

# The Catholic Light

DIOCESE OF SCRANTON

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## Diocese of Scranton to establish Saint Pius X Propaedeutic House of Formation

SCRANTON - The Diocese of Scranton will take a significant step forward in fostering vocations this summer with the establishment of a new Propaedeutic House of Formation in the heart of downtown Scranton - whose lives of prayer and service left a lasting imprint on the Diocese. With the recent departure of the remaining sisters, the building now enters a new chapter of service to the Church.

In a letter released April 13, the Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, announced that the Cathedral Convent building at 333 Wyoming Avenue will become the Saint Pius X Propaedeutic House of Formation, welcoming its first seminarians in August 2026.

"This decision is a visible sign of hope and vitality," Bishop Bambera wrote. "It demonstrates to our faithful that the Church of Scranton is alive, growing, and actively investing in its future."

For decades, the Cathedral Convent served as a home to generations of religious sisters - particularly the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary

"While this transition marks the end of a significant chapter, it also presents us with a providential opportunity," the Bishop noted.

That opportunity comes at a time of renewed energy around vocations within the Diocese. According to Bishop Bambera, the number of men currently studying for the priesthood is the highest it has been in several years.

"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," he wrote, expressing gratitude to clergy and lay leaders who continue to encourage vocations.

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The Diocese of Scranton announced this week that the Cathedral Convent, 333 Wyoming Avenue, Scranton, will soon become the Saint Pius X Propaedeutic House of Formation.



Pope Leo XIV prays during an evening prayer vigil for peace in St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican April 11, 2026. (CNS photo/Vatican Media)

## Pope decries horror of war at Peace Vigil

VATICAN CITY (CNS)- Warning against an increasingly unpredictable and aggressive "delusion of omnipotence" threatening the globe, Pope Leo XIV called on world leaders and individuals to empty their hearts and minds of hatred and violence, and to start serving life.

"Enough of the idolatry of self and money! Enough of the display of power! Enough of war! True strength is shown in serving life," he said during a special

evening prayer vigil for peace in St. Peter's Basilica April 11.

"Those who pray are aware of their own limitations; they do not kill or threaten with death," he said. "Instead, death enslaves those who have turned their backs on the living God, turning themselves and their own power into a mute, blind and deaf idol, to which they sacrifice every value, demanding that the whole world bend its knee."

"Let us listen to the voices of children," who write to him

all the time, recounting "all the horror and inhumanity of actions that some adults boast of with pride," he said.

The vigil, which drew thousands of people inside and outside the basilica, featured the recitation of the glorious mysteries of the rosary. Before each mystery was recited, women wearing traditional dress from countries representing the different continents of the world lit small lamps.

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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

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The Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, D.D., J.C.L.  
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Secretary for Communications/Editor-in-Chief:  
Eric M. Deabill

## Managing Editor:

Kevin G. McDonnell

## Advertising Coordinator:

Eileen Manley

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Pamela Haeefele

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# Explainer: New Stages of Priestly Formation

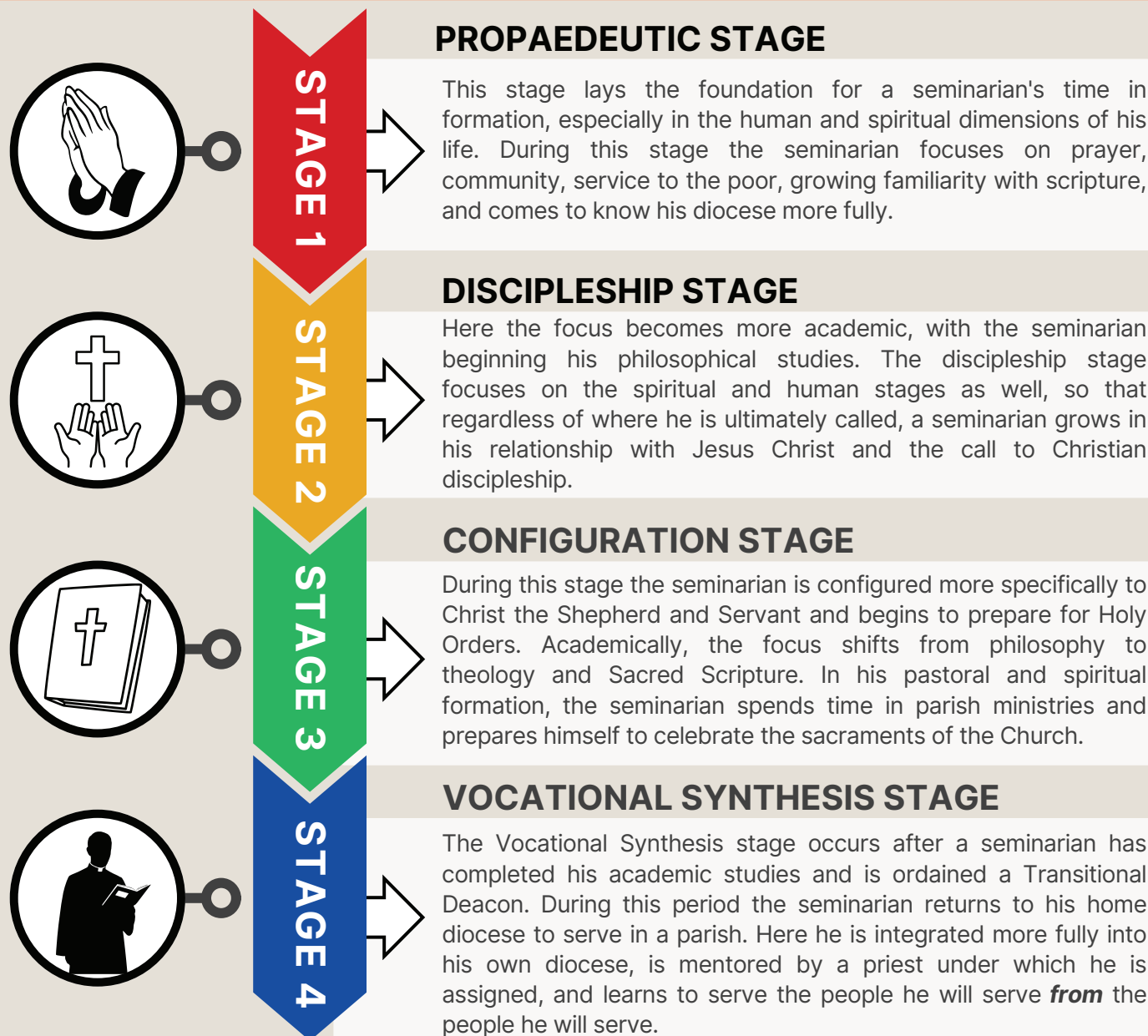
There are now four stages of formation for priesthood: **Propaedeutic, Discipleship, Configuration, and Vocational Synthesis.**

The Propaedeutic Stage is a new addition for first-year seminarians. The Discipleship Stage was formerly known as Pre-theology, with an academic focus on philosophical studies. The Configuration Stage corresponds with theological studies through what was previously third theology. Finally, there is a Vocational Synthesis Stage, which occurs after Diaconate ordination, and is a period of real-world pastoral training, ideally within the Diocese.

Below is a very brief description of each stage:

## NEW STAGES OF FORMATION

### PROGRAM FOR PRIESTLY FORMATION, 6<sup>TH</sup> EDITION



# From Convent to Formation House, a new mission takes root

*Continued from Page 1*

The new house of formation reflects recent updates to the Church's formation model, as outlined in the Program for Priestly Formation, which includes a distinct Propaedeutic Stage. This initial stage is designed to provide a strong spiritual and human foundation before formal theological studies begin.

"The Propaedeutic Stage... seeks to provide seminarians with the basic groundwork they need to engage in priestly formation," Bishop Bambara explained, highlighting its emphasis on prayer, fraternity and a deepening relationship with Jesus Christ.

By establishing the program locally, seminarians will be able to begin their formation within the Diocese itself - something the Bishop believes will have a lasting impact.

"This initiative will allow our men to begin their formation journey in their home Diocese, rooted in the life of our local Church," he said. "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."

The Saint Pius X Propaedeutic House of Formation will have space to accommodate up to 13 seminarians for a typical one-year period, with coursework taking place at local colleges, including The University of Scranton, depending



**Left: The front of the Cathedral Convent building as seen from Wyoming Avenue in downtown Scranton. (Photo/Dan Gallagher)**

**Above: The side of the Cathedral Convent building as seen from the Cathedral Prayer Garden next door. (Photo/Dan Gallagher)**

on individual needs. The program will focus on all four dimensions of priestly formation, with particular attention to human and spiritual development.

In naming the house after Saint Pius X, the Diocese also honors the legacy of the former Saint Pius X Seminary in Dalton, which educated generations of priests from 1962 to 2004.

While modest renovations are planned to prepare the building for its new purpose,

Bishop Bambara expressed confidence in the long-term value of the investment.

"I am confident that this effort represents a wise and forward-thinking commitment," he reiterated.

Looking ahead, the Bishop expressed hope that the new house of formation will further strengthen the culture of vocations already taking root throughout the Diocese.

"When young men see formation happening in their own Diocese, it

becomes more tangible, more accessible, and more real," he said. "It is my desire that this announcement will also provide our parishes with a renewed opportunity to speak about vocations... with even more confidence and encouragement."

As the Diocese prepares for this new chapter, Bishop Bambara is asking the faithful to remain engaged and prayerful.

"We will have much more to share and promote in the months ahead," he wrote. "Your role in fostering vocations - through your witness, your invitation, and your accompaniment - will remain essential."

Entrusting the initiative to God's providence, the Bishop concluded with a message of hope grounded in faith.

"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," he wrote.



**Once renovated, the Saint Pius X Propaedeutic House of Formation in Scranton will have individual rooms for up to 13 seminarians. This is one of the rooms, as seen pre-renovations. (Photo/Eric Deabill)**



**The Cathedral Convent building has three floors, this is the top floor of the building, which will soon receive new carpeting, paint and other necessary updates. (Photo/Eric Deabill)**

***If you would like to learn more about ways to support this exciting project, please contact Joseph Strubeck, Diocesan Secretary for Development, at (570) 207-2250 or email [JStrubeck@dioceseofscranton.org](mailto:JStrubeck@dioceseofscranton.org)***



## **Pray for Our Current Seminarians**



**Rev. Mr. Jan Carlo Perez**  
**Jeremy Barket**  
**Cody Yarnall**  
**Jacob Mutchler**  
**Daniel O'Brien**  
**Nicholas Wasko**  
**Roberto Carlos Acevedo Ruiz**  
**Leonel Ojo Gonzalez**  
**Michael Sullivan**  
**Peter Stec**  
**Antonio Ingargiola**  
**Liam Barry**  
**Faustinus Ugo**  
**Daniel Kotsko**  
**Kenneth Francis**  
**Matthew Kelly**  
**Zachariah Levin**



# Where is God Calling You? Summer camps invite youth to discern their path

SCRANTON - As the Diocese of Scranton prepares to open the Saint Pius X Propaedeutic House of Formation for men discerning the priesthood later this year, two longstanding summer programs will continue to play an important role in fostering vocational awareness among young people.

Quo Vadis Days and Fiat Days will return June 29 through July 1, 2026, at Marywood University, offering high school students an opportunity to grow in faith while reflecting on God's call in their lives.

Now in its eleventh year, Quo Vadis Days invites young men, from rising sophomores to graduating seniors, to take part in a three-day experience centered on prayer, fellowship, and discernment.

Participants engage in talks on priesthood, marriage, and prayer, while also building friendships through games, sports, music, and small group discussions. They will also have the opportunity to interact with Diocesan priests and seminarians and celebrate Mass with the Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton.

Fiat Days, now in its third year, offers a similar experience for young women. Through prayer, conversation, and shared activities, participants encounter religious sisters serving throughout the Diocese and hear firsthand stories of discernment in both religious life and marriage. Opportunities for one-on-one conversations provide a deeper, personal look at vocational calling.

Both camps cost \$100, and that fee covers lodging and meals.

Registration is currently open through June 11 on the Diocese of Scranton website (dioceseofscranton.org). Participants can

reserve their spot by paying with either credit card or check.

A recommendation from a parish or school leader is also required.

Together, Quo Vadis Days and Fiat Days help plant the seeds of vocation, encouraging young people to listen more closely to God's voice and consider how they are called to serve in the life of the Church.

For more information, or if cost is a hindrance, please email [vocations@dioceseofscranton.org](mailto:vocations@dioceseofscranton.org), or call (570) 207-1452.



