



DIOCESE OF SCRANTON
300 WYOMING AVENUE
SCRANTON, PENNSYLVANIA 18503-1279

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

Monday, April 13, 2026
Monday of the Second Week of Easter

Reverend and dear Father,
Dear Deacon,
Dear Parish Life Coordinator,
Dear Staff Member,

For many decades, the Cathedral Convent, 333 Wyoming Avenue, Scranton, has stood as a visible witness to Consecrated Life in the Diocese of Scranton. Generations of Sisters, particularly the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, have called that residence home, offering their lives in service to the Church and to the people of northeastern and north central Pennsylvania.

Until recently, a small number of Sisters continued that prayerful presence. Those remaining Sisters have discerned a return to their respective communities, leaving the Cathedral Convent unoccupied. While this transition marks the end of a significant chapter, it also presents us with a providential opportunity.

Over the past several years, with your collaboration and dedication, the Diocese of Scranton has placed renewed emphasis on fostering a culture of vocations to the Priesthood, Diaconate and Religious Life. I am deeply grateful to all our Pastors, Deacons, Parish Life Coordinators, and lay leaders who have actively encouraged young men and women to listen for the voice of the Lord. Thanks to these efforts – and, above all, the grace of God – we anticipate having as many as eighteen men studying for the priesthood by this coming September, with additional candidates currently in the discernment process.

As you may be aware, the sixth edition of the *Program for Priestly Formation*, promulgated in recent years, has introduced a renewed structure for seminary formation, consisting of the Propaedeutic, Discipleship, Configuration, and Synthesis Stages. The Propaedeutic Stage, in particular, seeks to provide seminarians with the basic groundwork they need to engage in priestly formation – including intentional focus on prayer, human formation, and fraternity, allowing a man to deepen his relationship with Jesus Christ before entering more formal theological studies.

After careful prayer and consultation with our Presbyteral Council and Diocesan Finance Council, I am pleased to announce that the Diocese of Scranton will establish the **Saint Pius X Propaedeutic House of Formation** in the Cathedral Convent beginning in **August 2026**.

This initiative will allow our men to begin their formation journey in their home Diocese, rooted in the life of our local Church, rather than needing to travel outside of our area. It will provide them with the space and structure necessary to grow in discipleship and prayer; while remaining closely connected to the people and parishes they may one day serve.

Naming our new Propaedeutic House of Formation after Saint Pius X will also allow us to continue to honor the great legacy of the former Saint Pius X Seminary in Dalton that operated from 1962 to 2004, helping to train hundreds of seminarians as the future spiritual leaders of their Church.

Once operational, Saint Pius X Propaedeutic House of Formation will provide a space for up to 13 seminarians to live generally for a one-year (12 month) period. There will be a clear commitment to all four dimensions of formation, specifically emphasizing the human and spiritual formation aspects, to help each man grow in virtue. Coursework during this period will take place at the University of Scranton or other local colleges depending on each man's needs.

While some modest investment will be required to prepare the Cathedral Convent building – such as painting, carpeting, and other necessary updates – I am confident that this effort represents a wise and forward-thinking commitment. More than a practical decision, this decision is a visible sign of hope and vitality. It demonstrates to our faithful that the Church of Scranton is alive, growing, and actively investing in its future.

I believe, too, that this initiative will further strengthen the culture of vocations that has been developing locally. When young men see formation happening in their own Diocese, it becomes more tangible, more accessible, and more real. It is my desire that this announcement will also provide our parishes with a renewed opportunity to speak about vocations to the Priesthood, Diaconate, and Religious Life with even more confidence and encouragement.

As we move forward, I ask for your continued prayers and support. We will have much more to share and promote in the months ahead and your role in fostering vocations – through your witness, your invitation, and your accompaniment – will remain essential.

As we look to the future with hope, we will entrust our new Propaedeutic House of Formation – and all those who will pass through it – to the Lord who calls. In a world that so often searches for meaning and purpose, we are reminded that every vocation is first a gift, born from God's love and sustained by his grace.

As Our Holy Father, Pope Leo XIV so beautifully expressed in a Meeting of Priests in June 2025, “every call from the Lord is first and foremost a call to share in his joy. We are not perfect, but we are friends of Christ, brothers to one another and sons of his loving Mother Mary, and this is enough for us.”

With this confidence, we move forward in faith – trusting that the Lord will continue to call generous men to serve His Church, and that through the efforts we are undertaking, those calls will be nurtured, strengthened, and brought to joyful fulfillment.

With gratitude for your ministry and with confidence in the Lord's providence, I remain

Faithfully yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Joseph C. Bambera". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

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