chowder, pasta fagioli and vegetable (all \$8/quart).

Friday Eucharistic Adoration & Benediction — APRIL 25, hosted by St. Maximilian Kolbe Parish at Our Lady of the Lake Church, 5112 Pocono Crest Tuesday Eucharistic Road, Pocono Pines; Adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament and benediction offered every Friday morning following the 9:15 a.m. Mass. All are invited to spend time in prayer & meditation with the Eucharistic Lord. St. Monica's Army hosts prayerful recitation of the Holy Rosary on the First Friday of each month at 6:30 p.m., followed by adoration.

Weekly Eucharistic Tuesday Novena Devotion Adoration — APRIL 25, 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 Novena theme: "The Mystery of 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.

> "Cathedral Derby" Night at *the Races*—APRIL 26, sponsored by the Cathedral of Saint Peter at the Diocesan Pastoral Center, 330 Wyoming Ave., Scranton; doors open at 6 p.m., followed by post time at 7 p.m. Admission cost: \$15 per person (adults only; ages 21+),

Weekly Pierogi & Soup includes light fare, beer, wine and soft drinks. Reservations online at www.stpeterscathedral.org.

> Celebration — APRIL 27, hosted at Divine Mercy Parish, 312 Davis St., Minooka section of Scranton, on the Second Sunday of Easter; devotion begins with sacramental confessions being heard and recitation of the Rosary from noon to 2 p.m. Celebration of Divine Mercy Sunday Mass follows; exposition of the Blessed Sacrament begins at 3 p.m., including praying of the Divine Mercy Chaplet, Eucharistic procession, and individual blessing with the first-class relic of St. Faustina, the saint of Divine Mercy. Social follows in the parish hall. More information, call the parish office (570) 344-

"Be Not Afraid, I Go Before (Lake Silkworth); four Monday You" — APRIL 28, MAY 5, evening gatherings held from 12 & 19, hosted by Our Lady 6:30 to 8 p.m. The parish grief Divine Mercy Sunday of Mount Carmel Parish, 2011

Grief Journey Ministry: State Route 29, Hunlock Creek Continued on Page 30

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Catholic Happenings Around the Diocese

Continued from Page 29

ministry offerings encourage and assist participants through their grief journey toward healing after suffering the loss of a loved one. All are welcome. Registration is office at (570) 477-5040.

Rummage Sale — APRIL 28 & 29, sponsored by the Christian Mothers of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish, 116 Hughes St., Swoyersville; sale held on Monday,

(\$2 Bag Day), 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. in canonization of Venerable Father the school gymnasium. Event also Patrick Peyton. includes bake sale, refreshments, hoagies, hot dogs and wimpies.

encouraged; contact the parish Ministry - APRIL 29, sponsored and hosted by Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish in Hunlock Creek; gathering of faith-filled community of women held on Tuesday evening at 6 p.m. in the parish hall. Under the patronage of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, the women's ministry offers support, encouragement, and inspiration in the faith through prayer, fellowship & service. Open to all women; for information, call/text Kathy Scavone at (570) 916-2510, or Christine Lewandoski at (570) by Our Lady of the Mountains 780-3994.

> Mother's Day Tea Party — MAY 3, hosted by the Catherine a.m. at the Oblates of St. Joseph McAuley Center for mothers and children in crisis; celebration of all mothers and women held from noon to 2 p.m. at 541 Wyoming Ave., Scranton (formerly The Space at Olive). Refreshments, Exhibition — MAY 17 & 18, including finger sandwiches and dessert, will be served; event also features children's activities. family photo station, door prizes and raffle drawings. Cost: \$25 per adult, including four children up to age 18; open to the community. For more information, including sponsorships/tickets, contact Nick Sherman, McAuley Center development manager, at (570) 561-4651 or nick@ catherinemcauleycenter.org.

Venerable Father Patrick Peyton Monthly Rosary — MAY 7, hosted by the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton; Rosary devotion is held on the first Wednesday of each month following the 12:10 p.m. Mass at the Cathedral. Recitation of Rosary prayers is offered for the special intention

from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Tuesday of furthering the cause for

Grief Support Group Sessions — MAY 7, 14, 21 & 28, four Mount Carmel Women's weekly gatherings address topics dealing with the grief process to enable participants find healing; Bereavement Support Group hosts seasonal meetings on Wednesdays from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. in the Diocesan Pastoral Center, 330 Wyoming Ave., Scranton (across from St. Peter's Cathedral). Anyone interested in attending is asked to contact the Cathedral Parish office at (570) 344-7231.

> Monthly Meeting of the Lay Carmelites — MAY 17, hosted Lay Carmelite Community on the third Saturday of each month; gatherings are held from 9 to 11 seminary/chapel, 1880 Highway 315, Laflin. For more information, contact Chris at (570) 239-8094.

> Eucharistic Miracles hosted by Epiphany Parish, 304 S. Elmer Ave., Sayre; offered in conjunction with the National Eucharistic Revival, the public display will be available for viewing on Saturday, 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., and Sunday, 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m., in the church hall. The exhibit, featuring more than 90 poster panels, is a presentation of principal, Vatican-approved Eucharistic miracle events documented by the Catholic Church throughout the centuries.