## QUO VADIS DAYS

• HIGH SCHOOL SUMMER CAMP •



**JUNE 29**  
**JUNE 30**  
**JULY 1**

- LOCATION: MARYWOOD UNIVERSITY
- OPEN TO RISING SOPHOMORES THROUGH GRADUATING SENIORS IN HIGH SCHOOL
- ADVENTURE, PRAYER, TALKS, MASS, ADORATION, AND OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES
- LEARN ABOUT VOCATIONS AND GET TO KNOW PRIESTS, SEMINARIANS, & FELLOW DISCERNERS
- COST IS \$100

REGISTRATION DEADLINE: JUNE 11<sup>TH</sup>

Diocese of Scranton  
**VOCATIONS**




## FIAT DAYS

• HIGH SCHOOL SUMMER CAMP •



**JUNE 29**  
**JUNE 30**  
**JULY 1**

- LOCATION: MARYWOOD UNIVERSITY
- OPEN TO RISING SOPHOMORES THROUGH GRADUATING SENIORS IN HIGH SCHOOL
- ADVENTURE, PRAYER, TALKS, MASS, ADORATION, AND OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES
- LEARN ABOUT VOCATIONS AND GET TO KNOW RELIGIOUS SISTERS AND FELLOW DISCERNERS
- COST IS \$100

REGISTRATION DEADLINE: JUNE 11<sup>TH</sup>

Diocese of Scranton  
**VOCATIONS**



# Catholic Foundation hosting online art auction featuring paintings of local churches

SCRANTON – The Catholic Foundation for the Diocese of Scranton is hosting an online art auction through May 1, featuring more than 20 original paintings of local Catholic churches and sacred spaces.

Proceeds from the auction, which launched on April 13, will benefit the “Founders Fund” of the Catholic Foundation and support the long-term pastoral, educational, and service ministries of the Diocese of Scranton.

The online auction showcases a collection of artwork generously donated by artist and philanthropist Austin Burke of Archbald.

Burke, a longtime community leader and former President of the Greater Scranton Chamber of Commerce, has spent the past year painting some of the most iconic church buildings in northeastern and north central Pennsylvania.

“I feel blessed. God has given me some talent, and I feel privileged to be able to use it in this way,” Burke said.

Each piece reflects not only architectural beauty but the deeper role of parish life.

“A church is where humanity encounters God,” Burke noted. “Not only do you encounter God there, but you meet your community there.”

A preview of several paintings was displayed earlier this year during a Bishop’s reception, drawing admiration from parishioners and benefactors alike.

Mark DiPippa, Executive Director of the Catholic Foundation for the Diocese of Scranton, said the auction is both a celebration of faith and an investment in the future.

“We are deeply grateful to Austin for sharing his extraordinary talent in such a

meaningful way,” DiPippa said. “His commitment to his faith and his dedication to the mission of the Catholic Foundation are clearly reflected in each of these works. Through this generous gift, he is helping to strengthen the future of the Church of Scranton while celebrating the beauty and heritage of our parishes.”

The paintings available are:

- *Annunciation Church, Williamsport*
- *Cathedral of St. Peter, Scranton*
- *Epiphany Church, Sayre*
- *Resurrection Church, Muncy*
- *Sacred Heart of Jesus Church, Mayfield*
- *Sacred Heart of Mary Church, Jermyn*
- *St. Ann Basilica and Grotto, Scranton*
- *St. Catherine of Siena Church, Moscow*
- *St. John the Evangelist Church, Honesdale*
- *St. John the Evangelist Church, Pittston*
- *St. Jude Church, Mountain Top*
- *St. Luke Church, Stroudsburg*
- *St. Mary of Czestochowa Church, Eynon*
- *St. Mary of Mount Carmel Church, Dunmore*
- *St. Mary of Vilna Church, Eynon*
- *St. Matthew Church, East Stroudsburg*
- *St. Nicholas Church, Wilkes-Barre*
- *St. Patrick Church, Scranton*
- *St. Rose of Lima Church, Carbondale*
- *St. Thomas Aquinas Church, Archbald*
- *Basilica of Padre Pio, Italy*
- *Cathedral Prayer Garden, Scranton*
- *Marian Chapel at Marywood University*
- *Angel of Agonies Statue, Scranton*

Bidding information and a full gallery of artwork is available on the Diocese of Scranton website ([dioceseofscranton.org](http://dioceseofscranton.org)) and the Catholic Foundation website ([catholicfoundationscranton.org](http://catholicfoundationscranton.org)).

## Own a Piece of Sacred Beauty. Strengthen Our Catholic Community.



### Support the Catholic Foundation’s Founders Campaign through a one-of-a-kind online art auction.

The Catholic Foundation of the Diocese of Scranton is proud to launch a special online auction benefiting the **Founders Fund**—an initiative that strengthens our ability to serve parishes, schools, and ministries across our region for generations to come.

This extraordinary collection features **over 20 original paintings** generously donated by Austin Burke, former President of the Greater Scranton Chamber of Commerce and a renowned regional artist. Many pieces beautifully capture beloved local churches and sacred spaces, offering a meaningful way to celebrate your faith and community.

Whether you place a bid or make a gift, your participation directly supports the future of Catholic life in our Diocese.

**Auction Opens: April 13, 2026 | Closes: May 1, 2026**

Each winning bidder and a guest are invited to a special reception at the Bishop’s residence on May 13, including dinner, photos, and time with Bishop Bambera.

For paintings purchased jointly, one representative from the group may attend with a guest.

### Browse the collection. Place your bid. Make an impact.



Visit: [e.givesmart.com/events/NmG/](http://e.givesmart.com/events/NmG/)  
Learn more: [catholicfoundationscranton.org](http://catholicfoundationscranton.org)

Contact: Mark DiPippa, Executive Director  
Catholic Foundation for the Diocese of Scranton  
300 Wyoming Ave, Scranton, PA 18503  
[catholicfoundationscranton.org](http://catholicfoundationscranton.org) | 570-207-2212



# Easter Vigil Masses bring 312 new members into the Church across Diocese

PITSTON – At the Easter Vigil Mass inside Saint John the Evangelist Parish, Sky Nicholson stood before a packed church, nervous but filled with anticipation.

“I have always had a relationship with God, but I was a bit hesitant to pursue that relationship,” she said. “I’m sorry that I waited this long.”

Sky Nicholson and her daughter, Serenity Rain Nicholson, were among those fully initiated into the Catholic Church during the Easter Vigil at the Pittston parish – an experience neither will soon forget.

“It was a beautiful experience. I really don’t have the words to explain it,” Sky added just minutes after being baptized, confirmed and receiving Holy Communion for the first time.

For her daughter, the moment carried its own mix of emotion and excitement.

“I know that different doors have been opened for me,” Serenity Rain explained. “I’m excited to keep going from here and I’m excited to be able to get into my bible and understand things from a different point of view because I’m finally where I want and need to be.”

While their journeys to that moment were personal, sharing it together side by side made the experience even more meaningful.

“I’ll never forget it,” Sky said. “It has just been amazing.”

The journey for the mother-daughter duo has been unfolding for months through the Order of Christian Initiation (OCIA), where weekly classes gradually built not only understanding of the Catholic faith, but community.

“We all created a good friendship in faith,” Serenity Rain said. “We’re kind of sad that it’s coming to an end – but we plan to continue doing things afterwards.”



**Father Joseph Elston uses the Sacred Chrism to confirm Sky Nicholson at the Easter Vigil Mass at Saint John the Evangelist Parish in Pittston on April 4, 2026. (Photo/Dan Piazza)**

Their story is just one example of a growing movement across the Diocese of Scranton.

This year, 312 individuals have been welcomed into full communion with the Catholic Church – up significantly from last year and reflecting a broader national trend.

At the Pittston parish alone, 10 catechumens and candidates were initiated during the Easter Vigil on April 4.

“This is one of our largest OCIA classes in a long time,” Father Joseph Elston, pastor of Saint John the Evangelist, Saint Joseph Marello, and Our Lady of the Eucharist

Parishes, said. “Numbers are up across the country with people who are becoming Catholic. We’re in the mix here in the Diocese and here in our parishes in Pittston.”

For those entering the Church, the Easter Vigil marks both an ending and a beginning.

“It is the climax of their preparation and the beginning of their lives as fully initiated Catholics,” Father Elston added. “They’ve been studying since October just about every Sunday and working hard. This class has really dedicated themselves to learning things and experiencing things and being a part of the community.”

For Matthew Rosencrans, 37, the journey to the Easter Vigil has taken twists and turns, but he was inspired by a close friend in the Harrisburg area who converted to Catholicism. The fact that he was fully initiated on the most significant date on the Church’s calendar was not lost on him.

“What a monumental time for us to be welcomed into the Church – at the same time that (Jesus) is being resurrected,” Rosencrans reflected. “It is amazing.”

He described the moment as transformative.

“I wasn’t sure how I was going to feel. Honestly, I was nervous and scared, but at that moment, when the water started to flush over my head, you could feel a little weight coming off you. I felt lighter and I felt more at peace,” Rosencrans added.

For Father Elston, accompanying all the individuals through the OCIA journey has been deeply moving.

“I got a tiny bit emotional when I was giving them Communion, because they’ve worked really hard,” he said. “They deserve the acceptance they received tonight and the joy that they feel in their hearts – and I feel it too – so I was really happy for them.”

## Welcome to all who fully entered the Catholic Church at this year’s Easter Vigil



**Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish, Peckville**  
Joyce Chowanec, Kimberly Ghilardi, Christina Kelly, Christina Larioni, Amanda Luchansky, Michele Newberry, and Kimberly Strong



**Saint Eulalia Parish  
Roaring Brook Township**  
Jason Hollenbeck, Matt Dalbke and Matt Froelick



**Saints Peter & Paul Parish,  
Towanda**  
Alexis Kenney and Darien Lantz

# Alleluia! He is Risen!

## Easter hope endures amid a suffering world, Bishop says at Easter Masses

SCRANTON – The Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, led the faithful of the Diocese of Scranton in celebrating the Easter Vigil on Saturday, April 4, 2026, at the Cathedral of Saint Peter, marking the Church's most solemn celebration of the Resurrection.

The liturgy began at 8:00 p.m. in the Cathedral Prayer Garden, where the Easter fire was kindled and the Paschal Candle lit, symbolizing Christ as the light of the world.

From there, the faithful processed in darkness to the Cathedral and once inside, their individual candles gradually illuminated the Mother Church of the Diocese.

Rooted in Scripture and rich symbolism, the Liturgy of the Word traced salvation history through a series of readings – from the story of creation in Genesis to the crossing of the Red Sea, the promises of the prophets, and ultimately the proclamation of the Resurrection from the Gospel of Matthew.

Preaching at the Vigil Mass, as well as at the 10 a.m. Mass on Easter morning, Bishop Bambera centered his homily on the hope of the Resurrection amid a suffering world.

“Welcome on this night of the Resurrection – this night that lies at the heart of our lives as Christians,” the Bishop



**Bishop Joseph C. Bambera lights the Paschal Candle in the Cathedral Prayer Garden at the start of the Easter Vigil Mass on Saturday, April 4, 2026. (Photo/Mike Melisky)**



**Bishop Joseph C. Bambera baptizes Dan Hoang at the Cathedral of Saint Peter during the Easter Vigil Mass on Saturday, April 4, 2026. (Photo/Mike Melisky)**

said at the Vigil Mass. “This is the day the Lord has made.”

The Bishop noted the joy of the occasion, particularly as more than 300 catechumens and candidates across the Diocese were being baptized or received into full communion with the Church this Easter.

“How blessed we are by their presence and commitment to journey with Christ and with us, his Church,” the Bishop said.

At the same time, he acknowledged the reality of suffering both globally and locally, pointing to ongoing wars, the struggles of immigrants, and the persistence of antisemitism, as well as the personal crosses carried by many.

“Amid such upheaval and pain,” he said, “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.”

Quoting Pope Benedict XVI, Bishop Bambera emphasized

that Christian hope is not the absence of suffering but the confidence to face it.

“Hope grows from a relationship with the risen Jesus,” Bishop Bambera related, “and our belief that, out of love for us, the power of God enabled his cross and death to give way to life and resurrection.”

He further challenged the faithful to live out the message of Easter beyond the walls of the church, recalling the Gospel's call to share the Good News.

“The resurrection of Jesus compels us

to move beyond ourselves,” he said, urging believers to proclaim God's mercy and care for those who suffer.

Following the homily, the Easter Vigil Mass continued with the Liturgy of Baptism, including the blessing of water, the renewal of Baptismal promises, and the reception of new members into the Church, before culminating in the celebration of the Eucharist and the singing of the closing song of “Jesus Christ is Risen Today.”



**Following the Renewal of Baptismal Promises at the Easter Vigil, Bishop Joseph C. Bambera sprinkles the faithful with holy water. (Photo/Mike Melisky)**



**During the Easter Vigil Mass at the Cathedral of Saint Peter, nine people were fully initiated into the Catholic Church. Two were baptized and seven others received Holy Communion and/or Confirmation. Pictured after Mass are, front row, from left: Brett Beemer, Maria Viola, Elizabeth Maranilli, Bishop Bambera, Ceyonna Rybitski, and Dan Hoang. Second row, from left: Charles Levers, Patrick Caffrey, Dean Walsh, and Ethan McConnell-Drozdis. (Photo/Mike Melisky)**

# Celebrate Easter Hope and Joy!

## 'Love has consequences': Good Friday homily centers on freedom and sacrifice

SCRANTON – Faithful of the Diocese of Scranton gathered at the Cathedral of Saint Peter on Friday, April 3, 2026, to commemorate Good Friday of the Passion of the Lord, one of the most solemn liturgies of the Church year.

The Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, served as principal celebrant, with Father Jeffrey Tudgay, Cathedral Pastor, delivering the homily.

