

# The Catholic Light

DIOCESE OF SCRANTON

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## “Lent Does Not Allow Us to Look Away”

### 2026 Lenten Message

BISHOP JOSEPH C. BAMBERA



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

More than ever before in recent memory, Lent meets us in a wounded world. The war in Ukraine continues to rage, the Middle East remains unsettled, innocent lives are being slaughtered in Nigeria, and the potential for conflict with Iran looms, to mention just a few areas around the globe that are steeped in pain and suffering.

In our own country, the immigration crisis continues to expose deep wounds within our society. While recognizing the duty of the government to protect the common good and maintain its borders, we must never forget that migrants and refugees are not strangers – but brothers and sisters, many of whom flee violence, poverty and persecution. Recent tragic incidents have reminded us how fragile human life is and how urgently we need solutions that safeguard communities while also honoring the God-given dignity of those seeking safety and hope.

Our Lenten experience begins in the midst of this sobering context.

In the liturgy of Ash Wednesday every year, we listen to the words of the prophet Joel, who sets the stage for our response to the Lord’s call to discipleship. He does so by challenging us to change our lives – not merely by performing religious gestures and practices – but by peering intensely into our hearts to ensure that our spirits are honest, pure and open to the transforming power and presence of God.

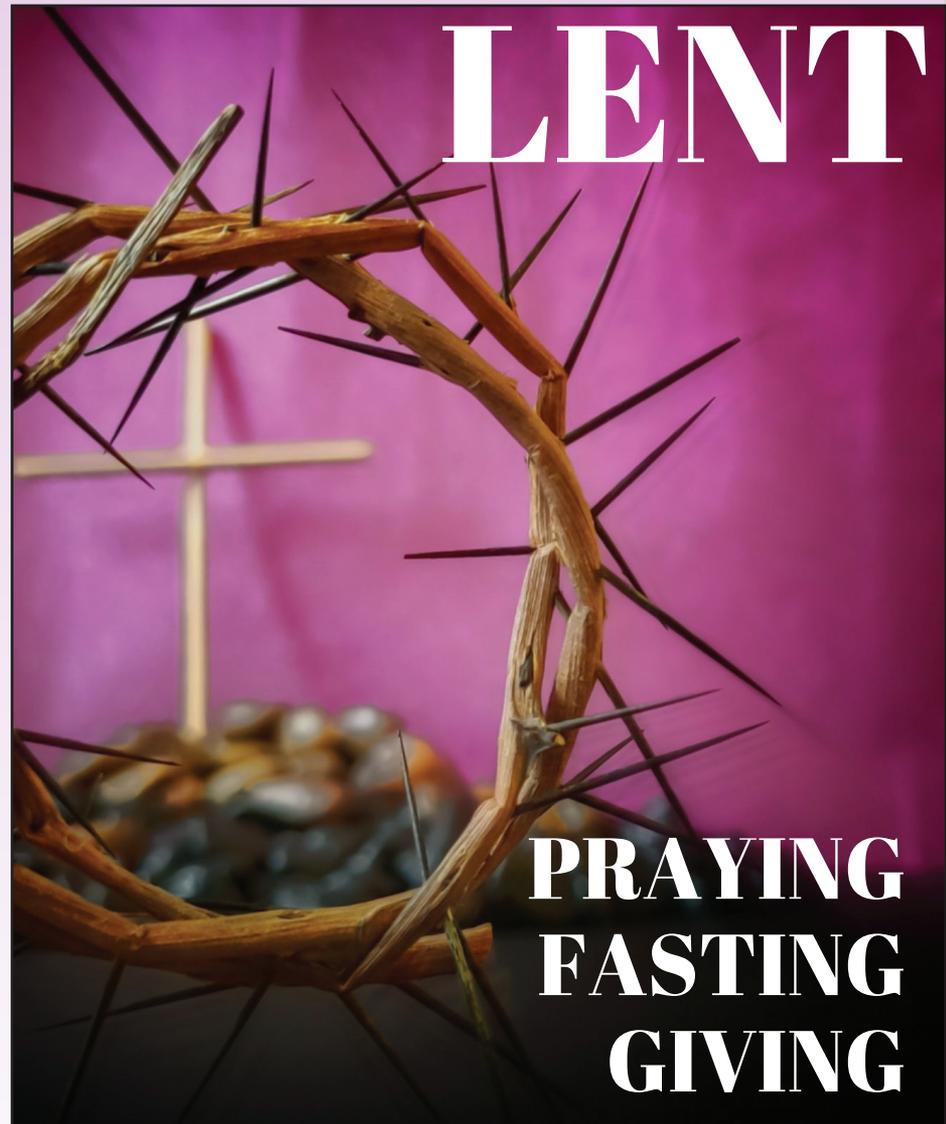
Saint Matthew, in that same liturgy, reinforces the words of the prophet as he calls us to pray, fast, and to give alms in support of the poor – not because such behavior will make us righteous – but because such acts for the true follower of Jesus are simply the consequence of faithful lives rooted in Jesus, who teaches us how best to live.

Yet, brothers and sisters, during these sacred days, it is not enough for us to simply focus on our own spiritual and moral well-being and growth to the exclusion of assuming any responsibility to care for our suffering world.

Lent does not allow us to look away!

It challenges us, in whatever situation and circumstance God has placed us, to move beyond indifference, to pray with honest hearts and to serve one another in ways that restore human dignity.

It beckons us to be people of healing, to listen before judging, to welcome before excluding, and to choose love when it’s easier to walk away.



While not one of us, on our own, can change the sad realities of the world in which we find ourselves, each one of us, through Baptism, can and must assume our place in building God’s kingdom of peace.

Lent then becomes a season of grace for personal conversion and a blessed opportunity to speak to our struggling world God’s words of love and peace.

*Bishop Bambera’s Lenten Message Continues on Page 3*

# The Catholic Light

(ISSN 0164-9418)

OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER OF THE  
DIOCESE OF SCRANTON



## 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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## Secretary for Communications/Editor-in-Chief:

Eric M. Deabill

## Managing Editor:

Kevin G. McDonnell

## Advertising Coordinator:

Eileen Manley

## Circulation Coordinator:

Pamela Haeefe

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# Message of the Holy Father Leo XIV for Lent 2026

## Listening and Fasting: Lent as a Time of Conversion

Dear brothers and sisters,

Lent is a time in which the Church, guided by a sense of maternal care, invites us to place the mystery of God back in the center of our lives, in order to find renewal in our faith and keep our hearts from being consumed by the anxieties and distractions of daily life.

Every path towards conversion begins by allowing the word of God to touch our hearts and welcoming it with a docile spirit. There is a relationship between the word, our acceptance of it and the transformation it brings about. For this reason, the Lenten journey is a welcome opportunity to heed the voice of the Lord and renew our commitment to following Christ, accompanying him on the road to Jerusalem, where the mystery of his passion, death and resurrection will be fulfilled.

### Listening

This year, I would first like to consider the importance of making room for the word through listening. The willingness to listen is the first way we demonstrate our desire to enter into relationship with someone.

In revealing himself to Moses in the burning bush, God himself teaches us that listening is one of his defining characteristics: “I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry” (Ex 3:7). Hearing the cry of the oppressed is the beginning of a story of liberation in which the Lord calls Moses, sending him to open a path of salvation for his children who have been reduced to slavery.

Our God is one who seeks to involve us. Even today he shares with us what is in his heart. Because of this, listening to the word in the liturgy teaches us to listen to the truth of reality. In the midst of the many voices present in our personal lives and in society, Sacred Scripture helps us to recognize and respond to the cry of those who are anguished and suffering. In order to foster this inner openness to listening, we must allow God to teach us how to listen as he does. We must recognize that “the condition of the poor is a cry that, throughout human history, constantly challenges our lives, societies, political and economic systems, and, not least, the Church” (*Dilexi Te*, 9).

### Fasting

If Lent is a time for listening, fasting is a concrete way to prepare ourselves to receive the word of God. Abstaining from food is an ancient ascetic practice that is essential on the path of conversion. Precisely because it involves the body, fasting makes it easier to recognize what we “hunger” for and what we deem necessary for our sustenance. Moreover, it helps us to identify and order our “appetites,” keeping our hunger and thirst for justice alive and freeing us from complacency. Thus, it teaches us to pray and act responsibly towards our neighbor.

With spiritual insight, Saint Augustine helps us to understand the tension between the present moment and the future fulfillment that characterizes this custody of the heart. He observes that: “In the course of earthly life, it is incumbent upon men and women to hunger and thirst for justice, but to be satisfied belongs to the next life. Angels are satisfied with this bread, this food. The human race, on the other hand, hungers for it; we are all drawn to it in our desire. This reaching out in desire expands the soul and increases its capacity” (Augustine *The Usefulness of Fasting*, 1). Understood in this way, fasting not only permits us to govern our desire, purifying it and making it freer, but also to expand it, so that it is directed towards God and doing good.

However, in order to practice fasting in accordance with its evangelical character and avoid the temptation that leads to pride, it must be lived in faith and humility. It must be grounded in communion with the Lord, because “those who are unable to nourish themselves with the word of God do not fast properly” (Benedict XVI, Catechesis March 9, 2011). As a visible sign of our inner commitment to turn away from sin and evil with the help of grace, fasting must also include other forms of self-denial aimed at helping us to acquire a more sober lifestyle, since “austerity alone makes the Christian life strong and authentic.” (Paul VI, Catechesis Feb. 8, 1978).

In this regard, I would like to invite you to a very practical and frequently unappreciated form of abstinence: that of refraining from words that offend and hurt our neighbor. Let us begin by disarming our language, avoiding harsh words and rash judgement, refraining from slander and speaking ill of those who are not present and cannot defend themselves. Instead, let us strive to measure our words and cultivate kindness and respect in our families, among our friends, at work, on social media, in political debates, in the media and in Christian communities. In this way, words of hatred will give way to words of hope and peace.

### Together

Finally, Lent emphasizes the communal aspect of listening to the word and fasting. The Bible itself underlines this dimension in multiple ways. For example, the Book of Nehemiah recounts how the people gathered to listen to the public reading of the Law, preparing to profess their faith and worship through fasting, so as to renew the covenant with God (cf. 9:1-3).



On Feb. 13, 2026, Pope Leo XIV released his first Lenten message, in which he encouraged Catholics to rediscover the power of fasting this Lent. (CNS photo/Lola Gomez)

*Pope Leo's 2026 Lenten Message Continues on Page 4*

## **“La Cuaresma no nos permite mirar hacia otro lado”** *Mensaje de Cuaresma 2026 del Obispo Bambera*

Queridos hermanos y hermanas en Cristo,

Más que nunca en la memoria reciente, la Cuaresma nos encuentra en un mundo herido. La guerra en Ucrania continúa, el Medio Oriente sigue inestable, vidas inocentes están siendo masacradas en Nigeria y se vislumbra la posibilidad de un conflicto con Irán, por mencionar solo algunas regiones del mundo marcadas por el dolor y el sufrimiento.

En nuestro propio país, la crisis migratoria continúa dejando al descubierto profundas heridas dentro de nuestra sociedad. Si bien reconocemos el deber del gobierno de proteger el bien común y mantener sus fronteras, nunca debemos olvidar que los migrantes y refugiados no son extraños, sino hermanos y hermanas, muchos de los cuales huyen de la violencia, la pobreza y la persecución. Trágicos acontecimientos recientes nos han recordado cuán frágil es la vida humana y cuán urgentemente necesitamos soluciones que protejan a las comunidades y, al mismo tiempo, respeten la dignidad dada por Dios a quienes buscan seguridad y esperanza.

Nuestra experiencia cuaresmal comienza en medio de este sobrio contexto.

En la liturgia del Miércoles de Ceniza cada año, escuchamos las palabras del profeta Joel, quien prepara el camino para nuestra respuesta al llamado del Señor al discipulado. Lo hace desafiándonos a cambiar nuestras vidas —no simplemente realizando gestos y prácticas religiosas— sino examinando profundamente nuestros corazones para asegurarnos de que nuestros espíritus sean sinceros, puros y estén abiertos al poder y a la presencia transformadora de Dios.

San Mateo, en esa misma liturgia, refuerza las palabras del profeta cuando nos llama a orar, ayunar y dar limosna en apoyo a los pobres —no porque tales acciones nos hagan justos— sino porque estos actos, para el verdadero seguidor de Jesús, son simplemente la consecuencia de una vida fiel arraigada en Él, quien nos enseña la mejor manera de vivir.

Sin embargo, hermanos y hermanas, durante estos días sagrados, no basta con centrarnos únicamente en nuestro propio bienestar y crecimiento espiritual y moral, excluyendo cualquier responsabilidad de cuidar a nuestro mundo sufriente.

¡La Cuaresma no nos permite mirar hacia otro lado!

Nos desafía, en cualquier situación y circunstancia en la que Dios nos haya colocado, a ir más allá de la indiferencia, a orar con corazones sinceros y a servirnos unos a otros de manera que restaure la dignidad humana. Nos llama a ser personas de sanación, a escuchar antes de juzgar, a acoger antes de excluir y a elegir el amor cuando sería más fácil alejarnos. Aunque ninguno de nosotros, por sí solo, puede cambiar las tristes realidades del mundo en el que vivimos, cada uno de nosotros, por medio del Bautismo, puede y debe asumir su lugar en la construcción del Reino de paz de Dios.

La Cuaresma se convierte así en un tiempo de gracia para la conversión personal y en una bendita oportunidad para comunicar a nuestro mundo atribulado las palabras de amor y paz de Dios.

Con el mismo espíritu de esperanza y promesa, acogeremos a los catecúmenos entre los elegidos el Primer Domingo de Cuaresma. Su número en nuestra Diócesis y en todo nuestro país ha aumentado significativamente en los últimos años, sirviendo como un poderoso recordatorio de la presencia de Dios que actúa entre nosotros y que continúa llamando a su pueblo a la vida y a la salvación. Cuando los encuentren en sus parroquias, denles la bienvenida y háganles saber cuán orgullosos están de su disposición a decir “sí” al llamado de Jesús al discipulado.

Como parte de nuestra experiencia cuaresmal diocesana, por cuarto año consecutivo, volveré a celebrar una Hora Santa ante el Santísimo Sacramento en cada uno de nuestros doce decanatos durante las semanas de Cuaresma. Espero orar con muchos de ustedes mientras reflexionamos juntos sobre cómo encontrar la paz de Dios en estos tiempos difíciles.

Finalmente, los animo a todos a acudir a la misericordia y sanación del Señor en el Sacramento de la Reconciliación.

