

# The Catholic Light

DIOCESE OF SCRANTON

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## 312 people

*from the Diocese of Scranton  
expected to enter the  
Catholic Church this Easter*

SCRANTON — Due to the threat of an impending winter storm, the Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, cancelled the Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion traditionally held at the Cathedral of Saint Peter on the First Sunday of Lent.

With the announcement, Bishop Bambera directed that the ceremonies for those seeking full communion in the Catholic Church this year be celebrated in local parishes that weekend, if possible, or during the Second Sunday of Lent weekend.

“I’ve asked our Pastors to celebrate this cherished ritual within your parishes,” the Bishop related in the preface of a prepared text of his homily meant to be delivered in person in the venerable Scranton Cathedral on Feb. 22. “While disappointed, we all have much for which to be grateful as we pray for the well over three hundred catechumens and candidates from parishes throughout our eleven counties who have answered the Lord’s call to discipleship.”

As Bishop Bambera indicated, the 2026 Rite of Election numbers are most impressive.

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# 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.

## POLICY STATEMENT

*The Catholic Light* is our official diocesan journal. The publication of notices, regulations and extra-synodical decrees in said paper constitute legal promulgation for all the faithful of the Diocese of Scranton, Clergy and Laity.

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# Bishop Bambera to celebrate Holy Week/Easter Masses at Cathedral of Saint Peter

SCRANTON – All 102 parishes across the Diocese of Scranton, including the Cathedral of Saint Peter, are busy preparing for Holy Week and Easter.

The faithful are invited and encouraged to attend Masses to experience the joy, hope and love of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, will celebrate Pontifical Liturgies at the Cathedral of Saint Peter for this holiest time of the year.

CTV: Catholic Television of the Diocese of Scranton will provide live coverage of all of the Pontifical Masses from the Cathedral of Saint Peter. In addition to being broadcast, the Masses will also be available via livestream on the Diocese of Scranton website, YouTube channel and all Diocesan social media platforms.

## PALM SUNDAY, MARCH 29

The solemn observances of Holy Week, which recall the passion and death of Jesus Christ, begin on Palm Sunday, March 29. Those attending the service receive palms, a reminder of Scripture telling us that people welcomed Jesus by laying down their cloaks and waving palm branches.

Bishop Bambera will celebrate a Pontifical Liturgy at 12:15 p.m. at the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton.

## CHRISM MASS, MARCH 31

Priests serving throughout the Diocese will gather at the Cathedral on Tuesday, March 31, at 4:00 p.m. for the Solemn Pontifical Chrism Mass, at which the Holy Oils used during the conferral of sacraments throughout the Church year will be blessed. Bishop Bambera will

be the principal celebrant and homilist.

## HOLY THURSDAY, APRIL 2

The three most sacred days of the Church's liturgical year, known as the Sacred Paschal Triduum, begin on Holy Thursday, April 2, with the Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper.

The Pontifical Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper, which will include the Rite of the Washing of Feet, will begin at 5:30 p.m.

## GOOD FRIDAY, APRIL 3

On Good Friday, April 3, and the following day (up to the Easter Vigil Mass), by a most ancient tradition, the Church does not celebrate the sacraments at all, except for Penance and Anointing of the Sick.

The Commemoration of the Passion and Death of the Lord

celebrated by Bishop Bambera will begin at 12:10 p.m.

## HOLY SATURDAY, APRIL 4

Holy Saturday, April 4, is the day that the Church waits at the Lord's tomb in prayer, meditating on his passion and death and awaiting his resurrection.

Bishop Bambera will be the principal celebrant and homilist of the Easter Vigil Mass at the Cathedral beginning at 8:00 p.m.

## EASTER SUNDAY, APRIL 5

Easter Sunday of the Resurrection of the Lord is the most joyous day in the Church year. This joy overflows into the 50 days of the Easter season, which concludes on Pentecost Sunday.

On Easter Sunday, Bishop Bambera will celebrate a Pontifical Mass at 10:00 a.m. at the Cathedral.

A photograph of a church altar with several glass chalices containing dark oil, a white candle in a gold holder, and a bouquet of flowers. The text 'Chrism Mass' is written in a large, yellow, cursive font across the top. Below the image, a yellow box contains the text: 'Please Plan to Join Us! Tuesday, March 31, 2026 4:00 p.m. Cathedral of Saint Peter 315 Wyoming Avenue, Scranton'.

## *The Risen Lord brings hope in a time of fear and suffering* *Bishop Bambera's 2026 Easter Message*

*"Do not be afraid! I know that you are seeking Jesus the crucified. He is not here, for he has been raised just as he said."*

Dear Friends,

These words from Saint Matthew's Gospel that will be proclaimed during the great Vigil of Easter, confronted the first followers of Jesus on the very day of his resurrection and boldly affirmed God's promise to save his people.

Yet despite such powerful words of faith that we read in the scriptures and proclaim whenever we gather for the celebration of the Eucharist, the reality of life at times can consume us with grief, pain and fear. These days are no exception.

Once again, we approach Holy Week and Easter with our world engulfed by war and suffering – in Iran, throughout the Middle East, for four years in Ukraine, and in far too many places to name around the world. At this very hour, men and women in our armed forces are in harm's way as they seek to secure a more peaceful existence for all. Right here, in our own land, immigrants who have become our neighbors and friends, fear for their well-being as their hopes for a better life for themselves and their families are dashed. Antisemitism has once again raised its ugly head. And amid such upheaval and pain, we have our own stories to tell of the crosses that we carry – crosses made of grief and loss, illness, addiction, loneliness and sin.

And so as we have done countless times before in the face of such heartbreak, these sacred days beckon us to turn to the only place that enables our broken world and lives to find forgiveness, healing, hope and peace: the Paschal Mystery, the Easter miracle, the promise won for us through the suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus!

But how does a mystery fraught with suffering and death provide us with hope? In his work, *The Passion and the Cross*, Father Ronald Rolheiser writes that it is only in and through the mystery of the cross of Jesus and our own, which we feebly attempt to carry with dignity and hope, that we find our peace. "Jesus never promised us rescue, exemptions, immunity from cancer or escape from death. Rather, he promised that in the end, there will be redemption, vindication, immunity from suffering and eternal life. But that's in the end; in the early and intermediate chapters of our lives, there will be the same kind of humiliation, pain and death that everyone else suffers." Yet, Rolheiser goes on to note, "Taking up your cross and being willing to give up your life means living in a faith that believes that nothing is impossible for God."

Brothers and sisters, for all that we have experienced throughout the journey of our lives – in joy and gladness – and, yes, even in suffering, death and in the many wounds that we have endured – our belief in the power and grace of God to work wonders in our world even in these most challenging times is where resurrection begins to enter our lives today and peace begins to take hold of our wounded spirits! While God doesn't promise us a perfect world free from suffering, no matter how faithful we are, he does promise forgiveness, redemption and life because of Jesus' cross.

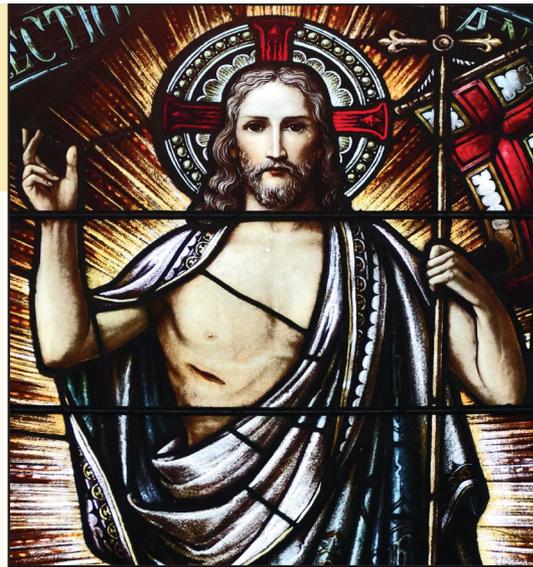
One of the greatest signs of the power of God at work in our world through the Risen Lord is the presence of well over 300 catechumens and candidates from throughout the Diocese of Scranton who will be baptized into the life, death and resurrection of Jesus and presented for full communion in the Catholic Church during the great Vigil of Easter. These catechumens and candidates – our relatives, neighbors and friends – will join with catechumens and candidates from around the world in numbers that we have not experienced in years to publicly profess their faith in Jesus Christ and to assume their place with us in Jesus' body, the Church.

As bishop of this great local church of the Diocese of Scranton, I am profoundly touched by the example of your lives. In the midst of all that life unfolds, you continue to live your faith and fulfill the promises of your Baptism. You continue to serve your brothers and sisters. And you continue to derive hope from a living relationship with the risen Jesus.

During these final days of Lent, Holy Week and Easter, I pray that we will come to appreciate more deeply than ever the fact that we are indeed blessed by God in more ways than we might believe or imagine. May we continue to trust in God's promise to sustain us and dispel our deepest fears. And may we open our hearts to the risen Jesus and allow him to fill them with his love and peace.

Faithfully yours in Christ,

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



## **El Señor Resucitado trae esperanza en un tiempo de miedo y sufrimiento**

*Mensaje de Pascua 2026 del Obispo Bambera*

*"¡No tengan miedo! Sé que buscan a Jesús, el crucificado. No está aquí, porque ha resucitado, tal como lo había dicho."*

Queridos amigos,

Estas palabras del Evangelio de san Mateo, que serán proclamadas durante la gran Vigilia Pascual, confrontaron a los primeros seguidores de Jesús el mismo día de su resurrección y afirmaron con valentía la promesa de Dios de salvar a su pueblo.

Sin embargo, a pesar de palabras de fe tan poderosas como las que leemos en las Escrituras y proclamamos cada vez que nos reunimos para la celebración de la Eucaristía, la realidad de la vida a veces puede consumirnos con tristeza, dolor y miedo. Estos días no son la excepción.

Una vez más, nos acercamos a la Semana Santa y a la Pascua con nuestro mundo envuelto en guerra y sufrimiento: en Irán, en todo el Medio Oriente, durante cuatro años en Ucrania y en demasiados lugares del mundo como para nombrarlos todos. En este mismo momento, hombres y mujeres de nuestras fuerzas armadas se encuentran en peligro mientras buscan asegurar una existencia más pacífica para todos. Aquí mismo, en nuestra propia tierra, inmigrantes que se han convertido en nuestros vecinos y amigos temen por su bienestar, ya que sus esperanzas de una vida mejor para ellos y sus familias se ven frustradas. El antisemitismo ha vuelto a levantar su fea cabeza. Y en medio de tanta agitación y dolor, también tenemos nuestras propias historias que contar sobre las cruces que llevamos: cruces hechas de duelo y pérdida, enfermedad, adicción, soledad y pecado.

*Continúa en la página 23*

# Parishes around the Diocese host Rite of Election for 312 candidates, catechumens

*Continued from Page 1*

The 137 catechumens — those who have never been baptized in the Christian faith — and 175 candidates — baptized Christians who desire full communion in the Church through Eucharist and Confirmation — outnumber by more than 100 the 207 catechumens and candidates from last year's Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion.

The Rite of Election is a pivotal moment in the journey of those seeking full initiation into the Catholic faith. Following months — sometimes even years — of prayerful preparation, study and discernment, the ceremony symbolizes their formal selection to become members of the Church at the upcoming Easter Vigil.

"While it was unfortunate that we weren't able to celebrate at the Cathedral with the Bishop and hundreds of others, the flip side was that the parish community was able to witness and participate in this important milestone for all of our catechumens and candidates," Ann O'Brien, coordinator for the Order of Christian Initiation of Adults (OCIA) at Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish in Peckville, said. "It was beautiful to be a part of this ancient tradition at the parish level and surround the catechumens and candidates with our community's prayer and support."

Joyce Chowanec, one of five candidates from the Peckville parish where Father Andrew Kurovsky serves as pastor, knew she probably would not be in attendance for her local celebration held on the First Sunday of Lent. However, she was able to enjoy the livestream through her phone.

"While I watched...as my friends continued the process, it was emotional because I could really feel I was there spiritually," she said. "Father Andy included me with his special message, and I felt that was so very special. I am forever grateful for everyone that has worked with our group."

Describing his new prospective parishioners as being "on fire" about entering the Catholic Church, Father Joseph Kutch, pastor of Saint Michael Parish in Canton, expressed, "I am thrilled with all six of the individuals involved in our OCIA. I am very proud of each and every one of them. They are so excited and proud about their newfound faith, to the point of tears."

The pastor also shares in their enthusiasm about the upcoming Easter Vigil ceremonies.

"I, too, am so looking forward to this year's Vigil, which will be extra special as I have the privilege to baptize the three catechumens and minister the Sacrament of Confirmation to all six," Father Kutch remarked.

Among the three candidates at Saint Michael's is Sandy Jackson, who was baptized into the Lutheran church and most recently worshipped in the Methodist tradition.

"Last September, I attended my first Catholic Mass and immediately felt at home," she shared.

"Participating in the Rites of Initiation and witnessing the Rite of Election was deeply moving," Jackson continued. "The reverence and formality of these moments made God's presence tangible. Holding the Rite at our parish allowed the congregation to share in and support our journey."

Concerning the celebration of this year's Rite of Election in local churches, Katie James offered her unique perspective as a catechist for the OCIA program at Christ the King Parish in Archbald.

"It is a gift to journey with these catechumens as they prepare to receive the Sacraments of Initiation. One of the beauties of the Order is that the entire parish joins in supporting them," James explained. "Through the Rite of Election and the Scrutinies, the community comes together to pray for the continued formation of these catechumens, while also being strengthened by their witness and desire to seek the faith."

