

The Catholic Light

DIocese of SCRANTON

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ANSWERING THE CALL

Largest group in years seeks full communion in Catholic Church

SCRANTON – On the first Sunday of Lent, the Cathedral of Saint Peter was nearly filled to capacity, as 215 catechumens and candidates gathered to celebrate the Rite of Election and the Call to Continuing Conversion.

This year's event was especially significant, as it saw the largest group of individuals preparing to fully enter the Catholic Church locally in several years.

"Everything that I saw was gloriously beautiful," Austin Chen from Saint Boniface Parish in Williamsport said. "The congregation of people standing together, the claps, the applause. That is why I'm so excited to be Catholic. It is something that is beautiful."

The Rite of Election is a pivotal moment in the journey of

those seeking full initiation into the Catholic faith. After months, and in some cases years, of preparation through prayer, study and reflection, the ceremony symbolizes their formal selection to become members of the church at the upcoming Easter Vigil.

"It warms your heart because there are so many people trying to do right and trying to believe in what is right and trying everyday to do something that is important," Chen added.

The Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, presided over the Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion.

"Your presence here today proclaims that you've heard God's call and have chosen to respond," Bishop Bambera said.



During the Rite of Election at the Cathedral of Saint Peter on the First Sunday in Lent, Bishop Bambera questions catechumens seeking full communion with the Catholic Church this Easter. (Photo/Mike Melisky)

"He's saying that your life – with all its struggles and joys, with all its blessings and challenges – has a unique place and role to play within his plan."

During the Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion, catechumens – those who have never been baptized in

the Christian faith – and candidates – baptized Christians who are seeking to enter full communion in the Catholic Church through the Eucharist and Confirmation – were presented by their sponsors to Bishop Bambera to affirm their desire to join the Church.

"I'm excited about it,"

Mariah Cabrera of Saint John Parish in East Stroudsburg said.

Cabrera and a fellow parishioner, Gabriella Cecere, both participated in the Call to Continuing Conversion because they have both already been baptized.

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Improved condition means pope can briefly go without supplemental oxygen



Pope Francis is seen in the chapel of his suite of rooms at Rome's Gemelli hospital March 16, 2025. (CNS photo/Vatican Press Office)

VATICAN CITY (CNS) - Pope Francis has been able to spend brief moments of the day without any supplemental oxygen, which is yet another sign of the gradual improvement in his condition, the Vatican press office said.

For example, there was no sign of a nasal tube in the photograph the Vatican released March 16 of the pope concelebrating Mass in his private chapel at Rome's Gemelli hospital. That was because he can be without it for brief periods, the press office told reporters March 17.

Also, when he is using the nasal tube, he is alternating between high-flow and normal-flow oxygen during the day while doctors have been reducing the number of hours he uses the noninvasive mechanical ventilation at night, the press office said.

The fact that the reductions are possible is a sign that there is slight, yet progressive improvement and the respiratory therapy is working.

However, a Vatican source said, his being discharged from the hospital "is not imminent."

In the March 16 photo, Pope Francis' right hand was also noticeably swollen, which was a consequence of his reduced mobility, officials said. That swelling has already been reduced thanks to the day's physical therapy, which is meant to counter the consequences of limited mobility during a lengthy hospitalization.

The pope continues to follow his usual daily routine of therapy, prayer, rest and a bit of work, officials added.

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The Catholic Light

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OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER OF THE
DIOCESE OF SCRANTON



DIOCESE OF SCRANTON MISSION STATEMENT

We, the Catholic community of the Diocese of Scranton, are called through Baptism to imitate the servant leadership of Jesus Christ. In union with Our Holy Father, the Pope, we proclaim the Gospel faithfully, celebrate the sacraments joyfully, and boldly promote life, justice and peace in northeastern and north central Pennsylvania.

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

SCRANTON — Parishes across the Diocese of Scranton, including the Cathedral of Saint Peter, are busy preparing for Holy Week and Easter. The faithful are invited and encouraged to attend Masses to experience the joy, hope and love of our Lord Jesus Christ.