En un mensaje a toda la Iglesia, el Papa León XIV ofreció esta perspectiva sobre nuestro camino cuaresmal: “Pidamos la gracia de una Cuaresma que nos lleve a una mayor atención a Dios y a los más pequeños entre nosotros... Esforcémonos por hacer de nuestras comunidades lugares donde el clamor de quienes sufren encuentre acogida, y donde la escucha abra caminos hacia la liberación, haciéndonos estar dispuestos y deseosos de contribuir a la construcción de una civilización del amor.”

Tengan la seguridad de mis oraciones para una fructífera vivencia de la Cuaresma.

Fielmente suyo en Cristo,

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

## **Through Baptism, each believer shares responsibility for building God’s Kingdom, Bishop says in Lenten message**

*Continued from Page 1*

In this same spirit of hope and promise, we will welcome catechumens into the ranks of the elect on the First Sunday of Lent. Their numbers in our own Diocese and throughout our country have increased significantly in recent years, serving as a powerful reminder of the presence of God moving among us and continually calling his people to life and salvation. When you meet them in your parishes, welcome them and let them know how proud you are of their willingness to say “yes” to Jesus’ call to discipleship.

As part of our Diocesan Lenten experience, for the fourth year, I will once again celebrate a Holy Hour before the Blessed Sacrament in each of our twelve deaneries throughout the weeks of Lent. I look forward to praying with many of you as we together we reflect upon how best to find God’s peace in these challenging times.

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

In a message to the entire Church, Pope Leo XIV offered this perspective on our Lenten journey, “Let us ask for the grace of a Lent that leads us to greater attentiveness to God and to the least among us ... Let us strive to make our communities places where the cry of those who suffer finds welcome, and listening opens paths towards liberation, making us ready and eager to contribute to building a civilization of love.”

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

Faithfully yours in Christ,



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



**RETURN TO ME WITH  
YOUR WHOLE HEART**

## Regulations for Lent 2026

Lent is a 40 day season of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving that begins on Ash Wednesday and ends at sundown on Holy Thursday. It is a period of preparation to celebrate the Lord's Resurrection at Easter.

The following fasting and abstinence regulations are observed:

- **FASTING** is to be observed on Ash Wednesday (Feb. 18, 2026) and Good Friday (April 3, 2026) by all Catholics over 18 years of age to the beginning of their 60th year. On days of fasting, one full meal is allowed. Two smaller meals, sufficient to maintain strength, may be taken according to one's needs, but together should not equal another full meal, unless dispensed or excused.

- **ABSTINENCE** from meat is to be observed by all Catholics who are 14 years of age or older. Ash Wednesday, all of the Fridays of Lent, and Good Friday are days of abstinence.

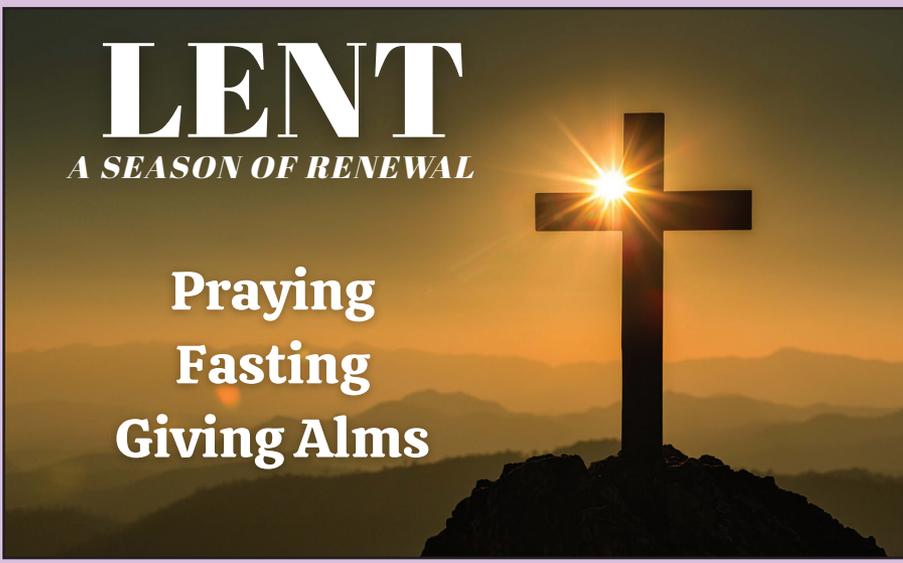
During Lent, we seek the Lord in prayer by reading Sacred Scripture; we serve by giving alms; and we practice self-control through fasting. We are called not only to abstain from luxuries during Lent, but to a true inner conversion of heart as we seek to follow Christ's will more faithfully. We recall the waters of baptism in which we were also baptized into Christ's death, died to sin and evil, and began new life in Christ.

Lent is a penitential season. It is a time to seek forgiveness, to look inward, and to admit our shortcomings and failures. All faithful of the Diocese of Scranton are reminded of Diocesan Statute No. 41, which addresses the penitential aspect of Lent:

*"The season of Lent is penitential in nature and during Lent penance should be not only internal and individual, but also external and social (Sacrosanctum Concilium, No. 5, 109). Pastors are obliged to avoid scheduling activities in the parishes which in any way could possibly detract from the external and social penance required by Lent."*

How can you spend your time during Lent?

- By **"giving up" things** you hunger after, such as sweets or alcohol; or activities you desire, such as vacations, concerts or movies.
- By **"doing" things to help others**, such as offering an extra donation to the poor or helping those in need by providing food or clothing.
- By **"adding" to our normal routine**, such as going to daily Mass, praying the Stations of the Cross and going to confession.



## The Light is ON for You!

*Sacrament of Reconciliation to be readily available in parishes throughout Lent*

The Church encourages us to make confession a regular part of our spiritual life, especially during the holy season of Lent, as we reflect on our baptism and repentance.

Parishes in the Diocese of Scranton will once again participate in "The Light is ON for You" initiative in 2026.

Every Monday evening during the Lenten season, beginning Feb. 23, and continuing through the Monday of the last full week of Lent, March 23, confessions will be heard in every parish from 5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. (unless the parish already has a different established weeknight tradition that is well publicized).

This special opportunity allows Catholics the ability to come (or return to) this incredible source of God's grace, mercy and healing.



## In his first Lenten message, Pope Leo XIV explains why Catholics fast during Lent

*Pope Leo's Lenten Message Continues from Page 2*

Likewise, our parishes, families, ecclesial groups and religious communities are called to undertake a shared journey during Lent, in which listening to the word of God, as well as to the cry of the poor and of the earth, becomes part of our community life, and fasting a foundation for sincere repentance. In this context, conversion refers not only to one's conscience, but also to the quality of our relationships and dialogue. It means allowing ourselves to be challenged by reality and recognizing what truly guides our desires — both within our ecclesial communities and as regards humanity's thirst for justice and reconciliation.

Dear friends, let us ask for the grace of a Lent that leads us to greater attentiveness to God and to the least among us. Let us ask for the strength that comes from the type of fasting that also extends to our use of language, so that hurtful words may diminish and give way to a greater space for the voice of others. Let us strive to make our communities places where the cry of those who suffer finds welcome, and listening opens paths towards liberation, making us ready and eager to contribute to building a civilization of love.

I impart my heartfelt blessing upon all of you and your Lenten journey.

*Leo P.P. XIV*



## Rice Bowl collection seen as more critical than ever after USAID cuts

(OSV News) - "Are you leaving, too?"

The question, said Abena Amedormey-country representative for Catholic Relief Services in the west African nation of Ghana - came to CRS workers as they visited communities they serve after a January 2025 freeze on all U.S. foreign aid, ordered by the Trump administration.

By July 2025, the U.S. Agency for International Development - established in 1961, and which in 2024 provided \$187 million in humanitarian funding to Ghana-effectively ceased to exist, with 85% of its programs cut. The result was that many in-country aid organizations also ceased operations.

But not CRS.

They're surviving - yet the deep slashes to USAID funding have now made their annual Rice Bowl collection more essential than ever.

A familiar Lenten program of Catholic Relief Services - the official relief and development agency of the Catholic Church in the U.S. - CRS Rice Bowl offers faith communities in every diocese throughout the United States the opportunity to put their faith into action.

Since 1975, the titular rice bowl - a brightly colored, cardboard almsgiving box that's a familiar annual Lenten sight in parishes nationwide - has invited Catholics to pray, fast, and give in solidarity with the world's poor.

"We're very much known across Ghana," Amedormey told OSV News. "People know that we bring relief and we work with the most vulnerable people, where nobody wants to go. It's the remotest parts of the country - the most hard to reach areas; the most vulnerable people - that we work with."

The Rice Bowl program has raised more than \$350 million since its inception.

To give online, visit [crsricebowl.org/give](http://crsricebowl.org/give). You can also call (877) 435-7277.

To give by mail, write "CRS Rice Bowl" in the memo line of a check and mail it to: Catholic Relief Services, P.O. Box 5200, Harlan, IA 51593-0700.

## Lenten Holy Hours with Bishop Bambera begin tonight in Bradford County

WYALUSING - As Lent unfolds across the Diocese of Scranton, the Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, will once again travel to each of our 12 deaneries to lead Lenten Holy Hours centered on this year's theme: "Finding Peace in Challenging Times."

The Holy Hours begin tonight at 7 p.m. at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish in Wyalusing, Bradford County.

In a world marked by uncertainty - and in lives often burdened with personal crosses - these evenings of Eucharistic Adoration, reflection, and sacred music offer a chance for the faithful to pause. Before the Blessed Sacrament, you will be invited to lay down your worries, seek clarity amid confusion, and rediscover the steady peace that only Christ can give.

All are welcome to attend any Holy Hour at 7 p.m., regardless of parish or deanery. The full schedule is listed below.

Consider making time this Lent to step away from the rush of daily life, encounter the Lord in stillness, and find peace in the midst of life's challenges.

### 2026 Lenten Holy Hours with Bishop Bambera

February 19

Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish, Wyalusing

February 24

Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish, Brodheads ville

February 25

Saint Ann Parish, Williamsport

February 26

Divine Mercy Parish, Scranton

March 2

Saint Thomas More Parish, Lake Ariel

March 3

Saint Carlo Acutis Parish, Olyphant

March 5

Saint John Bosco Parish, Conyngham

March 12

Nativity of Our Lord Parish, Duryea

March 16

Saint Therese Parish, Shavertown

March 19

Saint John Vianney Parish, Montdale

March 23

Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish, Peckville

March 24

SS. Peter & Paul Parish, Plains

All Holy Hours to begin at 7 p.m.

## Catholic Television to broadcast Cathedral devotions during Lent

# EVENING PRAYER

*with Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament*

## SUNDAYS DURING LENT

**February 22**

**March 1**

**March 8**

**March 15**

**March 22**

**March 29**

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

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

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

Evening Prayer is part of the Liturgy

of the Hours, also known as the Divine Office. In the Liturgy of the Hours, the Church fulfills Jesus' command to "pray always." Through this prayer, the people of God sanctify the day by continual praise of God and prayers of intercession for the needs of the world.

During Lent, CTV plans to broadcast both the Sunday 5 p.m. Mass live as well as the Sunday Evening Prayer that will begin directly thereafter (around 6:15 p.m.).

The first broadcast of the Sunday 5 p.m. Mass and Evening Prayer will take place on Sunday, Feb. 22, 2026.

## Stations of the Cross

Every Friday during Lent, the faithful are invited to enter more deeply into the mystery of Christ's saving love by praying the Stations of the Cross following the 12:10 p.m. Mass at the Cathedral of Saint Peter.

Walking spiritually along the path to Calvary, we reflect on the moments of Jesus' Passion - His condemnation, His falls, His encounter with His Blessed Mother, His crucifixion and death. In each station, we see not only the suffering of Christ, but the depth of God's mercy poured out for the world.

The Stations remind us that the crosses we carry are united to His - and that no suffering is endured alone.

For those unable to attend in person,



Catholic Television will broadcast the Stations of the Cross live each Friday, with rebroadcasts following the Daily Mass at 3:30 p.m. and 7:00 p.m., allowing the faithful to participate prayerfully from home.

Accompany our Lord to Calvary this Lent. Walk with Him, meditate upon His sacrifice, and discover in His Passion the hope and peace that lead to Easter joy.

## Rite of Election & Call to Continuing Conversion to be held Feb. 22

SCRANTON - Each Lent, the Church marks a powerful moment of grace for those preparing to enter full communion through the Order of Christian Initiation of Adults (OCIA) as it celebrates the Rite of Election and the Call to Continuing Conversion on the First Sunday of Lent.

During the Rite of Election, catechumens - those who have not yet been baptized - publicly declare their desire to receive the Sacraments of Initiation at the Easter Vigil. Their names are inscribed in their parish 'Book of the Elect,' and the Bishop, on behalf of the Church, formally affirms that they are chosen to receive Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist.

At the same celebration, candidates - those already baptized in another Christian

tradition who now seek full communion with the Catholic Church - participate in the Call to Continuing Conversion. They express their intention to complete their initiation through Confirmation and the Eucharist.

This year's celebration will be broadcast live on CTV: Catholic Television on Sunday, Feb. 22, at 2:30 p.m., offering parishioners throughout the Diocese of Scranton the opportunity to witness these inspiring testimonies of faith.

A livestream will also be available on the Diocese of Scranton website, YouTube channel and across all social media platforms.

As we begin Lent, please pray for this year's catechumens and candidates!

# Rite of *Election* and the *Call to* Continuing Conversion

**February 22, 2026 at 2:30 PM**

**SAINT PETER'S CATHEDRAL**

SCRANTON, PENNSYLVANIA



## 'Road to Resurrection' series to be held in Scranton

SCRANTON - Parishes throughout the Scranton Deanery will once again come together this Lent for their annual 'Road to Resurrection' series, a collaborative spiritual journey designed to help the faithful prepare their hearts for Easter.

The series will begin on Thursday, Feb. 19 at Saint Paul Parish in Green Ridge and conclude six weeks later on Thursday, March 26 at Divine Mercy Parish.

Rooted in the themes of conversion, sacrifice, and hope, the evenings invite parishioners to reflect more deeply on the journey from Calvary to the empty tomb - reminding us that every cross carried in faith leads toward the promise of new life.

All are welcome to attend any or all of the gatherings!