Tracey Singletary joins her husband, William, as candidates journeying through the Call to Conversion process at Saint Patrick Parish in Nicholson.

As she returns to her Catholic roots seeking full communion into the Church, Tracey is serving as Confirmation sponsor for her husband, who received Christian baptism and now desires entrance into the Catholic faith.

"Returning to the Church after so many years has been humbling," Tracey began. "There is something powerful about coming home to the sacraments and the truth of the faith that was always there waiting."

She continued by stating how her faith journey has become even more



**Abby Sehl signs the Book of the Elect on the altar of Saint John the Evangelist Church during Rite of Election ceremonies held at the Pittston parish on March 1.**

meaningful with William walking beside her as a candidate for First Eucharist and Confirmation.

"As Easter approaches, I feel a deep longing to receive the Eucharist again — to encounter Christ truly present — a gift I once took for granted but now cherish with a grateful heart," Tracey said. "This journey has reminded me that even when we wander far, Christ patiently waits for us and never stops calling us home."

Carlie Craven of Dupont, an OCIA candidate at Saint John the Evangelist Parish in Pittston, was candid about her circuitous path to full communion in the Catholic Church.

"Some people grow up with faith and never leave it. My story is different," Craven related, explaining that as a "cradle Catholic" she was baptized into the faith and received First Communion and First Reconciliation.

"Mine is the story of leaving, wandering, questioning everything — and slowly, unexpectedly, finding my way home," she continued as she told how a fractured family unit prevented her from receiving Confirmation, leading ultimately to separation from her faith and even her beliefs.

"The faith that was planted in me through baptism had never truly disappeared. It had simply waited...for the moment when I would finally be ready to return," Craven

said. "And when that moment came, I realized something profound. I had not just rediscovered the Catholic Church. I had come home."

Matt Rosencrans, who participated as a catechumen in the Rite of Election at Saint John the Evangelist on March 1, describes his faith journey of conversion to Catholicism with a quote by Saint John Henry Newman: "To live is to change, and to be perfect is to have changed often."

Stating it took years for him to "succumb to my thoughts and pursue my faith," Rosencrans said during the past year, "it just clicked, everything aligned, and I knew it was time."

"A dear friend of mine from the Harrisburg area, who also recently converted, stated that it must have been a calling," he expressed. "I wholeheartedly believe that because I was blessed with a great (OCIA) class, led by amazing people, and a beautiful church."

Also among the three candidates from the Pittston parish is Ryan Camaratta, who openly shared that he celebrated seven years of sobriety on the same day he participated in the Rite of Election at Saint John's.

"I was baptized as a Catholic at birth and raised in a Catholic family and attended a Catholic school. I was adherent to the faith and the Church until about the age of 14, when I developed an addiction to opiates," Camaratta declared forthrightly.

From there, his story spirals steeply out of control, eventually leading to chronic homelessness and extended incarceration.

"Last year I felt compelled to come back to the Church after years spent rebuilding my relationship with Christ, and I felt called to the parish of Saint John the Evangelist," he remarked. "I requested to meet with a priest and had the great fortune to meet Father (Joseph) Elston, who welcomed me back to the Church after having willfully spent most of my life away from it."

Camaratta concluded, "I've learned what a powerful force God can work on the sick and the afflicted and the lost, and that forgiveness truly is unconditional and never ending. Above all, I've learned and come to appreciate that living with Christ and with His Church is the only key to happiness and contentment I have ever found."

# On Holy Thursday, all parishioners are encouraged to “Get Up and Pray!”

“Why are you sleeping?” he asked them.

“Get up and pray so that you will not fall into temptation” (Luke 22:46)

At the Mass of the Lord’s Supper on Holy Thursday, the Church celebrates the institution of the Eucharist and Christ giving the Twelve Apostles and their successors the authority to be ministers of the Sacrament. At the end of Mass, the Eucharist is taken in solemn procession to an Altar of Repose.

At the Altar of Repose, parishioners keep vigil in silent prayer and adoration, recalling our Lord’s agony in the Garden of Gethsemane and his rebuke to his disciples: “What? Could you not watch one hour with me?”

On Holy Thursday in particular, Catholics are encouraged to pray for priests and seminarians – that they be holy messengers of hope, reconciliation and peace. This Holy Thursday, April 2, the Diocese of Scranton is once again inviting you to participate on a prayer journey and is asking you to share that journey on social media.

Invite your family, friends or assemble a group of people from your parish (young adults are especially encouraged to participate) to visit the Altar of Repose in several different churches in your community. All parishes were invited to submit their times prior to our press deadline. If additional parishes add times, that information will be available on the Diocese of Scranton website (dioceseofscranton.org).

## Bradford County

### Epiphany Parish

304 South Elmer Avenue  
Sayre  
Open Until 10 p.m.

### Saint Michael Parish

107 N. Washington Street  
Canton  
Open Until 11 p.m.

## Lackawanna County

### Cathedral of Saint Peter

315 Wyoming Avenue  
Scranton  
After 5:30 p.m. Mass  
Night Prayer at 10:00 p.m.

### Christ the King Parish

429 Church Street  
Archbald  
Following 7:00 p.m. Mass  
Night Prayer at 10:00 p.m.

### Immaculate Conception Parish

800 Taylor Avenue  
Scranton  
11 p.m. Night Prayer

### Mary Mother of God Parish

316 William Street  
Scranton  
Open Until 10 p.m.

### Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Parish

322 Chestnut Street  
Dunmore  
Open Until 10 p.m.

### Our Lady of the Abingtons

700 West Main Street  
Dalton  
Open Until 10 p.m.

### Our Lady of the Rosary Parish

6 N. Church Street & 15  
Fallbrook St, Carbondale  
Both Churches Open Until  
10 p.m.

### Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish

1101 Willow Street  
Peckville  
Open Until 11 p.m.

### Saint Catherine of Siena

220 Church Street  
Moscow  
After 7:00 p.m. Mass  
Night Prayer at 10:00 p.m.

### Saint Eulalia Parish

214 Blue Shutters Road  
Roaring Brook Twp.  
7:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.

### Saint Gregory Parish

330 North Abington Road  
Clarks Green  
8:30 - 10:00 p.m.  
Night Prayer at 10:00 p.m.

### Saint John Vianney Parish

704 Montdale Road  
Scott Township  
Open Until 10 p.m.

### Saint Michael Parish

949 Scranton Street, Scranton  
Open Until Midnight

### Saint Patrick Parish

1403 Jackson Street  
Scranton (Lower Church)  
6:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

### Saint Paul Parish

1510 Penn Avenue  
Scranton  
Following 7:00 p.m. Mass  
Open Until 9:45 p.m.

### SS Anthony & Rocco Parish

303 Smith Street  
Dunmore  
Night Prayer at 10:00 p.m.

## Luzerne County

### Exaltation of the Holy Cross

420 Main Road  
Hanover Township  
8:30 p.m. - 10:15 p.m.  
Night Prayer at 10:15 p.m.

### Gate of Heaven Parish

40 Machell Avenue  
Dallas  
8:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.  
Night Prayer at 10:00 p.m.

### Holy Family Parish

574 Bennett Street, Luzerne  
8:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.  
Night Prayer at 10:00 p.m.

### Holy Rosary Parish

240 South Poplar Street  
Hazleton  
Open Until 9:30 p.m.

### Nativity of Our Lord Parish

127 Stephenson Street  
Duryea  
8:00 p.m. - 10:30 p.m.  
Night Prayer at 10:30 p.m.

### Our Lady of Victory Parish

16 Second Street  
Harveys Lake  
8:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.  
Night Prayer at 10:00 p.m.

### Queen of the Apostles and Sacred Heart of Jesus

715 Hawthorne Street  
Saint Mary Church  
Avoca  
Night Prayer at 10:00 p.m.

### Saint Andrew Parish

316 Parrish Street  
Wilkes-Barre  
Open Until 9:30 p.m.

### Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton

116 Hughes Street  
Swoyersville  
8:15 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.  
Night Prayer at 10:00 p.m.

### Saint Faustina Kowalska

520 South Hanover Street  
Nanticoke  
8:00 - 10:00 p.m.

### Saint Ignatius of Loyola

339 North Maple Avenue  
Kingston  
Open Until 10:00 p.m.

### Saint Joseph Mareello Parish

237 William Street, Pittston  
Night Prayer at 10:00 p.m.

### Saint Leo Parish

33 Manhattan Street, Ashley  
Open Until 9:00 p.m.

### Saint Maria Goretti Parish

42 Redwood Drive, Laffin  
Night Prayer at 10:00 p.m.

### Saint Monica Parish

363 W. Eighth St, W. Wyoming  
Night Prayer at 10:15 p.m.

### Saint Pius of Pietrelcina

Transfiguration Church  
213 West Green Street  
West Hazleton  
After 7:00 p.m. Mass  
Night Prayer (English) 10 p.m.  
Saint Gabriel Church  
122 S. Wyoming St, Hazleton  
After 7:00 p.m. Mass  
Night Prayer (Spanish) 11 p.m.

### Saint Robert Bellarmine

143 W. Division Street  
Wilkes-Barre  
8:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.

### Saint Therese Parish

64 Davis Street, Shavertown  
8:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

### SS Peter & Paul Parish

13 Hudson Road, Plains  
8:00 - 10:00 p.m.

## Lycoming County

### Our Lady of Lourdes Parish

100 Walnut Street  
Montoursville  
8:30 - 10:00 p.m.

### Saint Ann Parish

1220 Northway Road  
Williamsport (Parish Hall)  
Open Until 11:00 p.m.

### Saint Boniface Parish

326 Washington Blvd.  
Williamsport (Narthex)  
Open Until 11:30 p.m.  
Night Prayer at 11:30 p.m.

### Saint Joseph the Worker

720 West 4th Street  
Williamsport  
After 7:00 p.m. Mass in  
Fleming Center  
Night Prayer at 10:00 p.m.

## Monroe County

### Saint John Parish

5171 Milford Road  
East Stroudsburg  
Open Until 10:00 p.m.

### Saint Matthew Parish

78 Ridgeway Street  
East Stroudsburg  
After 6:30 p.m. English  
Mass & in Spanish after  
the 8:30 p.m. Mass  
Open Until Midnight

## Sullivan County

### Immaculate Heart of Mary

123 Churchill Street  
Dushore  
(In St. Basil Parish Hall)  
Open Until Midnight

## Susquehanna County

### Ascension Parish

739 Delaware Street  
Forest City  
8:00 - 10:00 p.m.

### Holy Name of Mary Parish

278 S. Main Street, Montrose  
Open Until 10:00 p.m.

## Tioga County

### Holy Child Parish

240 S. Main Street  
Mansfield  
Open Until 10:00 p.m.

### Saint Peter Parish

47 Central Avenue,  
Wellsboro  
8:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.

## Wayne County

### Saint Katharine Drexel

361 Great Bend Turnpike  
Pleasant Mount  
After 5:30 p.m. Mass from  
6:30 p.m. - 6:30 a.m.

### Saint John the Evangelist Parish

414 Church Street, Honesdale  
8:30 p.m. - 11:00 p.m.

### Saint Mary Parish

242 Carbondale Road  
Waymart  
7:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.

## Wyoming County

### Nativity of the BVM Parish

99 E. Tioga St., Tunkhannock  
Open Until 9:30 p.m.

# Finding Peace in Challenging Times: Lenten Holy Hours draw strong turnout

SCRANTON – Hundreds of Catholics from across the Diocese of Scranton are gathering in churches throughout the region this Lent, filling pews for special evenings of prayer, reflection, and Eucharistic devotion as the Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, leads Lenten Holy Hours in each of the Diocese’s 12 deaneries.

At Divine Mercy Parish in Scranton, the church was nearly filled as parishioners from multiple parishes came together to pray before the Blessed Sacrament. At Saint John Bosco Parish in Conyngham, more than 300 people attended the Holy Hour for the Hazleton Deanery.

For many participants, the experience has been both powerful and deeply personal.

“It made me feel connected,” said Angel Parra of Saint Teresa of Calcutta Parish in Scranton after attending the Holy Hour at Divine Mercy Parish. “As a young Catholic, I don’t have many friends around my age who are Catholic. Just being around that many people praying together was a really refreshing experience.”

The Holy Hours began Feb. 19 at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish in Wyalusing and eight more have taken place since that time. The final three Lenten Holy Hours will all take place within the next week.

Each evening includes Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, time for silent prayer and adoration, sacred music and a homily offered by Bishop Bambera. The theme for this year’s reflection is “Finding Peace in Challenging Times.”

For many who attend, the opportunity



**Bishop Bambera delivers a homily during the Lenten Holy Hour at Divine Mercy in Scranton on Feb. 26, 2026. (Photo/Mike Melisky)**

to spend quiet time in prayer before the Eucharist during Lent is a meaningful break from the noise and pace of everyday life.

“When you’re in the church right now, there’s nothing to bother you – no phones or television,” said Judy Korgeski of Saint Carlo Acutis Parish in Olyphant. “You can really feel Jesus around us. And especially because of all the people who are with us, you can tell they feel the same way.”

Others say the Lenten Holy Hours offer a powerful reminder of the Church community that stretches beyond their own individual parish.

“We love to pray as a community – just to be together with everybody else

and experience these things together,” said Elizabeth Pass of Saint Thomas More Parish in Lake Ariel. “A lot of times we’re praying by ourselves.”