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

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

PALM SUNDAY, APRIL 13

The solemn observances of Holy Week, which recall the passion and death of Jesus Christ, begin on Palm Sunday, April 13. Those attending the service receive palms, a reminder of Scripture telling us that people welcomed Jesus by laying down their cloaks and waving palm branches.

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

CHRISM MASS, APRIL 15

Priests serving throughout the Diocese will gather at the Cathedral on Tuesday, April 15, at 4:00 p.m. for the Solemn Pontifical Chrism Mass, at which the Holy Oils used during the conferral of sacraments throughout the Church year will be blessed. Bishop Bambera will

be the principal celebrant and homilist.

HOLY THURSDAY, APRIL 17

The three most sacred days of the Church's liturgical year, known as the Sacred Paschal Triduum, begin on Holy Thursday, April 17, with the Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper.

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

GOOD FRIDAY, APRIL 18

On Good Friday, April 18, and the following day (up to the Easter Vigil Mass), by a most ancient tradition, the Church does not celebrate the sacraments at all, except for Penance and Anointing of the Sick.

The Commemoration of the Passion and Death of the Lord

will begin at 12:10 p.m.

HOLY SATURDAY, APRIL 19

Holy Saturday, April 19, is the day that the Church waits at the Lord's tomb in prayer, meditating on his passion and death and awaiting his resurrection.

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

EASTER SUNDAY, APRIL 20

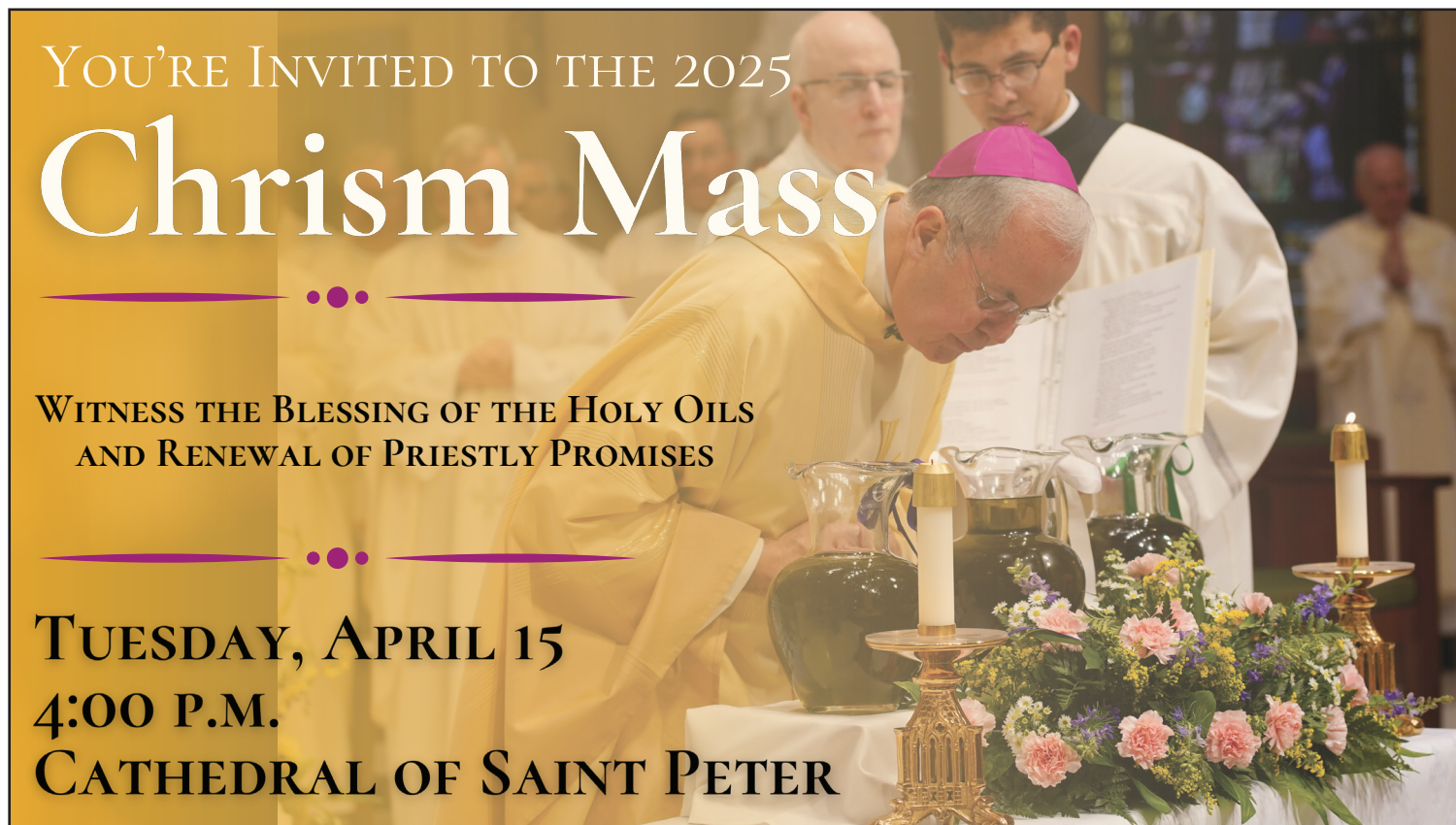
Easter Sunday of the Resurrection of the Lord is the most joyous day in the Church year. This joy overflows into the 50 days of the Easter season, which concludes on Pentecost Sunday.

