



The Catholic Light

DIOCESE OF SCRANTON

Weekly E-Newsletter

September 18, 2025

Bishop Bambera's Message for Respect Life Month 2025



Dear Friends,

“Life: Our Sign of Hope!”

For over five decades, the Catholic Church in the United States has dedicated the month of October as a special season to promote a culture of life throughout our land. This year’s theme is linked to the great Jubilee Year of Hope and emphasizes the belief that every human life is a precious gift from God, especially the most vulnerable. It encourages us to promote and defend life, recognizing it as a sign of God’s promise and love.

Despite the hope that was generated with the overturning of *Roe v. Wade* three years ago, the challenge to protect human life has not diminished. It has merely shifted from being a national issue to a state issue. Sadly, because our world is so often hostile to the truth of the Gospel of Life that we embrace, proclaiming the sanctity of human life can be challenging at best. In many arenas, defense of unborn lives, the lives of those who are disabled or dying, or the lives of any vulnerable human population is met with resistance. Proclaiming the Church's teaching on topics like abortion, assisted suicide, and the death penalty can provoke challenging and emotional responses from those who disagree. And often, we may find ourselves afraid to speak up about these issues in our families, among our coworkers, or with students in our school community. We may fear disagreement, judgement, confrontation, or misunderstanding.

But as our new Holy Father, Pope Leo XIV, encourages us, "How important it is that each and every baptized person feel himself or herself called by God to be a sign of hope in the world today."

Brothers and sisters, we bring hope to our world whenever we lift our voices in opposition to threats to our belief in the dignity and value of the human person – from abortion to euthanasia to the death penalty, human trafficking, and unjust immigration laws. We bring hope to our world not merely through self-righteous criticisms of those whose beliefs may be different than our own – but through the respect and dignity that we afford to every person we encounter, regardless of their lifestyle, their country of origin or economic status.

In anticipation of our commemoration of this cherished month devoted to respect for human life, I invite you to join me in traveling to our state capital of Harrisburg on Monday, September 22, 2025, where we will join with thousands of faithful souls from around our Commonwealth for the annual Pennsylvania March for Life. On that day, the message of countless numbers of faithful disciples of Jesus and brothers and sisters from different faith traditions will once again proclaim the value of human life as the treasured gift of God that it is.

Shortly after his election, Pope Leo shared these words to diplomats from countries around the world: “It is the responsibility of world leaders to work to build harmonious and peaceful civil societies.” He continued, “No one is exempted from striving to ensure respect for the dignity of every person, especially the most frail and vulnerable, from the unborn to the elderly, from the sick to the unemployed, citizens and immigrants alike.”

Therein, we discover our responsibility as disciples of Jesus as well as our true and lasting hope!

Faithfully yours in Christ,

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

[Click Here to Share Bishop Bambera's Respect Life 2025 Message from the Diocese of Scranton Website](#)

Speakers announced for 2025 Pennsylvania March for Life



The Pennsylvania March for Life is now just days away and several of the speakers who are expected to take the stage on Monday, Sept. 22 have been announced.

Among those expected to speak are the Most Reverend Nelson Perez, Archbishop of Philadelphia; Ryan Bomberger, founder, Radiance Foundation; Michael Geer, president, Pennsylvania Family Institute; Jennie Bradley Lichter, president, March for Life; Sarah Bowen, founding president, Pennsylvania Pregnancy Wellness Collaborative; Dr. Robby Waller, emergency medicine physician; along with numerous Pennsylvania lawmakers.

The events associated with the 2025 Pennsylvania March for Life will begin on Sunday, Sept. 21 at 12:15 p.m. as Saint Patrick Cathedral, 212 State Street, Harrisburg, will begin Eucharistic Adoration directly following their regular Mass. The Adoration will conclude with a Mass for Life on the day of the rally at 9:00 a.m., at which time a morning Mass for Life will be held.