The Holy Hours also give many parishioners the opportunity to see and pray with their bishop in a personal way.

“The shepherd coming to the sheep is very key,” added Marian Menapace who also attended the Holy Hour at Saint Thomas More Parish. “We didn’t have to go to Scranton. To have the Bishop here was pretty awesome.”

Throughout his homily, Bishop Bambera reflects on the Gospel account of the Road to Emmaus, reminding the faithful that Christ walks with them

even in the midst of life’s struggles and uncertainties.

He encourages Catholics to trust that God’s love remains constant, even during moments of difficulty.

“God’s love isn’t based on our righteousness or how perfectly we recite our prayers,” Bishop Bambera told those gathered at each Holy Hour. “It is pure gift.”

For many parishioners, hearing that message while kneeling in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament has been especially meaningful.

“When you are there, in the presence of Christ, it just pours through your heart and enlivens your faith,” said Annette Deitz of Divine Mercy Parish in Scranton.

As the Lenten season continues, Bishop Bambera hopes the remaining Holy Hours will help Catholics deepen their relationship with Christ and discover the peace that comes from encountering Him in prayer.

All Holy Hours begin at 7 p.m., and Catholics are welcome to attend any of the gatherings regardless of parish or deanery affiliation.

## Final Lenten Holy Hour Dates

**Thursday, March 19**

St. John Vianney Parish, Montdale

**Monday, March 23**

Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish, Peckville

**Tuesday, March 24**

Saints Peter & Paul Parish, Plains



**More than 300 people attended the Lenten Holy Hour in the Hazleton Deanery at Saint John Bosco Church in Conyngham March 5, 2026. (Photos/Dan Piazza)**



**Father Stephen Bosomafi incenses the Blessed Sacrament during a Holy Hour for the Honesdale Deanery at Saint Thomas More Parish in Lake Ariel March 2, 2026.**



**Faithful pray in front of the Blessed Sacrament during the Holy Hour for the Sayre Deanery at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish in Wyalusing Feb. 19, 2026.**

# When the Blessed Sacrament is Exposed for Adoration

## *What the Faithful Felt During Our Lenten Holy Hours*



**Judy Korgeski, Saint Carlo Acutis Parish**

“It makes me feel very comfortable and makes me feel like I am in the arms of Jesus.”



**Frank Polidora, MD, Saint John Bosco Parish**

“It makes me feel God’s love for me. Like the Bishop said, he loves because he’s God, not because of what we do.”



**Deacon Andrew Ciccaroni, Saint Thomas More Parish**

“I get a warmth in my heart ... In the silence of a Holy Hour, you can definitely feel that Christ is present with you.”



**Nancy Newell, Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish**

“It made me feel all the blessings the Lord has given me ... It is extremely uplifting.”



**Annette Deitz, Divine Mercy Parish**

“It feels like my heart just explodes. I get chills. I sat and prayers and words to Jesus were coming to me that I didn’t expect.”



**Ken Francis, Nativity of Our Lord Parish**

“You feel closer with God than if you were praying at home or anywhere else.”

# Catholic Ministries Appeal grant makes parish Lenten retreat possible

DUPONT – Two newly linked parishes in Luzerne County joined forces at the start of Lent to offer something they had not experienced in years – a parish mission designed to renew hearts and strengthen unity in Christ.

From Feb. 26-28, parishioners from Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish, Dupont, and Queen of the Apostles Parish, Avoca, gathered for “Return to the Heart of the Father,” a three-day Lenten retreat led by national Catholic speaker Allan Wright.

Hosted at both parish churches, the retreat featured opportunities for Mass, Eucharistic Adoration, Stations of the Cross, a communal penance service and multiple presentations – along with shared meals that gave parishioners time to connect.

“We decided to begin Lent with three days of prayer to reflect upon God’s love for us as we return to the heart of the Father,” Father Thomas Petro, pastor of both parishes, said.



**Allan Wright, a national speaker and author, leads a Lenten retreat at Sacred Heart of Jesus Church in Dupont on Feb. 28, 2026. (Photo/Dan Piazza)**

This marks the first Lent the two communities are together in a formal linkage, and the retreat was planned intentionally to build a sense of togetherness.

“It was our hope to allow the parishioners from both parishes to come together and get to know each other in a better way, but also find unity in Christ,” Father Petro added.

The mission was made possible through a grant from the Catholic Ministries Appeal.

Wright, an author, adjunct professor at Seton Hall University and Executive Director of the N.J. Family Policy Center, brought Scripture to life

through real life stories.

He encouraged participants to recognize the “silent witnesses” of the Gospel – figures such as the servants at Cana and the friends of the paralytic – who made a difference without saying a word.

He also focused on practical reflections of family life and discipleship.

“So much of what Jesus does takes place in the home – his teaching, healing, forgiving, sharing meals – it doesn’t take place on the sandy shores of the Galilee or the bustling streets of Jerusalem but in the home,” he added. “How can we bring our faith alive in the home?”

Parishioners said the retreat left a lasting impression.

“I thought it was fantastic,” parishioner Gary Beccaloni said. “I loved his presentation, his humor, it was an amazing three days.”

Scott Hilenski, who attended all three days, appreciated the

insights Wright provided. “He had a great way of portraying images through meditations that he’s had from different parts of Scripture that you usually don’t hear about,” he said.

In the days since the retreat ended, Father Petro said it offered much more than simply words of positive feedback.

“This retreat, for us, provided us with a great gift – inner renewal,” Father Petro stated. “I could really feel among our people a certain joy and lightness of spirit.”

## ‘Stations and Soup’ tradition strengthens faith and fellowship in Wilkes-Barre

WILKES-BARRE – Each Friday during Lent, the faithful gather at Saint Robert Bellarmine Parish for a tradition that blends prayer, sacrifice and fellowship.

Known as ‘Stations and Soup,’ the weekly gathering begins with Stations of the Cross at Saint Aloysius Church at 12:10 p.m., followed by a simple meatless meal shared among parishioners and visitors.

“It’s a meager meal,” Father Richard Cirba, pastor of Saint Robert Bellarmine Parish, said. “During Lent, there is obviously no meat on Friday, so the people who make the soup prepare things like clam chowder or cream of broccoli.”

While the meal offers nourishment, the focus of each week’s gathering remains on the centuries-old devotion of

the Stations of the Cross, which invites the faithful to reflect on Christ’s journey to Calvary.

“The Stations are a powerful devotion because they allow us to walk the road with Jesus – the 14 Stations of the Cross,” Father Cirba explained. “We do it out of love for Him and because He died for our sins and for our salvation.”

Following the prayer service, parishioners gather to share soup, bread, and conversation.

“We usually have five different types of soup,” parishioner Peg Warmouth said. “It’s nice because it gets people together that we don’t see every day because we all go to different Masses. We also have people who don’t belong to our parish who come. Everybody is welcome.”



**Father Richard Cirba, pastor, Saint Robert Bellarmine and Exaltation of the Holy Cross Parishes, talks with parishioners who are enjoying various soups as part of ‘Stations and Soup’ on Feb. 20, 2026, the First Friday in Lent this year. (Photo/Dan Piazza)**

Barbara Flora, another parishioner who helps prepare soup for the gathering, said the meal reflects the spirit of sacrifice that marks the Lenten season.

“It is my little offering that I can do, and I bring it here to share it with people,” Flora said.

For many participants, the gathering offers more than a

meal – it provides an opportunity to build relationships within the parish community.

“One of the sweetest things is the camaraderie,” Flora added. “You get a chance to speak with people that you don’t get a chance to see during the week. You see them at Mass, and you see them for Stations – but you don’t know their names yet – so you can sit with them and enjoy being together with one another.”

In a busy world, Father Cirba believes the ‘Stations and Soup’ tradition offers an opportunity to pause, pray, and remember the meaning of the Lenten season.

“We live in a world that is in desperate need of peace and justice,” he said. “This is one of my favorite devotions during Lent because it helps us to grow in our love for Jesus and the cross.”

# Saint Carlo Acutis Eucharistic Miracles exhibit inspires Hazleton area faithful



**Most Precious Blood Church in Hazleton hosted an exhibit on Saint Carlo Acutis, including a first class relic of the first millennial saint's hair, on the weekend of March 7-9.**

HAZLETON — On the weekend of the Third Sunday of Lent, hundreds of people in the greater Hazleton area encountered the story of a modern-day saint whose devotion to the Eucharist continues to inspire believers around the world.

Parishioners from the Hazleton Deanery and beyond were invited to visit Most Precious Blood Church March 7-9 to view an exhibit on Saint Carlo Acutis, the first millennial saint to be canonized by the Catholic Church.

The traveling display, on loan from Malvern Retreat House in southeast Pennsylvania, features more than 100 Eucharistic miracles that Acutis researched and cataloged before his death from leukemia in 2006 at the age of fifteen.

Using his skills in computer programming, the Italian teenager designed a website to share the stories of these miracles — a project that continues to evangelize people today.

The exhibit was put on display as part of the Hazleton Deanery's 'Road to Resurrection' initiative for Lent 2026 — a series of opportunities for the faithful to deepen their relationship with Christ during the Lenten season.

The 'Road to Resurrection' events began on March 5 with a Holy Hour at Saint John Bosco Church, where more than 300 people gathered in prayer with the Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton.

For Father Anthony Generose, pastor of Our Lady of Peace Parish, said the activities all came together as the result of a Spirit-led collaboration across the deanery.

"This has all come together by God's grace and the Holy Spirit," Father Generose said.

Father Generose said he was particularly touched by a video on Saint Carlo Acutis that was part of the exhibit.

"When you watch the video, you get to see this child that can connect with adults and with youth," he explained. "I sat there and I wept. I've never had the experience of listening to the mother of a saint speak about her son and his friends and the adults that grew up with him in Italy."

Parishioner Maureen Franzosa suggested bringing the exhibit to Hazleton after encountering it while visiting family near Philadelphia. Franzosa first experienced the display while visiting her granddaughter, who had been asked to reflect on Acutis as part of her Confirmation preparation.

"I walked in and got this serene feeling of peace," Franzosa said. "I couldn't believe everything that this young man, in his short life up to 15, had done to try to connect us to the Eucharist."

She believes the young saint's witness offers an important connection for youth today.

"He's a millennial saint. I think he could speak to our youth who need some kind of connection today," she added.

That same hope inspired members of the Our Lady of Peace Parish Vocation Ministry Team, who helped welcome visitors throughout the weekend.

"One of the target groups for us, as a vocation committee, is the young. We want to bring more teenagers back to the church," parishioner Nicole Composto said.

As visitors moved from panel to panel, they encountered detailed accounts of Eucharistic miracles from around the world — events recognized by the Church as scientifically inexplicable signs connected to the Blessed Sacrament.

didn't realize how many Eucharistic miracles there were. It's overwhelming to walk through and see how many."

Judy Kotzer, 84, was also struck by the number of Eucharistic miracles.

"A lot of times we go to Communion and don't really realize what is there," she said. "But this really shows us."

"The displays, the pictures, (they're) all beautiful," Composto expressed. "I said."



## BISHOP BAMBERA'S SCHEDULE

- March 19** - Lenten Holy Hour for the Clarks Summit Deanery  
Saint John Vianney Parish, Montdale, 7:00 p.m.
- March 22** - Bishop's Youth Award Mass for Eastern & Western Regions  
Cathedral of Saint Peter, Scranton, 2:30 p.m.
- March 23** - Lenten Holy Hour for the Carbondale Deanery  
Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish, Peckville, 7:00 p.m.
- March 24** - Lenten Holy Hour for the Wilkes-Barre Deanery  
Saints Peter & Paul Parish, Plains, 7:00 p.m.
- March 25** - School Mass for Marian Catholic High School  
Tamaqua, 9:00 a.m.
- March 25** - Lenten Day of Reflection for Priests  
Diocesan Pastoral Center, Scranton, Noon
- March 29** - Palm Sunday Mass  
Cathedral of Saint Peter, Scranton, 12:15 p.m.
- March 31** - Chrism Mass  
Cathedral of Saint Peter, Scranton, 4:00 p.m.
- April 2** - Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper  
Cathedral of Saint Peter, Scranton, 5:30 p.m.
- April 3** - Commemoration of the Lord's Passion  
Cathedral of Saint Peter, Scranton, 12:10 p.m.
- April 4** - Easter Vigil Mass  
Cathedral of Saint Peter, Scranton, 8:00 p.m.
- April 5** - Easter Sunday Mass  
Cathedral of Saint Peter, Scranton, 10:00 a.m.
- April 8** - Confirmation for Saint Paul & Mary, Mother of God Parishes  
Saint Paul Church, Scranton, 5:00 p.m.
- April 9** - Healing Mass for Survivors of Abuse  
Cathedral of Saint Peter, Scranton, 12:10 p.m.
- April 12** - Mass for the Second Sunday of Easter  
King's College, Wilkes-Barre, 8:00 p.m.
- April 13** - Confirmation for SS Anthony & Rocco and Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parishes  
Saint Anthony of Padua Church, Dunmore, 5:00 p.m.
- April 15** - School Mass for Holy Family Academy  
Hazleton, 9:00 a.m.
- April 16** - Confirmation for Sacred Heart of Jesus, Queen of Angels and Saint John Vianney Parishes  
Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish, Peckville, 5:00 p.m.