*The Scranton Area's*  
**the ROAD**  
2026  
to RESURRECTION

Make your Lenten journey a special one this year by following the Road to Resurrection

**Thursday February 19- 7:00 PM**  
**St. Paul Parish (GreenRidge)**  
1510 Penn Ave. Scranton, PA 18509

**Thursday February 26- 7:00 PM**  
**Lenten Holy Hour with Bishop Bambera**  
**Divine Mercy**  
312 Davis St. Scranton, PA 18505

**Thursday March 5- 7:00 PM**  
**Immaculate Conception**  
801 Taylor Ave., Scranton, PA 18510

**Thursday March 12- 7:00 PM**  
**St. Teresa of Calcutta (Bilingual)**  
1217 Prospect Ave., Scranton, PA 18505

**Thursday March 19- 7:00 PM**  
**St. Michael the Archangel**  
*(St. Lucy's Church- Traditional Latin Mass)*  
949 Scranton Street, Scranton, PA 18504

**Thursday March 26- 7:00 PM**  
**Divine Mercy**  
312 Davis St. Scranton, PA 18505

## Dupont & Avoca parishes plan Lenten retreat

DUPONT - All faithful are invited and encouraged to attend "Return to the Heart of the Father," a three-day parish Lenten retreat that will be held this month in Luzerne County.

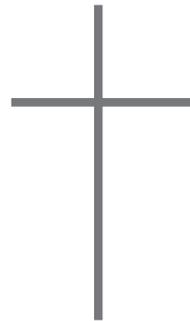
The three-day retreat will be

presented by guest speaker Allan Wright, Feb. 26-28, at Sacred Heart of Jesus Church, Dupont, and Saint Mary Church, Avoca.

Allan is a national speaker, author of over 20 books, adjunct professor at Seton Hall University

and Executive Director of the N.J. Family Policy Center.

For the full list of details for each day are contained below. To RSVP for the catered meals, please email [shojesuschurch@gmail.com](mailto:shojesuschurch@gmail.com) or call (570) 654-3713.



## Return to the Heart of the Father

A three-day Parish Lenten Retreat with  
**Allan Wright**

Hosted by

**Sacred Heart of Jesus Church, 215 Lackawanna Ave., Dupont**  
**and Saint Mary Church, 714 Hawthorne St., Avoca**

February 26 – Sacred Heart Church, Dupont

5:30 pm, Mass

6:15 pm, Catered meal in the church hall (RSVP required)

7:00 pm, Presentation in hall: *Disciples on Journey with Christ to the Cross*

February 27 – Saint Mary's Church, Avoca (two sessions)

1:00 pm, Stations of the Cross

1:30 pm, Presentation in church: *Return to the Heart of the Father*

5:30 pm, Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament

6:00 pm, Catered meal in parish hall (RSVP required)

6:45 pm, Presentation in church: *Return to the Heart of the Father*

7:45 pm, Stations of the Cross

February 28 – Sacred Heart Church, Dupont

9:00 am, Mass

9:30 am, Presentation in church: *Living this Lent with Intention: Bringing Joy and Charity to a Broken World*

Penance service to immediately follow in church.

*To RSVP for catered meals, email [shojesuschurch@gmail.com](mailto:shojesuschurch@gmail.com) or call 570-654-3713.*

*Allan is a national speaker, author, adjunct professor at Seton Hall University, and Executive Director of the NJ Family Policy Center. He is a husband and father of four children.*



# Lenten missions/events in parishes encourage faithful to pause and reflect

## *DUNMORE*

The parish communities of Saints Anthony & Rocco and Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Dunmore will host a parish Lenten mission March 2-4 in Saint Anthony of Padua Church, 208 Smith St., Dunmore.

Led by guest presenter Michael Gormley, the mission - entitled "That One Thing" - begins on Monday and Tuesday evenings, March 2 & 3, at 6:30 p.m. The retreat will conclude with Eucharistic praise & worship on Wednesday, March 4, beginning at 6:30 p.m. All are welcome.

Praise and worship music ministry will be provided by Mark Woodyatt, Dan Simrell, Joel Kankiewicz and Angela Cianci.

Gormley has led evangelization and ministry efforts for the past 17 years, both as a full-time parish staff member and speaker-consultant for parishes, dioceses and Catholic campus ministry programs.

He currently serves as mission evangelist for "Paradisus Dei," a ministry dedicated to helping men, couples, and families discover the overabundance of God's love and mercy.

Founding creative director of LayEvangelist.com, Gormley also co-hosts the popular Catholic podcasts "Catching Foxes" and "Every Knee Shall Bow."

## *EAST STROUDSBURG*

Saint Matthew's Adult Formation will present a morning reflection on the Seven Last Words of Christ on Saturday, March 7, from 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

The morning will include talks, discussion, reflection and prayer on Christ's last words from the cross. It will feature talks by Father Don Williams and Father Brian J.T. Clarke as well as reflections led by the Knights of Columbus and the Women's Prayer Group.

Please join us as we prayerfully connect the words of Christ to our daily lives. Registration is required.

Please call the parish office at (570) 421-2342 or email [catrillom@yahoo.com](mailto:catrillom@yahoo.com). The event will be held at St Matthews Parish Center, 78 Ridgeway St, East Stroudsburg. Light refreshments will be served.

## *PITTSTON*

While many consider Lent a somber time during the Church's liturgical year, we can look to Laetare Sunday, the Fourth Sunday of Lent, as an attitude to have for all 40 days.

It is true Lent is a penitential time; we should reflect on our spiritual life and allow that inward reflection to guide us in our efforts to renew our faith in God. But we should also rejoice, because through our Lenten sacrifice, we are preparing ourselves to celebrate Christ's Resurrection, the cornerstone of our faith, and the cause for our hope in eternal life.

Join the parish communities of Pittston on Wednesday, March 11, at 6:00 p.m. in the lower level of Saint John the Evangelist Church, 35 William Street, Pittston. Fr. Tom Dzwonczyk will present a talk on Laetare Sunday over light fare, and the evening will conclude with Night Prayer in the Chapel.

For reservations (preferred, but not required) or for any additional info, please contact Ed at [esankus@stjohnspittston.com](mailto:esankus@stjohnspittston.com) or call St. John's Office at (570) 654-0053.

## *MILDRED*

The Altar & Rosary Society of Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish invites all area faithful to participate in a special Lenten retreat, "A Day of Grace: In Honor of Our Lady," on Saturday, March 14, to be hosted at the parish worship site of Saint Francis of Assisi Church in Mildred.

Offered as an opportunity for spiritual renewal during Lent, the day of prayer, reflection, and sacramental grace will be led by Capuchin Franciscan Father Pio Mandato and the Capuchin Sisters of Nazareth.

The mission retreat, commemorating the special Jubilee Year of Saint Francis, proclaimed by Pope Leo XIV to celebrate the 800th anniversary of the death of Saint Francis of Assisi, will focus on prayer and sacraments to align with the spirit and intentions of the Jubilee Year.

The retreat day opens at 8:30 a.m. with registration in Saint Francis church hall, followed by recitation of the Rosary, celebration of Mass, and guest presentation in the church. A light lunch will be provided in the hall. The afternoon portion of the retreat will offer adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, Sacrament of Reconciliation, additional reflection, and benediction with the relic of Saint Padre Pio of Pietrelcina. All faithful are welcome free of charge; a free-will offering will be accepted.

Pre-registration is requested for planning purposes. For reservations, call Karen at (570) 637-6607.

## *OLYPHANT*

Saint Carlo Acutis Parish will host a Lenten mission entitled "Life is Worth Living" on March 23-25 at Saint Patrick Church, 200 Delaware Avenue, Olyphant. The presenter will be Rev. Charles P. Connor. The Lenten mission will be based on the teachings of Venerable Fulton Sheen. The nightly discussion topics will include: The Call to Holiness, Human Suffering, and Prayer and Mary.

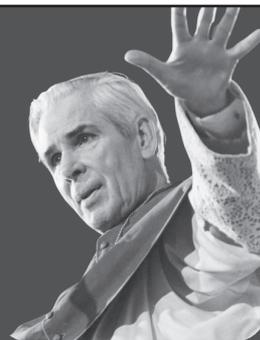
The Mission program will be offered each evening at 7:00 p.m. and will include Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament and sacramental confessions.

For more information on the Lenten mission, contact (570) 489-0752 or email [saintcarloacutis@gmail.com](mailto:saintcarloacutis@gmail.com).

## "Life is Worth Living"

A Lenten Parish Mission with Venerable Fulton J. Sheen

Saint Carlo Acutis Parish  
Church of St. Patrick  
200 Delaware Ave.  
Olyphant, PA 18447



## MARCH 23-25

7:00 PM

Conference each evening followed by Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.

Confessions will be heard each evening.

Join us as we reflect on the call to holiness, human suffering, prayer and Mary through the life and teachings of the Venerable Fulton J. Sheen.



OUR PRESENTER: REV. CHARLES P. CONNOR

# Bold and Beloved Retreat introduces women to Saint Hildegard of Bingen

DALTON – Many of the 100 women who attended the Diocese of Scranton’s recent ‘Bold and Beloved’ retreat had one thing in common: they knew little, if anything, about Saint Hildegard of Bingen.

By the end of the weekend experience, that had changed.

“I had never heard of Saint Hildegard before this,” Mary Daley of Epiphany Parish in Sayre said. “But reading the things that she wrote, it’s like you’re reading someone from today talking about the Catholic Church and the issues we’re facing.”

Held Jan. 31-Feb. 1, the third annual ‘Bold and Beloved’ women’s retreat centered on the life and teaching of Saint Hildegard, a 12th-century Benedictine abbess, mystic, composer, and Doctor of the Church.

Through prayer, study and fellowship, women of all ages explored her vision of faith, womanhood, and discipleship – many encountering her story for the first time.

The retreat was led by Annette Bergeon, CEO of Endow, a women’s apostolate devoted to intellectual and spiritual formation. Endow is one of the only women’s organizations that has a study specifically on Saint Hildegard.

“She was a doctor, a writer and author – and I can relate to a lot of that,” Hannah Halliday of Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish in Peckville, a third-year retreat participant, said. “It taught me so much about her and about her life.”

Participants took part in four large-group talks, followed by structured small-group discussions. The weekend retreat also

included daily Mass, the Rosary, Liturgy of the Hours, Eucharistic Adoration, opportunities for Reconciliation, and time for rest and fellowship.

The retreat was open to women over the age of eighteen, and many mother-daughter pairs participated.

“I’ve always loved coming to retreats and once I learned about this one, I was really excited and immediately messaged my mom and said, do you want to do this with me, and here we are,” Concetta Cooney of Saint John the Evangelist Parish in Pittston said.

“Women are created as social beings. We are extremely communal,” Marianne Guarnieri, Director of Discipleship for the Diocesan Office for Parish Life, explained. “This is a weekend that is designed to create fellowship. It is a wonderful time.”

For younger participants like Stephanie Kucharski, a first-year college student from Nativity of Our Lord Parish in Duryea, the retreat offered both renewal and connection.

“It’s nice to just take a break and relax and get away for a weekend from the workload,” she said. “It has been very interesting and cool to see like-minded people here for the same reason which is exploring their faith together.”

Others described the retreat as deeply affirming.

“In the real world, it’s not always easy to be Catholic,” Daley added. “It is so refreshing to be here with other Catholic women, sharing the same beliefs, and helping to strengthen those beliefs. I really appreciate it. It’s like water in the desert.”

As the retreat concluded, many



Annette Bergeon, CEO of Endow, leads the first talk on the life and visions of Saint Hildegard during the Bold and Beloved Women’s Retreat on Jan. 30, 2026, at Transfiguration Retreat Center in Dalton.



Saint Hildegard of Bingen is depicted in an icon by Augustinian Father Richard G. Cannuli. (OSV News photo)

participants say they’re already looking forward to next year.

“It’s an amazing opportunity and I

encourage anybody that is even thinking about coming on it to take that step,”

Halliday said.

## Ezra 10:4 Retreat planned for March

NANTICOKE - The Diocese of Scranton Vocations Office is hosting its *Ezra 10:4 Retreat* for men discerning the priesthood March 6-7 at Holy Family Spiritual Renewal Center in Nanticoke.

This preached retreat, named after the Book of Ezra verse that says, “Rise, then, for this is your duty! We are with you, so have courage and act!” is led by Father Alex Roche, Diocesan Secretary for Clergy Formation, Vocation Director, and Director of Seminarians.

Men over 18 who are interested in discerning a vocation to priesthood are invited to attend.

The retreat will include Mass, Eucharistic Adoration, talks, group discussion, fellowship, rooming accommodations, along with breakfast and lunch on Saturday.

The retreat is free to attend. For more information, please email [vocations@dioceseofscranton.org](mailto:vocations@dioceseofscranton.org). The deadline to register is Friday, Feb. 27.

Diocese of Scranton  
**VOCATIONS**

# EZRA 10:4

## A RETREAT FOR MEN DISCERNING THE PRIESTHOOD

**Rev. Alex Roche**

**Holy Family Spiritual Renewal Center, Nanticoke**  
151 OLD NEWPORT ST, NANTICOKE, PA 18634

**Hosted by the Diocese of Scranton Vocations Office**

# MARCH 6 - 7, 2026

# Local faith leaders unite for Ecumenical Prayer Service for Christian Unity

SCRANTON – Christians from different churches came together on Thursday, Jan. 22, 2026, for a special Ecumenical Celebration of God’s Word at the Cathedral of Saint Peter.

The annual prayer service, which took place during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, invited Christians to pray that all followers of Jesus may grow closer together.

The Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, served as the Leader of Prayer. Christian leaders from several different traditions also took part, showing that while churches may have differences, they share the same faith in Jesus Christ.

Among those participating this year were Rev. Craig Miller, Bishop of the Upper Susquehanna Synod of the Lutheran Church in America; Most Rev. Dr. Anthony Mikovsky, Prime Bishop of the Polish National Catholic Church; Rev. Dr. Nora Foust, Regional Conference Minister of the United Church of Christ; Rev. Lory D. Ryan of the Presbyterian Church of Mountain Top; and Rev. Scott Sterowski, Diocesan Coordinator

for Ecumenism and Interreligious Affairs and pastor of Saint Carlo Acutis Parish.

The Ecumenical Prayer Service was based on worship materials prepared by the Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Church.

The gathering began with the Lord’s Prayer. Those present prayed together using the words Christians have shared for centuries: “Our Father, who art in heaven...”

An invocation followed, asking God to guide all Christians toward unity. The congregation then sang “Arise, Your Light Has Come.”

Throughout the service, prayers and readings focused on Jesus as the true Light of the world. While the parts of the prayer service may have been led by leaders from different churches, the gathering was meant to highlight that Christians all share one Lord.