The liturgy began in silence and included the proclamation of the Passion of Jesus Christ according to Saint John, along with the Solemn intercessions for the needs of the Church and the world.

The congregation also participated in the Veneration of the Holy Cross and received Holy Communion.

In his homily, Father Tudgay reflected on the relationship between love and freedom, emphasizing that “love has consequences” and must be freely chosen.

He noted that the Passion reveals



**Father Jeffrey Tudgay, V.E., J.C.L., delivers the homily on Good Friday at the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton. (Photos/Mike Melisky)**

“perfect love” and “perfect freedom” in the person of Christ, who endured betrayal, suffering, and death, yet responded with mercy and forgiveness.

“Every nuance of human behavior that can alienate us from one another is

experienced by Jesus ... and all of it is taken to the cross and all of it is forgiven,” Father Tudgay said.

He added that Christ’s final words, “It is finished,” changed the course of human history because they “illustrate the perfect use of freedom and the perfect choice that perfect love demands.”

Concluding his reflection, Father Tudgay invited the faithful to consider their own response to Christ’s sacrifice.

“Today, we realize that our relationship with Jesus Christ and His love for us, which redeems us and frees us from sin and death, has profound consequences for each one of us. It demands choices, it changes everything, and so, in freedom, how do we respond?” he ended his homily by asking.



**Rev. Mr. Jan Carlo Perez holds a crucifix, allowing parishioners to venerate the cross with a kiss, as shown, or another appropriate sign of reverence.**

## Holy Thursday homily: Gethsemane teaches us to hand over what we can't control



**Father Gerald W. Shantillo, V.G., S.T.L., delivers the homily at the Mass of the Lord's Supper at the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton. (Photos/Mike Melisky)**

SCRANTON – The Evening Mass of the Lord’s Supper was celebrated April 2, 2026, at the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton, marking the beginning of the Sacred Triduum.

The liturgy recalled the institution of the Holy Eucharist, the priesthood, and

Christ’s call to service, as proclaimed in the Gospel of Saint John: “I have given you a model to follow, so that as I have done for you, you should also do.”

During the Mass, the Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, washed the feet of 12 individuals, reflecting Jesus’ humble service to his disciples. The celebration also included the Liturgy of the Word, the Eucharistic Prayer and Communion, drawing the faithful into the mystery of Christ’s sacrifice and love.

In his homily, Father Gerald W. Shantillo, Vicar General and Moderator of the Curia, invited the faithful to reflect on the depth of Holy Week, acknowledging that “Holy Week can be overwhelming, as we drink in the most intense moments of Jesus’ life, death and resurrection.”

He encouraged prayers for those suffering in today’s world, especially in areas affected by war, adding, “Jesus, King of Peace, give us peace – especially in the Holy Land.”

Father Shantillo reflected on Christ’s agony in the Garden of Gethsemane, noting “there is much to agonize over in our lives – however, agony can be a blessing if we let it lead us to God and not to ourselves.”

He emphasized that, even before entering into his suffering, Jesus provided for his followers through the gift of the Eucharist and the example of service in the washing of feet.

“Remember when we kneel that we are in the very same posture that Jesus was in the garden this very night. Can we hand over to God what burdens us and trust in his providence?” Father Shantillo asked. “God doesn’t call us to solve all the problems of the immense world. He calls us to unite ourselves to him through the Eucharist and to serve our neighbors.”



**During the Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday, Bishop Joseph C. Bambera washed the feet of 12 individuals, recalling Christ's call to service.**

The Mass concluded with the solemn procession and transfer of the Most Blessed Sacrament to the Altar of Repose, inviting the faithful to prayer and reflection in the presence of the Lord.

## Diocese marks annual Chrism Mass with hope and renewal

SCRANTON - Priests from across the Diocese of Scranton gathered at the Cathedral of Saint Peter on Tuesday, March 31, 2026, for the annual Chrism Mass – one of the most significant liturgies of Holy Week.

Celebrated by the Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, the Mass brought together clergy, religious and faithful from throughout the Diocese as the holy oils used in sacraments during the coming year were blessed and consecrated. During the liturgy, priests also renewed their priestly promises, reaffirming their commitment to serve God's people.

In his homily, Bishop Bambera acknowledged the challenges facing the world today, pointing to "suffering, pain and uncertainty," including war, injustice and division. Yet, he emphasized that the Church's gathering in prayer is a powerful sign of hope.

"Our presence... affirms that what we celebrate has the power to give us hope in the face of adversity," he said.

Reflecting on the Scriptures, the Bishop reminded the faithful that God



**Priests from the Diocese of Scranton stand during the Renewal of Priestly Promises, an annual time for them to renew their dedication to Christ and to the service of His people.**

remains present and active in the world, offering grace and peace even in difficult times. He encouraged priests to remain steadfast in their mission to proclaim Christ's presence and bring "mercy, promise and peace" to those they serve.

While acknowledging the realities of modern ministry - including fewer parishioners actively participating in the life of the church compared to decades

ago and the need for linkages and consolidations – Bishop Bambera urged his brother priests not to lose heart.

"There is good news to proclaim," he said, pointing to the many ways God continues to work through parish life and pastoral ministry.

The Bishop highlighted signs of renewal within the Diocese, including the anticipated reception of more than 300



**Prior to the Liturgy of the Eucharist, Bishop Joseph C. Bambera consecrated the Sacred Chrism by breathing upon it. He also blessed the oils that will be used in parishes this year. (Photos/Mike Melisky)**

individuals into the Church this Easter and a growing number of vocations to the priesthood.

"The Spirit is surely at work among us," he said.

As he concluded his homily, Bishop Bambera expressed gratitude for the faithful service of priests and encouraged all present to continue building God's Kingdom with hope, trust and perseverance.

## Scranton parish filled to capacity for Divine Mercy Sunday celebration

SCRANTON – All of the pews were filled at Divine Mercy Parish on April 12, 2026, as hundreds of faithful gathered to celebrate Divine Mercy Sunday through prayer and devotion.

The annual celebration – held on the Second Sunday of Easter – has grown in recent years, drawing people from across Lackawanna and Luzerne counties and beyond for an afternoon centered on God's forgiveness and grace.

The annual observance included the Sacrament of Confession, Mass, the praying of the Rosary and Divine Mercy Chaplet, Eucharistic Adoration, a procession with the Blessed Sacrament and the veneration of a first-class relic of Saint Faustina.

"We are very honored, proud and grateful here at Divine Mercy Parish to host everyone for this beautiful spiritual celebration," Father Paul McDonnell, O.S.J., Pastor of Divine Mercy Parish, said. "How beautiful it was to see our church filled to capacity – and everyone praying and celebrating that great gift that



**Hundreds of people filled Divine Mercy Parish in Scranton on April 12 in celebration of Divine Mercy Sunday. (Photos/Dan Piazza)**

the world needs – the gift of God's love."

Six priests were available for Confession for more than two hours, offering what Father McDonnell described as "a grace and a blessing" to those in attendance.



**Father Paul McDonnell, O.S.J., blesses a man with a first-class relic of Saint Faustina.**

For the faithful, the experience was deeply moving.

"I can't tell you the feeling that I am leaving with," Erin Thornton of Corpus Christi Parish, said. "It brought tears to my eyes. It was so moving. More people need to see something like this."

Many said the Eucharistic procession was especially powerful.

"It leaves me speechless when he walks around with the Blessed Sacrament," Thornton added.

Mary Ann Lahaszow of Nativity of Our Lord Parish in Duryea said the day was filled with a profound sense of peace and unity.

"You could feel God's presence," she said. "There were so many people from so many different walks of life. It's wonderful to feel this peace."

For parishioner Pat Rodney, the devotion to Divine Mercy – though discovered later in life – has become deeply meaningful.

"The devotion is something that is new to me," she said. "But I love the Divine Mercy Chaplet and the promises of Jesus ... It was a beautiful part of the day."

Father McDonnell hopes that the faithful left not only with a sense of the Lord's mercy personally, but a desire to share it with others.

"Hopefully everyone will be energized enough to embrace the merciful spirit of Christ," he said, "and live it in their homes, families and lives."

# President Trump draws backlash over Pope Leo rant, 'deeply offensive' image

PHILADELPHIA (OSV News) - Catholic bishops and lay leaders across the political spectrum are expressing their shock and disapproval following President Donald Trump's online screed against Pope Leo XIV.

Others have also voiced concern over an image which Trump posted within an hour of attacking the vicar of Christ that appeared to depict Trump as Jesus Christ himself.

Trump deleted the post of him looking like Christ the following day, after an uproar from Christians denouncing the depiction as blasphemous, but he refused to apologize to Pope Leo.

"Pope Leo said things that are wrong," Trump said, doubling down on a 330-word condemnation of the pope April 12 as "WEAK on Crime, and terrible for Foreign Policy," and taking credit for the U.S.-born pope's election.

Archbishop Paul S. Coakley of Oklahoma City, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, issued a statement that evening, saying he was "disheartened that the President chose to

write such disparaging words about the Holy Father."

Archbishop Coakley said that the pope is not Trump's "rival," and "nor is the Pope a politician. He is the Vicar of Christ who speaks from the truth of the Gospel and for the care of souls."

Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin of Newark, New Jersey, who was part of an interview on Pope Leo with CBS' "60 Minutes" program that aired April 12, told OSV News in an April 13 statement that Trump's "recent statements and actions ... convey a grave misunderstanding of the Holy Father's ministry and a troubling lack of respect for the faith of millions."

"Pope Leo serves a higher authority and desires to proclaim the Gospel faithfully and advance the Church's peaceful mission in a world deeply in need of healing," he said.

"He will continue to speak clearly against war and other offenses against human dignity and to call for authentic dialogue, because the Church's witness is grounded in the peace of Christ, not in partisan interests," Cardinal Tobin said.

Other fellow prelates rallied around

the pope in the wake of Trump's broadside.

Speaking to reporters at the White House April 13, Trump said he had "nothing to apologize for."

"He was very much against what I'm doing with regard to Iran, and you could not have a nuclear Iran, Pope Leo would not be happy with the end result," Trump said.

The AI-generated image was removed from Trump's Truth Social feed on April 13. The president told reporters the same day that he thought the depiction had been of him "as a doctor making people better and I do make people better. I make people a lot better."

"I did post it," he said, "and I thought it was me as a doctor and had to do with the Red Cross."

## *Bishop Bambera's Statement on Social Media Posts*

**"War divides; hope unites.  
Arrogance tramples upon others; love lifts up.  
Idolatry blinds us; the living God enlightens."**

When Our Holy Father, Pope Leo XIV, spoke those words Saturday at a Prayer Vigil for Peace, he was speaking from the heart of the Gospel.

I was deeply saddened to read comments posted by the President about the Holy Father, and likewise dismayed when seeing an AI-generated image, also posted by the President but then later deleted, that seemingly portrays him in the place of Jesus Christ.

I am praying for the President, that he may be guided by wisdom, humility and a sincere pursuit of peace. I am also praying for Pope Leo that he may be strengthened to continue speaking boldly for peace and justice, even in the face of criticism.

Blessed are the peacemakers!

## ***Pope decries horror, inhumanity that 'some adults boast of with pride'***

*Continued from Page 1*

The small lamps were lit from a flame from the Lamp of Peace from Assisi that was placed below a statue of Our Lady Queen of Peace.

Prayer can move mountains, he said in his remarks in Italian. "War divides; hope unites. Arrogance tramples upon others; love lifts up. Idolatry blinds us; the living God enlightens."

It just takes a tiny bit of faith "to face this dramatic hour in history together," he said.

For a people of faith in the risen Lord who conquered death with love, he said, "nothing can confine us to a predetermined fate, not even in this world where there never seem to be enough graves, for people continue to crucify one another and eliminate life, with no regard to justice and mercy."

While the pope did not mention any one current conflict in his remarks, he did recall St. John Paul II's fervent efforts and

calls for peace during the 2003 invasion of Iraq conducted by the U.S. with the assistance of a multi-national coalition.

"I make his appeal my own this evening, relevant as it is today," Pope Leo said, referring to his predecessors' calls for "No more war."

"The Church is a great people at the service of reconciliation and peace," he said. "She advances without hesitation, even when rejecting the logic of war may lead to misunderstanding and scorn."

The Church "proclaims the Gospel of peace and instills obedience to God rather than any human authority, especially when the inherent dignity of other human beings is threatened by continuous violations of international law," Pope Leo said.

With the help of prayer and God, people can help "break the demonic cycle of evil" and be at the service of the Kingdom of God, where there is "no sword, no drone, no vengeance, no trivialization of evil, no unjust profit, but only dignity, understanding and forgiveness," Pope Leo said.

"It is here that we find a bulwark against that delusion of omnipotence that surrounds us and is becoming increasingly unpredictable and aggressive," he added.

He criticized the use of God's name in justifying violence, saying "even the holy name of God, the God of life, is being dragged into discourses of death."

Those invoking God's name in such a way erase a world made up of brothers and sisters with one heavenly Father and instead create a "nightmare" where the world is made up of enemies and threats, rather than calls to listen and to come together.

Speaking to the world's leaders, the pope said, "Stop! It is time for peace! Sit at the table of dialogue and mediation, not at the table where rearmament is planned, and deadly actions are decided!"