# FINANCIAL REPORT

## Diocese of Scranton Fiscal Year 2024-2025



Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

*"Now it is of course required of stewards that they be found trustworthy." (1 Corinthians 4:2)*

With the Church having just concluded the Jubilee Year of Hope, we give thanks for the leadership of Pope Leo XIV, who has spoken often about unity, authentic co-responsibility among the People of God, and transparency in the administration of the Church's goods.

Our Holy Father has reminded us that the resources of the Church are never ends in themselves, but instruments placed at the service of communion, mission, and charity. His words challenge us to be faithful stewards - together.

In this regard, I present to you the audited financial statements of the Administrative Offices of the Diocese of Scranton for the 2024-2025 Fiscal Year. These statements, prepared in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles and reviewed by independent auditors, reflect our ongoing commitment to accountability, integrity, and clarity in all that we do.

Every assessment from our parishes, every contribution to the Catholic Ministries Appeal, every bequest and gift entrusted to the Church supports ministries that form disciples, educate our children, care for our retired priests, spread the Good News of the Gospel, and serve those most in need across the eleven counties of northeastern and north central Pennsylvania.

This past year, we have continued to advance important initiatives that shape the future of our local Church, including:

- **Catholic Foundation for the Diocese of Scranton:** We have continued to strengthen and promote our Catholic Foundation, dedicated to sustaining the pastoral, educational, and charitable ministries of our Diocese through endowments, planned gifts, and other charitable contributions. By honoring donor intent and embracing responsible Catholic investing, the Foundation will help ensure the long-term vitality of our local Church for generations.
- **Vision 2030 Pastoral Planning Process:** Throughout 2025, we continued to look proactively at the realities of our local church and implemented modifications to meet future needs, including three parish consolidations, five linkages (including one with three parishes), and the appointment of a new Parish Life Coordinator.
- **Catholic Schools Strategic Growth Plan:** During 2025, we continued implementing our Strategic Growth Plan entitled, "Our Faith. Our Students. Our Future." We have been working hard to achieve a balanced budget through a new sustainable tuition model and expanded participation in scholarship programs. We also began investing millions of dollars in our school facilities - strengthening both the mission and long-term stability of Catholic education.

Co-responsibility means that the mission of the Church belongs to all of us. Transparency means that we openly account for how the resources entrusted to us are managed. Unity means that we move forward together - with trust in God and trust in one another.

I am deeply grateful for your continued generosity and for the sacrifices you make to sustain the life of our Diocese. Please be assured that I, along with our diocesan leadership team, remain committed to prudent financial management, thoughtful planning, and faithful stewardship of all that has been entrusted to us.

As you review this report, I invite you to see not simply numbers on a page, but a reflection of a Church alive in faith - serving, teaching, evangelizing, and caring in the name of Christ.

May God bless you abundantly for your goodness and strengthen us in our shared mission.

Faithfully yours in Christ,

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



The financial information contained on the following pages is derived from the audited financial statements of the Administrative Offices of the Diocese of Scranton as of June 30, 2025 and 2024. The full report is available under the "Financial Services" page at [dioceseofscranton.org](https://dioceseofscranton.org)

# CATHOLIC COMMUNITY AT A GLANCE

STATISTICS REFLECT THE 2025 CALENDAR YEAR

**TOTAL POPULATION**  
1,112,166  
**CATHOLIC POPULATION**  
290,500



**1**  
BISHOP

**1**  
RETIRED BISHOP

**75**  
PRIESTS ASSIGNED IN  
THE DIOCESE

**5**  
PRIESTS ASSIGNED  
OUTSIDE DIOCESE

**91**  
RETIRED OR ILL  
PRIESTS

**171**  
TOTAL NUMBER OF  
DIOCESAN PRIESTS



**23**  
INTERNATIONAL PRIESTS  
SERVING IN THE DIOCESE

**51**  
RELIGIOUS ORDER  
PRIESTS

**2**  
RELIGIOUS ORDER  
BROTHERS

**305**  
RELIGIOUS ORDER  
SISTERS

**105**  
PERMANENT  
DEACONS

**12**  
SEMINARIANS



**2,229**  
BAPTISMS

**1,801**  
FIRST COMMUNIONS

**1,711**  
CONFIRMATIONS

**3,319**  
FUNERAL SERVICES

**405**  
MARRIAGES  
336 CATHOLIC  
69 INTERFAITH

**103**  
NUMBER OF PARISHES  
ACROSS 11 COUNTIES

## A message from the Chief Financial Officer of the Diocese of Scranton

Dear Friends,

As the Chief Financial Officer of the Diocese of Scranton, it continues to be my privilege to present the 2024-2025 audited financial report for the Diocese of Scranton Administrative Offices. This report provides an overview of our prudent use of funds that have been received from our faithful for the period covering July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025.

I want to express my sincere gratitude to the faithful who continue to support the mission of the Church. We are committed to ongoing transparency and the wise use of the financial gifts entrusted to us by our parishioners, donors and supporters. Our mission of serving the community, serving Catholic ministries and sustaining the work of the Diocese of Scranton in spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ is only possible with this support. It is imperative we are committed to careful and intentional stewardship, integrity, and transparency of these resources in all that we do.

I would like to share some highlights in both revenue and expenses from the most recent 2024-2025 Fiscal Year:

- Due to ongoing stewardship commitment at the parish level, we continue to see an increase in assessment revenue to the Diocese of Scranton. Despite the consolidation of physical locations within the Diocese, we remain ever grateful for the continued support of the Church as a whole. Catholic school assessments also grew, in line with parish stewardship, as well. These assessments are passed directly to the Catholic School System once received.

- The Diocese continued to experience increases in our self-insurance premiums. This increase is due to the inflationary, ever-increasing cost of claims and premium increases being passed along by our carriers.

- The Catholic Ministries Appeal remained strong at \$3.8 million due to the generosity of the faithful. These funds are used in accordance with its case statement, including Seminarian Education, Catholic Education, Care for Retired Clergy, Catholic Social Services, Catholic Communications, Social Justice and Faith Formation Grants, and Parish Life initiatives. We remain grateful for this strong support for these ministries.

- Donations and Bequests remain stable, even while decreasing from the prior year. There were some large bequests in the prior year which did not replicate at the same level in the current year.

- National Collections remain strong. These funds are used to support various national ministries that are supported through our national office.

- Scholarship Foundation Contributions grew from \$527,559 last year to \$626,414

this fiscal year. We are very grateful for the individuals and businesses who continue to support Catholic education through the Pennsylvania EITC Program.

- Investment Income and Gains from Sale of Investments was \$1.6 million, up \$672,000 from approximately \$1 million the prior year. This was due to favorable equity markets which continued to provide strong returns for another year.

- A significant increase in our administrative costs was due to the increased cost of both our medical self-insurance plan and our liability self-insurance program. These two programs experienced an increase of \$1.6 million collectively, or an 11% increase, from the prior year. These cost drivers include increased cost of claims (rising healthcare and property replacement costs), higher excess carrier premiums and higher administrative costs.

- Other changes include a Bad Debt Expense from the Catholic School System, which was unable to remain current on their medical premiums. This resulted in a \$3.4 million reserve in the current fiscal year as compared to \$2.4 million in the prior year. The Catholic School System implemented a Strategic Growth Plan in 2025 which includes a break even budget for Fiscal 2025-2026. We are optimistic the Catholic School System will be able to stay current on premiums in the future.

- The Diocese received a \$5 million reduction of a Related Party Payable on its Loan Payable Due to the Diocese of Scranton Institute. The Diocese also benefited from positive investment market conditions, offset by rising interest rates, which provides a Pension Related Credit of \$507,000 this year, compared to a \$186,577 in the prior year. Unrealized gains were \$1.4 million in the current year compared to \$2.2 million in the prior year. Both years had net unrealized gains from the strong equity markets.

I invite you to view the complete audited financial statement for the 2024-2025 Fiscal Year on the Diocese of Scranton website at [dioceseofscranton.org/directory/offices/financial-services](https://dioceseofscranton.org/directory/offices/financial-services).

Please know the Diocesan Finance Office works tirelessly to control costs and find new ways to be more efficient with its resources. That work is constantly ongoing while we continue to invest in evangelization, clergy formation and Hispanic ministry programs.

Faithfully yours in Christ,

*Eileen Giombetti*

Eileen Giombetti

Diocese of Scranton Chief Financial Officer



# IMPACTING FAMILIES AND CHILDREN

Catholic Social Services Responded Compassionately to the Needs of Individuals & Families in 2025

## 122,079

Meals served at Saint Vincent de Paul Kitchen in Wilkes-Barre



## 28,864

Households served through area food pantries

9,434 in Scranton  
5,510 in Hazleton

11,003 in Carbondale  
2,917 in Wilkes-Barre



## 20,584

Individuals assisted with clothing

8,848 in Scranton  
7,180 in Carbondale  
3,678 in Wilkes-Barre  
878 via Mobile Clothing Trailer



## 5,312

Children provided gifts at Christmas through the annual 'Gifts for Kids' Program

## 1,178

Families receiving assistance through Children & Youth Truancy Programs



## 12,573

Nights of shelter provided through emergency shelters

4,400 at Saint Anthony's Haven in Scranton  
4,319 at Mother Teresa's Haven in Wilkes-Barre  
3,854 at Divine Providence in Hazleton



## 24,450

Meals served in parishes through St. Francis Kitchen Outreach Program

7,350 in Olyphant      10,890 in Carbondale  
3,450 in Elmhurst      2,760 in Archbald



## 8 women & 3 babies

Provided housing at Shepherd's Maternity House in Monroe County

# REVENUE FOR DIOCESAN ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES

## STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES (Years Ending June 30, 2025 and 2024)

The Diocese of Scranton's operating revenue for the 2024-2025 fiscal year was \$39.2 million.

This represents an increase of more than \$2 million over the previous Fiscal Year. The growth was driven largely by adjustments within our Self-Insurance Programs and continued support from parishes.

The Diocese's Self-Insurance Programs, particularly medical coverage, once again represented the largest source of revenue. An increase over last year reflected higher premium rates implemented to meet rising healthcare costs.

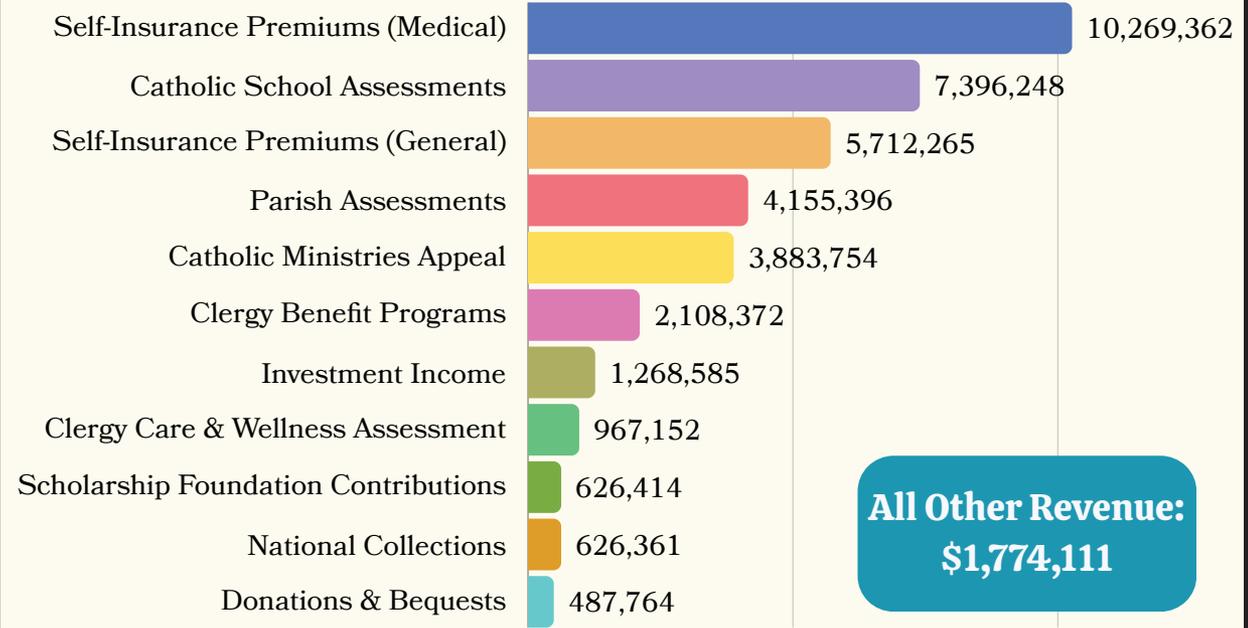
Parish assessments also demonstrated steady strength. Catholic School Assessments increased to \$7.39 million, directly supporting the mission of our Catholic School System. Parish Assessments rose to \$4.15 million, helping fund essential central services such as human resources, financial services and administrative support.

The Catholic Ministries Appeal remained consistent, generating \$3.88 million after parish rebates - but there was a notable decrease in donations and bequests - reminding us that philanthropic giving can fluctuate from year to year.

These revenue streams reflect a Diocese sustained primarily through shared responsibility with parishes, faithful participation in the Catholic Ministries Appeal, and prudent financial management in the face of rising costs.