In her homily, Rev. Dr. Foust reminded those gathered that unity is not something people create on their own. She said it is a gift from God.



**In celebration of the annual Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, an Ecumenical Celebration of God’s Word was held on Thursday, Jan. 22, 2026, at the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton. Participating in the Prayer Service were, from left: Rev. Craig A. Miller, Bishop, Upper Susquehanna Synod, Lutheran Church in America; Most Rev. Dr. Anthony Mikovsky, Prime Bishop, Polish National Catholic Church; Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton; Rev. Dr. Nora Foust, Regional Conference Minister, United Church of Christ, Rev. Lory D. Ryan, Pastor, Presbyterian Church of Mountain Top, Presbyterian Church in America, and Rev. Scott Sterowski, Diocesan Coordinator for Ecumenism and Interfaith Relations. (Photo/Mike Melisky)**

“We are not the origin of the light,” she said. “Any light we have or give begins with Christ.”

The theme for the 2026 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity was “There is One Body and One

Spirit, Just as You are Called to the One Hope of Your Calling” (Ephesians 4:4).

In her remarks, Rev. Dr. Foust focused on living with humility, patience, gentleness, and love –

the virtues named by Saint Paul in his Letter to the Ephesians.

“We are not here today because the Church has suddenly solved all its divisions. Indeed, we are living in a time of deep turmoil among Christian peoples,” she added. “We are here because, in Christ, our unity is deeper than our differences.”

The service continued with a responsorial psalm, a hymn, and the profession of the Nicene Creed – words that Christians across the world proclaim together: “Light from Light, true God from true God.”

The Ecumenical Prayer Service ended with closing prayers asking God to help Christians reflect Christ’s light in the world – especially in places of darkness and division.

“Shine the light of your righteousness and wisdom on all your creatures,” Bishop Bambera prayed. “Make us children of light and children of the day, so that we may always live our lives reverently, and become for all the world, worthy lampstands for your life-giving light.”

## All Christians must humbly, joyfully invite others to trust in God, pope says

ROME (CNS) - All Christians are called to invite everyone to trust in Christ, who enlightens and consoles, Pope Leo XIV said.

“Every authentic encounter with the Lord is, in fact, a transformative moment that grants a new vision and a new direction for the task of building up the Body of Christ,” the pope said as he closed the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity Jan. 25 during an ecumenical evening prayer service at Rome’s Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls.

Every year, the week “invites us to renew our commitment to this great mission, bearing in

mind that the divisions among us - while they do not prevent the light of Christ from shining - nonetheless make the face which must reflect it to the world less radiant,” he said.

As the service began, Orthodox Metropolitan Polykarpos of Italy and Anglican Bishop Anthony Ball, the archbishop of Canterbury’s representative to the Holy See, joined Pope Leo in descending the stairs under the main altar to pray before the relics of St. Paul.

Several leaders and representatives of numerous churches and Christian communions worldwide



**Pope Leo XIV, center, leads an ecumenical evening prayer service at Rome’s Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls Jan. 25, 2026, as he closed the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. (OSV News photo/Simone Risoluti, Vatican Media)**

attended the prayer service, including Armenian Orthodox Archbishop Khajag Barsamian,

the representative of the Armenian Apostolic Church to the Holy See.

The theme for the 2026 celebration of the week was inspired by St. Paul’s letter to the Ephesians (4:4), “There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling.”

“We are one! We already are! Let us recognize it, experience it and make it visible!” Pope Leo said in his homily.

The synodal journey of the Catholic Church, which is and must be ecumenical, he said, “is a path for growing together in mutual knowledge of our respective synodal structures and traditions.”

“As we look toward the 2,000th anniversary of the Passion, Death and Resurrection of the Lord Jesus in 2033, let us commit ourselves to further developing ecumenical synodal practices and to sharing with one another who we are, what we do and what we teach,” the pope said.

The mission of all Christians today is “to proclaim Christ and to invite everyone to place their trust in him,” he said. This shared task is to “say humbly and joyfully to the world: ‘Look to Christ! Come closer to him! Welcome his word that enlightens and consoles!’”

# Bishop Bambera: Christian unity is 'vital' and 'not an add-on'

(OSV News) - Amid the 2026 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity Jan. 18-25, OSV News spoke with Bishop Joseph C. Bambera, who serves as chair of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs and the Catholic co-chair of the Holy See's International Catholic-Pentecostal Dialogue committee, part of the Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity.

This interview has been edited for length and clarity.

**OSV News: How has the recent commemoration of the 1700th anniversary of the Council of Nicaea impacted this year's observance of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity?**

**Bishop Bambera:** This year obviously is a very significant year to mark Christian unity, particularly in light of the council's 1700th anniversary. It certainly is a very significant step forward (in Christian unity) this year.

Our Holy Father, Pope Leo XIV, has really established for his pontificate (a concern for Christian unity) in that incredible gesture of traveling to Nicaea to meet with Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, and to profess a desire, certainly between the Catholic community and the Orthodox community, to pursue - based on our shared appreciation for that creed - work for unity.

**OSV News: Where would you say we're currently at with Catholic-Orthodox efforts to reunite?**

**Bishop Bambera:** It's very difficult for me to actually spell out specifically where we stand in terms of that relationship. However, I think we see clearly a desire for us to start to move forward in the gesture of Pope Leo going to Nicaea.

And I think we see it also in the gestures of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, as the conference is now regularly inviting Orthodox observers to come to our plenary meeting in November, as we did this past year.

I also think (the move toward unity gains momentum) because of some of the upheaval that we see in our world

and in various countries in which there is tremendous concern for the well-being of people. I'm thinking of Ukraine in particular, and obviously the Middle East.

I think that the need is for us as Christians - Orthodox, Catholics, Protestants - to give whatever evidence we can of our desire to fulfill that prayer of Jesus (for unity, in John 17:1-26). If Christian leaders can't work together in harmony and peace, how would we ever expect there to be harmony and peace in our world?

**OSV News: How do you think increased Christian unity might help with interreligious dialogue?**

**Bishop Bambera:** Our ability to journey together as Christians can only impact our relationship with other religions in a positive way ... There's a wonderful quote attributed to Mahatma Gandhi (the Indian political activist and nonviolence advocate), who had a great, great appreciation as a Hindu for Christ and for the message of the Gospel. He was asked if he would ever consider becoming a Christian, and his response was that he would become a Christian when Christians began to live the example and teaching of their Master.

Doesn't that really speak very powerfully to the roots of this Week of Prayer for Christian Unity? We are responding to a prayer of Jesus. And so we have to get our house in order first.

I think for anybody to look at us in a way that sees our desire to journey together with them, be they Christians or of other religious traditions - before they're going to trust us, they have to see that we're willing to walk this talk.



Photos on this page are of participants in the Ecumenical Prayer Service on Jan. 22, 2026, at the Cathedral of Saint Peter. (Photos/Mike Melisky)

**OSV News: How can the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity speak to the divisions that exist among Catholics themselves in the U.S.?**

**Bishop Bambera:** We ought not set ecumenism to the side. It's vital to our understanding of the Second Vatican Council. You can't read the council without a lens towards Christian unity.

And it clearly, clearly is at the heart of the agenda of Pope Leo XIV, as it was with Pope Francis and recent pontiffs.

In the heart of that is this incredible prayer of Jesus (Jn 17:1-26) that establishes this invitation to all of us to work for unity. It's not an add-on.

**OSV News: The work of Christian unity seems to take place at two levels-expert theological dialogue, and the everyday encounters of fellow Christians with one another. How do these two levels intersect and interact?**

**Bishop Bambera:** I think the easiest way to respond to that is to say it really goes back to Pope Francis, who put it in his own style very, very well (during ecumenical vespers for the close of the 2024 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity). He said that if we are focused on theological unity, and if we are looking at addressing all of the various theological factors that have led up to divisions within the churches, repairing those breaks in unity will take centuries. It took a long time for them to surface. It's going to take a long time for them to be mended.

But there's also, he said, a unity of life and love, whereby all of us, not just theologians, but more particularly the people in our pews - who are the visible presence and witness to faith and life and indeed unity - are going to embrace it much, much more readily and deeply and authentically. I can see that very, very well in my own life as a priest over the last 43 years in ordained ministry.

At times, from a



theological perspective, perhaps we've lost our enthusiasm at times for unity. I think on the heels of the Council, many individuals thought that we would be able to move forward very quickly in terms of establishing unity. That's not necessarily been the case.

But what I think you start to see on a very grassroots level is people walking together as brothers and sisters, almost to the point of not even recognizing our differences.

**OSV News: Do you think one obstacle to Christian unity is a fear that oneness will mean compromising the tenets of a given Christian denomination, including Catholicism?**

**Bishop Bambera:** I think so often people worry that we're going to give away the store to simply achieve this level of unity that we commit ourselves to. And I think it's so important that we don't impose a false sense of unity.

The true and most authentic way for us to journey together as brothers and sisters is never to diminish who we are, and never to set up some false sense of unity that we haven't yet established. It's to acknowledge our differences.

It's to recognize there's a phenomenon called "receptive ecumenism," whereby we look at really what is best in the other, and it's not so much what we can give to you, but what we can learn from you and make a part of our lives.

We acknowledge our differences, we respect them, and we learn from one another ways in which we can grow together - recognizing that that full unity may be far, far in the future, but also recognizing that Jesus' prayer is a prayer that is before us today, and whatever way we can walk together as brothers and sisters is what we're called to do.

## Pocono parish youth group caps off another bright showing at annual March for Life in Washington

WASHINGTON — Tens of thousands of pro-life advocates gathered for the 53rd annual March for Life — united around the theme “Life is a Gift” — on Jan. 23 in Washington, D.C.

For the many Catholics who participated, the March was a pilgrimage, involving traveling long hours to the nation’s capital while praying together, and feeling invigorated by the sight of large, joyful crowds in their efforts to protect unborn life.

Among them were 14 teenage students in grades 8-12 from the Youth Group of Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish in Brodheadsville, who represented their home Diocese of Scranton with proud punctuation.

Led by their always-young-at-heart pastor, Father Bob Simon, and accompanied by four chaperones — including Youth Ministry director Jill Salvi and Religious Education & Faith Formation director Linda Carbone — the young participants from the Poconos joined the mass of peaceful marchers on their annual trek from the National Mall, up Constitution Avenue, to the U.S. Capitol and eventually to their

final destination, the U.S. Supreme Court.

Proudly donning their signature bright orange ski caps, the Brodheadsville brigade marched with great exuberance — and some may say, “fluorescence” — in defense of the unborn and the sanctity of human life at all stages.

Leading up to the annual March the day before, the local contingent took part in a “prep & pep” gathering — dubbed “Life is VERY Good” — hosted by the nearby Diocese of Arlington, Va., with events that included an Evening of Prayer, Morning Rally and Mass.

“Our young people inspired me with their determination to give witness publicly to their commitment to respect life,” Father Simon remarked. “They were all in with Eucharistic Adoration, Mass, and the March.”

All of this year’s “March for Lifers” were blessed and inspired by a personal message from Pope Leo XIV, an early March for Life participant, who imparted his blessing and assured them “of my spiritual closeness as you gather for this eloquent public witness.”



Serving as chaperones for the Our Lady Queen of Peace Youth Group pilgrimage to this year’s March for Life in the nation’s capital were, pictured from left: Linda Carbone, Terry Talbott, Maria Correia, Jill Salvi and Christine Casale.



Young pilgrims from Our Lady Queen of Peace Youth Group, Brodheadsville, who participated in the 2026 March for Life in Washington with their pastor, Father Bob Simon, and adult chaperones included: Brian Correia, Anthony Salvi, Billy Corbo, Matthew Demaio, Joey Demaio, Brooke Landis, Grace Blundetto, Emily Smith, Sara Correia, Lily Blundetto, Audrey Landis, Brianna Tilton, Lily Tilton and Katie Tilton.

“Organizing this pilgrimage for our teens was truly a labor of love,” Salvi said. “To accompany our teens and watch them be inspired and understand the importance of the life movement was extremely important.”

The youth minister continued by praising the support of parishioners who once attended the March but could no longer do so. “The Life movement continues to span generations,” she proudly stated.

Noting that in regard to the abortion issue, today’s culture is influenced by the rich, famous and powerful, Carbone remarked, “Do not believe for one moment that the presence of our youth was anything less than impactful, influential, or inspiring. I’m honored to march with our youth and grateful for their sacrifices to defend life.”

Maria Correia, one of the trip’s chaperones, remarked, “Technology has changed how we live and has made us susceptible to so many different outside influences,” often leading to self-reliance and forgetting to turn to God for guidance. “It is imperative that we remind our youth that ‘life is very good’ and ‘life is a gift,’” she said.

Ironically, the young marchers from Our Lady Queen of Peace, who have only known abortion to be somehow “legal” and protected by law, are spearheading the new pro-life generation — and they have something to say.

For Emily Smith, Lily Blundetto and Sara Correia, the March for Life experience proved truly inspiring, as they found themselves surrounded by so many like-minded peers who are also

proudly pro-life.

“It was beautiful when the entire stadium of teenagers became silent for adoration,” Sara said. “I was also very inspired by all of the speakers that shared their stories. Life is very good!”

Fellow student Audrey Landis noted she was inspired to march for “what you believe in and what you think is right...how life is a miracle, and how all life matters.”

“Exhilarating!” was how Brian Correia described his participation in the 2026 March for Life. “I could feel the support for life in the air...I could practically taste it.”

“The March was an amazing experience that showed me how much all life matters,” Brooke Landis shared. “When people come together to show that, something amazing can happen.”



Matthew & Joey Demaio

# Cathedral of Saint Peter to host Saint Patrick's Parade Day Mass March 14

SCRANTON – The annual Saint Patrick's Parade Day Mass will be celebrated at 10 a.m. on Saturday, March 14, at the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton.

All are welcome to attend.

The liturgy is traditionally held in conjunction with the city of Scranton's annual Saint Patrick's Day Parade. Following the Mass, the Saint Patrick's Parade is expected to take to the streets of the Electric City beginning at 11:45 a.m.

The Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, will serve as principal celebrant for the Mass. Various priests from the Diocese of Scranton are expected to concelebrate.

The Mass will be broadcast live on CTV: Catholic Television of the Diocese of Scranton due to the generosity of the Society of Irish Women.

It will also be livestream on the Diocese of Scranton YouTube channel and website. Links to view the Mass will also be shared on all of the Diocese of Scranton social media platforms.