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

YOU'RE INVITED TO THE 2025 Chrism Mass

WITNESS THE BLESSING OF THE HOLY OILS
AND RENEWAL OF PRIESTLY PROMISES

TUESDAY, APRIL 15
4:00 P.M.
CATHEDRAL OF SAINT PETER



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

“Why are you sleeping?” he asked them.

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

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

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

On Holy Thursday in particular, Catholics are encouraged to pray for priests and seminarians – that they be holy messengers of hope, reconciliation and peace.

This Holy Thursday, April 17, the Diocese of Scranton is once again inviting you to participate on a prayer journey and is asking you to share that journey on social media.

Invite your family, friends or assemble a group of people from your parish (young adults are especially encouraged to participate) to visit the Altar of Repose in several different churches in your community. Below are a listing of parishes that invite you to visit the Altar of Repose.

Bradford County

Saint Michael Parish

107 N. Washington Street
Canton

7 p.m. Mass - 10:00 p.m.

Lackawanna County

Cathedral of Saint Peter

315 Wyoming Avenue
Scranton

7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.
Night Prayer at 9:00 p.m.

Christ the King Parish

429 Church Street
Archbald

8:00 p.m. - 10:30 p.m.
Night Prayer at 10:30 p.m.

Immaculate Conception Parish

801 Taylor Avenue
Scranton

8:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.
Night Prayer at 10:00 p.m.

Mary Mother of God Parish

316 William Street
Scranton

8:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.

Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish

1101 Willow Street
Peckville

8:15 p.m. - 11:00 p.m.

Saint Eulalia Parish

214 Blue Shutters Road
Roaring Brook Twp.

7:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.

Saint Catherine of Siena Parish

220 Church Street
Moscow

8:00 p.m. - 10:15 p.m.

Saint John Vianney Parish

704 Montdale Road
Scott Township

8:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.

Saint Patrick Parish

1403 Jackson Street
Scranton

8:15 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.

Saint Paul Parish

1510 Penn Avenue
Scranton

8:15 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish

1090 Carmalt Street
Dickson City

7:15 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.

Luzerne County

Annunciation Parish

122 South Wyoming Street
Hazleton

8:00 p.m. - 11:00 p.m.
Night Prayer at 11:00 p.m.