However, all the world's people also have a duty to reject the violence in their own hearts and minds, and help build a kingdom of peace each and every day in one's own home, school and community, he said.

"Let us believe once again in love, moderation and good politics," he said, urging people to learn more and "get personally involved" in being part of "the mosaic of peace!"

"Dear brothers and sisters, let us return home having made a commitment to pray without ceasing and without growing weary, a commitment to a profound conversion of heart," the pope said.

Before entering the basilica, Pope Leo greeted the faithful gathered in St. Peter's Square, thanking them for their presence. He explained his reason for calling for the prayer vigil, which was also being joined by countless others around the world, either online or in their own parishes.

By praying the rosary together, he said, "we want to tell the whole world that it is possible to build peace, a new peace, that it is possible for all people, of all religions, of all ethnicities, to live together, and that we want to be disciples of Jesus Christ, united as brothers and sisters, all united in a world of peace."

# 'Courageous Faith' is theme of 2026 Catholic Women's Conference

SCRANTON - Catholic women from across northeastern and north central Pennsylvania and beyond are invited to gather at Marywood University for the highly anticipated 2026 Catholic Women's Conference on June 5 and 6, 2026.

With the powerful theme "Courageous Faith," this year's event promises to be an inspiring and transformative experience for every woman in attendance.

From moving talks to spiritual enrichment, the Catholic Women's Conference is an exciting event designed to fortify your faith, and help you suit up in your armor of truth and grab your shield of strength.

Courageous faith is more than just belief - it's action.

It is the kind of belief that pushes forward even when fear, doubt, or uncertainty threaten to stop you.

It is about trusting deeply in what you know to be true, even when there's no guarantee of success.

This faith shows up in your life when you stand firm in your values, when you choose to act in accordance with your beliefs and not just hold them inwardly. It's a faith that lives boldly, stepping forward despite opposition, and refusing to compromise on truth.

At the Catholic Women's Conference, courageous faith will come alive through inspirational talks, prayer, and community.

It will be a reminder that faith isn't just something you have - it's something you live.

The conference is a day of friendship, fun and faith!

The day will begin with the celebration of Mass with the Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton.

In addition, there will be opportunities for Reconciliation and Eucharistic Adoration, offering moments of deep reflection and spiritual renewal.



**Fr. Dan Reehil**

The conference will also feature uplifting music, a marketplace for faith-centered products and lunch, creating a full day of connection and enrichment.

Throughout the day, a series of dynamic keynote speakers will each tackle aspects of courageous faith.

Father Dan Reehil, Pastor of Saint Catherine of Siena Church in the Nashville-area, will open the conference with a talk on Spiritual Battle.

He will address the ongoing, unseen battle between good and evil that shapes every part of our lives.

He will explore the struggle between truth and deception, faith and doubt, and call all believers to take a stand for God's values in an often chaotic world. His insights will challenge participants to reflect on their daily choices and the importance of standing firm in faith.

Francesca LaRosa will follow his presentation, blending music, scripture and reflections to inspire attendees to embody courageous faith in their lives.

LaRosa began her musical journey at the age of nine, playing at Mass with her father. By the end of high school, she had composed and recorded two albums for the Holy Liturgy.

Francesca pursued music education at Ball State University, excelling in vocal competitions



**Susan Brinkmann**

and deepening her call to serve God through music.

She launched the instrumental piano channel 'Keys of Peace,' featured on Hallow. With her husband David, a music producer and videographer, she created a YouTube channel to share her word-for-word Psalm settings in English and Spanish which quickly gained international recognition.

Her work has been featured on Sirius XM's 'The Catholic Channel,' including 'The Busted



**Francesca LaRosa**

Halo Show' and Gus Lloyd's 'Seize the Day' show and over 10 million Youtube views. Francesca was honored with the Best New Singer award at the first annual Catholic Music Awards in Rome.

In the afternoon, Sue Brinkmann will continue the conversation with her session on Spiritual Battles in Daily Life.

Using scripture and real-life applications, Sue will help women recognize the spiritual battles they face every day. She

will teach participants how to engage with these challenges with faith, discernment, and prayer, offering practical tools to navigate the struggles of life.

Her session will empower women to put on the full armor of God and walk in victory.

The conference hostess will be Mary Clare Hallman, Diocesan Secretary for Parish Life. Co-Chairs of the event are Mary Carroll Donahoe and Deborah Kennedy.

A special evening option is available Friday, June 5, for those who wish to dive deeper into the spiritual battles we face. There will be a special evening session with Father Dan Reehil and Sue Brinkmann at the Marian Chapel in the Swartz Center of Spiritual Life on the Marywood University campus.

Registration is now open. You can fill out the form below and mail it back, scan the QR code, or visit [cwcnepa.com](http://cwcnepa.com) to register online.



**Courageous faith**  
Get battle ready with  
**Father Dan Reehil,**  
**Sue Brinkmann,**  
**and Francesca LaRosa!**  
**June 5 & 6, 2026**



Saturday Conference x \$75 per person = \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
If purchasing multiple tickets, List names below.

Friday Dinner & Talks x \$50 per person = \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Talks by Fr. Dan Reehil and Sue Brinkmann

Accommodations \$100 per room = \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Single or Double. If Double include name of person.

A Good Samaritan ticket @ \$75 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
I'd like to buy a ticket for a woman that can't afford to attend.

TOTAL = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Payment & sponsorship options:**

online at [www.cwcnepa.com](http://www.cwcnepa.com)

or **QR CODE**

or **Make checks payable to:**

The Diocese of Scranton.

Mail to:

Refresh Your Faith Conference

P.O. Box 14

Chinchilla, PA 18410

# Diocese to celebrate annual Mother's Day Adoption Mass May 10



SCRANTON – The Diocese of Scranton will celebrate its annual Mother's Day Adoption Mass on Sunday, May 10, at 10:00 a.m. at the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton.

This liturgy prayerfully recognizes all mothers, with a special emphasis on adoptive and foster mothers. The Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, will be the principal celebrant and homilist.

The Mother's Day Adoption Mass is open to the public and all faithful are invited to attend.

CTV: Catholic Television of the Diocese of Scranton will broadcast the Mass live. A livestream will also be provided on the Diocese of Scranton website, YouTube channel and across all Diocesan social media platforms.

In his first year as the successor of Peter, Pope Leo XIV has offered the Catholic Church a renewed reflection on the importance of motherhood and maternity. Through his pastoral tone and public messages, he has emphasized that motherhood is a sacred gift, and maternity

is at the heart of the Church's mission to protect, nurture and evangelize.

As the world grows increasingly more complex, Pope Leo XIV calls the Catholic faithful to rediscover the foundational role of mothers in both the Church and society.

On Mother's Day 2025, Pope Leo issued a heartfelt message from the Vatican, offering blessings to all mothers, especially those in heaven. In doing so, he reaffirmed the Catholic Church's deep gratitude for the maternal vocation.

In a formal message to the Dicastery for the Laity, Family and Life, Pope Leo XIV framed maternity as a vocation essential to the Catholic Church's life, and at the Jubilee of Families last year shared that a family's love, when grounded in Christ, becomes "a sign of peace for the world."

While Mother's Day is not a liturgical or Catholic observance, it is a wonderful opportunity to highlight the beautiful vocation of motherhood and the gift of human life. It calls us to cherish the gift of life that we receive from our mothers and to pray for all women to whom God has entrusted life in a very special way.



## BISHOP BAMBERA'S SCHEDULE

- 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.
- April 19** - Confirmation for Our Lady of the Snows Parish  
Church of Saint Benedict, Clarks Summit, 11:00 a.m.
- April 19** - Confirmation for Saint Gregory Parish  
Church of Saint Gregory, Clarks Green, 2:00 p.m.
- April 20** - Confirmation for Saint John the Evangelist, Saint Joseph Marello, Our Lady of the Eucharist, Queen of the Apostles and Sacred Heart of Jesus Parishes  
Saint John the Evangelist Parish, Pittston, 5:00 p.m.
- April 21** - School Mass for Holy Cross High School  
Dunmore, 9:00 a.m.
- April 22** - School Mass for Notre Dame Elementary & Jr./Sr. High School  
East Stroudsburg, 9:00 a.m.
- April 23** - Confirmation for Saint Robert Bellarmine, Exaltation of the Holy Cross, Saint John the Baptist and All Saints Parishes  
Robert Bellarmine Parish, Wilkes-Barre, 5:00 p.m.
- April 27** - Confirmation for Saint Therese and Saint Frances Cabrini Parishes  
Saint Therese Parish, Shavertown, 5:00 p.m.
- April 29** - School Mass for Epiphany School  
Sayre, 10:00 a.m.
- April 29** - School Mass for Saint Agnes School  
Towanda, 12:30 p.m.
- April 30** - Confirmation for Immaculate Conception, Saint Patrick and Good Shepherd Parishes  
Immaculate Conception Parish, Freeland, 5:00 p.m.
- May 3** - Mass at The University of Scranton  
Madonna della Strada Chapel, Scranton, 11:00 a.m.
- May 3-5** - Pennsylvania Bishops Meeting  
Malvern, PA
- May 6** - Confirmation for Saint John Bosco Parish  
Saint John Bosco Parish, Conyngham, 5:00 p.m.
- May 7** - Confirmation for Saint John Parish  
Saint John Parish, East Stroudsburg, 6:30 p.m.
- May 9** - Commencement for Misericordia University  
Dallas, 2:00 p.m.
- May 10** - Mother's Day Adoption Mass  
Cathedral of Saint Peter, Scranton, 10:00 a.m.
- May 11** - Confirmation for Saint Maximilian Kolbe, Saint Rita and Most Holy Trinity Parishes  
Most Holy Trinity Parish, Cresco, 5:00 p.m.
- May 15** - Commencement for King's College  
Mohegan Arena at Casey Plaza, Wilkes-Barre Twp., 1:00 p.m.
- May 16** - Commencement for Marywood University  
Mohegan Arena at Casey Plaza, Wilkes-Barre Twp., 1:00 p.m.
- May 17** - Mass for the Seventh Sunday of Easter  
Sacred Heart of Mary Church, Jermyn, 9:00 a.m.
- May 18** - Confirmation for SS Peter & Paul, Epiphany, Saint Michael, Immaculate Heart of Mary and Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parishes  
SS Peter & Paul Parish, Towanda, 5:00 p.m.
- May 19** - Mass at the Lackawanna County Prison  
Scranton, Noon
- May 20** - Confirmation for Our Lady of Lourdes and Resurrection Parishes  
Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, Montoursville, 5:00 p.m.

## SAVE THE DATE - JUNE 10



CATHOLIC CHARITIES USA  
"PEOPLE OF HOPE MUSEUM"  
WILL VISIT SCRANTON

Details Coming Soon!

# A Shared Responsibility: Safe Environment efforts begin in every parish

SCRANTON – In parishes across the Diocese of Scranton, the work of protecting children and young people begins quietly – but decisively – at the local level.

For parish leaders like Tiffany Haller of Saint Ann Parish in Williamsport and Kristin Osipower of Saint Theresse Parish in Shavertown, ensuring a safe environment is not simply a policy to follow, but a personal responsibility rooted in faith, trust, and care for others.

“At Saint Ann’s in Williamsport, we are clear that background checks are a requirement to work with children up front,” Haller explained. “Then, I do my best to help them with any questions, concerns or logistics in completing the process if they have not already done so.”

That hands-on approach reflects a broader reality: safe environment efforts rely heavily on dedicated parish representatives who manage clearances, track compliance and foster awareness among volunteers and staff.

Osipower, who is the Director of Religious Education at Saint Theresse Parish, emphasized that communication and organization are essential in keeping track of a large and active volunteer base.

“One challenge for our parish is managing the sheer volume of volunteers ... Another challenge is when other ministries have a great idea to involve youth, but I have to remind them about the necessary extra steps to be safe environment compliant,” she said. “This occasionally has altered plans and timelines, but our parishioners understand that our priority is the well-being of our youth.”

Both women acknowledged that managing compliance – especially tracking background clearances and five-year renewals – can be challenging. Yet through consistent oversight and collaboration with the Diocese, those challenges remain manageable.

Beyond paperwork and policies, both leaders stressed that the ultimate goal is creating a culture where children and families feel secure and valued.

“I often tell families that I want them to feel at home in our parish and a big component of that is trusting that you will be safe,” Osipower said. “As a mom of four myself, I would never leave my children if I thought their safety was going to be jeopardized.”



## APRIL IS CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH





**Throughout April, communities nationwide, including the Diocese of Scranton, observe Child Abuse Prevention Month, a time to raise awareness and reaffirm our collective commitment to protecting children from abuse and neglect.**

**The Diocese of Scranton remains firmly dedicated to:**

-  Safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults
-  Supporting survivors of abuse
-  Ensuring all allegations of abuse are promptly reported to law enforcement
-  Requiring mandatory prevention training for clergy, employees and volunteers to ensure safe environments throughout our Diocese

**We also recognize and thank those who work tirelessly to keep our parishes, schools and communities safe.**

Haller echoed that sentiment, describing safe environment efforts as an extension of the Church’s mission.

“A safe environment is simply a reflection of, and way to, uphold the dignity of all of us as brothers and sisters in Christ,” Haller stated. “I view this as a form of hospitality; when we all take steps to ensure safety, everyone – from our most seasoned catechists to our youngest students – feels loved and protected.”