The Mass will be rebroadcast several times the following week, including Tuesday, March 17 and Wednesday, March 18.



**Dignitaries and marching bands gather outside the Cathedral of Saint Peter following Mass in 2025 for the start of Scranton's Saint Patrick's Day Parade.**

Among the other local organizations that participate in the annual Saint Patrick's Parade Day Mass are the Ancient Order of Hibernians, Friendly Sons of Saint Patrick, Irish American Men's Association, Irish Cultural Society, Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians and the Saint Patrick's Parade Association of Lackawanna County.

## APPOINTMENTS

His Excellency, Bishop Joseph C. Bambera, announces the following appointments, effective as follows:

### PAROCHIAL VICARS

**Reverend Stephen Kwasi Brenyah**, from Parochial Vicar, Our Lady of the Rosary Parish, Carbondale, to ministry, Diocese of Sunyani, Ghana, effective December 27, 2025.

**Reverend Paul Kwadwo Yeboah**, from Parochial Vicar, Saint Faustina Kowalska Parish, Nanticoke, and Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish, Hunlock Creek, to ministry, Diocese of Sunyani, Ghana, effective December 27, 2025.

**Reverend Boniface Ameyaw**, from ministry, Diocese of Sunyani, Ghana, to Parochial Vicar, Our Lady of the Rosary Parish, Carbondale, effective January 20, 2026.

**Reverend Michael Osei-Boateng**, from ministry, Diocese of Sunyani, Ghana, to Parochial Vicar *pro tem*, Saint Thomas More Parish, Lake Ariel, effective January 20, 2026.



## BISHOP BAMBERA'S SCHEDULE

- February 19** - Lenten Holy Hour for the Sayre Deanery  
Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish, Wyalusing, 7 p.m.
- February 22** - Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion  
Cathedral of Saint Peter, Scranton, 2:30 p.m.
- February 23** - Lenten Day of Reflection for Clergy  
Diocesan Pastoral Center, Scranton, Noon
- February 24** - School Mass for Wyoming Area Catholic School  
Exeter, 9:00 a.m.
- February 24** - Lenten Holy Hour for the Stroudsburg Deanery  
Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish, Brodheadsville, 7 p.m.
- February 25** - Lenten Holy Hour for the Williamsport Deanery  
Saint Ann Parish, Williamsport, 7:00 p.m.
- February 26** - Lenten Holy Hour for the Scranton Deanery  
Divine Mercy Parish, Scranton, 7:00 p.m.
- March 1** - Bishop's Youth Award Mass for Southern Region  
Cathedral of Saint Peter, Scranton, 2:30 p.m.
- March 2** - Read Across America  
Saint Clare School Primary Campus, Scranton, 1:30 p.m.
- March 2** - Lenten Holy Hour for the Honesdale Deanery  
Saint Thomas More Parish, Lake Ariel, 7:00 p.m.
- March 3** - Lenten Holy Hour for the Dunmore Deanery  
Saint Carlo Acutis Parish, Olyphant, 7:00 p.m.
- March 4** - School Mass for La Salle Academy  
Jessup, 9:00 a.m.
- March 5** - School Mass for Our Lady of Peace School  
Clarks Green, 9:00 a.m.
- March 5** - Lenten Holy Hour for the Hazleton Deanery  
Saint John Bosco Parish, Conyngham, 7:00 p.m.
- March 8-11** - USCCB Administrative Committee Meeting  
Washington, D.C.
- March 12** - Lenten Holy Hour for the Pittston Deanery  
Nativity of Our Lord Parish, Duryea, 7:00 p.m.
- March 13** - Friendly Son's of Saint Patrick Dinner  
Scranton, 6:00 p.m.
- March 14** - Saint Patrick's Parade Day Mass  
Cathedral of Saint Peter, Scranton, 10:00 a.m.
- March 15** - Bishop's Youth Award Mass for Northern Region  
Cathedral of Saint Peter, Scranton, 2:30 p.m.
- March 16** - Lenten Holy Hour for the Kingston Deanery  
Saint Therese Parish, Shavertown, 7:00 p.m.
- March 17** - School Mass for Saint Mary of Mount Carmel School  
Dunmore, 9:00 a.m.
- March 18** - School Mass for Saint Nicholas/Saint Mary School  
Wilkes-Barre, 9:00 a.m.
- March 19** - Saint Joseph Feast Day Mass  
Oblates of Saint Joseph, Laflin, Noon
- March 19** - Lenten Holy Hour for the Clarks Summit Deanery  
Saint John Vianney Parish, Montdale, 7:00 p.m.

## Cathedral becomes place of grace and consolation for the sick



**Bishop Joseph C. Bambera anoints the forehead of a woman during the World Day of the Sick Mass at the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton Feb. 11, 2026. (Photo/Mike Melisky)**

SCRANTON — Some came in wheelchairs. Family members or caregivers assisted others. But they all approached the sanctuary with hands open, ready to receive a blessing.

On Wednesday, Feb. 11, 2026, dozens of faithful received the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick during the Diocese of Scranton's annual World Day of the Sick Mass at the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton.

The Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, served as principal celebrant and homilist. He called the Mass a special and sacred moment for the Church.

"It's beautiful to see so many of you gathered for this annual celebration," Bishop Bambera his homily by saying.

Celebrated each year on the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, the World Day of the Sick invites Catholics to pray in a special way for those who are ill, elderly, or suffering, while also honoring caregivers and healthcare professionals who accompany them with compassion.

The World Day of the Sick was established in 1992 by Saint John Paul II as a moment of prayer and spiritual closeness for the entire Church.

For 2026, Pope Leo XIV chose the theme: "The Compassion of the Samaritan: Loving by Bearing the Pain of the Other."

Reflecting on that theme, Bishop Bambera pointed to the familiar Gospel story of the Good Samaritan.

"Without even thinking about it, he makes a difference," Bishop Bambera said of the Samaritan who stops to care for an injured stranger. "He makes the world more fraternal. He participates in building a community that we know as the Body of Christ."

The Bishop reminded the faithful that love cannot remain an abstract idea.

"Love can't just be spoken about," he said. "It needs concrete gestures of closeness, through which we enter into the suffering of others — those who are ill, and especially those who experience poverty, isolation, grief, loss and loneliness."

During his homily, the Bishop spoke about celebrating Christmas Mass each year at the Gino Merli Veterans Center in Scranton — a simple gathering in a community room.

"For all that is so obviously missing in that gathering, it is a sacred moment, because, like here, Jesus is present," the Bishop remarked. "He's present in the Eucharist, he's present in the Scriptures that are proclaimed, but he is so very present in family members, volunteers, staff and most especially the residents that make their way to Christmas morning Mass."

That same sacred presence filled the Cathedral as the faithful came forward for anointing.

*Continued on Page 23*

## Diocesan community gathers to celebrate Persons with Disabilities



**Members of the Order of Alhambra, Alamar Caravan #4, prepare for the procession of the gifts during the Mass for Persons with Disabilities Feb. 8, 2026. (Photo/Mike Melisky)**

SCRANTON — Surrounded by family members and caregivers, individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities were honored in a special way on Feb. 8, 2026, during the Diocese of Scranton's annual Mass for Persons with Disabilities at the Cathedral of Saint Peter.

Reflecting on Jesus' call to be the "salt of the earth" and "light of the world" in the Gospel for the Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time, the Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, reminded those gathered that the true value of salt and light is realized only when they are shared.

"Salt and light, of themselves, are not good for very much," Bishop Bambera said. "Their value is realized only when they interact with other things."

In the same way, the Bishop explained, disciples of Christ are called to live with humility and generosity — drawing out goodness in others and illuminating the presence of God in the world.

Bishop Bambera noted that those living with disabilities often offer a powerful witness to that message.

"More than you realize, my good friends, you teach us what it means to be 'salt and light' for our world," Bishop Bambera stated. "You illuminate our world and our hearts in such ways that even the most cynical among us can see the presence of God in the simplest gestures and in the most unexpected places. Often with few words and with your infectious

smiles, you teach us lessons of gratitude for the simplest of blessings."

The liturgy itself reflected the spirit of inclusion the Mass seeks to foster each year.

Sister Mary Alice Jacquinot, IHM, President and CEO of Saint Joseph's Center, served as one of the lectors. She was joined by Gerard Wazeter of Saint Frances X. Cabrini Parish in Carverton, who has been privileged to proclaim the Word of God at the annual Mass for several years.

Members of the Order of Alhambra, Alamar Caravan #4, served as gift bearers.

"For so many years, the Bishop has offered this liturgy to highlight the idea of inclusion — involving people in their community — to be able to celebrate and honor people with disabilities and to recognize their unique gifts," Sister Mary Alice said following the Mass. "We're creating a welcoming community."

She noted that the residents living and served through Saint Joseph's Center demonstrate inspiring values each day.

"They teach us courage, perseverance, acceptance, trust," she said. "But also, they bring a great spirit of gratitude, humility, and unconditional love. I think those are all values that we can embrace and learn."

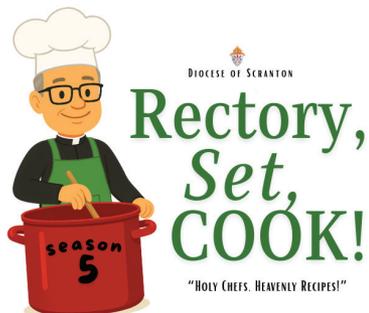
Ada Magni, Supreme Director of Region II of the Order of the Alhambra, said her organization is grateful to participate in the annual celebration.

*Continued on Page 23*



## 2026 Pastor Chefs & Recipes

- Msgr. John Bendik & Fr. Phil Sladicka** - Monsignor's Famous Carbonara & Fr. Phil's Zucchini Quiche  
**Fr. Michael Boris** – Lemon Ricotta Pasta with Pan-Seared Chicken  
**Fr. Stephen Bosomafi** – Ghanaian Baked Chicken Legs with Jollof Rice  
**Fr. Michael Bryant** – White Chili  
**Fr. Brian J.W. Clarke** – Cabbage Pie  
**Fr. Mark DeCelles** – Hungarian Mushroom Paprikash Stew  
**Fr. Michael Drevitch** – Traditional Chili  
**Fr. Cyril Edwards** – Foolproof Egg and Cheese Breakfast Sandwich  
**Fr. Joseph Elston** – The Refinery's Truffle Caramelized Pasta  
**Fr. Anthony Generose & Fr. Shawn Simchock** – Italian Manicotti  
**Fr. Ryan Glenn, Fr. Michael Amo Gyau & Seminarian Faustinus Ugo**– Ghanaian Yam with Egg Sauce  
**Fr. Gerald Gurka** – Banoffee Pie  
**Fr. Michael Kloton** – Quick and Slow BBQ Ribs  
**Fr. Jose Kuriappilly & Fr. Dan Toomey** - Kerala-Style Hot and Spicy Venison With Yucca  
**Fr. Arun Lakra & Fr. Sudhir Toppo** – Chili Chicken with Fried Rice  
**Fr. Glenn McCreary & Fr. Dias Valiamarathungal** – Indian-Style Lamb Stew w/ Irish Soda Bread  
**Fr. Kevin Miller, Fr. Neftali Feliz Sena & Fr. Benito Hierro Aquino** – Shrimp Scampi and Mofongo  
**Fr. James Paisley** – Fr. Paisley's Favorite Night Time Snacks  
**Fr. Greg Reichlen** – Rise and Shine Blueberry Muffins  
**Fr. Gus Ricciardi** – Fr. Gus's Signature Chili  
**Fr. Alex Roche** – Polenta Parmigiana with Porcini Mushrooms  
**Fr. Brogan Ryan** – Rotisserie Chicken Noodle Soup  
**Fr. Jeffrey Tudgay** - Panko-Crusted Salmon with Roasted Butternut Squash and Salad  
**Fr. Brian Van Fossen** – Rosa Citrica Beer  
**Seminarians Antonio Ingargiola, Liam Barry & Peter Stec** – The Seminarian Sampler



# Voting is now underway!

Vote for your favorite pastor chef recipe or video to support anti-hunger and anti-homeless initiatives of Catholic Social Services. To view all videos and vote, visit [dioceseofscranton.org](http://dioceseofscranton.org) or scan the QR code below:



# Saint John Neumann's first MLK Day of Service reflects Church's mission

WILLIAMSPORT - Saint John Neumann Regional Academy students, faculty, and administrators celebrated Martin Luther King Jr. Day with an in-person learning day on Jan. 19, 2026, filled with faith, service, and fun.

"It's a basic tenet of Christianity - and a deep part of Catholicism - that we're called to meet Christ in the hungry, the thirsty, the homeless and the stranger," Father Glenn McCreary, pastor of Saint Boniface and Saint Ann Parishes, said. "Our day of service reflected MLK's life mission as well as the Church's mission to the world."

This was the first year Saint John Neumann Regional Academy held a student school day on MLK Day since it became a national holiday.

"This has been a goal of mine for many years. It is important that students learn about and share their time and talents with others on this day," explained Principal Alisia McNamee. "Martin Luther King Day is more than a celebration of his importance to civil rights and peaceful protest. We wanted our students to show how important MLK's message about service resonates throughout our lives and within our Catholic beliefs."

Dr. Chad Greevy, Assistant Principal and Curriculum Director added, "We had over 200



**Saint John Neumann Regional Academy primary students make cards for local heroes as part of a MLK Day of Service on Jan. 19, 2026.**

students participating in morning Mass, and every SJNRA student provided service at our local food bank; provided the collection of products, assimilation, and distribution of hygiene-care packages to local soup kitchens; helped with projects around Saint Boniface Parish; or wrote thank you cards to community service heroes for our Catholic Schools Week project."

## CATHOLIC FIRST

Students gathered before the normal start time of their school day, to join Saint Boniface parishioners for daily Mass followed by a message from Williamsport Mayor Derek Slaughter.

The 8:00 a.m. Mass was attended by parishioners, SJNRA

parents and family members, community leaders, and SJNRA PreK-3 through Grade 12 students.

During his homily, Father McCreary spoke about the importance of Dr. King's message of equality and service and how it helped to shape our nation's pathway.

However, he also explained how King and others like him "stood on the shoulders of others before him ... including many black Catholic saints."

Father McCreary referenced saints like St. Martin de Porres, St. Josephine Bakhita, St. Augustine of Hippo, and St. Benedict the Moor. He also spoke about six African Americans who are on the path to sainthood, including Servant of God Julia Greeley and Venerable Mother Henriette Delille.