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

Historic church's bicentennial unites past and present



On a picturesque September morning, with sun streaming through the historic stained-glass windows, Saint Augustine Church celebrated a momentous milestone: 200 years of Catholic faith and community.

The bicentennial Mass, held at 10:30 a.m. on Sept. 14, 2025, drew a packed church filled with current parishioners and returning families who came from far and wide.

The Most Reverend Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, served as the principal celebrant and homilist for the special liturgy at the oldest Catholic church in the Diocese of Scranton.

“This is a big milestone in our history. It’s not a small thing,” said Father Thomas Augustine, Pastor of Saint Brigid Parish, of which Saint Augustine Church is a worship site. “It calls back the

memories that were planted many years ago and now we can see the fruit of what was planted here.”

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

Harrisburg Bishop 'deeply saddened' by shooting that left three officers dead, two wounded



Bishop Timothy C. Senior of Harrisburg said he was “deeply saddened” by a shooting in rural Pennsylvania that claimed the lives of three police officers and injured two others.

York County law enforcement officials were attempting to serve an arrest warrant to a man at a farm in North Codorus Township Sept. 17 when the man opened fire before being shot by an officer, officials said.

“At this difficult time, I entrust all those impacted to the loving care of our Lord,” Bishop Senior said in a Sept. 18 statement. “We recognize and honor the bravery and selflessness of law enforcement officers, who daily put their lives on the line to protect others. Their courage reflects the highest ideals of service and sacrifice.”

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

Bishop Bambera to celebrate Mass this weekend honoring 125+ year legacy of Larksville church



On Saturday, Sept. 20, 2025, parishioners and friends of Saint John the Baptist Church in Larksville will gather in thanksgiving as the Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, will celebrate a special 4:00 p.m. Mass marking 125+ years since the founding of the parish.

All are welcome to attend.

The parish reached its 125th anniversary milestone last year, but did not wish to celebrate without its pastor, Rev. Gerald Gurka, who was recovering from an illness at the time.

The history of Saint John the Baptist Parish is one of faith, hope, hard work, and sacrifice.

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

Mass for Suicide Healing and Remembrance to be held Sept. 21

DIOCESE OF SCRANTON

MASS FOR
*Suicide
Healing
AND
Remembrance*



The Most Reverend Joseph C. Bambera, D.D. J.C.L.
Principal Celebrant

Sunday,
SEPTEMBER 21
12:15 pm | Cathedral of St. Peter
315 Wyoming Avenue
Scranton



This Mass is open to people all across the diocese and serves to remember loved ones lost by suicide and to promote healing for those who grieve their passing.



In observance of National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month in September, the Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, will celebrate a Mass for Suicide Healing and Remembrance on Sunday, Sept. 21, 2025, at 12:15 p.m. at the Cathedral of Saint Peter, located at 315 Wyoming Avenue, Scranton.

The Mass will serve to remember loved ones lost to suicide, and to promote healing for those who grieve their passing.

Those attending the Mass will be invited to offer a flower in memory of a loved one who died from suicide. All are welcome.

In the United States, nearly 50,000 people died by suicide in 2023, which amounts to about one person every 11 minutes, according to numbers listed by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

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

Faith, family and culture shine at Hispanic Heritage Mass in Scranton



The Cathedral of Saint Peter was nearly filled to capacity on Saturday, Sept. 13, 2025, as the Diocese of Scranton celebrated its annual Hispanic Heritage Mass.

The liturgy drew hundreds of Spanish-speaking Catholics from parishes across the diocese, uniting them in faith, fellowship, and the celebration of their shared heritage.

“This is not just a Mass – this is more like a family gathering,” Karla Andrade, a parishioner of Saint Teresa of Calcutta Parish in Scranton, explained. “We bring our traditions and cultures and celebrate with different parishes of the Diocese of Scranton.”

Following the Mass, the celebration continued across the street at the Diocesan Pastoral Center with a huge festival featuring food, music, and dancing.

