



The Catholic Light

DIOCESE OF SCRANTON

Weekly E-Newsletter

November 20, 2025

Eight men to be ordained Permanent Deacons on Nov. 29



The Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, will ordain eight men as permanent deacons for the Diocese of Scranton at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, Nov. 29, 2025, at the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton.

The newly ordained deacons will join the ranks of clergy who minister to the faithful in parishes and other settings throughout the Diocese.

During the Mass of Ordination, Bishop Bambera will ordain the following men to serve permanently in the Order of Deacon: Fernando Alves, Francisco Castelan, Michaelangelo Colaneri, Frank Fanelli, Joel Marte, Jorge Roca, Rafael Sanchez Velasquez, and Christian Saunders.

“For me, the deacon is the bridge between the sanctuary and the people,” Michaelangelo Colaneri, a parishioner of the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton, said. “You’re allowed to be right next to the mystery of God on the altar on Sunday, and then you’re able to take that majesty that comes from Him and extend it to the people in your parish.”

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**86 young adults and chaperones
currently traveling to NCYC 2025**



This week, more than 80 young adults and chaperones from the Diocese of Scranton will join more than 15,000 young people in Indianapolis for the 2025 National Catholic Youth Conference.

The Catholic Light visited Saint Catherine of Siena Church in Moscow Tuesday afternoon as one of our two Diocesan buses departed this afternoon - to talk with some of the young pilgrims.

We ask for your prayers as thousands will encounter Christ, be inspired through our incredible speakers, and have a once-in-a-lifetime Digital Encounter with Pope Leo XIV on Friday morning.

Loving Father, please be with all those who will be traveling to Indianapolis this week.

Open our hearts and minds to hear Your words through others.

Let each of us know that You are with us and will guide us as each day passes. Give us the strength and ability to spread Your

word through our actions and conversations with others. We ask you Lord for safe travel and protection in every mile we travel.

Thank you, God for watching over us as we continue to build your Kingdom here on earth, Amen.

[Click Here to Watch a Short Video from CTV: Catholic Television About the NCYC 2025 Departure](#)

Parish serves more than 14,000 meals each year to neighbors in need



On a recent Saturday afternoon, the smell of meatballs and sauce filled the air inside the church hall at Saint Matthew Parish. Conversation and laughter were also heard as people from all walks of life shared a meal together – neighbors, families, and even those experiencing homelessness.

With a similar scene playing out on every Thursday and Saturday – the importance of the parish’s community meal is clear and more important than ever.

For some guests, the meals are a refuge from the streets. For others, they are a cure for loneliness or provide a way to stretch limited budgets as food prices rise.

“I’m 81 years old now, and I thought my life would be getting easier as I got older, but it’s not,” Irene Shields, a longtime East Stroudsburg resident who comes to the parish for meals each week, said. “Between the high rent and high food costs, there is no money left for anything.”

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**Parishioners turn gratitude into
action during '40 Days of Service' to
honor pastor**



Parishioners of two parishes in Luzerne County recently came together in a unique way – participating in various service projects to honor the 40th anniversary of their pastor.

Between Sept. 15 – Oct. 24, the parishes of Saint Ignatius Loyola, Kingston, and Holy Family, Luzerne, held a '40 Days of Service' effort to recognize the 40th anniversary of Monsignor David L. Tressler.

The effort started with a simple idea, which led to conversations among parishioners, and eventually led to a joint committee being formed with people from both parishes.

“Our first committee meeting was in July, as this effort required the bulk of planning early on,” committee member Debbie Lyons said. “People responded very graciously knowing that this would honor Monsignor in a thoughtful and unique way.”

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Knights of Columbus donate coats to children in the greater Hazleton area



The Knights of Columbus, Our Lady of Fatima Council 8613, of Saint John Bosco Church in Conyngham, and Good Shepherd Church in Drums, recently held a Coats for Kids Drive for the needy of the greater Hazleton area.

More than 80 new coats were donated by the Council.

Council members are currently collecting items for this year's Cross Catholic Outreach 'Box of Joy' program. This marks the sixth year that the Council has joined with Cross Catholic

Outreach to bring smiles and hope to children who might otherwise go without a Christmas gift.

The Knights will also sponsor a holiday blood drive on Thursday, Dec. 11 in the Saint John Bosco gym. All are invited to make an appointment.

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North Scranton parish offers heartfelt gratitude to local veterans



The faithful of Mary, Mother of God Parish gathered on Sunday, Nov. 9, for a special Mass honoring the men and women who have served in the United States Armed Forces.

Patriotic touches throughout the 11 a.m. Mass celebration created a celebration not only rooted in faith – but also in gratitude.