"Thea Bowman, as an educator and musician, used her voice to highlight the beauty of African American church music and to speak about justice to the American Bishops," Father McCreary said.

Following Mass, Mayor Slaughter, spoke to those in attendance about the needs of the community and the necessity for giving back.

Slaughter shared how volunteerism can be impactful



**Students in third through fifth grade assembled thousands of Easter eggs as part of their MLK Day service project.**

to a community and emphasized how St. John Neumann's Day-of-Service "is a day we serve those less fortunate than us."

## HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS VOLUNTEER LOCALLY

Following Mass, students in grades 9-12 headed to the Central Pennsylvania Food Bank to begin their service to the community.

However, students and teachers were not the only ones sacrificing their time and day off to work at the food bank.

Employee Ryan Watts, Volunteer Projects Coordinator, was the lone employee that morning. He came in on his "day off" to serve alongside the Neumann High School students and faculty. Watts shared that "roughly 430 groups a year volunteer" at the food bank.

"The kids did great. I feel that it's important to encourage the younger generations to do good things for their community," Watts said.

Watts related that this was the first time a group had come in on MLK Day to volunteer, and he has already invited Saint John Neumann back for its Day-

of-Service on the same holiday next year.

"Saint John Neumann tries to volunteer there three or four times a year with groups of students. I think today changed the perception for some of our kids. A few were hesitant to attend not knowing what to expect, but after an hour and a half and four pallets of packed food boxes for veterans later, we showed Neumann's passion for care and our energy to help others," Dr. Greevy shared.

## MIDDLE SCHOOL INVITES SPEAKER, SERVES OTHERS

Middle School students began their morning of service with an interactive lecture and applied activity with Melodie Shaw.

Shaw, the Former Executive Director of the Campbell Street Family & Youth Center at the Williamsport Community Center from 2006-2010, spoke about Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s sacrifice for today's society and how his actions and words helped to inspire students and adults alike.

Jennifer McPherson, Director of Guidance, related that Shaw shared with students about "how to respond to adversity peacefully."

She cited the March for Civil Rights that MLK led as well as other events.

"Martin Luther King sacrificed himself for people of all ages, cultures, and genders," eighth grader Quillen McPherson said.

Quillen made the connection that "Jesus and even some Catholic saints" made similar sacrifices.



**The MLK Day of Service for students, faculty and administrators began with the celebration of Mass at Saint Boniface Parish.**

*Continued on Page 17*

# Saint Agnes School sock collection delivers comfort and warmth

TOWANDA – Across the Diocese of Scranton, Catholic Schools Week looked a little different this year.

A big snowstorm in late January, icy roads, and frigid temperatures forced delays, closures, and schedule changes in many places, stretching what is traditionally a single week of celebration into something longer and more flexible in many communities.

Yet even as calendars shifted, the foundation behind Catholic Schools Week remained the same: faith, learning, and service to others.

Throughout the 19 Catholic schools in the Diocese of Scranton students participated in outreach projects that extended beyond school walls and into the wider community.

One such example came from Saint Agnes Elementary School in Towanda, where students collected socks to benefit the local Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post. The socks will be distributed to men, women, and children throughout the local area and the state – providing warmth and comfort during the cold winter months.

The service project was organized by the school's 5th Grade Kindness Club, which took responsibility for collecting and counting donations from every grade level. From Pre-K 3 through sixth grade, students were encouraged to bring in socks, turning a friendly competition into a shared mission.

"We were bringing socks and we would count them up and give them to people who need them," fifth grader Killian Smith said.



**Fifth grade students from Saint Agnes School in Towanda pose with nearly 400 pairs of socks that they collected for the local VFW during Catholic Schools Week 2026.**

When asked how it felt knowing the socks were going to the VFW, Smith's answer was simple and sincere: "Good."

His classmate, Will Eberlin, was struck by the number of

donations. "There were a lot of socks," he said. "It will help a lot of people, and it will keep people warm."

In the end more than 360

pairs of socks were collected, with second graders leading the way by donating 96 pairs.

Several students spoke about how meaningful it was to help others during a week already filled with celebration.

"Catholic Schools Week is really fun because you get to play games and think of the people you're giving to," fifth grader Sofia Lrozso stated.

For Max Bride, the combination of learning, fun, and service is what makes Catholic Schools Week special.

"I think it's nice to help people," Bride said.

Through projects like the sock collection, students at Saint Agnes School learned to live the Gospel in tangible ways and that even small acts of kindness can make a meaningful difference.

# Saint John Neumann Academy puts faith into action on MLK Day

*Continued from Page 16*

"We heard that we have to learn about our ancestors' mistakes. Without learning from each other, we will make the same mistakes. Doing what people like MLK did helps us understand their sacrifices better," the Neumann middle schooler explained.

Ann Wilson, Saint John Neumann High School Secretary and 1983 Neumann alumna commented, "From my observation, even the hardest to engage students were one hundred percent on board with the projects they were assigned, and I witnessed some great camaraderie in the hallways between High School and Junior High students.

## GRADES 3-5 ASSIST WITH ST. BONIFACE PROJECTS

The upper elementary students wrote their own prayers for their Peace Tree and helped

Father McCreary organize, clean, and assemble thousands of plastic Easter eggs used for parish and community Easter egg hunts.

"Our students took on a bigger task than expected putting together Easter eggs for Saint Boniface and helped in organizing areas of the church campus," Arianna Scutt, fourth grade teacher, said.

Fifth graders studied the "I Have a Dream" speech and discussed its importance.

They also learned that Dr. King spoke locally at Lycoming College, adjacent to the Saint Boniface campus, in April 1958.

"Our students did multiple activities during the week. We were busy, but it was good busy. We helped the church, learned about Dr. King's message, and made connections between his message of service and how simple services can make big impacts," added third grade teacher Sara Meixel.



**Following Mass on Jan. 19, Williamsport Mayor Derek Slaughter spoke to students about the importance of volunteering.**

## YOUNGEST STUDENTS WRITE LETTERS TO HEROES

SJNRA Primary students also discussed the legacy of MLK Jr. and his teachings. Teachers developed a curriculum that taught students that a "legacy" is the impression of what you or someone else leaves behind.

"It's what people will

remember you for. We had the honor of bringing action to this legacy, which made them very excited, by making cards for our local heroes. This paired with the lesson they had on community helpers," Shayna McNamee, Pre-K 3 teacher, explained. "We centered our learning around MLK's quote that 'Everybody can be great, because everybody can serve.'"

She added, "Jesus came up multiple times in our conversations. When learning about MLK and the kindness he shared, a Pre-K student even said, 'like Jesus.' It was perfect."

The letters, cards and pictures were delivered along with 'Thank You Baskets' during Catholic Schools Week to local fire companies, police departments, nurses, and the local armory. Provisions for the baskets were donated by SJNRA families as part of MLK Day and Catholic School Week.

"I witnessed some great camaraderie in the hallways. I feel that this day was completely beneficial to our students allowing them to learn in a hands-on way, what service to your community can be," Wilson said. "We showed our students many different ways to serve that day, and our Neumann Knights approached all tasks with greatness. I believe that our Academy had another moment of excellence that day. May there be many more!"

For more information about Saint John Neumann Regional Academy or to inquire about Admissions and Enrollment contact: [admissions@sjnra.org](mailto:admissions@sjnra.org) or call (570) 323-9953.

For more information about the Central Pennsylvania Food Bank, located at 3301 Yahoo Drive, Williamsport, call (570) 321-8023, or to contact Volunteer Projects Coordinator Ryan Watts, call (570) 980-9079 or email him at [rwatts@centralpafoodbank.org](mailto:rwatts@centralpafoodbank.org).

*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.*



Congratulations to the varsity and junior varsity cheerleaders at **Saint Clare/Saint Paul School in Scranton** for their performance at the Holy Redeemer Cheer Competition. The Crusaders took home first place in varsity and second place in junior varsity last weekend.



Student council officers at **Notre Dame Jr./Sr. High School in East Stroudsburg** serve up sweet treats to their classmates at the Catholic Schools Week ice cream sundae bar.



Congratulations to Chloe Coslett, an eighth grader at **Our Lady of Peace School in Clarks Green**, for scoring 1,000 points as a Lady Falcon!



Second grade students from **Saint Agnes School in Towanda** learn about the types of clouds and their water cycle.



Students from Mrs. McDermott's fourth grade homeroom at **Saint Nicholas/Saint Mary School in Wilkes-Barre** show their school spirit dressing up for "decades day" as part of Catholic Schools Week.

**Coming in March...**

Celebrating the recent success of our *Living the STREAM* competition. More than \$116,000 was raised from 800 donors!



During Catholic Schools Week, students from **All Saints Academy in Scranton** played a game against the Learning Campus from the NEIU. Students from all grades also made signs to cheer on their teams.



First grade students at **Saint Mary of Mount Carmel School in Dunmore** celebrated the 100th day of school by building a large tower with 100 cups.



The winners of the 'Religion Bee' at Notre Dame Elementary School in East Stroudsburg pose with their medals.



Seniors at Saint John Neumann Jr./Sr. High School in Williamsport give a presentation to other students in the school gym.



Kindergarteners at Epiphany School in Sayre celebrated the 100th day of school by dressing as 100 year olds and completing 100 themed challenges.



Students from Saint John Neumann Elementary School in Williamsport participate in the Blessing of the Throats for the Feast of Saint Blaise.



Students at La Salle Academy in Jessup are loving their newly refinished gym floor.



Students from Holy Rosary School in Duryea recently sponsored a bake sale with the proceeds benefitting the Bernardine Sisters.



Students from Wyoming Area Catholic School in Exeter were recently recognized for earning scholarships to Holy Redeemer High School based on their high school placement test scores. Scholarship recipients pictured include: Matthew Shemo, Bridget DePhillips, Frank Pacelli, Eugene Pisano, Tyler Vecchi and Kelsey Barrett. Scholarship recipients not pictured are: Jorja Lamoreux, Lucianna Dunn and Nathan Marsh.



Students from Holy Cross High School in Dunmore gathered on Feb. 11 with several Diocesan priests for a working lunch. Students met with area pastors to discuss ways of forging deeper connections between our student body and their parish communities.

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## Love in full 'swing' during National Marriage Week

SCRANTON – Music and the shuffling sounds of dancing feet filled the Diocesan Pastoral Center on Saturday, Feb. 7, 2026, as more than 100 people came together for the Diocese of Scranton's first-ever Swing

Dance celebrating National Marriage Week.

The evening began with dance instruction from local instructors Philip Spinka and Jill Wetzel, followed by an open dance featuring the 17-piece Swing Fever Dance Band, a Big Band recreating the swing sounds of the 1930s and 1940s.

For many couples that participated, it was a chance to relax and simply enjoy the company of their spouse.

"It is a hobby of ours," Marie Sica of Saint Michael Parish in Scranton said. "It's nice to be able to have a live band and have good company and just be together."

Her husband, Robert Sica, echoed her enthusiasm.

"It was a great opportunity to get out with my wife. We have 11



More than 100 people participated in the Diocese of Scranton's inaugural 'Swing Dance' to celebrate National Marriage Week on Saturday, Feb. 7, 2026, at the Diocesan Pastoral Center in Scranton. (Photo/Dan Piazza)

children at home so it's difficult to find a good value to be able to have fun and just connect with one another," he said. "The band was phenomenal. We were really excited about being able to dance in front of a live band. Just the way they play with changing the tempo, makes it exciting to try other dance moves."

The Huffmans, who belong to a parish in Scranton, were also happy they attended.

"We had a great time," Rebecca Huffman said. "I really enjoyed the lessons. The band was fantastic and it was nice that it was a BYO (Bring Your Own) event, so it kept the cost down."

Rebecca is hoping another Swing Dance night is held soon.

"My husband and I learned some (new moves), and we have to keep practicing, and hopefully the Diocese will do this again," she added.

Philip Huffman said the Swing Dance was a great opportunity to get out as a couple.

"I'm learning to dance. It's new to me," he joked. "It's good

exercise. It's great to actually get out of the house when it's zero degrees out."

Bridget Maille, Program Coordinator for Family Life in the Diocese of Scranton Office for Parish Life, organized the event.

"The Swing Dance came out of a hope and a dream from a personal passion of mine that I hoped would catch fire – and it has," Maille said. "It is one of my favorite things to do ... What is beautiful about it is it brings you out of your comfort zone, out of your shell, and you get to meet new people. It's a wholesome activity – where you learn new talents and skills and you get to do something very special with the people you love."

Couples of all ages attended the Swing Dance, and some even brought friends or singles looking to meet someone new.

Maille said the event was meant to be a fun way for couples to keep their marriage alive and celebrate National Marriage Week (Feb. 7-14) in a fun and uplifting way.

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## YOU Can Feed and Clothe People In Need!

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](http://stfranciskitchen.org), [facebook.com/stfranciskitchen](https://www.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 29, 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.



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Click on the MEDIA tab on the Diocese of Scranton website ([dioceseofscranton.org](http://dioceseofscranton.org))

# Faith Moves Mountains: Young adults gather for prayer at ski resort

SCRANTON — When Camilla Edwards moved to northeastern Pennsylvania from Michigan a little more than four months ago, she knew that she wanted to find a faith community she could call home.

“I’ve been trying different churches here and there,” she said. “My huge goal has been to get involved in a faith community and just start building a network of like-minded, Catholic people to surround myself with.”

That search led her, on a cold January afternoon, to the slopes of Montage Mountain — and to an event aptly named “Faith Moves Mountains.”

On Saturday, Jan. 17, 2026, young adults from across the Diocese of Scranton were invited to come together at Montage Mountain for a ski-in, ski-out Bible study and fellowship experience organized by the Diocesan Office for Parish Life.

For Edwards, the event offered something she had been hoping for since her move.

“How do we find like-minded people? How do we start those connections?” she asked. “You don’t wear a badge on your forehead that says ‘Catholic.’ This is the perfect opportunity

— I just know that everyone here is on the same page as me and it was a fun activity. I’m really glad I came.”

The winter meet-up was coordinated by Bridget Maille, Program Coordinator for Family Life in the Diocesan Office for Parish Life. Maille said the event was designed to take faith beyond church walls and into everyday life.

“Last year, our winter meet-up was a New Year’s retreat. But this year, we decided to take our faith out into the world,” Maille explained.

The theme, “Faith Moves Mountains,” was inspired by Christ’s teaching that faith the size of a mustard seed can move mountains.

“As young adults, it gives us a chance to realize that we’re not alone in our faith and that faith doesn’t just happen on Sundays,” Maille added. “By establishing relationships, we build community and deepen our faith.”