Exaltation of the Holy Cross Parish

420 Main Road
Hanover Township

8:30 p.m. - 10:15 p.m.

Gate of Heaven Parish

40 Machell Avenue
Dallas

8:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.

Holy Family Parish

574 Bennett Street
Luzerne

8:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.

Holy Name of Jesus Parish

213 West Green Street
West Hazleton

6:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

Holy Rosary Parish

240 South Poplar Street
Hazleton

6:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

Nativity of Our Lord Parish

127 Stephenson Street
Duryea

8:00 p.m. - 10:30 p.m.
Night Prayer at 10:30 p.m.

Our Lady of the Eucharist Parish

535 North Main Street
Pittston

7:15 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.
Night Prayer at 8:45 p.m.

Our Lady of Victory Parish

16 Second Street
Harveys Lake

8:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.

Saint Andrew Parish

316 Parrish Street
Wilkes-Barre

8:15 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.

Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish

116 Hughes Street
Swoyersville

8:15 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.
Night Prayer at 10:00 p.m.

Saint Ignatius of Loyola Parish

339 North Maple Avenue
Kingston

8:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.

Saint John the Evangelist Parish

35 William Street, Pittston

8:15 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.
Night Prayer at 10:00 p.m.

Saint Joseph Marello Parish

237 William Street
Pittston

8:15 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.
Night Prayer at 10:00 p.m.

Saint Leo Parish

33 Manhattan Street
Ashley

8:30 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.

Saint Maria Goretti Parish

42 Redwood Drive
Lafin

8:15 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.
Night Prayer at 10:00 p.m.

DIOCESE OF SCRANTON
VOCATIONS



“Get Up and Pray”

Luke 22:46

Join us in praying for vocations on Holy Thursday, April 17th!

1. Assemble a group to visit the Altar of Repose in as many churches as you can

2. Look for the “Add Yours” sticker on @Scrantonvoc stories Thursday night

3. Share photos using the sticker & tell us which priests and/or seminarians you’re praying for!



Saint Monica Parish

363 West Eighth Street
West Wyoming

8:15 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.

Saint Robert Bellarmine Parish

143 West Division Street
Wilkes-Barre

8:15 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.

Saint Therese Parish

64 Davis Street
Shavertown

8:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

Lycoming County

Our Lady of Lourdes Parish

100 Walnut Street
Montoursville

7:30 p.m. - 10:30 p.m.

Resurrection Parish

75 Musser Lane
Muncy

8:30 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.

Saint Ann Parish

1220 Northway Road
Williamsport

8:15 p.m. - 11:00 p.m.
Night Prayer at 10:45 p.m.

Saint Boniface Parish

326 Washington Blvd.
Williamsport

8:15 p.m. - 11:30 p.m.
Night Prayer at 11:30 p.m.

Saint Joseph the Worker Parish

720 West 4th Street
Williamsport

8:30 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.
Night Prayer at 10:00 p.m.

Monroe County

Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish

1402 Route 209
Brodheads ville

Following 7:00 p.m. Mass
Night Prayer at 11:00 p.m.

Saint Maximilian Kolbe Parish

5512 Pocono Crest Road
Pocono Pines

8:15 p.m. - Midnight

Wayne County

Saint John the Evangelist Parish

414 Church Street
Honesdale

8:30 p.m. - 11:00 p.m.

Wyoming County

Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish

99 East Tioga Street
Tunkhannock

8:15 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.

Editor Note: All parishes were invited to submit their times prior to press time. If additional parishes add times, that information will be available on diocesefscrannton.org

Lenten Holy Hour draws newlyweds closer to faith and each other

PITTSSTON – In the midst of a busy and often chaotic world, a young couple from Luzerne County has discovered the profound peace that comes with spending quiet time in prayer before the Lord.

Only two months ago, Christian and Concetta Cooney stood before the altar at Saint John the Evangelist Church in Pittston to celebrate their wedding day.