### DIOCESAN ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES REVENUE



	2025			2024		
	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total
Parish Assessments						
Diocesan	\$4,155,396	-	\$4,155,396	\$3,905,722	-	\$3,905,722
Clergy Care & Wellness	\$967,152	-	\$967,152	\$960,012	-	\$960,012
Catholic Schools	\$7,396,248	-	\$7,396,248	\$6,974,069	-	\$6,974,069
Intra-Diocesan Billings						
Self-Insurance Premiums (General)	\$5,712,265	-	\$5,712,265	\$4,725,748	-	\$4,725,748
Self-Insurance Premiums (Medical)	\$10,269,362	-	\$10,269,362	\$9,971,706	-	\$9,971,706
Clergy Benefit Programs	\$2,108,372	-	\$2,108,372	\$2,069,173	-	\$2,069,173
Diocesan Program Revenues	\$210,500	-	\$210,500	\$273,900	-	\$273,900
<b>Schedule 1</b>						
Diocesan Annual Appeal	-	\$3,883,754	\$3,883,754	-	\$3,864,989	\$3,864,989
Special Collections	-	\$28,837	\$28,837	-	\$26,374	\$26,374
Donations and Bequests	\$241,373	\$246,391	\$487,764	\$596,763	\$210,364	\$807,127
Scholarship Foundation Contributions	-	\$626,414	\$626,414	-	\$527,559	\$527,559
Custodial Receipts						
National Collections	-	\$626,361	\$626,361	-	\$912,884	\$912,884
Unemployment	\$208,093	-	\$208,093	\$287,424	-	\$287,424
Propagation Collections	\$315,296	-	\$315,296	\$444,983	-	\$444,983
Other Revenue	\$558,665	-	\$558,665	\$469,904	-	\$469,904
Investment Income, Net	\$786,104	\$482,481	\$1,268,585	\$337,380	\$847,056	\$1,224,436
Net Realized Gain (Loss) on Sale of Investments	\$223,226	\$152,038	\$375,264	(\$172,952)	(\$79,182)	(\$252,134)
Net Realized Gain on Sale of Property	\$77,456	-	\$77,456	\$9,301	-	\$9,301
Net Assets Released from Restrictions (Note 7):						
Satisfaction of Program Restrictions	\$6,274,165	(\$6,274,165)	-	\$6,376,748	(\$6,376,748)	-
<b>Total Revenues, Gains and Other Support</b>	<b>\$39,503,673</b>	<b>(\$227,889)</b>	<b>\$39,275,784</b>	<b>\$37,269,881</b>	<b>(\$66,704)</b>	<b>\$37,203,177</b>

# EXPENSES FOR DIOCESAN ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES

## STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES (Years Ending June 30, 2025 and 2024)

The Diocese of Scranton's expenses for the 2024-2025 Fiscal Year were \$38.8 million.

That represents an increase from \$36.4 million in the previous fiscal year.

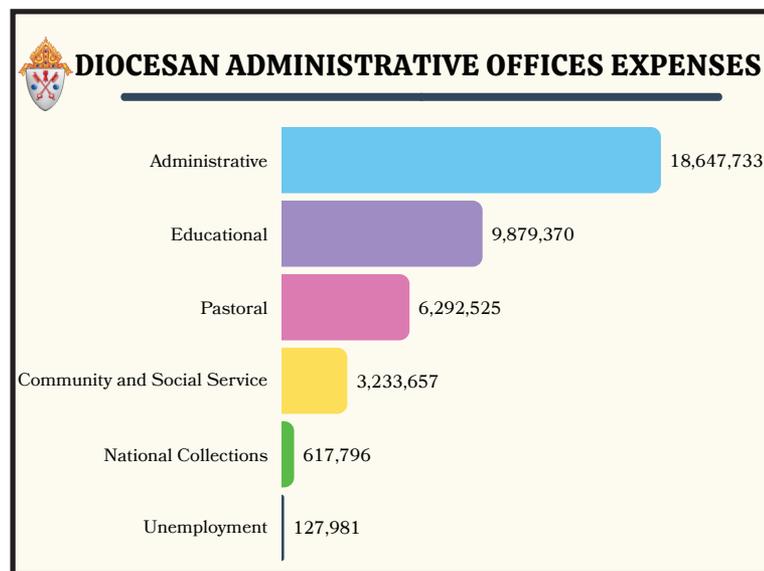
Throughout the 2024-2025 fiscal year, the Diocese of Scranton continued its mission of proclaiming the Gospel and serving the people of God throughout the 11 counties of northeastern and north central Pennsylvania.

As in previous years, the largest portion of Diocesan spending was directed towards administrative services, totaling \$18.65 million. These services provide essential support to parishes, schools, and ministries across the Diocese, including areas such as human resources, financial services, information technology and other centralized functions that help ensure operations are carried out efficiently and responsibly.

The second largest category of expenses involved educational support, totaling \$9.88 million. This funding supports the mission of Catholic education throughout the Diocese, helping to sustain schools that form young people in faith, academic excellence and service to others.

Diocesan spending also supported a variety of pastoral ministries, totaling \$6.29 million, which help strengthen parish life, support clergy and promote evangelization and faith formation opportunities for people of all ages.

In addition, community and social services ministries accounted for \$3.23 million. These ministries extend the Church's mission beyond parish walls, providing assistance, outreach and support to individuals and families in need throughout the region.



	2025			2024		
	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total
<b>Total Revenues, Gains and Other Support</b>	\$39,503,673	(\$227,889)	\$39,275,784	\$37,269,881	(\$66,704)	\$37,203,177
<b>Expenses</b>						
Pastoral	\$6,292,525	-	\$6,292,525	\$6,191,180	-	\$6,191,180
Educational	\$9,879,370	-	\$9,879,370	\$9,493,728	-	\$9,493,728
Community & Social Service	\$3,233,657	-	\$3,233,657	\$2,548,617	-	\$2,548,617
Administrative	\$18,647,733	-	\$18,647,733	\$17,153,918	-	\$17,153,918
<b>Custodial Disbursements</b>						
National Collections	\$617,796	-	\$617,796	\$912,884	-	\$912,884
Unemployment	\$127,981	-	\$127,981	\$104,185	-	\$104,185
<b>Total Expenses</b>	\$38,799,062	-	\$38,799,062	\$36,404,512	-	\$36,404,512
<b>Excess of Revenues Over Expenses</b>	\$704,611	(\$227,889)	\$476,722	\$865,369	(\$66,704)	\$798,665
<b>OTHER CHANGES</b>						
Change in Value of Beneficial Interest in						
Perpetual Trust	-	\$9,929	\$9,929	-	\$124,049	\$124,049
Provision for Credit Losses	(\$3,372,754)	-	(\$3,372,754)	(\$2,388,312)	-	(\$2,388,312)
Reduction of Related Party Payable	\$5,000,000	-	\$5,000,000	-	-	-
Other Components of Net Periodic Pension Cost	\$336,208	-	\$336,208	\$186,577	-	\$186,577
Pension-Related Changes Other Than Net						
Periodic Pension Cost	\$507,344	-	\$507,344	\$1,097,243	-	\$1,097,243
Net Unrealized Gains and Losses on Investments	\$721,916	\$661,435	\$1,383,351	\$1,546,741	\$659,658	\$2,206,399
<b>Increase in Net Assets</b>	\$3,897,325	\$443,475	\$4,340,800	\$1,307,618	\$717,003	\$2,024,621
<b>Net Assets (Beginning)</b>	\$8,866,542	\$11,266,090	\$20,132,632	\$7,558,924	\$10,549,087	\$18,108,011
<b>Net Assets (Ending)</b>	<b>\$12,763,867</b>	<b>\$11,709,565</b>	<b>\$24,473,432</b>	<b>\$8,866,542</b>	<b>\$11,266,090</b>	<b>\$20,132,632</b>

## Questions & Answers on How the Diocese of Scranton raises and uses money

**Q: What are the key roles and responsibilities of the Diocese and how are they funded?**

**A:** The Diocese exists to support the responsibilities of the Bishop to “teach, govern and sanctify” as he shepherds the parishes and Catholic community across the eleven counties of northeastern and north central Pennsylvania. Among the initiatives the Diocese provides for are:

- Support of, service to priests, deacons, religious and seminarians
- Education, catechesis and lay formation
- Support for parish and family life
- Helping those in need of pastoral care and basic needs

The funds required to execute those responsibilities come from several key sources:

- Parish and Catholic School Assessments - Each parish in the Diocese pays a percentage of its income to support the overall operations and ministries provided by the Diocese.
- Fundraising - The Diocese conducts several fundraisers, including its most significant event the Catholic Ministries Appeal.
- Investments - The Diocese maintains funds that are invested and generate returns that can be used to fund operations while maintaining the principal of those funds.

**Q: What administrative and financial services do parishes rely on the Diocese to provide?**

**A:** The Diocese provides management of a centralized insurance procurement program for all Diocesan entities. This enables better pooling of risk and purchasing power to reduce costs for insurance across all categories - medical, property, workers comp, etc.

In addition, the Diocese also provides:

- Administration of a pension plan and 403B plan for parish, school and other Diocesan employees.
- Basic legal and real estate support services for parishes and schools.
- Administrative support of parishes in areas like Human Resources, Child Protection, and Risk Management.

**Q: How is financial oversight and accountability achieved on the parish level? How are they done on the Diocesan level?**

**A:** The Diocese of Scranton has policies and procedures in place to ensure appropriate controls and best practices are followed in both parishes and schools.

Some of the work is accomplished with the help of the following:

- Finance Councils - The Diocese has a Finance Council as do all parishes, as required by Canon Law, which provide support, guidance and oversight to a pastor. A listing of Diocesan Finance Council members appears on the following page.
- Audits - On an annual basis, the financial statements of the Diocese of Scranton are audited by an independent public accounting firm. The financial statements for the year ended June 30, 2025, were audited by MMQ & Associates, PC, in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States. The 2024-2025 audit report included an opinion that the financial statements for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2025, are fairly presented. The full audited statement is available publicly on the Diocese of Scranton website at [dioceseofscranton.org](http://dioceseofscranton.org).

## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION June 30, 2025 and 2024

	<b>ASSETS</b>	
	<b>2025</b>	<b>2024</b>
Cash and Equivalents	\$14,534,213	\$18,127,400
Accounts Receivable, Less Allowance for credit losses of \$11,386,667 in 2025 and \$8,013,913 in 2024	\$1,708,098	\$1,181,805
Accrued Interest Receivable	\$96,094	\$106,610
Contributions Receivable	\$435,569	\$440,998
Prepaid Expense	\$402,665	\$298,173
Cash Subject to Program Restrictions	\$2,726,119	\$2,232,010
Notes and Loans Receivable	---	\$2,444,315
Investments	\$22,376,016	\$20,815,771
Land, Buildings & Equipment, Net	\$5,498,952	\$5,809,280
Other Assets	\$756,536	\$512,230
Due from Catholic Cemeteries	\$8,709	---
Beneficial Interest in Charitable Trust	\$380,584	\$370,655
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$48,923,555</b>	<b>\$52,339,247</b>

	<b>LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</b>	
	<b>2025</b>	<b>2024</b>
Accounts Payable	\$784,542	\$796,203
Custodial Funds Payable	\$19,798	\$86,606
Contributions Payable	\$724,880	\$614,377
Scholarships Payable	\$705,019	\$535,622
Liability for Pension Benefits	\$1,936,207	\$3,096,706
Accrued Claim Expense	\$2,088,720	\$1,456,514
Accrued Post-Retirement Benefit Obligation	\$6,898,739	\$6,991,662
Deferred Revenue	\$123,660	---
Loans Payable	---	\$2,444,315
Due to Catholic Cemeteries	---	\$16,052
Due to Diocese of Scranton Institute	\$11,168,558	\$16,168,558
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>\$24,450,123</b>	<b>\$32,206,615</b>

<b>NET ASSETS</b>		
Without Donor Restrictions	\$12,763,867	\$8,866,542
With Donor Restrictions	\$11,709,565	\$11,266,090
<b>TOTAL NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$24,473,432</b>	<b>\$20,132,632</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$48,923,555</b>	<b>\$52,339,247</b>

# STATEMENTS OF CASH FLOWS

## June 30, 2025 and 2024

### OPERATING ACTIVITIES

	2025	2024
Increase in Net Assets	\$4,340,800	\$2,024,621
Adjustments to Reconcile Change in Net Assets to Net Cash (Used In) Provided by Operating Activities:		
Net Realized (Gain) Loss on Sale of Investments	(\$375,264)	\$252,134
Net Unrealized Gain on Investments	(\$1,383,351)	(\$2,206,399)
Net Realized Gain on Sale of Property	(\$77,456)	(\$9,301)
(Accretion) Amortization on Investments	(\$45,006)	\$20,468
Depreciation Expense	\$382,473	\$364,659
Provision for Credit Losses	\$3,372,754	\$2,388,312
Change in Beneficial Interest in Charitable Trust	(\$9,929)	(\$124,049)
(Increase) Decrease in Accounts Receivable	(\$3,899,047)	\$863,892
Decrease (Increase) in Accrued Interest Receivable	\$10,516	(\$48,231)
Decrease in Contributions Receivable	\$5,429	\$10,913
Increase in Due from Catholic Cemeteries	(\$8,709)	-
(Increase) Decrease in Prepaid Expense	(\$104,492)	\$389,972
Increase in Other Assets	(\$244,306)	(\$69,355)
Decrease in Accounts Payable	(\$11,661)	(\$503,533)
Decrease in Custodial Funds Payable	(\$66,808)	(\$217,165)
Increase (Decrease) in Contributions & Scholarships Payable	\$279,900	(\$273,705)
Decrease in Liability for Pension Benefits	(\$1,160,499)	(\$1,765,318)
Increase (Decrease) in Accrued Claim Expense	\$632,206	(\$43,826)
(Decrease) Increase in Accrued Post-Retirement Benefit Obligation	(\$92,923)	\$80,383
Increase in Refundable Advances	\$123,600	-
Decrease in Due to Catholic Cemeteries	(\$16,052)	(\$949,429)
(Decrease) Increase in Due to Diocese of Scranton Institute	(\$5,000,000)	\$6,418
<b>NET CASH (USED IN) PROVIDED BY OPERATING ACTIVITIES</b>	<b><u>(\$3,347,765)</u></b>	<b><u>\$191,461</u></b>

### INVESTING ACTIVITIES

	2025	2024
Purchase of Fixed Assets	(\$72,145)	(\$429,880)
Proceeds From Sale of Property	\$77,456	\$9,301
Principal Collected-Loans Receivable	\$2,444,315	\$192,716
Purchase of Investments	(\$5,716,946)	(\$6,129,431)
Proceeds from Sale of Investments	\$5,960,322	\$6,889,732
Net Cash Provided By Investing Activities	<u>\$2,693,002</u>	<u>\$532,438</u>
Financing Activities		
Principal Payments on Loan	(\$2,444,315)	(\$192,716)
Net Cash Used in Financing Activities	<u>(\$2,444,315)</u>	<u>(\$192,716)</u>

<b>Net (Decrease) Increase in Cash</b>	<b><u>(\$3,099,078)</u></b>	<b><u>\$531,183</u></b>
<b>Cash, Cash Equivalents and Restricted Cash, Beginning</b>	<b><u>\$20,359,410</u></b>	<b><u>\$19,828,227</u></b>
<b>Cash, Cash Equivalents and Restricted Cash, Ending</b>	<b><u>\$17,260,332</u></b>	<b><u>\$20,359,410</u></b>

## Financial Accountability

Transparency and accountability are important parts of our stewardship responsibilities. Each year, the Diocese subjects itself to an independent audit. Diocesan leadership has established and regularly confers with the Diocesan Finance Council. The council, whose existence is required by Canon Law, focuses on financial policies, procedures and activities of the Church of Scranton.