Throughout the afternoon, participants prayed the Rosary, took part in a Bible study, and shared togetherness in an informal, welcoming way over a warm fire pit.

Deacon Michaelangelo

Colaneri, who serves the Cathedral of Saint Peter and Immaculate Conception Parish in Scranton, took part in the gathering and said it embodied the Church’s call to bring Christ into the world.

“It gives us a chance to bring Christ outside of our Cathedrals and churches,” he said. “Christ doesn’t belong just in the church—we are the Church. As we come out and are with one another and

enjoy each other’s fellowship, you start to see the true idea that Christ had for His Church start to blossom and flourish.”

He noted the simplicity of the afternoon is what made it enjoyable.

“We all sat around a fire. It is something so basic, so easy, so simple, but the experiences and sharing that came from it, you could feel Christ in our midst,” Deacon Colaneri added.

After collecting phone numbers for all the people in attendance, with the plan to start a group text message to continue sharing their interests and faith, Edwards said the Scranton area is starting to feel a little more like home.

“I’m very grateful for the experience and I’m looking forward to the next event,” she said.



Young adults from the Diocese of Scranton gathered at the Montage Mountain Ski Resort in Scranton Jan. 17, 2026, to enjoy fellowship and participate in bible study. (Photo/Dan Piazza)

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## Archbishop Fulton Sheen's beatification moves ahead after six-year pause

(OSV News) - Venerable Fulton J. Sheen will soon be beatified, now that the Vatican has given the green light, the Diocese of Peoria, Illinois, announced Feb. 9. No date or location for the beatification was given.

The announcement comes six years after the Holy See had

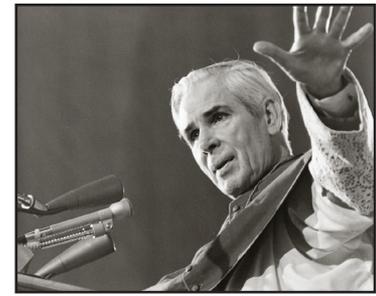
postponed the beatification, initially scheduled for December 2019, only weeks before the event was to take place.

"The Holy See has informed me that the Cause for the Venerable Servant of God Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen can proceed to Beatification," Bishop Louis Tylka of Peoria said in a Feb. 9 statement. "The next step in the process is the celebration of the Beatification, in which Fulton Sheen would be declared Blessed."

He added, "We are working with the Dicastery of the Causes of Saints at the Vatican to determine the details for the upcoming Beatification."

The bishop said the date and event details will be released soon through celebratesheen.com, the website for Archbishop Sheen's cause.

"Archbishop Fulton Sheen was one of the greatest voices of evangelization in the Church and the world in the 20th century," Bishop Tylka said. "I have long



**Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen, pictured in an undated photo, is remembered as one of the most influential and innovative evangelists in American history. (OSV News file photo)**

admired his lifelong commitment to serve the Church as a priest, rooted in his deep devotion to the Blessed Mother and the Eucharist. As he journeyed through the different stages of his life, his ability to share the Gospel and truly relate to people drew countless souls into an encounter with Jesus - one that transformed not only his life, but more importantly, the lives of those he touched."

Archbishop Sheen is remembered as one of the most influential and innovative evangelists in American history. Once dubbed "God's microphone," Archbishop Sheen announced God's truth in a non-confrontational, yet no less life-giving, manner to untold millions through radio, print and television.

Born in El Paso, Illinois, on May 8, 1895, Archbishop Sheen resolved to serve the Church as a priest from an early age. He was assigned to academic ministry following his ordination to the priesthood on Sept. 20, 1919, for the Diocese of Peoria.

Throughout his 60-year priesthood, Bishop Sheen sought to conform himself more closely to Christ by observing a daily Eucharistic Holy Hour, what he called "the hour that makes my day." He also was intensely devoted to the Mother of God.

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## Diocesan Mass affirms dignity, belonging and joyful witness of persons with disabilities

Continued from Page 14

“It’s a real opportunity to spotlight the unique gifts that God has given to them,” Magni said. “We can always learn from them. They’re just cherished.”

The Order of the Alhambra, founded in 1904, is dedicated to assisting individuals with intellectual disabilities. Alamar Caravan #4, established locally in 1906, will celebrate its 120th anniversary in June and is the oldest caravan in the nation. Throughout the year, members host events like dinner dances, hockey outings, and an annual festival.

“We want to continue to do God’s work, to help those with intellectual disabilities and provide events for them,” Magni added.

Both Magni and Sister Mary Alice emphasized that inclusion within the Church – and in society – requires continued effort.

“We establish belonging when we welcome the varied gifts of all people,” Sister Mary Alice said. “We’re really able to broaden our understanding of God’s love for us by getting to know people with disabilities.”

As he concluded his homily, Bishop Bambera also echoed that same message of gratitude and learning.

“Thank you for serving us through your lives,” he said. “And for teaching us how to believe, to trust, and to love with the generous, selfless spirit of Jesus.”

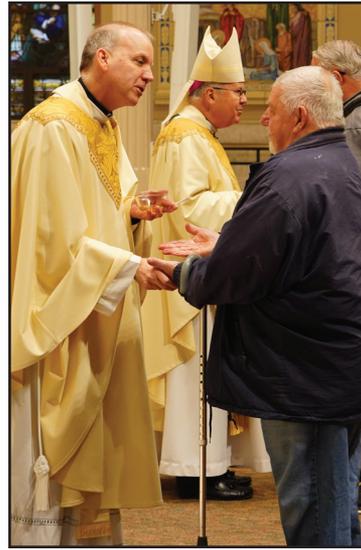
## Anointing of the Sick held at Cathedral

Continued from Page 14

The priests present traced the sign of the cross with holy oil on each person’s forehead and hands, praying for healing, strength, and peace.

“Today, Jesus invites us to experience His healing and His grace. Say yes to His invitation to come to Him with your burdens, to find consolation and peace,” Bishop Bambera ended by saying. “Trust, that in the midst of all that life seems to unload upon you, that Jesus will care for you and remember – through the wonderful sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick – every one of you will encounter the Lord, who promises to touch our hearts and give rest to our spirits.”

The Mass for the World Day of the Sick was broadcast live



**Rev. Gerald W. Shantillo, Vicar General, anoints the hands of a man at the World Day of the Sick Mass Feb. 11, 2026. (Photo/Mike Melisky)**

by CTV: Catholic Television of the Diocese of Scranton and livestream on Diocesan media platforms, allowing many who could not attend in person the opportunity to participate in prayer.

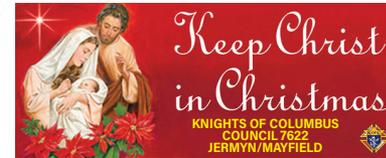


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[www.onefamilyinmission.org](http://www.onefamilyinmission.org)

For many, Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen is remembered as the charismatic bishop who captivated millions through his television program *Life Is Worth Living*. But, before he became a household name, Archbishop Sheen served as National Director of the Pontifical Mission Societies in the United States from 1950 to 1966.

During that time, he transformed missionary awareness in our country. His voice reached far beyond parish mission appeals; he invited American Catholics to see themselves as personally responsible for the spread of the Gospel.

Under his leadership, support for the Missions flourished. Catholics across the United States began to understand that missionary activity was not

“someone else’s job” in a distant land. It was the work of the whole Church.

Through his radio broadcasts, national speaking engagements, and especially his television program, he spoke not only about theology and morality, but about the real lives of missionaries across the globe. He shared stories of priests traveling by foot to bring the sacraments to remote villages, of sisters educating children in poverty-stricken regions, and of lay catechists risking persecution to proclaim Christ.

Archbishop Sheen often reminded people that “the Missions” were not simply about charity. They were about love — about sharing the greatest gift we have received: Jesus Christ. He helped Catholics see that missionary cooperation is not optional or secondary; it is a natural fruit of faith.

His upcoming beatification shines a light on that missionary spirit at a time when the Church is once again emphasizing the call to evangelize.

Mission today looks different in some ways. We speak of “missionary discipleship,” of reaching the peripheries, of encountering others in charity and

truth. Yet the heart of the mission remains the same: *proclaim Christ to the world.*

The Pontifical Mission Societies continues the work Archbishop Sheen championed so passionately: supporting young churches, forming seminarians and catechists in mission territories, assisting children through the Missionary Childhood Association, and strengthening the bonds of communion between local churches worldwide. His leadership helped root that mission deeply in the hearts of American Catholics.

His upcoming beatification highlights this missionary dimension of holiness. He did not separate media work from mission work. For Archbishop Sheen, proclaiming Christ through television and raising support for the Missions were part of the same calling: to make Jesus known and loved.

As we look toward his beatification, we give thanks for a shepherd who understood that the Church is most alive when she is missionary. May his example renew in each of us the conviction that the world still longs to hear the Good News — and that *WE* are the ones sent to share it.

## MISSION MESSAGE

### Fulton Sheen: A Missionary for the Modern Age

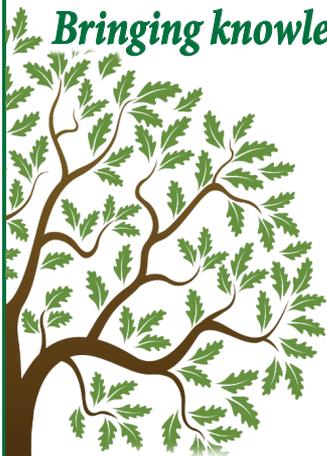
By Shannon Kowalski  
Diocesan Director,  
of Pontifical Mission Societies



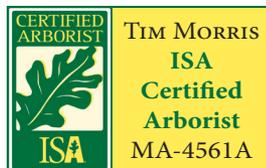
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## Apostleship of Prayer

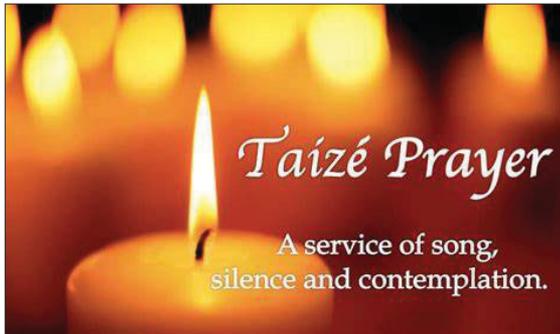
Papal Intention for February 2026

*For Children with Incurable Diseases —*

Let us pray that children suffering from incurable diseases and their families receive the necessary medical care and support, never losing strength and hope.

## Taizé Lenten prayer service March 2 in Wilkes-Barre

WILKES-BARRE — Saint Nicholas-Saint Mary Parish will host a Taizé Prayer “Around the Cross” service for Lent on Monday, March 2, at 7 p.m. in the upper church of Saint Nicholas Church, 226 South Washington St., Wilkes-Barre.



Taizé is a meditative style of communal prayer, featuring sung repetitive refrains to create a gentle rhythm that invites reflection and

meditation.

The unique prayer service is offered to area faithful to enhance their Lenten season of prayer and

spiritual preparation for the celebration of Easter.

Music ministry for the prayer service will be provided by Rob Yenkowski, director of music at King’s College, Wilkes-Barre, and the King’s Cantores Christi Regis performance choir.

Faithful are invited to participate free of charge; a free-will offering will be

accepted.

For more information, call the parish office at (570) 823-7736.

## Dallas parish hosting ‘World Day of Prayer’ event March 6

DALLAS — Gate of Heaven Parish in Dallas announces it will host a special service commemorating the 2026 World Day of Prayer on Friday, March 6.

An annual ecumenical celebration of informed prayer and Christian action, the World Day of Prayer event will begin at 1 p.m. in Gate of Heaven Church, 40 Machell Ave., Dallas.

This year’s theme for the worldwide prayerful initiative — “I Will Give You Rest: Come”



— centers on Nigeria, offering insights into finding rest in God during challenging times.

Christian women in the Back Mountain area are invited to

join together for the service’s program, which was composed by Nigerian women.

Men are also welcome to attend the celebration, concluding with refreshments and fellowship in the parish center.

Women interested in having a speaking role for the service are asked to contact Louise Roberts at (570) 675-4237, or emailing: iamabooker@yahoo.com.

A program rehearsal is planned for late February.



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### 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.

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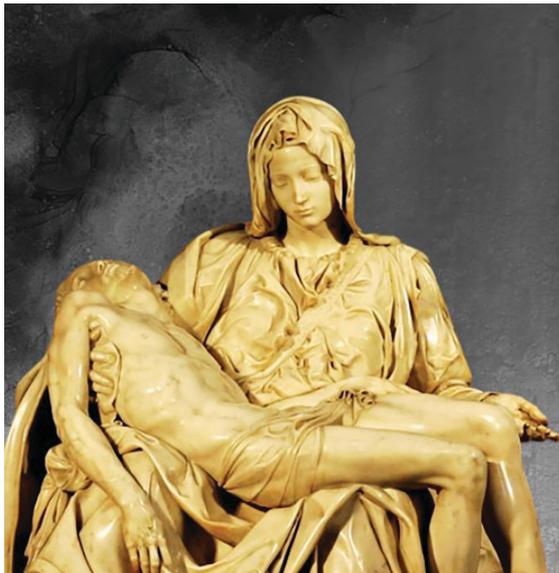
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# STABAT MATER DOLOROSA

by GIOVANNI BATTISTA PERGOLESI

FRIDAY, MARCH 6 AT 6:30 P.M.  
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315 WYOMING AVENUE, SCRANTON

SCRANTON — Attributed to Jacopone da Todi (1230-1306) in a setting composed by Giovanni Battista Pergolesi in 1736, *Stabat Mater Dolorosa* will be performed in the Cathedral of Saint Peter on Friday, March 6, at 6:30 p.m.

Featured soloists for this performance will be soprano Alissa Swarts and mezzo Ellen Rutkowski.

The moving presentation provides a wonderful opportunity to experience the solemn setting for the sacred texts of the meditations of the Sorrowful Mother of Jesus.

Marking the 290th anniversary of its premier performance this year, the event is being presented as part of First Friday Scranton.

There is no admission charge to attend. A free-will offering will be accepted to help defray the costs of the performance.

## Catholic Choral Society Lenten Concert set for March 1

SHAVERTOWN — Continuing its 70-year tradition of inspiring prayer and meditation through sacred music, the Catholic Choral Society announces its annual performance concert for the Season of Lent.

The annual Lenten Concert will be presented on Sunday, March 1, at 3 p.m. at Shavertown United Methodist Church, 163 North Pioneer Ave., Shavertown.