That culture of care is reinforced not only through background checks and ongoing training, but also through education. Parishes throughout the Diocese implement annual age-appropriate safe environment lessons for children, helping them understand boundaries, recognize unsafe situations, and identify trusted adults.

At the Diocesan level, efforts are coordinated and supported by Addie Rocco, Safe Environment Coordinator for the Diocese of Scranton, who works closely with parishes, schools, and ministries to ensure full compliance with national and local standards.

“My role as Safe Environment Coordinator of the Diocese of Scranton is as a liaison to all parishes, schools, clergy, Diocesan staff and volunteers to ensure safe environment compliance,” Rocco said. “I also act as the liaison between the Diocese and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), and I am responsible for a yearly audit from the USCCB that ensures such compliance measures are met operationally throughout the Diocese.”

Rocco noted that more than 25,000 individuals across the Diocese have completed training through the “VIRTUS: Protecting God’s Children” program, a cornerstone of the Church’s efforts to prevent abuse through education and awareness.

But she is quick to emphasize that policies alone are not enough.

“Ensuring safety is a team sport,” she said. “If you see something, say something. Be present, be aware. When your child or grandchild is going to parish events, ask questions, get involved. I know we are tired and busy. We are juggling so much in this world today and there are

many distractions. When these instances of distraction occur, that is when we become vulnerable to crime. Don’t brush off gut feelings, go with them. It is the Lord guiding you.”

The Diocese of Scranton maintains a zero-tolerance policy for abuse and reports all allegations immediately to law enforcement.

In addition, a Victim Assistance Coordinator is available to provide pastoral care and support for survivors and their families, including access to counseling and other resources.

However, training and prevention remain at the heart of the Diocese’s mission to protect children – at all levels.

“As a mother of four daughters and a former member of law enforcement, I understand how important safety measures are and that education on reporting and looking for warning signs of behaviors can help to stop abuse before it starts,” Rocco added.

“These efforts require diligence, but protecting our children is one of the most important things we do, and it is well worth it,” Haller ended by saying.

# Bishop celebrates Healing Mass for Survivors of Abuse at Cathedral

SCRANTON - During a Healing Mass for Survivors of Abuse on April 9, 2026, at the Cathedral of Saint Peter, the Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, reflected on the enduring pain carried by survivors, the importance of listening to their stories, and the Church's responsibility to foster healing and accountability.

Celebrated annually during Child Abuse Prevention Month, and this year within the Octave of Easter, the liturgy offered prayers for healing and hope rooted in the Risen Christ.

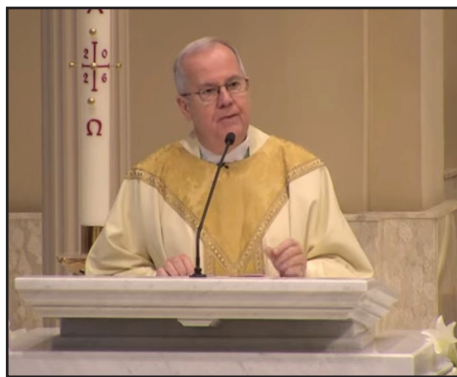
Bishop Bambera's homily is printed in full below as it was prepared for delivery:

*Brothers and sisters, this is the eighth time in my tenure as Bishop that I've gathered with you in our cathedral to celebrate Mass during the month of April, a time dedicated to Sexual Assault and Child Abuse Prevention. We pray during this hour for God's healing and peace for all survivors of sexual abuse and particularly for those abused by members of the clergy and trusted Church workers. We pray as well for mercy and forgiveness for those who inflicted or enabled such abuse.*

*It is significant that our prayer today takes place in the heart of the Octave of Easter – eight days that remind us that the cross of Jesus, despite its overwhelming pain, was not the end of Jesus' story but, through the power of God, gave way to the fullness of life, meaning and peace for Jesus – and for each of us through faith.*

*Earlier this year, in speaking to the cardinals of the Catholic Church, Pope Leo XIV addressed what he called "the scandal of closed doors." The Holy Father stressed that while "abuse itself causes a deep wound which may last a lifetime, often the scandal in the Church is that the door was closed and victims were not welcomed or accompanied" by the Church. He went on to share the testimony of a victim with whom he had spoken: "She told me that the most painful part for her was that no bishop wanted to listen." There, Pope Leo said, "listening is profoundly important."*

*Brothers and sisters, while we have celebrated this Mass in a very public way for many years, it continues to be vital that we pray for survivors of abuse. Why? Because there is still pain. And the Church needs to listen to the stories of survivors, to their pain*



**Bishop Joseph C. Bambera delivers the homily during a Healing Mass for Survivors of Abuse on April 9, 2026, at the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton. (Photo/Courtesy of Catholic Television)**

*and to the movements of their hearts.*

*Most of us will ever know the depth of the pain that survivors endure. Yet, in courageously sharing their pain, so many of them with whom I've spoken over the years have taught me a great lesson. They've taught me that if the Church is truly intent upon creating safe environments for its children and all of God's people, the Church – and especially Church leaders – must never forget or allow time to numb us to the pain that was so willfully inflicted on innocent lives by those who postured themselves as God's representatives and ministers of his love and mercy. An authentic recognition of the pain of that cross is the only thing that can truly prompt us to change and to create a Church deserving of people's trust.*

*Friends, today's Scripture passages remind us of another cross. They remind us of the pain and suffering so unfairly inflicted upon Jesus. They also remind us that sin and death did not have the final word in Jesus' experience. Nor do we journey through life alone as we carry our crosses. God walks with us – as Jesus walked with the burdened disciples on the road to Emmaus – and as he appeared to others in Jerusalem huddled for fear for their very lives. And we who gather in prayer this day are "witnesses" to the saving, healing presence of God in our world and in our lives as well.*

*Yet, for many of us, and especially for survivors of abuse, despite the hope that is proclaimed through the faith that we embrace as followers of the risen Jesus, it is still difficult at times to come to terms*

*with such suffering and pain. Time doesn't always heal.*

*And the world in which we find ourselves – fraught with wars, hatred and discrimination, and, yes, the constant news stories questioning and chronicling the rampant sexual abuse of minors by individuals of notoriety and fame – has sadly only served to open wounds of so many who have suffered for so long.*

*It is, however, miraculously in moments of such pain and despair that our faith can help us come to understand how God works best works within our lives.*

*When we have nowhere else to turn, when we're no longer capable of fixing the things that have gone awry in our lives, God is finally given room to step into our lives and to carry us when we can no longer walk on our own. In his letter to the Church at Corinth, Saint Paul confronts the reality of his own suffering amid the broken world in which he finds himself, "I willingly boast of my weakness that the power of Christ may rest upon me" (2 Corinthians 12:9).*

*If we can see ourselves in Jesus' suffering and death, our faith tells us that we have nothing to fear. St. Paul once again*

*says that "if we have died with Christ" – not just at the time of our passing from this world but also and especially through the crosses that we carry in life – "we shall also live with him," not only in eternity but in this moment of our journey of faith.*

*Brothers and sisters, this is Easter! That is what we celebrate this day in our prayer during this Eastertide ... God, in Christ, embraces our suffering – all of it, as unfair and as painful as it may be – and gives us hope to move forward in our journey of life and faith.*

*As Bishop of this local Church, I again apologize for the pain that has been inflicted upon far too many of you by leaders of our Church. In this season of hope and new life, I ask for forgiveness from the countless numbers of you who have suffered so much. And I pledge to continue to do all within my power to keep our churches and schools safe for our children and for all our people to worship, to pray, to learn and to grow in their faith.*

*May the risen Jesus heal us of our pain, fill us with his love and strengthen us to walk together in faith and so reflect his life and love to a world so desperately in need of it.*

## Prayer for Survivors of Abuse

Lord God,  
your own Son was delivered into the hands of the wicked,  
yet he prayed for his persecutors and overcame hatred  
with his blood on the cross.

Relieve the suffering of those who have been abused;  
Grant them peace of mind and a renewed faith in your  
protection and care.

Protect us all from the violence of others,  
keep us safe from the weapons of hate,  
and restore to us tranquility and peace.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

May God bless us with his mercy, strengthen us with his love,  
and enable us to walk in charity and peace.

Amen.

*Adapted from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Secretariat of  
Child and Youth Protection*

# Rectory, Set, Cook! breaks record again, raises \$234,779 to fight hunger and homelessness

SCRANTON – The Diocese of Scranton is proud to announce the results of its fifth annual Rectory, Set, Cook! pastor chef cooking competition – and once again – the event has set a new benchmark for generosity.

At the close of this year's campaign, Rectory, Set, Cook! raised a record-breaking \$234,779 from 2,031 donors, making this year's competition the most successful in its five-year history.

Between Feb. 17 and March 27, 2026, the popular online fundraiser brought together priests from across northeastern and north central Pennsylvania in a friendly and creative culinary showdown, all in support of anti-hunger and anti-homelessness initiatives of Catholic Social Services of the Diocese of Scranton.

At the conclusion of the competition, at exactly 4 p.m. on March 27, the following pastor chefs and teams were named the 2026 Top Chefs:

## First Place:

**Father Jose Kuriappilly, Father Dan Toomey and Team Bradford County**

Parishes: Saints Peter and Paul Parish, Towanda; Epiphany Parish, Sayre; Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish, Wyalusing

**Total Raised: \$32,524.06**

## Second Place:

**Father James Paisley**

Parish: Saint Ann Basilica Parish, Scranton

**Total Raised: \$31,829.52**

## Third Place:

**Father Glenn McCreary and Father Dias Antony Valiamarathungal**

Parishes: Saint Boniface Parish, Williamsport; Saint Ann Parish, Williamsport

**Total Raised: \$31,363.92**

## Fourth Place:

**Monsignor Jack Bendik, Father Phil Sladicka and Father Jake Doris**

Parish: Representing Retired Clergy of Villa Saint Joseph, Dunmore

**Total Raised: \$30,034.81**

## Fifth Place:

**Father Kevin Miller, Father Neftali Feliz Sena, and Father Benito Aquino**

Parish: Saint Pius of Pietrelcina Parish, Hazleton

**Total Raised: \$17,248.00**

“This year’s Rectory, Set, Cook! once again showed the incredible generosity of our community,” Shannon Kowalski, Development Coordinator for Catholic Social Services, said. “Each year, this event continues to grow, not only in the amount of money raised but the number of people who get involved and support our mission.”

“We are truly honored and humbled to have finished first in this year’s Rectory, Set, Cook! contest,” Father Kuriappilly said on behalf of the winning team. “This achievement does not belong simply to us priests, but to all the people who supported and encouraged us along the way. We also congratulate all our brother priests who participated in this year’s event!”

The true impact of Rectory, Set, Cook! extends far beyond the friendly competition in the kitchen.

“The real winners are the individuals and families

who benefit from the outpouring of support,” Kowalski added. “These funds allow Catholic Social Services to continue providing essential services to those who rely on our food pantries, kitchens and emergency shelters.”

Since its launch in 2022, the competition has grown steadily each year – raising \$171,747 in its inaugural year, followed by \$197,412 in 2023, \$218,001 in 2024, \$227,162 in 2025, and now surpassing that total again in 2026. With this year’s success, the initiative has now raised more than \$1 million overall.

Numerous community partners also helped to make Rectory, Set, Cook! successful this year, including Hawk Family Foundation, Discover NEPA, Creative Benefits, Inc., Grimm Construction, Inc., Topp Business Solutions, MMQ & Associates, P.C., Troy Mechanical, Inc., Damage Control, Inc., DePietro’s Pharmacy, and Tambur Family Foundation.

# Young disciples recognized for service at final Bishop's Youth Award Mass

SCRANTON – The final Mass honoring recipients of the 2026 Bishop's Youth Award brought together young people from the Eastern and Western Pastoral regions of the Diocese of Scranton on Sunday, March 22, 2026, at the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton.

The liturgy marked the conclusion of three celebrations held throughout March recognizing eighth- and twelfth-grade students who have demonstrated a strong commitment to their Catholic faith through service in their parishes, schools, and communities.

For many of the students recognized at the final Mass, the celebration was both an honor and an opportunity to witness the faith of their peers.

"I'm really excited to be here and to see a lot of people who contribute to the Church," Angelica Barcia, a senior at Delaware Valley High School and parishioner of Saint Patrick Parish in Milford, said. "Especially in today's world, people are tempted to do things that are not Christ-like, so it's very important to celebrate the people who are doing that."

Barcia, who serves as a catechist, lector, and youth group member in her parish, said her faith has helped keep her grounded.

"No matter what else is going on in the world, I have Jesus, and that is all that



**Elijah Watson from Saint Michael Parish in Canton receives his Bishop Youth Award at the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton on March 22, 2026. (Photos/Mike Melisky)**

really matters," she added.

Zachariah Levin, a homeschooled senior from Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish in Brodheadsville, described receiving the award as an opportunity to "bear witness to God's goodness" and inspire others.

Levin, who has recently been accepted as a seminarian for the Diocese of Scranton, said his growing involvement in parish life helped him recognize God's call.