Current members of the Diocesan Finance Council are: Most Reverend Joseph C. Bambera, John Devine, John Graham, Carlon Preate, Rev. Gerald Shantillo and Paul Woelkers.



Diocesan finances are audited by McGrail Merkel Quinn & Associates, P.C., Certified Public Accountants & Consultants. The full audited financial statements for the Fiscal Year 2024-25 are published on the Diocesan website at: [www.dioceseofscranton.org/directory/offices/financial-services](http://www.dioceseofscranton.org/directory/offices/financial-services)

*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.*



Over the last month, the Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, celebrated Mass with students in three more school communities: **Wyoming Area Catholic School in Exeter**, Feb. 24; **La Salle Academy in Jessup**, March 4; and **Our Lady of Peace School in Clarks Green**, March 5. During Lent, the Bishop reminded all of the students that is a time to grow closer to Jesus through prayer, sacrifice, and acts of love. He also spoke in a special way about the saints, encouraging the students to look to their example as they strive to become people that God created them to be.

The Peer Listeners group at **Notre Dame Jr./Sr. High School in East Stroudsburg** sponsored a blanket collection to benefit the shelter at Stroudsburg Wesleyan Church. In addition to blankets, the students also collected new and gently used sweatpants, sweatshirts, and personal care items.



Knights of Columbus, Saint Vincent de Paul Council 11901, Plymouth, recently made a generous donation to the Scholarship Fund at **Good Shepherd Academy in Kingston**. Pictured, from left: Sam Wolfe, Grand Knight; Sophia Jones, GSA Student Council; James Jones, Principal; Frank Hadley, Chairman; Dean Clark, GSA Student Council; Ed Keating, Treasurer; and Joyce Elston, Vice Principal.



Fifth grade students at **Notre Dame Elementary School in East Stroudsburg** hosted a STREAM Activity Day for their fellow students in kindergarten through fourth grade. In celebration of Read Across America Week, one of the challenges was called "Cat's Chaos" where the goal was to balance cups, balls and books!



Kindergarten students at **Saint Agnes School in Towanda** celebrated Dr. Seuss' birthday by making "Oobleck" – a slime-like substance that gets its name from the Dr. Seuss book "Bartholomew and the Oobleck."



Pre-K4 students at **Saint Clare/Saint Paul School in Scranton** were treated to a visit from Bishop Joseph C. Bambera during Read Across America Week. The Bishop celebrated his love of reading by sharing "The Little Engine That Could" with the students.



Students from **Saint Jude School in Mountain Top** recently danced the night away at their annual Snowball Dance.



**Holy Rosary School in Duryea** challenged its students to read 1,000 books. The students reached that goal and pictured are the students who read the most books in Pre-K through third grade.



Fourth grade student Grace Markovich, and fifth grade student Kylie Keller, from **Saint Mary of Mount Carmel School in Dunmore**, buddy up for flashlight Friday to end Read Across America Week.



Students from **Holy Redeemer High School in Wilkes-Barre** celebrated the importance of vocations by hosting a lunch with local clergy and religious sisters. The group shared stories, laughter and thoughtful conversation.



Second grade students at **Holy Family Academy in Hazleton** celebrated Chinese New Year last month by designing and wearing their own masks.



Students in the English III classes at **Holy Cross High School in Dunmore** were introduced to a unit on American Romanticism by competing in a lockbox/escape room activity filled with research, riddles, problem solving, puzzles and a scavenger hunt.



Third and fourth grade students at **Epiphany School in Sayre** held a 'Saints Museum' for their classmates and parents to learn more about several saints.



Students from **Saint Nicholas/Saint Mary School in Wilkes-Barre** participated in the Pennsylvania Junior Academy of Science regional competition at Wilkes University. Pictured, from left: Simon Vo, Speranta Montrose, Yarmerys Diaz Ramos, Lauren Montrose and Elina Thach.



**All Saints Academy in Scranton** kicked off Read Across America Week with Champ's Home Run Readers, encouraging students to step up to the plate and make reading a home run.



Students at both **Saint John Neumann Elementary School** and **Saint John Neumann Jr./Sr. High School in Williamsport** participated in a "Souper Bowl" of Caring collection in February. Students were encouraged to donate a can of soup to Saint Joseph the Worker Parish and wear their favorite team jersey.

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## More than 500 young adults honored for living their faith

SCRANTON – More than 500 young people from across the Diocese of Scranton are being recognized this Lent for their commitment to faith and service as recipients of the 2026 Bishop’s Youth Award.

The honor, presented annually since 1996, recognizes eighth- and twelfth-grade students who have demonstrated exceptional dedication to their Catholic faith through volunteer service in their parishes, schools, and communities.

This year’s recipients are being celebrated during three special Masses throughout March at the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton.

“While today is exciting and it’s an honor to receive this award, it is a reminder to all of us that whether we’re going into high school or later years in life, we have to continue doing the service that we’ve done to receive this award,” Kevin Vincent Jr., a senior at Holy Cross High School and member of Saints Anthony & Rocco Parish in Dunmore, said.



**Alessandra Lynn, a senior at Holy Cross High School and parishioner of Saint Eulalia Parish, receives the Bishop’s Youth Award at the Cathedral of Saint Peter on March 15, 2025. (Photo/Mike Melisky)**

Students from the Southern Pastoral Region were honored during the first Mass on March 1. The Cathedral celebration drew a standing-room-only crowd of families, friends, and parish leaders.

Among those recognized was Lilly Holtz, an eighth-grade student from Saint Jude Parish in Mountain Top.

“I’m so happy because I just get to help people in my community,” she said, noting her service as an altar server and her role as student body president at Saint Jude School.

Blake Pribula, an eighth-grade student from Corpus Christi Parish in West Pittston, said receiving the award carried special meaning because he had watched his brother receive the same honor.

“I always thought it was really interesting when he received it, and I’m really excited that I can do the same,” he said.

The second Mass, held March 15 for students from the Northern Pastoral Region, drew such a large crowd that overflow seating was needed in the Diocesan Pastoral Center.

For Jesus Hernandez, a senior at Scranton Prep and a member of Saint Teresa of Calcutta Parish

in Scranton, faith has served as a steady foundation in uncertain times.

“For me, faith has always been my biggest anchor. Christ has always been my biggest anchor,” Hernandez explained. “I think it’s pretty awesome to see how many young people are devoted to their parish and I hope it stays like this for many years to come.”

Meredith Duffy, a senior from Saint Gregory Parish in Clarks Green agreed, saying the Masses are a powerful reminder that young Catholics are not alone in their beliefs.

“I am a sacristan, I’m a catechist for the 8th grade Confirmation class, I volunteer at a lot of bible camps and children’s ministry activities, and it is just a blessing for me to be able to have that involvement in my parish,” Duffy explained. “It is great to be surrounded by fellow parishioners who have also been noticed for the great contributions they’ve made to their parishes.”

The final Bishop’s Youth Award Mass will take place Sunday, March 22, honoring students from the Eastern and Western Pastoral Regions of the Diocese.

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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.

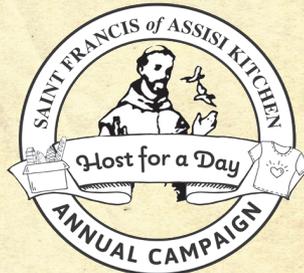


*Recent contributors to the Host-for-a-Day campaign are receiving an appeal directly from the Kitchen through the mail or will be contacted by a member of the Advisory Board. Donations can also be made by:*

**Calling the Kitchen at 570-342-5556, online at [stfranciskitchen.org](http://stfranciskitchen.org), [facebook.com/stfranciskitchen](https://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.**



# LIVING THE STREAM: Students shine in faith-fueled innovation challenge

SCRANTON - The Diocese of Scranton recently celebrated the conclusion of its second annual 'Living the STREAM' competition, raising more than \$116,000 through online votes and sponsorship support to benefit Catholic education.

This year's initiative challenged 231 sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade students from 13 Diocesan Catholic Schools to work in teams to identify real-world problems and propose

creative solutions through video presentations.

In total, 60 student teams participated in the competition, which highlights the connection between Science, Technology, Religion, Engineering, Arts and Math in Catholic education.

The competition ended with an Awards Night celebration at the Diocesan Pastoral Center in Scranton on Feb. 11, 2026, where students, teachers, and families gathered to recognize

the creativity and innovation displayed throughout the project.

Several teams received awards recognizing innovation, creativity and community impact, with some students also earning scholarships and technology prizes.



Nearly 200 people packed the Diocesan Pastoral Center for the 'Living The STREAM' 2026 awards night, where multiple students earned scholarships and prizes for their achievements. The overall Judges' Choice winner was Team God's Gospel (Connor Troy, Alston Lin, and Matthew Suchter) from Our Lady of Peace School in Clarks Green. The team created a working Noah's Ark computerized story game. The Top Fundraisers Award went to The Domers from Good Shepherd Academy in Kingston - Harry Perrillo, Maddox Wilk, and Blake Thomas - who conceptualized domed shelters to serve the homeless population. Good Shepherd Academy also was the top fundraising school, entering 30 teams that collectively raised more than \$30,000.

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## IHM Leadership Statement of Commitment to Our Immigrant and Refugee Neighbors

February 4, 2026

Rooted in Gospel love and our IHM mission and charism, we commit ourselves to stand with our immigrant and refugee neighbors, wherever we serve. We affirm the God-given dignity of every person and pledge to welcome all with compassion, respect, and solidarity.

We promise to:

- Extend hospitable hearts and accompaniment to those seeking safety and belonging.
- Advocate for just and humane immigration policies that protect families and honor human rights.
- Educate and engage our communities to build understanding, empathy, and a culture of welcome.
- Serve generously through our ministries, offering support, resources, and hope.
- Pray faithfully for all who journey in search of peace and a future for their families.

Inspired by Mary, Mother of Hope, we seek to make Christ's love visible in our steadfast commitment to our immigrant and refugee brothers and sisters.

*The Congregation of the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary  
Scranton, Pennsylvania*



*Annual Saint Joseph Day*  
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## Diocese to hold annual Healing Mass for Survivors of Abuse April 9

SCRANTON - The month of April is Child Abuse Prevention Month. It is a time to recognize the importance of families and communities working together to prevent child mistreatment.

The Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, will celebrate a Healing Mass for Survivors of Abuse at 12:10 p.m. on Thursday, April 9, 2026, at the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton.

The Healing Mass provides space for those affected by

### HEALING MASS FOR SURVIVORS OF ABUSE



**Thursday, April 9, 2026  
 12:10 p.m.  
 Cathedral of Saint Peter, Scranton**

Mass will be broadcast live on CTV: Catholic Television and livestream on the Diocese of Scranton website, YouTube Channel and social media platforms for those unable to attend.

abuse to find solace, strength, and support. Through prayer, reflection, and healing, the Diocese of Scranton remains committed to offering care and compassion to survivors.

The Mass will be broadcast live on CTV: Catholic Television of the Diocese of Scranton and livestream on the Diocese of Scranton website, YouTube channel and social media.

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## IRELAND PILGRIMAGE with Bishop Joseph C. Bambera

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## Scranton seminarian receives Ministry of Acolyte

VATICAN CITY - On Sunday, March 1, 2026, seminarian Jacob P. Mutchler from Saint Matthew Parish in East Stroudsburg, was one of 33 seminarians who received the Ministry of Acolyte in the Chapel of



(Photo/Pontifical North American College)

the Immaculate Conception at the Pontifical North American College, Vatican City State.