While many parishes throughout the Diocese of Scranton commemorate Veterans Day with special liturgies, this community goes above and beyond, not only recognizing veterans during Mass but also reaching out with gifts, visits to the homebound, and a home-cooked meal for residents of the nearby Saint Francis Commons veterans facility.

“We have the freedom to worship, or not worship, because of those who sacrificed so much. They gave so much of their lives and many never came home. It is the least we can do. We’ll do this every year,” Father Cyril D. Edwards, pastor of Mary, Mother of God Parish, said. “It’s a way to teach patriotism, to teach gratitude in the context of worship. It was really beautiful. We had a huge crowd at the Mass.”

Before the liturgy began, there was a moving procession that featured eight parish veterans carrying flags representing each branch of the military.

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Catholic Social Services to operate City of Scranton's Code Blue shelter



The City of Scranton and Catholic Social Services of the Diocese of Scranton formally announced on Nov. 13 that CSS will staff and operate the city's Code Blue shelter at the Weston Field House for the 2025-2026 winter season.

The shelter, located at 982 Providence Road, opens on nights when the temperatures are expected to fall below 20 degrees or when winter conditions create dangerous windchills. Last winter, Scranton issued approximately 70 Code Blue alerts, with an average of about 15 individuals seeking shelter at Weston Field each night.

"We are proud to continue providing a Code Blue shelter here at Weston Field," Scranton Mayor Paige G. Cagnetti said. "The City and each of the partner organizations in our Unsheltered Task Force, which includes Catholic Social Services, remain committed to addressing the changing needs of those without stable housing in Scranton."

Catholic School Services has served individuals experiencing homelessness in Scranton for more than three decades through Saint Anthony's Haven, the city's only year-round emergency shelter for adults.

In 2024, Saint Anthony's Haven provided 5,567 nights of shelter to 549 individuals.

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Community support needed for 'Gifts for Kids' program this Christmas



Catholic Social Services of the Diocese of Scranton is once again hoping to make Christmas special for thousands of area children through its annual Gifts for Kids program.

The agency is currently seeking donations of toys and gifts to provide to children in Scranton, Carbondale, and Hazleton.

Program coordinators say they are experiencing an increase in the number of families registered for assistance heading into the 2025 Christmas season.

In Carbondale, 280 children have already registered for the program – an increase of 10-15 children compared to last year.

“Our distribution is going to be on Tuesday, Dec. 9 for registered families,” Jolette Lyons, Catholic Social Services Director of Lackawanna County Offices, said. “Anyone who missed registration – including grandparents who might need something – we’re having a second-chance giveaway on Dec. 10 from 8 a.m. to noon at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church.”

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Hispanic Ministry Convocation focuses on creating Diocesan ministry plan



Representatives from nearly a dozen parish communities across the Diocese of Scranton gathered on Saturday, Nov. 15, 2025, for a Hispanic Ministry Convocation that marked a key step in the

process of creating a new Diocesan Pastoral Plan for Hispanic Ministry.

The Convocation, held at the Diocesan Pastoral Center in Scranton, brought together parish leaders, pastors, and the Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, to review months of consultation and discern concrete goals and action steps for the growing Hispanic community.

“The purpose of the Convocation is the last, final step in the consultative process for our Hispanic Ministry Pastoral Plan that we are working on,” Felix Martinez, Diocesan Director of Hispanic Ministry, said.

Over the last year, parish “consultative assemblies” have been held in each community where Hispanic ministry is present, allowing parishioners to identify their most pressing needs and priorities.

The consultations consistently highlighted themes such as spiritual growth, cultural integrity, family life, leadership development, and parish integration.

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**Prayer vigils for immigrants mark
Cabrini feast, commitment human
dignity**



On the feast of the patron saint of immigrants – and a day after the U.S. Catholic Bishops issued a special pastoral message on immigration – a coalition of Catholic organizations held a second wave of prayer vigils across the country Nov. 13 for what organizers called a “national day of public witness for our immigrant brothers and sisters.”

The latest vigils – which took place on the feast of Saint Frances Xavier Cabrini, an Italian immigrant whose ministry to fellow immigrants ultimately led to her canonization as the first American saint – came amid growing concern from various faith communities and the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops about the impact of hardline immigration policies.

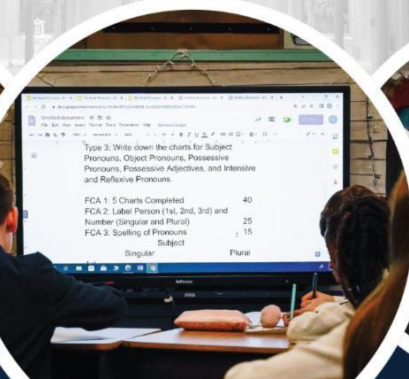
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OUR CALL TO SERVE

CATHOLIC MINISTRIES APPEAL



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