"I've seen a lot of the hurt and pain that goes on in the world, but also the benefit of God's grace," he said. "It is a great benefit in our life to be Catholic."



**Father Dan Toomey, Pastor of Epiphany Parish in Sayre, delivers the homily at the third Bishop Youth Award Mass.**

For Anna Tokarz, a senior from Saint Peter Parish in Wellsboro, the gathering itself was especially meaningful.

"It feels really nice to be around other kids who are Catholic, because I don't experience that a lot in my public school, so it's really nice being around people with like-minded thoughts," Tokarz explained.

Eighth-grade recipients also reflected on the importance of faith in their daily lives.

"It helps me make better decisions and overall makes me a better person," Lya Peguero of Saint Pius of Pietrelcina Parish

in Hazleton, who participates in her parish choir and youth group.

"When you think, 'What would God do?' it really helps shape every decision you make," Lillian Kuchar, an eighth-grade student at Holy Family Academy in Hazleton, added.

During the Mass, Father Dan Toomey, pastor of Epiphany Parish, Sayre, encouraged the young people to recognize their unique role as witnesses to Christ in the world.

"You are the presence of Christ in this world," Father Toomey said in his homily. "This Mass is about continuing to pray for God's movement in your hearts and minds."

Sharing his own vocation story, Father Toomey spoke about discerning God's call later in life after serving as an Army officer, reminding students of the importance of listening for God's voice.

"Continue to listen to how God is calling you to be an individual person. He has created you and given you the Holy Spirit," Father Toomey added.

## Bishop celebrates Mass at Marian Catholic High School in Tamaqua



TAMAQUA - On Wednesday, March 25, 2026, the Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, visited Marian Catholic High School in Tamaqua, Schuylkill County, to celebrate Mass with students for the Solemnity of the Annunciation.

Following Mass, Bishop Bambera posed for a photo with many of the students who attend Marian Catholic High School but reside and belong to parishes within the Diocese of Scranton.

## Mueller Family McDonald's donates \$10,000 to Diocese of Scranton Scholarship Foundation

SCRANTON - Carol Mueller and Christina Curran of the Mueller Family McDonald's presented a check for \$10,000 to Diocese of Scranton Scholarship Foundation on Friday, March 20, 2026.

The donation was a result of the annual Fry Fundraiser that kicked off National Catholic Schools Week Jan. 25, 2026, and ended Feb. 15, 2026. A total of 21 Mueller Family McDonald's locations in Bradford, Lackawanna, Luzerne, Susquehanna, Wayne, and Wyoming counties participated by donating a portion of every large order of french fries sold during that period.

"We are so grateful to the Mueller family for their generosity and commitment to supporting families in need. This support is needed more than ever and ensures an excellent faith-based education is affordable and available to those desiring to attend one of our schools," Kristen Donohue, Diocesan Secretary for Catholic Education/Superintendent of Schools, said.

Shown above at the check presentation are, from left: Carol Mueller, Christina Curran, and Kristen Donohue.



*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.*



Sixth, seventh and eighth-grade students at **Good Shepherd Academy in Kingston** take a moment to celebrate the amazing season of the Holy Redeemer High School Girls' Basketball Team, which finished as runner-up in the PIAA Class 3A State Title Game.



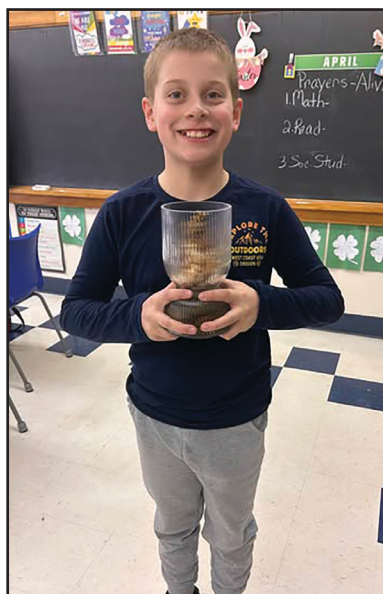
J.J. Galvin, Cullen Papiercavich and Michael Hudzinki, students at **Holy Rosary School in Duryea**, earned awards at Cub Scout Pack 316's annual Blue and Gold Banquet. Father Thomas Petro, Executive Director of the Cub and Scout's BSA Program in Avoca, is pictured with the students.



Sixth graders from **Saint Agnes School in Towanda** attended the Diocesan Chrism Mass at the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton on March 31 and posed afterward for a photo with Father Jose Kuriappilly.



**Notre Dame Jr./Sr. High School in East Stroudsburg** had a large number of students who marched in the Stroudsburg Saint Patrick's Day Parade on Sunday, March 22, 2026. Thank you to Papillon & Moyer for providing a flatbed and Mrs. Spain for providing the balloon arch for this year's float.



David Mazaika, a fifth-grade student at **Holy Family Academy in Hazleton**, holds a flower that was grown by his teacher, Mr. John Mardyniak, who passed away suddenly on March 23, 2026.



Eighth-grade students from **Saint Mary of Mount Carmel School in Dunmore** learn about the Seder meal and Passover. Through it, they saw how Jesus celebrated the Passover at the Last Supper and how He used it to give Himself in the Eucharist as the new Passover lamb who saves us from sin and brings us to eternal life.



Students at **La Salle Academy in Jessup** created Lenten crosses as a meaningful way to reflect on faith, sacrifice, and the journey toward Easter.



Walking with Christ, step by step, guided by seventh and eighth-grade students at **All Saints Academy in Scranton** as a public display of faith, love and sacrifice.



Seniors at **Holy Cross High School in Dunmore** performed the Living Stations of the Cross for the student body prior to Easter break. The beautiful performance brought the Passion of Our Lord to life for students and faculty.



During Holy Week, on Tuesday, March 31, seniors at **Holy Redeemer High School in Wilkes-Barre** presented a beautiful and powerful dramatization of Christ's Passion, Death and Resurrection.



Brayden Antonello and Lily Holtz, eighth-grade students at **Saint Jude School in Mountain Top**, participate in the annual Living Stations meditation as part of Holy Week.



Seventh-grade students at **Saint Clare/Saint Paul School in Scranton** reverently brought the Living Stations to life, demonstrating a beautiful expression of faith, reflection, and dedication. Each station was thoughtfully presented, allowing the school community to walk alongside this meaningful journey in a powerful and moving way.



The eighth-grade class of **Wyoming Area Catholic School in Exeter** presented the Living Stations on Palm Sunday to the school and community.



Mila Rouse, Cameron Roth and Moises Rodriguez, second graders at **Saint Nicholas/Saint Mary School in Wilkes-Barre**, present the Living Stations of the Cross on March 27 inside Saint Nicholas Church.



Eighth-grade students from **Our Lady of Peace School in Clarks Green** reverently brought the Stations of the Cross to life at the Church of Saint Gregory in preparation for Easter. Audrey Krupovich portrayed Mary, and Patrick Donohue portrayed Jesus.



Sixth-grade students from **Notre Dame Elementary School in East Stroudsburg** perform the Living Stations of the Cross.



Fourth-grade students at **Epiphany School in Sayre** lead the Stations of the Cross with Father Dan Toomey, pastor of Epiphany Parish.

# Prayers & Devotion

to Our Lady of Fatima, Queen of Peace



WEDNESDAY, MAY 13TH, 7 P.M.

OUR LADY OF VICTORY CHURCH, HARVEYS LAKE

DEVOTIONS TO OUR LADY OF FATIMA WILL BE HELD  
THE 13TH OF EACH MONTH THROUGH OCTOBER



“The Most Holy Virgin in these last times in which we live has given a new efficacy to the recitation of the Rosary to such an extent that there is no problem, no matter how difficult it is, whether temporal or above all spiritual in the personal life of each one of us, of our families...of the life of peoples and nations that cannot be solved by the Rosary. There is no problem. I tell you, no matter how difficult it is, that we cannot resolve by the prayer of the Holy Rosary.”

– Sister Maria Lucia of Fatima

JOIN OUR PRAYERS FOR PEACE IN THE WORLD!

# Pope Leo arrives in Algeria on first-ever papal trip to the country

ALGIERS (OSV News) - Pope Leo XIV arrived in Algeria on the morning of April 13, becoming the first pope to make an apostolic journey to the North Africa nation, the first stop of the pope's 11-day, four-country tour of Africa.

Speaking to journalists on the flight to Algiers, Pope Leo revealed that his trip to Africa was "meant to be the first trip of the pontificate."

"Already last year, in May, I said, 'On my first trip, I would like to travel to Africa,'" Pope Leo said on the papal plane, a chartered ITA Airways flight.

"I am very happy to visit the land of St. Augustine again," he added, saying that Augustine "offers a very important bridge in interreligious dialogue" and "is much loved in his homeland, as we will see."

The pope emphasized, "We must always seek bridges to build peace and reconciliation. And so, this trip truly represents a precious opportunity to continue with the same voice, with the same message."

Calling the trip "very special for several reasons," the pope said it is "a blessing for me personally," expressing hope that the visit will also be a blessing "for the Church and the world."

The papal plane touched down at Houari Boumediene Airport in Algiers shortly before 10 a.m. local time following a two-hour flight from Rome. Since heavy rain was in the forecast, the welcoming ceremony in Algeria's capital city was moved indoors.

The pope was greeted by Algerian President Abdelmadjid Tebboune as an honor guard stood at attention and a young girl presented the pope with flowers.

The pope's visit to Algeria marks a historic milestone in a



**Pope Leo XIV receives a painting from a resident as he visits the nursing home of the Little Sisters of the Poor in Annaba, Algeria, April 14, 2026. (OSV News photo/Simone Risoluti, Vatican Media)**

country that is 99% Sunni Muslim and home to fewer than 9,000 Catholics among a population of more than 45 million people.

Algerian bishops said the pope comes "as an apostle of peace," seeking to strengthen a Church whose mission is one of "fraternal presence" in a predominantly Muslim society.

From April 13 to 23, the 70-year-old pope is scheduled to travel a total of 11,000 miles on 18 flights, visiting 11 cities across Algeria, Cameroon, Angola and Equatorial Guinea.

The American pope is expected to deliver addresses in English, French, Portuguese and Spanish. In Algeria he will speak primarily in English.

Algeria, the largest country in Africa, is dominated by the vast Sahara Desert, yet the pope's itinerary here is centered on the country's northern Mediterranean coast, with stops in Algiers and Annaba.

The visit carries particular significance for Pope Leo, who described himself as a "son of Augustine" on the day of his election on May 8, 2025. St. Augustine, served as bishop of Hippo Regius, near the present-

day Algerian city of Annaba, and died there in A.D. 430. The pope first visited Algeria in 2003 when he was serving as prior general of the Augustinian order and returned again in 2014.

"The Holy Father has already visited Algeria twice," Bishop Michel Guillaud of Constantine-Hippone told OSV News.

Pope Leo's apostolic visit to Algeria, he added, is primarily "to meet the Algerian people and to support his Church, drawing on the strong bond between them through the figure of Augustine."

In addition to St. Augustine and St. Monica, Algeria is also known as the site of more modern witnesses to the faith. In 2018, the Church beatified 19 martyrs killed during the Algerian Civil War, including Trappist monks whose story was depicted in the film *Of Gods and Men*.

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REV. CHRISTOPHER MULHOLLAND, C.S.C.

"I pray not only for them, but also for those  
who will believe in me through their word,  
so that they may all be one, as you, Father,  
are in me and I in you."

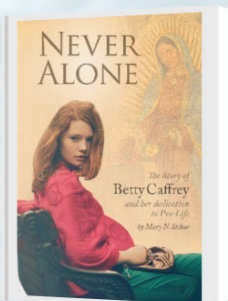
John 17:20-21



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## Never Alone

THE UNTOLD STORY OF A PRO-LIFE PIONEER



Abortion is a topic that usually issues the response of -- silence! Perhaps it is given so as not to offend or condemn, so no stance is taken. Crucifixion, the killing of the Lord and Giver of Life, elicits another response. Many choose not to have a crucifix where the bloodied body of Christ is seen--a cross is better. Both reveal that an innocent life is terminated. Silence kills. Blindness kills as well. We are now at a point in our civilization where our birth rate is radically surpassed by our abortion rate. How did this happen?

The story of one local woman reveals her life long commitment to saving the lives of the unborn and the protection of women. Betty Caffrey's biography *Never Alone* follows her from the beginning when she was shocked by the Roe versus Wade decision allowing abortion. It is her story, but it is also the story of the changes that occurred in the perception of this issue over the course of over 50 years. It features historical photos and news stories recalling the Pro-Life efforts, successes, and challenges which the Chapter under her leadership withstood throughout the years.

Despite being berated and opposed at times, nothing deterred this dynamic pro-life warrior. From the very beginning, she worked to protect women and to counsel them as well as to offer help for those who were pregnant and to those who have had abortions. She followed the doctors, the lawmakers, the clergy, the women's groups and called them out when they did not uphold the right to life.

Her story also reveals how the message of abortion was delivered by clever manipulation of the language. Name changes and language changes helped the feminists trick women into believing that abortion is a "right." She likewise revealed how abortionists' greed for money was disguised by offering the service to "better help a woman's life" and by the media messages vilifying the pro-life stance of the church.