His Excellency, Archbishop Samuele Sangalli, Adjunct Secretary of the Dicastery for Evangelization, conferred the Ministry of Acolyte.

In the rite of the Institution of Acolyte, Archbishop Sangalli placed the paten, which contains the hosts for the celebration of Mass, in the hands of each candidate. He then said, "Take this vessel with bread for the celebration of the Eucharist.

Make your life worthy of your service at the table of the Lord and of His Church."

The seminarians, currently in their second year of formation at the College, have two additional years of theological studies before being ordained to the priesthood in their home dioceses.

The Pontifical North American College serves as the American seminary in Rome. Founded in 1859 by Blessed Pius IX, the College has formed over 5,000 priests for service in dioceses around the United States and Australia.

## Mensaje de Pascua 2026 del Obispo Bambara

Continuación de la página 3

Y así, como hemos hecho innumerables veces antes ante tanto dolor, estos días sagrados nos invitan a volvernos hacia el único lugar que permite que nuestro mundo y nuestras vidas heridas encuentren perdón, sanación, esperanza y paz: el Misterio Pascual, el milagro de la Pascua, la promesa ganada para nosotros por medio del sufrimiento, la muerte y la resurrección de Jesús.

Pero ¿cómo puede un misterio marcado por el sufrimiento y la muerte ofrecernos esperanza? En su obra *La Pasión y la Cruz*, el padre Ronald Rolheiser escribe que solo en y a través del misterio de la cruz de Jesús —y de la nuestra propia, que tratamos de llevar con dignidad y esperanza— encontramos la paz. “Jesús nunca nos prometió rescate, exenciones, inmunidad contra el cáncer o escape de la muerte. Más bien, prometió que al final habrá redención, vindicación, liberación del sufrimiento y vida eterna. Pero eso es al final; en los primeros y en los capítulos intermedios de nuestra vida habrá el mismo tipo de humillación, dolor y muerte que todos los demás sufren”. Sin embargo, continúa señalando Rolheiser, “tomar tu cruz y estar dispuesto a dar tu vida significa vivir con una fe que cree que nada es imposible para Dios”.

Hermanos y hermanas, por todo lo que hemos experimentado a lo largo del camino de nuestras vidas —en alegría y gozo— y, sí, incluso en el sufrimiento, la muerte y las muchas heridas que hemos soportado, nuestra fe en el poder y la gracia de Dios para obrar maravillas en nuestro mundo, incluso en estos tiempos tan desafiantes, es donde la resurrección comienza a entrar en nuestras vidas hoy y donde la paz empieza a tomar posesión

de nuestros espíritus heridos. Aunque Dios no nos promete un mundo perfecto libre de sufrimiento, por muy fieles que seamos, sí nos promete perdón, redención y vida gracias a la cruz de Jesús.

Uno de los mayores signos del poder de Dios actuando en nuestro mundo a través del Señor Resucitado es la presencia de más de 300 catecúmenos y candidatos de toda la Diócesis de Scranton que serán bautizados en la vida, muerte y resurrección de Jesús y presentados para la plena comunión en la Iglesia Católica durante la gran Vigilia Pascual. Estos catecúmenos y candidatos —nuestros familiares, vecinos y amigos— se unirán a catecúmenos y candidatos de todo el mundo, en números que no hemos experimentado en años, para profesar públicamente su fe en Jesucristo y asumir su lugar con nosotros en el Cuerpo de Cristo, la Iglesia.

Como obispo de esta gran Iglesia local de la Diócesis de Scranton, me siento profundamente conmovido

por el ejemplo de sus vidas. En medio de todo lo que la vida presenta, ustedes continúan viviendo su fe y cumpliendo las promesas de su Bautismo. Continúan sirviendo a sus hermanos y hermanas. Y continúan encontrando esperanza en una relación viva con Jesús resucitado.

Durante estos últimos

días de Cuaresma, la Semana Santa y la Pascua, rezo para que lleguemos a apreciar más profundamente que nunca el hecho de que verdaderamente somos bendecidos por Dios de muchas más maneras de las que quizás creemos o imaginamos. Que continuemos confiando en la promesa de Dios de sostenernos y disipar nuestros

miedos más profundos. Y que abramos nuestros corazones a Jesús resucitado y le permitamos llenarlos con su amor y su paz.

Fielmente suyo en Cristo,

*Joseph C. Bambara*

Mons. Joseph C. Bambara  
Obispo de Scranton



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# Divine Mercy Sunday

APRIL 12, 2026

Divine Mercy Parish, 312 Davis Street, Scranton, PA



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

## SCHEDULE

12:30 PM

Rosary and Sacrament of Reconciliation  
(Divine Mercy Story)

2:00 PM

Liturgy (Mass)

Exposition of Blessed Sacrament

3:00 PM

Chaplet of Divine Mercy

Solemn Benediction

Procession with the Blessed Sacrament

Blessing with Relic of St. Faustina

Veneration of the Divine Mercy Painting

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

- All are invited to join in the Divine Mercy celebration -

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

## Parade Day begins with prayer at Cathedral

SCRANTON – Hundreds of faithful gathered at the Cathedral of Saint Peter on March 14 to begin one of the region's most beloved traditions – Scranton's annual Saint Patrick's Parade – with prayer and thanksgiving.

The Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, served as principal celebrant and homilist for the annual Parade Day Mass, which has long marked the official start of one of the largest Saint Patrick's Day parades in the country.

In his homily, the Bishop reflected on the enduring example of Saint Patrick, who returned to Ireland after escaping slavery to preach the Gospel.

"God takes us as we are and uses us as instruments of peace in building his Kingdom," Bishop Bambera said, noting that Patrick's life reminds Christians of their call to forgiveness, reconciliation, and service to others.

The Mass drew members of



Members of the Society of Irish Women, who sponsor the broadcast of the Parade Day Mass on Catholic Television, stand for the entrance procession. (Photo/Mike Melisky)

Irish cultural organizations, civic leaders, and parade participants, including visitors from Scranton's sister city of Ballina in County Mayo, Ireland.

"It's so fitting that the parade starts with Mass," said Jarlath Munnelly, Cathaoirleach of Ballina, who traveled to Scranton for the celebration. "Faith was such an important part of keeping (Irish) communities together."

Local Irish groups also

highlighted the religious roots of the celebration.

"It is a celebration of Saint Patrick – traditionally a Catholic holiday," Tammy Jackson, President of the Society of Irish Women, said. "It almost has to start with the Catholic Church."

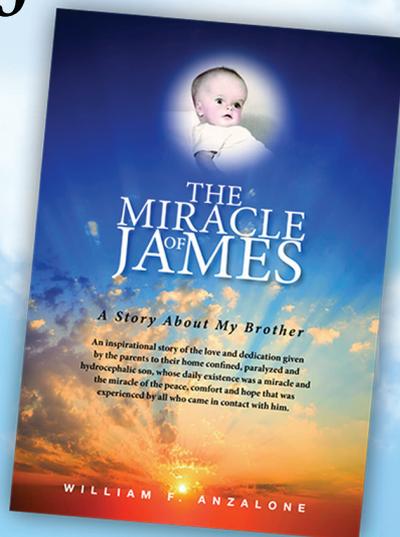
"We are very proud to be Irish Catholic, and we love to come to Mass at the Cathedral on this day," Anna McTavish of the Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians in Scranton, added.

# The Perfect Inspirational Easter Gift

## The Miracle of James

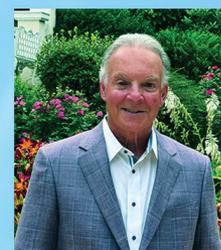
By William F. Anzalone

This is a story of my brother, who was injured at his birth. A story of a hydrocephalic, paralyzed, home confined, bedridden baby who was 100 percent dependent on my mom, dad, my sisters and me for survival. An inspirational story of young parents who were living the American dream, who had the financial means to do what they wanted and to go where they wanted and passed it all up to care for their invalid son for fifty four years. It is a story of love, dedication and sacrifice, and the belief in God, Jesus Christ and the Church, that lead my family and those who came in contact with James to witness The Miracle of James.



## About the Author

Bill Anzalone is the managing partner of Anzalone & Doyle Trial Lawyers. In this book, Bill wants to share the special experience that he had living with his hydrocephalic, bedridden, home confined brother. He shares the heartache and also the joy the family experienced living with and caring for James.



Bill Anzalone is donating 100% of the net proceeds from the purchase of this book to charities and organizations associated with special needs of children and adults.

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## Pope Leo XIV calls for Middle East ceasefire

VATICAN CITY (OSV News) - Pope Leo XIV is calling for an immediate ceasefire in the Middle East, condemning what he described as "atrocious violence" in the U.S.-Israeli-led war on Iran as the conflict spreads across the region.

Speaking after the Angelus on March 15 in St. Peter's Square, the pope voiced particular concern for Lebanon, urging "lasting solutions" for the good of all Lebanese people and pleading for dialogue to resume.

His appeal came as the war entered its third week, with Tehran accusing the United States of launching attacks from the United Arab Emirates.

The Associated Press reported March 15 that President



**Pope Leo XIV prays the Angelus in St. Peter's Square March 15, 2026. (CNS photo/Vatican Media)**

Donald Trump said U.S. forces had "obliterated" military sites on Iran's Kharg Island and warned Iran's oil infrastructure could be next if shipping in the Strait of Hormuz is threatened.

Pope Leo also mourned the human toll, especially in Lebanon, where Maronite Father Pierre al-Rahi was killed March 9 after Israeli tank fire.

## Pope names Archbishop Caccia papal ambassador to United States

ROME (OSV News) - Pope Leo XIV has appointed Archbishop Gabriele Caccia as the Vatican's new ambassador to the United States, selecting a seasoned diplomat to serve as a crucial liaison between Rome and the pope's home country.

The Vatican announced March 7 that Archbishop Caccia, 68, will serve as apostolic nuncio to the United States, succeeding Cardinal Christophe Pierre, who turned 80 in January after leading the post since 2016.

A nuncio serves as the pope's ambassador to a government while also representing the Vatican to the local Catholic Church, helping maintain ties between Rome and national bishops.

A Milan native, Archbishop Caccia has served since 2020 as the Holy See's permanent observer to the United Nations in New York. In Washington, he will help oversee the process of selecting U.S. bishops and serve as a key liaison with the U.S. government.

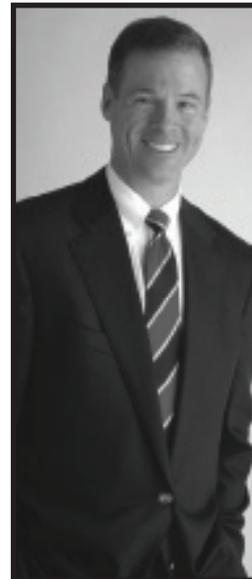


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### Notice Regarding Reporting Sexual Abuse of a Minor

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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## MISSION MESSAGE

### Guest Column: *Once Upon a Time*

By **Daria Braithwaite**

**Pontifical Mission Societies, Archdiocese of Boston**

**Editor's Note:** *On her first visit to Malawi, Daria Braithwaite encountered the missions not as an abstract concept, but as living faith — in classrooms without desks, churches rising brick by brick, and children whose joy and questions revealed both deep need and deep hope. In this personal reflection, she shares how witnessing the Church in mission transformed her understanding of generosity, responsibility, and the universal call to evangelization.*

I stood up from my desk and found myself eye to eye with a golden peacock — a gift from a mission priest from India who had once visited our office. It was now my turn to visit the missions for the first time, and I knew I would return to that chair with a greater sense of responsibility.

*Why did You pick me, God?* I wondered.

I was about to fly alone to Malawi — to a continent I had never visited. I had read in books that it was dusty, and that people carried their own water. But I needed to see it with my own eyes.

After twenty-one hours on the plane, I landed in Lilongwe, the capital of Malawi. The airport was tiny, and there were no tall buildings in sight. As we left the airport, our car stopped at the first traffic light. Along the roadside stood small markets — crates with upside-down chickens, piles of sandals and crocs, stacks of watermelons, and colorful assortments of vegetables. People crowded the curbs, each one moving with quiet purpose.

Tap, tap. I turned to see a boy at my window, pursing his lips and touching his fingers to his mouth. Naively assuming that everyone in the missions was Catholic, I thought he was asking me to pray for him. I nodded, but he kept gesturing. Then I heard the click of Father Peter, our driver, locking the doors. The boy wasn't asking for prayer — he was begging for money. I hoped I hadn't just lied to him. I said a quick prayer anyway, and we drove on.

My first visit was to Dedza Primary School, funded by the Missionary Childhood Association. I stepped into the classroom and immediately noticed the bare walls, the tin roof, and the absence of desks. Yet the children rushed to greet me, smiles a mile wide, eager to share their grades and favorite subjects.

They took me inside the neighboring church, still under construction. I reached out my hand and traced the rough edges of a few bricks. I pictured myself back home at the count table, reading the names of schools and parishioners who

made donations. I am touching what their prayers and sacrifices are building, I thought. Donation by donation. Brick by brick. Soul by soul.

After a week visiting schools, hospitals, and seminaries, it was time for the first-ever Missionary Childhood Congress in Malawi. Children from the country's eight dioceses gathered to celebrate the faith that missionaries had brought to them — and to embrace their duty to continue that mission from their villages.