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

Pilgrimage of Hope: Bishop leads faithful on Jubilee Year journey to Italy



Nearly 100 faithful from the Diocese of Scranton embarked on the journey of a lifetime earlier this month, traveling to Italy as part of the Diocese's official Jubilee Year of Hope Pilgrimage, led by the Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton.

From walking through the Holy Doors of Rome's four major basilicas to celebrating Mass at the Tomb of Saint Peter, the pilgrimage offered a deep, personal, and transformative spiritual experience for those who participated.

The ten-day trip, organized in partnership with TravelWorld, spanned some of the most sacred and historic sites in the Catholic faith – from Rome and Assisi to Florence, Lucca, and Gubbio.

"The pilgrimage exceeded my expectations, and the amount of ground we covered was remarkable," Toni Ballenstedt, a pilgrim from Epiphany Parish in Sayre, said. "As a convert to the Catholic faith, it was truly enlightening."

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

In interview, Pope talks about abuse crisis, Trump, following Pope Francis



Clerical sexual abuse continues to be “a real crisis,” one that the Catholic Church still must learn to deal with, particularly in improving the way it helps survivors while also ensuring the rights of the accused are respected, Pope Leo XIV said.

“It would be naive for myself or for anyone” to think that dismissing the offender and giving the victim a financial settlement completely solves a case, “as if those wounds are just going to go away because of that,” the pope said in an interview for a book by Elise Allen, a journalist.

For Allen's biography, "Leo XIV: Citizen of the World, Missionary of the XXI Century," Pope Leo spoke about a range of issues, including the abuse crisis, U.S. President Donald Trump, the war in Gaza, Vatican policy toward China, the church's openness to LGBTQ Catholics, the role of women in the church, and the celebration of the pre-Vatican II Mass in Latin.

Excerpts of Allen's July 30 interview, her second interview with the pope, were published Sept. 14, but the full transcript was released Sept. 18 in conjunction with the publication of the Spanish edition of the book by Penguin Peru.

[Click Here to Read the Full Story from Catholic News Service](#)

'Healing and Hope' initiative tackles mental illness crisis at local level, say U.S. Bishops



The nation's Catholic bishops have launched a new effort to more closely engage the faithful in addressing the issue of mental health, particularly at the local level.

In a Sept. 16 press release, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops announced its “Healing and Hope” initiative as a “new component” of the USCCB’s National Catholic Mental Health Campaign.

Unveiled in October 2023, the campaign is spearheaded by Metropolitan Archbishop Borys A. Gudziak of the Ukrainian Catholic Archeparchy of Philadelphia, chairman of the USCCB’s Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development, and Bishop Robert E. Barron of Winona-Rochester, Minnesota, who leads the USCCB’s Committee on Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth.

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

**Celebrating an American saint: St.
Elizabeth Ann Seton's canonization at
50**



If St. Elizabeth Ann Seton's life was written as a Hollywood screenplay, a script doctor might say it was simply too tragic for audiences to believe — let alone that the heroine would repeatedly persevere.

The death of her mother when she was 3. The separation of her father and step-mother, who practically shunned her and her older sister. The death of her father from contagious disease. The bankruptcy of her husband's business and the loss of their home. The death of her husband in a foreign land. The opposition of some of her family and friends when she converted to Catholicism. The deaths of two of her children during her lifetime.

If it all seems a bit too much – truth is sometimes stranger than fiction, and as she herself declared, “Faith lifts the soul. Hope supports it. Experience says it must. And love says let it be!”

Sept. 14 marked the 50th anniversary since the canonization of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton (1774-1821), the first American-born saint. And while it’s been more than 250 years since her birth, her admirers say Mother Seton is hardly a quaint figure from an antique past – she’s instead a vibrantly relevant woman who continues to have much to share with modern believers.

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

Follow us on Social Media...



Diocese of Scranton
300 Wyoming Avenue,
Scranton, PA 18503-1279
(570) 207-2238
www.dioceseofscranton.org