As Betty's friend, St. Mother Teresa said that "any country who accepts abortion is the poorest of the poor while adding that we should not be surprised to hear of murders, of killings, of wars, of hatred. If a mother can kill her own child, what is left but for us to kill each other."

Being pro-life is for being for mercy!

*Never Alone: The Story of Betty Caffrey and Her dedication to Pro-Life* is available on Amazon. It is also available at The Heaven and Earth Book Shop in Scranton, PA, at Bedwick's Pharmacy in Wilkes-Barre, PA, and The Pro-Life Center in Wilkes-Barre, PA.



Mary Stchur, author of *Never Alone*, recently attended the PA Pro-Life banquet in Hershey and presented the main speaker, Kayleigh McAnney, with a copy of Betty Caffrey's biography.

## Registration open for 2026 Diocesan Wedding Anniversary Mass



### WEDDING ANNIVERSARY MASS

Sunday, June 28th, 2026

2:30pm

Cathedral of St. Peter

315 Wyoming Ave, Scranton PA 18503

Celebrating Milestone Anniversaries:

10  
YEARS

25  
YEARS

40  
YEARS

50  
YEARS

To register, please visit [www.dioceseofscranton.org](http://www.dioceseofscranton.org)  
or call the Office for Parish Life at (570) 207-2213

SCRANTON - Every summer, the Diocese of Scranton holds a Wedding Anniversary Celebration for couples celebrating milestone anniversary years.

This year's Mass will be held at the Cathedral of Saint Peter on Sunday, June 28, 2026, at 2:30 p.m.

Couples who are celebrating 10, 25, 40, and 50 years of marriage are invited to register for the Mass, where couples will renew their wedding commitment.

Immediately following the liturgy, there will be a reception with light refreshments at the Diocesan Pastoral Center, which is across the street from the Cathedral (330 Wyoming Avenue).

Pre-registration is required.

To register, visit the Diocese of Scranton website.

For more information, please call Bridget Maille, Program Coordinator, Family Life at (570) 207-2213 x1133 or email [familylife@dioceseofscranton.org](mailto:familylife@dioceseofscranton.org).

SCRANTON - Cada verano, la Diócesis de Scranton celebra una Misa de Aniversario de Bodas para las parejas que conmemoran años importantes de matrimonio.

La Misa de este año se llevará a cabo en la Catedral de San Pedro el domingo 28 de junio de 2026 a las 2:30 p.m.

Las parejas que celebran 10, 25, 40 y 50 años de matrimonio están invitadas a inscribirse para la Misa, durante la cual renovarán su compromiso matrimonial.

Inmediatamente después de la liturgia, habrá una recepción con refrigerios ligeros en el Centro Pastoral Diocesano, ubicado al otro lado de la calle de la Catedral (330 Wyoming Avenue)

Se requiere inscripción previa.

Para inscribirse, visite el sitio web de la Diócesis de Scranton.

Para más información, por favor comuníquese con Bridget Maille al (570) 207-2213 ext. 1133 o por correo electrónico a [familylife@dioceseofscranton.org](mailto:familylife@dioceseofscranton.org).

## Divine Mercy Parish to host Mass celebrating Nurses Week

SCRANTON — Divine Mercy Parish in Scranton's Minooka section will host a special Mass to celebrate National Nurses Week during May 6-12.

The 4 p.m. Vigil Mass on Saturday, May 9, in the parish's Saint Joseph Church, 312 Davis St., Scranton, will highlight the week-long observance honoring the nursing profession.

"The Power of Nurses" has

been chosen as the official theme for National Nurses Week 2026 in the United States — emphasizing the influence, expertise, and leadership of nurses in healthcare.

The specially designated Eucharistic liturgy also coincides with the observance of Mental Health Awareness Month during May.

The Nurses Mass tradition at Divine Mercy Parish continues

to affirm the essential role nurses play in advancing the Catholic Church's long-standing health ministry mission.

All faithful are welcome to join the parish community in worship and song in appreciation of the nursing profession and to pray for God's blessings and guidance for those healthcare professionals who advocate and care for patients and their families.

## Dunmore societies host Communion Breakfast



The Holy Name and Altar & Rosary Societies of Saints Anthony & Rocco Parish and Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish in Dunmore

hosted their annual Combined Communion Breakfast March 1 at La Buona Vita banquet hall in the borough. The event began with the 8:30 a.m. Mass at nearby Saint Anthony of Padua Church, celebrated by Father David Cappelloni, pastor of both Dunmore parish communities. Father Tom Dzwonczyk, assistant pastor of SS. Anthony & Rocco and Our Lady of Mount Carmel parishes, served as toastmaster for the event. Alfredo Pisa, Holy Name Society president, offered remarks on behalf of both parish societies. Guest principal speaker for the breakfast program was Nick Carr, who is pictured above in the foreground. Also shown are, standing from left: Alfredo Pisa, Father Dzwonczyk, Father Cappelloni and Martha Gervasi.

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(3 nights) June 14-17 & August 23-26 • \$409 (\$30 slot & \$60 food credit)

Resorts World Catskills Casino • May 17; August 16; November 15, \$25 slot play & \$15 food credit • \$59

Wind Creek Casino • June 28; September 27, \$25 slot play • \$56

"Joshua" Sight & Sound • Front center seats. July 25 incl. meal at Hershey farm restaurant; Oct. 17. Includes meal at authentic Amish farm • \$225

Dutch Apple Dinner Theater • Rat Pack Tribute Concert • May 16 Includes buffet meal • \$219

Dutch Apple Dinner Theater • "All Shook Up" • June 20 — The life story of Elvis, buffet meal included • \$209

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The Best of Kentucky • Aug. 1-6 • featuring The Ark Encounter, Churchill Downs Racetrack tour & museum, Bourbon Tasting & Tour. Louisville Slugger Museum, Muhammad Ali Center & much more • \$1498

Ocean City, Maryland • Sept. 7-10 Accom. on the boardwalk, welcome party, breakfast vouchers, visits to Berlin, Ocean Downs Casino, all rooms ocean view • \$758 - For oceanfront add \$60

Niagara Falls, Canada • September 20-23 • Tour of the area, Niagara on the Lake, 5 meals & more • \$989

Texas Adventure by Motorcoach • Oct. 3-14, 3 nights on San Antonio's Riverwalk, Dallas/Fort Worth, Cattle Drive, 14 meals & much more • \$2,785

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## Catholic colleges in Diocese slate spring commencement ceremonies

DALLAS — Misericordia University will celebrate its Spring Commencement on Saturday, May 9, with two ceremonies honoring graduate and undergraduate students and featuring distinguished keynote speakers whose lives reflect service,

leadership, and a commitment to the common good.

The graduate commencement ceremony will be held at 10 a.m., followed by the undergraduate exercises at 2 p.m. Both will be staged in the Anderson Sports and Health Center on campus.

The graduate ceremony will feature keynote addresses by Rabbi Larry Kaplan and his wife, Gerri Kaplan, both of whom will receive an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree.

Spiritual director of Temple Israel in Wilkes-Barre since 1998, Rabbi Kaplan has also served as a chaplain at the VA Medical Center and taught at Misericordia and King's College, Wilkes-Barre.

Together, the Kaplans have made an extraordinary impact through their commitment to foster care, opening their home to more than 125 children.

Kevin Hyland, a member of the chivalric Order of the British Empire, will deliver the keynote address during the university's undergraduate ceremony and be conferred an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters.

Hyland is an internationally recognized leader in the fight against human trafficking and modern slavery, with more than 30 years of public service. He led London's Human Trafficking Unit and later served as the United Kingdom's first independent anti-slavery commissioner.

The guest speaker helped to establish the Santa Marta Group — an international body of law enforcement agencies, civil society, and the Catholic Church launched by Pope Francis at the Vatican in April 2014.

As co-founder of the group, Hyland has worked extensively with governments and the United Nations to advance global initiatives aimed at eradicating human trafficking and forced labor.

institution of higher learning will receive their diplomas.

The newest King's graduates will hear fellow alumnus Cassandra Coleman deliver the ceremonies' keynote address, after which she will be conferred an honorary Doctor of Humanities degree.

A resident of Exeter borough and 2010 graduate of King's College, Coleman currently serves as executive director of America250PA and a member of the King's board of directors.

In September 2019, the Pennsylvania Commission for the United States Semiquincentennial (America250PA) — established to plan the commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States — appointed Coleman as executive director, making her the first to receive the distinguished designation from any state in the nation.

A former special advisor to past Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf, Coleman served as one of the youngest female mayors in American history. In 2008, at the age of 20, the future King's graduate was appointed mayor of Exeter to fill the term of her late grandfather, Mayor Joseph Coyne. She was subsequently re-elected twice.

### Actress/Comedian Rhea at Marywood Graduation

Caroline Rhea will deliver the commencement address at Marywood University's graduation ceremony on Saturday, May 16, at 1 p.m. at Mohegan Arena at Casey Plaza in Wilkes-Barre Township.

Rhea, a stand-up comedian and actress from Quebec, Canada, is best known for her role as Hilda Spellman on the hit series *Sabrina the Teenage Witch*.

Her film credits include *The Perfect Man*; *Man on the Moon* with Jim Carrey; *Christmas with*

*Continued on Next Page*


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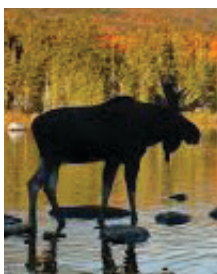
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## Catholic colleges to stage commencements

Continued from Previous Page

the *Kranks* opposite of Tim Allen and Jamie Lee Curtis; and *Ready to Rumble*.

In addition to her well-known performances in *Sabrina the Teenage Witch* and *Phineas and*

*Ferb*, Rhea has built an extensive television career, including a recurring role in *Lopez vs. Lopez*. She also hosted *The Caroline Rhea Show* and NBC's *The Biggest Loser*.

The Canadian actress also

earned wide acclaim for her celebrated role as Mrs. Miracle in Hallmark's *A Mrs. Miracle Christmas*, supported by additional work in Disney's *Mom's Got a Date with a Vampire* and HBO's *Curb Your Enthusiasm*.

## Prayer Requests for Priests Serving the Diocese

April 16, Monsignor Shane Kirby; April 17, Father Michael Kirwin; April 18, Father Michael Kloton; April 19, Holy Cross Father Charles Kociolek; April 20, Father Bert Kozen; April 21, Father Jonathan Kuhar; April 22, Father Jose Joseph Kuriappilly; April 23, Father Andrew Kurovsky; April 24, Father Joseph Kutch; April 25, Father Arun Lakra; April 26, Father

John Lambert; April 27, Father William Langan; April 28, Father John Lopera; April 29, Saint Peter Priestly Fraternity Father William Lawrence; April 30, Passionist Father John Michael Lee; May 1, Pope Leo XIV; May 2, Bishop Joseph C. Bambera; May 3, Jesuit Father John Levko; May 4, Father Michael Litcheck; May 5, Holy Cross Father Thomas Looney;

May 6, Holy Cross Father Robert Lozinski; May 7, Father Edward Lyman; May 8, Monsignor Peter Madus; May 9, Father Joseph Manarchuck; May 10, Capuchin Franciscan Father Pio Mandato; May 11, Father Michael Marchetti; May 12, Jesuit Father Joseph Marina; May 13, Jesuit Father Leonard Martin; May 14, Bishop Emeritus Joseph F. Martino; May 15, Father Paschal Mbagwu; May 16, Father Andrew McCarroll; May 17, Father Michael McCormick; May 18, Father Glenn McCreary, V.E.; May 19, Saint Joseph Oblate Father Paul McDonnell; May 20, Father Patrick McDowell; May 21, Father James McGahagan; May 22, Father Gerard McGlone; May 23, Monsignor Stephen McGough; May 24, Jesuit Father Bernard McIlhenny.



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SATURDAY, APRIL 18, 2026

Transfiguration Church

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- 12:00 PM – 6:00 PM
- 4:00 PM Mass
- 5:00 PM Special Talk:  
Padre Pio's Love  
for the Blessed Mother

SUNDAY, APRIL 19, 2026

Saint Gabriel's Church

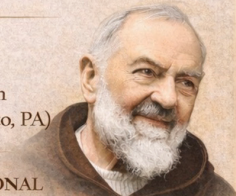
122 S. Wyoming Street  
Hazleton, PA 18201

- 7:00 AM – 4:00 PM
- Mass Schedule:
- 7:00 AM (English)
- 8:30 AM (Spanish)
- 10:00 AM (English)
- 12:00 PM (Spanish)
- 2:00 PM Talk on the Blessed Virgin Mary

Presented by

**Joe Santoro**

Director, Mission Outreach Program  
National Center for Padre Pio (Barto, PA)



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The Diocese of Scranton has two, Tally heavy-duty, 24-pin dot matrix printers designed specifically for IBM system environments and high-volume multiform printing. These have not been used in several years, due to the retirement of IBM system. Both power on, and were in excellent working order at last use in 2022. The models are Tally 4347-i10 and Tally T2365. Looking for \$100 each, or best offer. Buyer must pick up at the Diocese Chancery building. Contact Connie Wisdo, IT Manager, at 570.591.5010 if interested.