At Mass, Malawian girls danced down the aisle — their hands outstretched to Christ, their feet keeping rhythm with the melodic voices of the children's choir. Each day, clergy and children met to discuss Catholic social teaching, child trafficking and labor, mental health, care for the environment, and how to be a missionary of hope. They prayed the World Mission Rosary and met with Sister Inês Paulo, Secretary General of Missionary Childhood in Rome.

It turns out children in the missions take great selfies. As a crowd of them fought to fit into my camera roll, I noticed a pair of eyes watching me. A young girl named Martyu asked if she could touch my hair. It was French-braided and folded into a jaw clip. "How is it so smooth?" she asked.

Soon, a group of her friends joined us. They asked what houses and cars looked like in America. They took turns posing with my sunglasses.

"Are you married?"  
"What is it like to ride a plane?"  
"We are scared to be bitten by rats at night."

I slowly realized how different their lives were from mine. Many marry young. Some will never leave Malawi — yet they already know something about the outside world.

As the group dispersed, Martyu grasped my arm and led me to a nearby curb so we could continue talking. But before long, a priest from Zimbabwe approached to ask for a meeting. I didn't want to leave her alone, but I couldn't ignore a priest. As I looked over my

shoulder, Martyu lowered her eyes and disappeared into the sea of children. I never saw her again.

That day, it felt like I caught a boulder. *God, why did You give me such a sensitive heart?*

Now I know — it's because I saw myself in them. We all have a childhood. We all ask questions, seek attention, and make spontaneous comments. As a witness, my job is to take that boulder and lay down a path to Christ by sharing these children's stories.

That's the thing about childhood — we all love a good story, don't we?

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Glenn; March 22, Father Joseph Greskiewicz; March 23, Holy Cross Father Richard Gribble; March 24, Monsignor Vincent Grimalia; March 25, Father Louis Grippe; March 26, Father Gerald Gurka; March 27, Father Richard Gyansah-Tabiri; March 28, Passionist Father Lee Havey; March 29, Saint Michael the Archangel Father Benito Hierro Aquino; March 30, Father Robert Hochreiter; March 31, Father Thomas Hudak; April 1, Pope Leo XIV; April 2, Bishop Joseph C. Bambera; April 3, Father Andrew HvozdoVIC; April 4,

Holy Cross Father Daniel Issing; April 5, Holy Cross Father Walter Jenkins; April 6, Monsignor John Jordan; April 7, Father Joseph Kakareka; April 8, Father Louis Kaminski; April 9, Saint Peter Priestly Fraternity Father Matthew Kane; April 10, Father Binesh Joseph Kanjirakattu; April 11, Father William Karle; April 12, Father Joseph Kearney; April 13, Jesuit Father Herbert Keller; April 14, Father Brian Kelly; April 15, Father John Kilpatrick; April 16, Monsignor Shane Kirby; April 17, Father Michael Kirwin.

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## Easter faith formation series in Williamsport

WILLIAMSPORT — Saint Boniface Parish will host a spiritual faith formation series during the Easter season based on the Gospel of Saint Mark.

Led by Jack Houston, Ph.D., parish adult formation leader, the series will be held on four consecutive Wednesdays, April 8 through 29, at 2 p.m. & 7 p.m., in Saint Lawrence Church Hall, 800 West Central Ave., South Williamsport. The four-week

series schedule is as follows:

**April 8** — “Following Jesus — The Son of God” (Mark, Chapters 1-3).

**April 15** — “The Journey of Jesus — Everyone is Called & Invited” (Mark, Chapters 4-7).

**April 22** — “The Suffering Servant & the Way of the Cross” (Mark, Chapters 8-13).

**April 29** — “True Discipleship — Serving Others” (Mark, Chapters 14-16).

## IN MEMORIAM

Religious Sister  
of Mercy  
Elizabeth Gaynor

Entered Eternal Life:  
February 26, 2026



Religious Sister  
of Mercy  
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Entered Eternal Life:  
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# Catholic Happenings Around the Diocese

**Final "40 Days for Life" Pro-Life Rosary Gatherings** — MARCH 19-27, 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** — MARCH 19-27, 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 Food Sale** — MARCH 19-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 Dinner** — MARCH 20, hosted by St. Maximilian Kolbe Parish in Pocono Pines; dinner served from 4 to 6 p.m. in the social hall at Our Lady of the Lake Church, 5112 Pocono Crest Road, Pocono Pines. Friday Lenten buffet features 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; 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.

**Lenten Fish Dinner** — MARCH 20, hosted by Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish in Wyalusing; fish dinner served from 4 to 6 p.m. in St. Mary Church hall, 245 State St., Wyalusing. All proceeds benefit Special Olympics of Bradford/Sullivan County and the Helping Hands Food Pantry, Wyalusing.

**Lenten Fridays Potluck Supper Series** — MARCH 20 & 27, sponsored by the parishes of St. Ann and St. Boniface in Williamsport; held on the Fridays

*Continued on Page 30*

## St. Lucy's Spaghetti Dinner is Back!

St. Michael's Parish at St. Lucy's Church will be hosting a spaghetti dinner featuring *St. Lucy's famous sauce* on **SUNDAY, APRIL 26 - IN THE CHURCH HALL**

**\$15<sup>PP</sup>** Sit down dinners served: 4:00-7:00 P.M.  
Take outs available: 3:00-4:00 P.M.  
*Includes salad, spaghetti, meatballs, salad, bread & dessert*

For tickets or more information, please contact Joe Guido at 570-955-7469.



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May 23: "1776: The Musical"

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## Catholic Happenings Around the Diocese

Continued from Page 29

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.

**Monthly Meeting of the Lay Carmelites** — MARCH 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.

**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.

**Polish Lenten Devotion: "Gorzkie Zale"** — MARCH 22, traditional Polish-language devotion for Lent known as "Bitter Lamentations"; begins at 3 p.m. in Sacred Heart of Jesus Church, 215 Lackawanna Ave., Dupont. Devotion is a sung reflection on the Passion of Christ and his Sorrowful Mother; held in the context of a Eucharistic Holy Hour, concluding at 4 p.m. Anthony George, organist/music director for Sacred Heart Parish, Dupont, and Queen of the Apostles Parish, Avoca, will lead the combined parish choirs in the sung devotions. Guest homilist: Monsignor John Sempa, Avoca native and pastor of Corpus Christi Parish, West Pittston. Light reception follows in church hall.

**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 and refreshments; bake sale also available. Admission fee: \$5 per person.

**Weekly Pierogi & Soup Sale** — MARCH 22 & 25, sponsored by SS. Peter & Paul Church, 1309 West Locust St., West Scranton; sale of homemade pierogi and various soups held each week following the church's Sunday morning Mass at 11 a.m. and Wednesday morning Mass at 9 a.m. Cost: pierogi, \$10/dozen; soup, \$8/quart. For more information, call the St. Ann Basilica Parish office at (570) 342-5166.

**Outdoor Rosary Prayer Services** — MARCH 22, 29 & APRIL 12, hosted at Our Lady of Fatima Blessed Grotto in North Wilkes-Barre; Sunday Rosary devotions, with recitation of 15 decades, begin at 7 p.m. at the Fatima Grotto, 51 W. North St., Wilkes-Barre. Participants are asked to arrive 15 minutes early to submit prayer petitions; street parking available. All faithful welcome.

**Lenten Parish Mission: "Life is Worth Living"** — MARCH 23-25, hosted by St. Carlo Acutis Parish at St. Patrick Church, 200 Delaware Ave., Olyphant; based on the teachings of Venerable Fulton Sheen. Mission program offered each evening at 7 p.m.; includes sacramental confessions and concluding benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. Guest presenter: Father Charles Connor. Discussion

Continued on Page 31

### 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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## Apostleship of Prayer

Papal Intention for April 2026

*For Priests in Crisis* —

Let us pray for priests going through moments of crisis in their vocation, that they may find the accompaniment they need and that communities may support them with understanding and prayer.

# Catholic Happenings Around the Diocese

Continued from Page 30

topics include The Call to Holiness, Human Suffering, and Prayer & Mary. For more information, call (570) 489-0752.

**Taizé Lenten Prayer Service** — **MARCH 26**, hosted by Holy Name of Mary Parish in Montrose; begins at 6 p.m. in the parish church. Taizé prayer is meditative Christian worship marked by repetitive chants, Scripture readings, and periods of silence, focusing on communal prayer. All are welcome.

**Take-Out Lenten Fish Fry** — **MARCH 27**, sponsored by Good Shepherd Parish in Drums; take-out only fish fry dinners available from 2 to 6 p.m. in the church hall. Dinner cost: \$12, includes breaded haddock filet (fried), fries & cole slaw. Advance orders only; pre-orders accepted until March 23. Contact Aniela Ross (570) 582-5623, or Cathy Penkala (570) 436-5017.

**LGBTQ Spiritual Support Group Gathering** — **MARCH 28**, sponsored by Mary, Mother of God Parish in Scranton; support group meeting for the spiritual needs of LGBTQ community begins at noon in the Holy Rosary Rectory, 316 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.

**Weekly Bereavement Support Group Sessions** — **APRIL 6-MAY 11**, sponsored by St. John Neumann Parish in Lords Valley; bereavement support group meets on consecutive Monday afternoons from 2 to 3:30 p.m. in St. John parish hall, 705 Route 739, Lords Valley. Weekly gatherings address topics dealing with the grief process to enable participants to find healing following the loss of a loved one. All are welcome; advance registration required at stvgriefgroup@att.net or by calling the parish office (570) 775-6791.

**Secular Discalced Carmelites Meeting** — **APRIL 12**, 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 Laffin. New members are most welcome. For more information and inquiries, contact Gina Romancheck at (570) 956-9272.

**Rummage Sale** — **APRIL 13 & 14**, sponsored by the Christian Mothers of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish, 116 Hughes St., Swoyersville; sale held on Monday, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Tuesday (\$2 Bag Day), 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the school gymnasium. Event also includes bake sale, refreshments, hoagies, hot dogs & wimpies.

**Grief Support Journey: "Loss of a Loved One"** — **APRIL 13, 20, 27 & MAY 4**, hosted by Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish, 2011 State Route 29, Hunlock Creek (Lake Silkworth); four weekly grief support sessions held on Monday evening from 6:30 to 8 p.m. in the parish hall. Program offers support, understanding, and discovering God's love and grace during the grief journey for those mourning the loss of a loved one. Reservations requested; call Our Lady of Mount Carmel church office (570) 477-5040.

**Cathedral Sacred Concert Series: "Marywood University Chamber Singers"** — **APRIL 17**, hosted by the Cathedral of Saint Peter, 315 Wyoming Ave., Scranton; Chamber Singers from Marywood University, Scranton, perform in concert beginning at 7:30 p.m. in the Cathedral. All are welcome free of charge.

**Biblical Scripture Experience: "The Lamb of God"** — **APRIL 18**, hosted by the Knights of Columbus of St. Michael Parish in Canton; presentation begins at 5 p.m. (following the 4 p.m. Vigil Mass) in St. Michael Church, 106 N. Washington St., Canton. Guest speaker: Alex Piechocki, who will lead a discussion on the Scriptural use

of images of the lamb throughout the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation. Light meal & fellowship will follow the presentation. All are welcome free of charge.

**Retro 70's & 80's Dance Party** — **APRIL 24**, sponsored by the Knights of Columbus at St. Matthew Parish in East Stroudsburg; held from 7 to 11 p.m. in the parish hall. Music from the era provided by DJ Brian Engler. Cost: \$15 per person, includes soda, water, snacks and hot dogs; patrons may provide own beverages. For tickets, contact Mike Catrillo at (570) 807-2994 or catrillom@yahoo.com.

**Immaculée Ilibagiza Retreat: "Love, Hope & Forgiveness"** — **APRIL 24 & 25**, hosted by St. Joseph Parish in Danville; retreat, including presentation sessions and book signing, held on Friday, from 5 to 9 p.m., and Saturday, 7:30 a.m. to noon. Featuring special guest Immaculée Ilibagiza, Rwandan genocide survivor and best-selling author; retreat includes her true and powerful witness of prayer and miracles of the Rosary, and inspirational messages of love, hope and forgiveness. Pre-registration required; visit: [www.immaculee.com/collections/retreats](http://www.immaculee.com/collections/retreats) and select "Danville."

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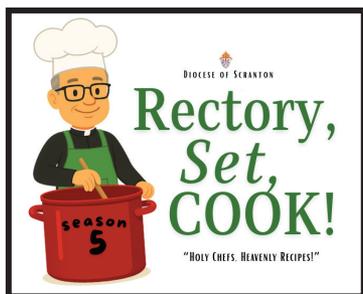
## One week left to vote in Rectory, Set, Cook!

SCRANTON - There is now **only one week left** to vote in the Diocese of Scranton's popular pastor chef cooking competition, Rectory, Set, Cook!

Because of the generosity of people across northeastern Pennsylvania (and beyond), the friendly competition has already raised more than \$125,000 from more than 1,400 donors.

This year, the fundraiser could potentially surpass \$1 million in total funds raised since the initiative first launched in 2022.

Rectory, Set, Cook! invites priests from the eleven counties of the Diocese of Scranton to step into their kitchen as "pastor chefs," creating cooking videos and encouraging supporters to vote for their favorite dish through online donations.



Half of all funds raised benefit hunger and homelessness initiatives of Catholic Social Services. The remaining half goes directly to the participating priest's parish.

**This year's competition continues through 4 p.m. on Friday, March 27.**

Visit [dioceseofscranton.org](http://dioceseofscranton.org) to view all videos and vote for your favorite! You can vote for as many pastor chefs as you would like!

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