> Drive-Thru Potato Pancake Fest — MAY 17 & 18, sponsored by the Men's Club of Exaltation of the Holy Cross Parish, 420 Main Road, Hanover Township; held on the parish grounds Saturday and

> > Continued on Next Page

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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Catholic Happenings Around the Diocese

Continued from Previous Page

Sunday, noon to 5 p.m. (vehicles may enter drive-thru from the Sans Souci Highway). Cost: six potato pancakes for \$10. Cash raffle drawing with \$25,000 in prizes held Sunday at 5:30 p.m. For more event sponsorship, call Mary (570) information, call (570) 823-6242 842-4561, or Ann Marie (570) or visit www.exhc.org.

"Spring Fling" Flea Market — MAY 17 & 18, hosted at St. John Bosco Parish Center, 573 State Route 93, Sugarloaf; held Saturday, 7 a.m. to 3 p.m., & Sunday (Box Day), 1 to 3 p.m. Featuring a large variety of flea by the NEPA Chapter of Mental market items; hot breakfast & Health Ministers and the Mental lunch available on Saturday. Event Health Ministry of Divine Mercy includes tricky trays & cash raffle drawings.

Designer Bag Bingo -MAY 18, sponsored by the St. Catherine of Siena Parish Altar & Rosary Society in Moscow; hosted at the parish hall, 220 Church St., Moscow. Doors open and conversation; all are welcome. 12:30 p.m.; bingo games begin 1:30 p.m. Cost: \$25, in advance; \$30, at door. Admission includes Golf Outing — JUNE 9, annual

20 regular games; additional golf tournament honors late games available for \$5 each or homemade foods, beverages, cash & basket raffle tickets. Admission tickets available at parish office; for more information, including 510-3125.

Mental Health Workshop: "Eating Disorders & Our Catholic Faith — MAY 22, hosted at Divine Mercy Parish, 312 Davis St., Minooka, Scranton, beginning at 6:30 p.m.; event sponsored Parish. Guest presenter: Dr. Megan Heeder, of The University of Scranton; workshop offers insight from the Catholic tradition to aid in understanding eating disorders and to provide practical tools to those who struggle with them. Time will be allowed for questions

Deacon Cliff Memorial

businessman and Permanent 4/\$15. Event also features sale of Deacon Cliff Jorgenson, who served at St. Patrick Parish in Milford; all proceeds benefit the parish children's faith formation program and charitable endeavors. Tournament hosted at Lords Valley Country Club (Hemlock Farms). Outing begins with 7:30 a.m. registration/continental breakfast and 9 a.m. shotgun start (scramble format); followed by tournament prizes and buffet awards dinner. Cost: \$150 per golfer. For more information/registration and sponsorship opportunities, contact Jack Boyle at (908) 451-1206 or Jackb18337@gmail.com.

> Summer Youth Music Camp: "Weeklong Treasure Hunt" -JULY 28-AUG. 1, hosted by Gate of Heaven Parish, 40 Machell Ave., Dallas; music camp for children held daily throughout the week from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m., concluding with a Youth Liturgy on Sunday, Aug. 3. Camp is open to youth singers ages 8 to 15. For more information and registration, contact the parish office at (570) 675-2121, or parishoffice.goh@ goholv.org.



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Blue Army Reparation Vigil

The next monthly First Friday Reparation Vigil, dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Immaculate Heart of Mary and sponsored by the Blue Army, will be held May 2 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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Bishop's Lenten Holy Hours conclude, homily available online



Bishop Bambera delivers a homily during a Lenten Holy Hour for the Sayre Deanery at Saint Basil Church in Dushore on March 31.

the Season of Lent, the Most with us and will lead us to eternal Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, peace at the end of our journey," Bishop of Scranton, visited all Bishop Bambera said at each stop. 12 deaneries to hold a special Lenten Holy Hour, focused on full the Jubilee Year of Hope and the Diocese of Scranton website National Eucharistic Revival.

"Hope is the belief that search regardless of how our lives Homilies 2025."

DUSHORE - Throughout unfold, we believe that God walks

To read the Bishop's homily, visit the (dioceseofscranton.org) "Bishop Bambera's

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State CYO Championship team presents Bishop with signed basketball following tournament win

SCRANTON the Saint Clare/Saint Paul Crusaders claimed victory in this Seitzinger, Jimmy Doherty, year's CYO Boys' Basketball and Charlie Dennebaum Tournament, the team presented now join their fathers, who Bishop Bambera with a ball won the same title in 1992. signed by all players on April 3, 2025, following a school Mass in history, reaching his 1,000th which the Bishop acknowledged career point in the final the team's achievements.

The undefeated Crusaders beat a team from Our Lady of finished with a perfect 35-0 Peace from the Diocese of Erie in season under coach Burke March by a final score of 63-23.

moment for the Crusaders, 3 record over the last three winning it all while hosting the seasons. CYO tournament with their fans

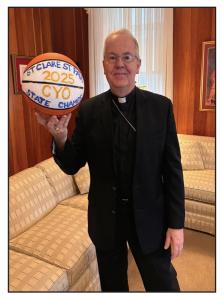
After behind them.

Legacy players Matty

Doherty also made minutes of the game.

Saint Clare/Saint Paul McGrath, who has now This year's win was a special led the program to a 102-

Congrats Crusaders!



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