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### Notice Regarding Reporting Sexual Abuse of a Minor

It is the policy of the Diocese of Scranton to report any allegation of sexual abuse of a minor to law enforcement. If you are a victim of sexual abuse committed by a priest, deacon, religious or lay employee or volunteer of the Diocese of Scranton, you are encouraged to immediately report the matter to law enforcement. If any priest, deacon, religious, lay employee or volunteer of the Diocese of Scranton has cause or reason to suspect that a minor has been subjected to any form of abuse, including child sexual abuse, the matter will be reported to law enforcement.

It is also the policy of the Diocese to adhere to all civil and state regulations. To this end, the Diocese is equally committed to adhering to the norms of the *Code of Canon Law* and to upholding the tenets of the USCCB *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*, which includes supporting victims of sexual abuse in their pursuit of emotional and spiritual well-being. As such, information regarding an allegation of sexual abuse of a minor should also be reported to the Victim Assistance Coordinator, Mary Beth Pacuska at (570) 862-7551.

### Aviso al Respecto de Reportar el Abuso Sexual de Un Menor de Edad

Es la norma de la Diócesis de Scranton reportar cualquier alegación de abuso sexual de un menor de edad a las autoridades. Si usted es una víctima de abuso sexual cometido por un sacerdote, diácono, religioso o empleado laico, o voluntario de la Diócesis de Scranton, usted está obligado a reportar el asunto inmediatamente a las autoridades de la ley.

Si algún sacerdote, diácono, religioso, empleado laico o voluntario de la Diócesis de Scranton tiene sospecha de que un menor de edad ha sido sujeto a cualquier forma de abuso, incluyendo abuso sexual de menor de edad, el asunto será reportado a las autoridades de la ley.

Es la norma de la Diócesis defender todas las regulaciones civiles y del estado. Al fin de que la Diócesis esté comprometida igualmente a defender las normas del Código de Derecho Canónico y defender los principios de la Carta Para la Protección de Niños y Jóvenes (Conferencia de los Obispos Católicos de los Estados Unidos), lo cual incluye apoyar a las víctimas de abuso sexual en pos del bienestar emocional y espiritual.

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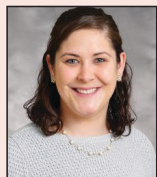
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## MISSION MESSAGE

### 'From the Upper Room to the Ends of the Earth'

By Shannon Ruiz  
Diocesan Director,  
of Pontifical Mission Societies



Every year on the Second Sunday of Easter — Divine Mercy Sunday — we hear the story of “Doubting Thomas” in the Gospel of John.

You know the scene. The risen Christ appeared to the disciples on Easter evening, but Thomas happened to be somewhere else. When his friends told him the news, he wasn't buying it. “Unless I see the mark of nails in his hands and put my finger into the nailmarks and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.”

A week later, Jesus appeared again, and this time Thomas was in the room. Rather than scolding him, Christ simply offered His wounds and said, “*Do not be unbelieving, but believe.*”

Thomas dropped to his knees and responded with one of the most powerful lines in all of Scripture: “*My Lord and my God!*”

I've always had a soft spot for Thomas because I think his response is one that most people would have had.

Think about it. Put yourself in that room. Your closest friend, the man you believed was the Messiah, has just been arrested, tortured, and executed. You're grieving, you're frightened, and

you're hiding behind locked doors. Then your friends come to you saying that they've seen Him alive. That He walked through the walls. That He showed them His hands and His side. What would you have said?

I probably would have said exactly what Thomas said. “I'm sorry, but I need to see this for myself.” That's not a failure of faith. That's a completely human response to an extraordinary claim.

If anything, I think Thomas deserves a little credit for his honesty.

Now here's the part of his story I wish we talked about far more than the doubting. After that encounter in the upper room, Thomas went further than almost any of the other Apostles making his way to India, planting the seeds of faith along the Malabar Coast in what is now Kerala.

The Christians there trace their heritage directly to his preaching and have called themselves the “St. Thomas Christians” for nearly two thousand years. They are among the oldest continuously existing Christian communities on earth.

The man who demanded proof with his own hands ended

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up crossing thousands of miles of unknown territory to tell strangers about a risen Savior. He was eventually martyred near present-day Chennai around 72 A.D., and the Basilica of St. Thomas stands over what tradition holds to be his tomb — one of only two apostolic tombs outside of Europe.

I'd like to propose a rehabilitation of St. Thomas' reputation. Not as the weak link among the Apostles, but as one of the greatest missionaries the Church has ever known. Thomas showed us that honest doubt, brought to Christ with an open heart, can be transformed into something extraordinary.

And if Thomas can go from that locked room to the shores of India, I think there's hope for the rest of us too.

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## Apostleship of Prayer

Papal Intention for May 2026

*That Everyone May Have Food* —

Let us pray that everyone, from large producers to small consumers, be committed to avoid wasting food, and to ensure that everyone has access to quality food.

**Knights of Lithuania honor  
patron saint, raise  
nation's flag in Pittston**



Knights of Lithuania Council 143 in Pittston celebrated the recent Feast of Saint Casimir, patron saint of Lithuania, with a Mass at Saint John the Evangelist Church, Pittston. During the liturgical celebration, third and fourth degrees of the Lithuanian Knights were conferred by celebrant and host pastor Father Joseph Elston. A luncheon and Amber District meeting in the Monsignor Bendik Center followed the service. Pictured in the top photo are Council members and Amber District members. First row, from left: Evelyn Parra, Marilyn Fitzgerald, Judy Stodolny, Rob Kiska, Eileen Kelly, Supreme Ritual Chair & District Secretary Tom Miller, District President Barbara Miller, fourth degree recipients Dennis Palladino, Janet Palladino and Yvonne Branasipient, Mary Claire Voveris and June Supey. Back row: Les Distin, Donna Albright, Anne Marie Distin, Lainey Mentrikoski, Joe Francik, Mary Portelli, Elaine

Elko, Bill Sodnik, District Vice President Tom Wierbowski, Sylvia Waxmonsky, Tom Vaxmonsky, Don Waxmonsky, Irene Kovaleski, John Kovaleski and District Treasurer Larry Domalakes. Absent was Beverly Harnen. On Feb. 19, the Lithuanian Knights Council celebrated the 108th anniversary of Lithuania's independence with a flag-raising ceremony at the Pittston Memorial Library. Shown in the bottom photo are federal, state and city officials — in attendance to present citations and proclamations — as they joined the Knights of Lithuania for the hoisting of the Lithuanian national flag to be flown over the Pittston Library to commemorate the anniversary.



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## Catholic Happenings Around the Diocese

**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.

**Monthly Meeting of the Lay Carmelites — APRIL 18**, 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.

**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.

**Designer Purse Bingo — APRIL 18**, sponsored by St. Maria Goretti Parish in Laflin; doors open at 10:30 a.m. in the parish center, 42 Redwood Drive, Laflin. Bingo games held from 12:30 to 3:30 p.m. Admission fee: \$25 (pre-sale) or \$30 (at door), includes 20 games (extra games may be purchased); four special games cost \$5 each. Food and beverages available for purchase; event also includes basket raffle & bake sale. For tickets, contact the parish office at (570) 655-8956.

**St. Joseph Fraternity of Third Order Secular Franciscans — APRIL 19**, Lay Franciscan Canonical Order gathers on the third Sunday of each month; meetings hosted

from 2 to 4 p.m. at the Oblates of St. Joseph Seminary/Chapel, 1880 Highway 315, Laflin. All interested men, women and visitors are welcome. For more information, contact Michele Sisak, OFS, at (570) 807-7996, or visit the Facebook page.

**Grief Support Journey: "Loss of a Loved One" — APRIL 20, 27 & MAY 4**, hosted by Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish, 2011 State Route 29, Hunlock Creek (Lake Silkworth); 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.

**Weekly Bereavement Support Group Sessions — APRIL 20-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.

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.



### Elder Law

- Guardianships
- Asset Protection Planning
- Medicaid Application Assistance

### Estate Administration

#### Probate :

Settle all estate matters and distribute inheritances.

#### Inheritance Tax :

Utilize all discounts and proper deductions.

Meet all requirements and deadlines.

- Powers of Attorney • Living Wills • Wills
- Trusts Guardianships • Asset Protection Planning
- Medicaid Application Assistance

### Estate Planning

- Powers of Attorney • Living Wills
- Wills • Trusts Guardianships



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Maureen McCann

Entered Eternal Life:  
March 22, 2026



# Catholic Happenings Around the Scranton Diocese

**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 Cattrillo at (570) 807-2994 or [cattrillom@yahoo.com](mailto:cattrillom@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."

**Boy Scout Take-Out Pasta Dinner** — **APRIL 25**, sponsored by Boy Scout Troop 50 of St. Ann Shrine Basilica in Scranton; dinner is take-out only, available from 3 to 6 p.m. at St. Ann's Food Stand on the basilica grounds, 1229 St. Ann Street, West Scranton. Cost: \$12 per dinner, includes large portion of penne pasta, served with homemade marinara sauce, meatballs, bread, salad and dessert. Tickets available at the St. Ann Gift Shop and parish office.

**Parish Book & Puzzle Sale** — **APRIL 25 & 26**, sponsored by St. Andrew Parish, 316 Parrish St., Wilkes-Barre; sale held on Saturday, from 1 to 7 p.m., and Sunday, 11:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., at the parish hall. Featuring a large selection of gently used

books and puzzles at bargain prices; cash payments required for all purchases. For more information, contact Helene at (570) 823-1948.

**Cash Bingo** — **APRIL 26**, sponsored by the Social Concerns Committee at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish, 116 Hughes St., Swoyersville; doors open at noon and bingo games start at 1 p.m. Admission fee: \$25 per person (in advance); \$30 (at door). Cash prizes include: 15 regular games, \$100 each; four special games, \$200 each; and \$500 cover all. Event includes bake sale, door prizes, 50/50 cash drawing, basket raffles and lunch. Tickets available at the April 18-19 weekend Masses.

**Cancer Ministry Holy Hour** — **MAY 1**, hosted by Exaltation of the Holy Cross Parish, 420 Main Road, Hanover Township; devotion begins at 6:30 p.m. in celebration of the Feast of St. Peregrine, patron saint of cancer patients. Evening Holy Hour includes Eucharistic adoration, special intercessory prayers, reflection by host pastor Father Richard Cirba, and benediction of the Blessed Sacrament; music provided by the Young Adult Contemporary Choir. Luminaries for display in the parish church will be sold for \$5 and may be purchased in memory/honor of loved ones afflicted with cancer. All proceeds benefit cancer outreach. For more information, contact Suzanne at (570) 709-1120, or visit [www.exhc.org](http://www.exhc.org).

**LGBTQ Spiritual Support Group Gathering** — **MAY 3**, sponsored by Mary, Mother of God Parish in Scranton; support group meeting for the spiritual needs of LGBTQ community begins at noon (following the 11 a.m. Sunday Mass) 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. For more information, call (570) 342-4881.

**Secular Discalced Carmelites Meeting** — **MAY 10**, 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.

**Designer Purse & Cash Bingo** — **MAY 16**, hosted at SS.

Peter & Paul Church Hall, 1309 W. Locust St., West Scranton; doors open at 5 p.m. Cost: \$30, includes 20 regular games; event includes special games, raffles, gift baskets, and food sales. Tickets available at St. Ann Basilica Parish rectory and St. Ann Shrine Gift Shop.

**Drive-Thru Potato Pancake Fest** — **MAY 16 & 17**, sponsored by the Men's Club of Exaltation of the Holy Cross Parish, 420 Main Road, Hanover Township; held on the parish grounds Saturday, noon to 5 p.m., and Sunday, noon to 4 p.m. (vehicles may enter drive-thru from the Sans Souci Highway). Cost: six potato pancakes for \$10. For more information, call (570) 823-6242 or visit [www.exhc.org](http://www.exhc.org).

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You can support this mission through the annual Host-for-a-Day campaign. For a donation of \$100 or more, an individual, a family, a business, a community organization or faith-based group can help sponsor a day's meal at the Kitchen and be recognized as a "host" of that meal. Major sponsorship levels are also available beginning at \$500.



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

Calling the Kitchen at 570-342-5556, online at [stfranciskitchen.org](http://stfranciskitchen.org), [facebook.com/stfranciskitchen](https://www.facebook.com/stfranciskitchen), text SFAK to 26989, or sending a check to Saint Francis of Assisi Kitchen, 500 Penn Avenue, Scranton PA 18509

*Thank You For Your Support!*

The culmination of the campaign will be celebrated at Fiorelli's in Peckville on Wednesday, April 29, at 6 p.m. *RSVPs are required by April 15.* Those who would like to sponsor the reception are asked to call the Kitchen at 570-342-5556.



## A Night Under the Stars

A fundraiser for Catholic Social Services in Hazleton

Friday, May 29, 2026

5:45 - 10:00 p.m.

Venue - Surprise Location in the Hazleton area

Tickets & Sponsorships available at [dioceseofscranton.org](http://dioceseofscranton.org)

## OUR LADY QUEEN OF PEACE ANNUAL FLEA MARKET

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The Church is accepting Donations of gently used goods on  
Fri., June 5/Noon-6PM • Sat., June 6/9AM-2PM • Mon., June 8/10AM-4PM

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