



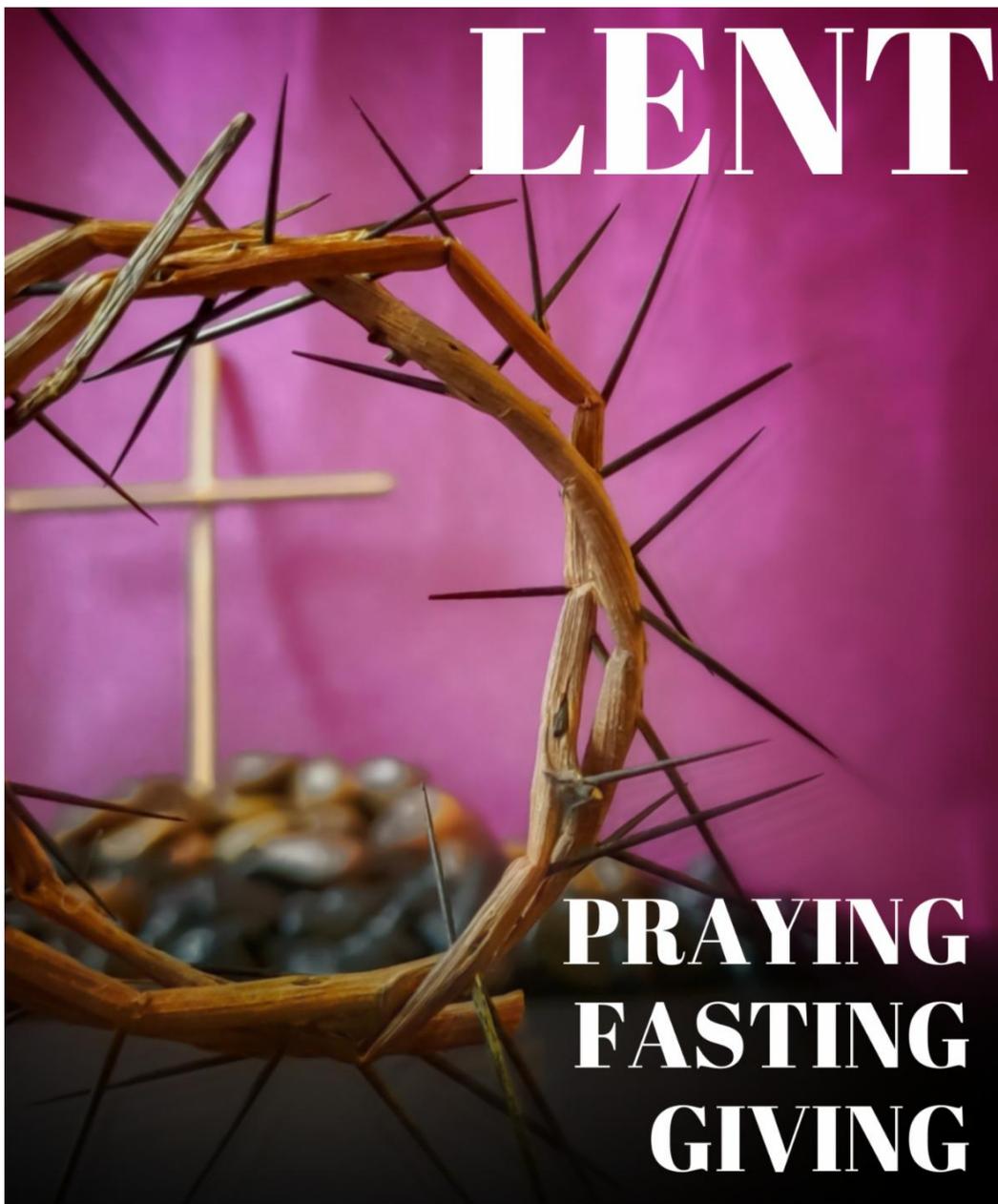
The Catholic Light

DIOCESE OF SCRANTON

Weekly E-Newsletter

February 19, 2026

**"Lent Does Not Allow Us to Look
Away," Bishop Bambera says in
Lenten message**



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.

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

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

**Rite of Election & Call to Continuing
Conversion to be held this Sunday**

Rite of
Election
and the
Call to
Continuing Conversion

February 22, 2026 at 2:30 PM

SAINT PETER'S CATHEDRAL
SCRANTON, PENNSYLVANIA



More Details at
www.dioceseofscranton.org

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.

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

Road to Resurrection Series begins tonight in Scranton-area parishes

The Scranton Area's
2026
the ROAD
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

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 tonight (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!

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

Catholic Television to broadcast Cathedral devotions during Lent

EVENING PRAYER

with Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament

SUNDAYS DURING LENT

February 22

March 15

March 1

March 22

March 8

March 29

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.

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

Lenten Holy Hours with Bishop Bambera begin tonight in Bradford County



2026 Lenten Holy Hours with Bishop Bambera

February 19

Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish, Wyalusing

February 24

Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish, Brodheadsville

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.

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.

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

Pope Leo XIV on Ash Wednesday: Ask the Lord for the gift of true conversion this Lent



On Ash Wednesday, Pope Leo XIV encouraged Catholics to ask the Lord for “the gift of true conversion” at the start of the 40-day penitential season of Lent.

Speaking to English-speaking pilgrims at his Wednesday general audience in St. Peter's Square Feb. 18, the pope encouraged people to approach Lent as a time of "conversion of heart" so that "we may better respond to his love for us and share that love with those around us."

"At the beginning of Lent, I urge you to live this liturgical season with an intense spirit of prayer so that you may arrive, inwardly renewed, at the celebration of the great mystery of Christ's Resurrection, the supreme revelation of God's merciful love," Pope Leo added in Italian at the close of the audience on a sunny winter day in Rome.

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

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



“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.

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

USCCB calls for Adoration hours, works of mercy to celebrate America's 250th anniversary



As the U.S. prepares to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops has encouraged Catholics to participate in initiatives including a collective 250 Hours of Adoration and 250 Works of Mercy.

To celebrate the occasion, “America 250,” the initiatives encourage prayer for the unity and healing of the U.S., according to a resource guide the USCCB has published. The conference previously said the U.S. bishops will consecrate the United States to the Sacred Heart of Jesus in June.

In his encyclical “Dilexit Nos,” Pope Francis “instructs us to ‘nourish our lives with the strength of the Eucharist’ in Holy Communion and Adoration, so that we might understand Christ’s love for all more deeply and live out this love ourselves,” the guide stated. “Our contemplation of the Sacred Heart leads us deeper into the mystery of our salvation and deeper into our love for Christ found in the faces of our sisters and brothers — especially those most in need.”

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

**Support anti-hunger and anti-homelessness programs through
Rectory, Set, Cook! 5**



In the just over 24 hours since the fifth installment of Rectory, Set, Cook! 5 began - more than 130 generous donors have already donated more than \$11,000 to support anti-hunger and anti-homelessness programs with Catholic Social Services.

Rectory, Set, Cook! officially launched on Tuesday night with a 'Launch Party' at the Diocesan Pastoral Center in Scranton.

This year, a total of 25 videos of our local pastor chefs are available to view - as they cook up recipes in their rectories. Viewers are then invited to support their favorite video or recipe by making a donation.

The online cooking competition will end in late March just before the beginning of Holy Week.

[Click Here to Watch all of this year's Rectory, Set, Cook! videos](#)

Follow us on Social Media...



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