In addition to the Choral Society singers, the concert will feature selections by the church

choir from the Shavertown Methodist community, under the direction of Nancy Evans.

The traditional Lenten musical performance is open to the public free of charge; a free-will offering will be accepted.

Ann Manganiello serves as music director for the Catholic Choral Society; Linda Houck is accompanist.

Composed of 50 members from Luzerne, Lackawanna, Wayne, Susquehanna and Wyoming counties, the Catholic Choral group is led by co-

presidents Lois Ostrowski and Brenda Grunza.

For more information, call (570) 575-1040 or visit: [www.catholicchoralsociety.org](http://www.catholicchoralsociety.org).

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## Apostleship of Prayer

Pope's Intention for March 2026

**For Disarmament & Peace**

## Hibernians celebrate annual Feast of Saint Brigid of Ireland



SCRANTON — In the spirit of friendship, unity, and Christian charity, the Lackawanna County Men and Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians (AOH & LAOH) gathered recently for a Mass to commemorate the memorial Feast of Saint Brigid of Ireland — celebrated as the holy flame-bearer and beloved Patroness of Ireland. The Hibernians participated in the annual liturgy honoring Saint Brigid at Saint Patrick Church in West Scranton, celebrated by Father Richard Fox, pastor of Saint Patrick Parish. Those AOH & LAOH members pictured in attendance with Father Fox include: Mary Finnerty Browning, Ellen Perry, Kathy McDonnell, Maggie Tucker, Gennette Rotherforth, Katie Murray, Danielle Ketch, Kristin Keenan Krowiak, Mary Kate Werner, Mercy Sister Kathleen Smith, Erin Kologe, John Michelle, Mercy Sister Therese Marques, Conal McHugh, Doreen Gilbride, Sean May, Dorothea Crowley, Maureen Wallace, Craig Tucker, Pat Savitts, Mary Ellen Richard, Amanda Gavin, Chuck Schneider and Kate Schneider.

### Prayer Requests for Priests Daily Intentions

February 19, Father Richard Cirba; February 20, Father Brian J.T. Clarke; February 21, Father Brian J.W. Clarke; February 22, Father Charles Connor; February 23, Jesuit Father Vincent Conti; February 24, Father William Corcoran; February 25, Father William Culnane; February 26, Father Charles Cummings; February 27, Father Richard Czachor, V.E.; February 28, Father Vincent Dang; March 1, Pope Leo XIV; March 2, Bishop Joseph C. Bambera; March 3, Sulpician Father Daniel Doherty; March 4, Father John Doris; March 5, Saint Peter Priestly Fraternity Father Anthony Dorsa; March 6, Father Michael Drevitch; March 7, Father Thomas Dzwonczyk; March 8, Father Cyril Edwards, V.E.; March 9, Father Christian Ekeh; March 10, Father Joseph Elston; March 11, Monsignor John Esseff; March 12, Father Joseph Evanko, V.E.; March 13, Father Neftali Féliz Sena; March 14, Father Samuel Ferretti; March 15, Father Richard Fox; March 16, Saint Peter Priestly Fraternity Father Thomas Fritschen; March 17, Father Martin Gaiardo; March 18, Father J. Duane Gavitt; March 19, Father Anthony Generose; March 20, Father Richard Ghezzi; March 21, Father Ryan Glenn; March 22, Father Joseph Greskiewicz; March 23, Holy Cross Richard Gribble; March 24, Monsignor Vincent Grimalia; March 25, Father Louis Grippe.

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## Oblate Fathers plan Saint Joseph Novena, Feast Day celebration

LAF LIN — The Congregation of the Oblates of Saint Joseph will celebrate the Solemnity of Saint Joseph on Thursday, March 19, with a Feast Day Mass at noon in Saint Joseph Chapel, 1880 Route 315, Laffin.

Principal celebrant and homilist of the Mass will be the Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton.

An additional evening Mass for the feast day will be celebrated at 7 p.m. by Saint Joseph Oblate Father Joseph Sibilano.

In preparation for the Solemn Feast of Saint Joseph, a nine-day Novena will be held at the seminary chapel during March 10-18, with Masses offered daily at noon and 7 p.m.

Novena prayers to Saint Joseph will immediately follow



each Mass, concluding with the blessing of the first-class relic of Saint Joseph Marello, founder of the OSJ religious order.

Preaching this year's Solemn Novena will be invited permanent deacons of the Scranton Diocese:

**March 10** — Deacon André Kabacinski; **March 11** — Deacon Jim Rose; **March 12** — Deacon Jim DiSimoni; **March 13** —

## Slovak Heritage Lenten program March 15

KINGSTON — The Slovak Heritage Society of NEPA will host the celebration of a Lenten Slovak Hymn Sing & Traditional Slovak Stations of the Cross on Sunday, March 15, in Saint Ignatius Church at Saint Ignatius Loyola Parish, 339 North Maple Ave., Kingston.

All faithful are welcome to join in the congregational singing of Slovak Lenten hymns that will open the program at 2 p.m.

Prayerful meditation of the sorrowful Stations of the Cross in the Slovak language follow.

The words and translations of the rich hymnology, along with program booklets for the Station prayers, will be provided to those in attendance.

Benediction will conclude the service, to be followed by refreshments.

A free-will offering will be accepted.

Saint Ignatius Church is wheelchair accessible via elevator.

For more information, contact Anna Hudock at (570) 510-1655.

## Alhambra plans dinner for Special Olympians

EXETER — Local caravan Alhambra No. 4, Order of Alhambra, will host a Spring Dinner Dance for Special Olympians, their families, and friends of Alhambra on Tuesday, March 24, at Fox Hill Country Club, 454 Tunkhannock Ave., Exeter.

All are invited to attend the gala from 5 to 8 p.m.

Dinner entrée includes fruit salad, penne pasta, stuffed chicken breast, mashed potatoes, vegetable, and chocolate mousse dessert.

Coffee, tea and soft drinks will be provided.

DJ Joe Hussey will provide the evening's entertainment.

Tickets cost \$35 each. Reservations, including guests' names and check payable to Alhambra Caravan 4, are required by March 11. Remit to: Alhambra Caravan 4, 17 English St., West Wyoming, PA 18644.

For more information, contact Ada Magni at amagni@earthlink.net.

Deacon Ed Schoener; **March 14** — Deacon David Marx; **March 15** — Deacon Peter Lemoncelli; **March 16** — Deacon Alan Baranski; **March 17** — Deacon Ed Kelly; and **March 18** — Deacon Martin Castaldi.

Saint Joseph Oblate Father Paul A. McDonnell, rector of the Oblate religious community, invites all faithful of the Diocese to attend the celebrations.

For more information, call the main office at (570) 654-7542.



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**Pope Leo XIV has proclaimed An Extraordinary Jubilee Year to commemorate the 800th Anniversary of St. Francis of Assisi's death.**

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## Catholic Happenings Around the Diocese

**“40 Days for Life” Pro-Life Rosary Gatherings — FEB. 19-MARCH 27**, offered for the special intentions of an end to abortion and closure of the Planned Parenthood location in Wilkes-Barre; Rosary is prayed each weekday, Monday to Friday, at 10 a.m. in front of the Planned Parenthood offices at 101 North Main St., Wilkes-Barre. The pro-life campaign draws attention to the evil of abortion through prayer & fasting, constant vigil, and community outreach.

**Annual Homemade Pierogi Sale — FEB. 19-MARCH 27**, sponsored by St. Catherine of Siena Parish, 220 Church St., Moscow; sale held Monday thru Friday, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., in the parish hall (lower level of St. Catherine Church) and after all weekend Masses. Cost: potato cheese or cabbage pierogi, \$10 for baker's dozen (13); halushki (cabbage & noodles) also available for \$10/ quart. Orders may be placed by calling Mary Ann (570) 266-3198, or Betty Ann (570) 842-6195.

**Lenten Fridays Potluck Supper Series — FEB. 20-MARCH 27**, sponsored by the parishes of St. Ann and St. Boniface in Williamsport; held on the Fridays of Lent at 5:30 p.m. at St. Ann parish hall. Patrons are requested to bring a meatless dish to share. Thematic presentation begins at 6 p.m., followed by Stations of the Cross.

**Lenten Fridays Food Sale — FEB. 20-APRIL 3**, hosted by

St. John the Evangelist Parish, 35 William St., Pittston; held every Friday during Lent (including Good Friday) with order pick-up from 3:30 to 6 p.m. in the Monsignor Bendik Pastoral Center on Church Street. Sale items include potato pancakes (3 for \$5) and take-and-heat red pizza or white pizza with broccoli (\$15/ tray). Orders required by Thursday of each week by calling the parish office (570) 654-0053.

**Lenten Friday Buffet Dinners — FEB. 20, MARCH 6 & 20**, hosted by St. Maximilian Kolbe Parish in Pocono Pines; dinners served from 4 to 6 p.m. in the social hall at Our Lady of the Lake Church, 5112 Pocono Crest Road, Pocono Pines. All three buffets feature a variety of meatless dishes. Menu offerings include garden salad, featured soup, fish item and meatless entrees, including stuffed pasta shells, macaroni & cheese, halushki, and veggie penne pasta;

*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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February 10, 1929

*Entered Eternal Life:*  
January 30, 2026



# Catholic Happenings Around the Diocese of Scranton

*Continued from Previous Page*

buffet also includes bread, hot & cold beverages, and homemade dessert. Cost: adults, \$15; seniors (age 65+), \$12. Children's meals discounted at the door. Both dine-in and take-out service available. For more information, call the parish office (570) 646-6424.

**Monthly Meeting of the Lay Carmelites** — FEB. 21, hosted by Our Lady of the Mountains Lay Carmelite Community on the third Saturday of each month; gatherings are held from 9 to 11 a.m. at the Oblates of St. Joseph Seminary/Chapel, 1880 Highway 315, Laflin. For more information, contact Chris at (570) 239-8094.

**LGBTQ Spiritual Support Group Gathering** — FEB. 28, sponsored by Mary, Mother of God Parish in Scranton; support group meeting for the spiritual needs of LGBTQ community begins at 1 p.m. in the former Holy Rosary School, 312 William St., North Scranton. Group provides

support & fellowship, including information on speakers and other community resources. All are welcome to attend; refreshments provided. For more information, call (570) 342-4881.

**Venerable Father Patrick Peyton Monthly Rosary** — MARCH 4, 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 of furthering the cause for canonization of Venerable Father Patrick Peyton.

**Gift Card Bingo** — MARCH 7, sponsored by the Youth Ministry at Exaltation of the Holy Cross Parish, Hanover Township; hosted at the Warrior Run Fire Hall, 316 Academy St., Warrior Run. Doors open 10:30 a.m.; games begin at noon. Admission fee: \$25 (in advance) or \$30 (at door), includes 15 regular games; each game wins

\$100 in gift cards. Event features five specials, Pot of Gold door prizes, basket raffle, bake goods & food sales, and cash raffle; final cover-all special wins \$1,000 in gift cards. For tickets/more information, visit [www.exhc.org](http://www.exhc.org) or call (570) 328-4004.

**Secular Discalced Carmelites Meeting** — MARCH 8, monthly meeting of the Holy Annunciation Secular Community of Discalced Carmelites (OCDS); the community gathers on the second Sunday of the month, from noon to 4 p.m., at the Oblates of St. Joseph Seminary in Laflin. New members are most welcome. For more information and inquiries, contact Gina Romancheck at (570) 956-9272.

**Drug & Alcohol Recovery Workshop** — MARCH 14, sponsored by the Mental Health Committee at Divine Mercy Parish in Scranton; held from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the Parish Hall, 312 Davis St., Minooka section. Representatives include Narcotics Anonymous, Alcoholics Anonymous, AlAnon, and The

Way 2 Recovery. Pizza and beverages provided.

**Parish Night at the Races** — MARCH 14, hosted by SS. Peter & Paul Parish, 13 Hudson Road, Plains; doors open at 5:30 p.m. in the parish's Bernardine Hall, with post time at 7 p.m. Admission cost: \$10 per person (adults only/age 21+), includes food & refreshments. Race horses available for \$10 each; race sponsors, \$100 per race. All tickets and sponsorships available for purchase after weekend Masses or at the parish office. For more information, donations, and tickets/sponsorships, call the office at (570) 825-6663.

**St. Joseph Fraternity of Third Order Secular Franciscans** — MARCH 15, Lay Franciscan Canonical Order meets on the third Sunday of each month; meetings hosted from 2 to 4 p.m. at the Oblates of St. Joseph Seminary/Chapel, 1880 Highway 315, Laflin. All interested men, women and visitors are welcome. For more information, contact Michele at (570) 807-7996.

**15th Annual Polish Lenten Devotion: "Gorzkie Zale"** — MARCH 22, traditional Polish-language devotion for Lent known as "Bitter Lamentations"; begins at 3 p.m. on the Fifth Sunday of Lent at Exaltation of the Holy Cross Parish, 420 Main Road, Hanover Township. Devotion is a sung reflection on the Passion of Christ and his Sorrowful Mother. Parish music ministry assisted by guest singers. Presiding celebrants: Father Richard Cirba, host pastor, and Father James McGahagan; concludes with benediction & social. To participate in the choir, call Dom Costantino (570) 706-6951; for more information, call Barry Kaminski (570) 899-5080.

**Annual Ham Bingo** — MARCH 22, sponsored by St. Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church in Old Forge; begins 1 p.m. in the church hall, 320 Vine St., Old Forge. Event features various bingo game specials, theme baskets, and door prizes. Kitchen opens at 11 a.m., offering a variety of food items; bake sale also available. Admission fee: \$5.

## Milford parish assists food pantry



People Helping People (PHP), a nonprofit program at Saint Patrick Parish in Milford, funded the cost of Christmas dinner hams distributed by the Ecumenical Food Pantry during the recent holiday season. The Saint Patrick's apostolate works closely with the food pantry throughout the year with ongoing donations, as well as a team of volunteers which serves the food pantry on a regular basis, distributing food and other necessary items for families in the community. Shown is Shannen Borriss of PHP, left, presenting the check donation to Nancy Potter of the Ecumenical Food Pantry in Pike County.

## Save the Date!

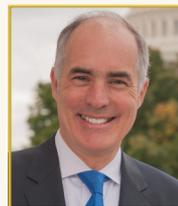
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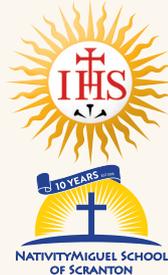


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