The newlyweds found themselves back before the same altar on March 5, praying before our Eucharistic Lord, during the first of the Diocese of Scranton's Lenten Holy Hours this year.

"I loved being here with my wife," Christian Cooney said. "We've really blossomed as a couple in the last couple of months. Being able to stand side-by-side with her at this Holy Hour and holding her hand was priceless to me."

Cooney's wife has a deep love of Eucharistic Adoration, finding it to be a very personal way to have one-on-one time with Jesus.

"If people put themselves fully into this experience and really sit with the Lord, He makes Himself known. I think everyone, when they fully enter into it, has their own personal revelation," Concetta said.

For the third year in a row, the Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, is holding a series of Lenten Holy Hours across all 12 deaneries of the diocese, inviting the faithful to spend time in Eucharistic Adoration and prayer.



Newlyweds Concetta and Christian Cooney, at right, pray during a Lenten Holy Hour with Bishop Bambera at Saint John the Evangelist Parish in Pittston March 6, 2025.

This year, Bishop Bambera is focusing on the theme of "hope" as part of the 2025 Jubilee Year and the third year of the National Eucharistic Revival coincide.

"He really brought a message that we needed to hear, hope for the future," Sheryl Charbonneau, a parishioner of Saint John the Evangelist Parish, said. "Jesus is our hope. That is who we need to focus on."

The first two Holy Hours were held at Saint John the Evangelist Parish in Pittston and Annunciation Parish in Hazleton, with ten more planned in the coming weeks leading up to Holy Week.

The Holy Hours are designed to help individuals and families deepen their spiritual lives during the penitential season of Lent.

Saint John the Evangelist Parish in

Pittston currently holds a monthly Holy Hour which has been attracting a growing number of parishioners over the last couple of years.

Father Joseph Elston, pastor, believes the three-year National Eucharistic Revival has helped people have a deeper understanding that the Eucharist is central to our faith.

"We're a Eucharistic people, so our relationship

with the Eucharist is so important. The way we grow that relationship is by spending time, just like you'd grow any other relationship, with time, care, love, and communication," Father Elston said.



Each Holy Hour with Bishop Bambera begins at 7 p.m. at the designated location in each deanery. All are welcome to come and experience this moment of grace and community with fellow parishioners.

During Lent, participating in a Holy Hour offers a peaceful opportunity for people to deepen their faith and draw closer to God.

For the dates of the upcoming Holy Hours, please consult the graphic below.

LENTEN HOLY HOURS WITH BISHOP BAMBERA
BEGINNING AT 7 P.M. EACH NIGHT

- Thursday, March 20: St. John the Evangelist Parish, Honesdale**
- Monday, March 24: Christ the King Parish (St. Thomas Aquinas Church), Archbald**
- Tuesday, March 25: St. Boniface Parish, Williamsport**
- Wednesday, March 26: Our Lady of the Snows Parish, Clarks Summit**
- Thursday, March 27: Visitation of the BUM Parish, Dickson City**
- Monday, March 31: Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish (St. Basil Church), Dushore**
- Tuesday, April 1: St. Faustina Kowalska Parish, Nanticoke**
- Wednesday, April 2: St. Ann Basilica Parish, Scranton**
- Thursday, April 3: Saint Matthew Parish, East Stroudsburg**
- Monday, April 7: Saint Nicholas/Saint Mary Parish, Wilkes-Barre**

Catechumens and candidates preparing to join the Church at Easter

Continued from Page 1

"I was asked to be my niece's godmother. At first, it was more of just a task for me to make my sacraments, but things lately have not been so great in my life, so doing these (OCIA) classes and coming to church, has actually made me feel like I'm on the right path and I'm here for more than just a task to be a godmother," Cecere explained. "That is why I'm thrilled for the experience and to see what life is like as part of the parish."

The catechumens were invited to the front of the Cathedral to sign their names in the Book of the Elect, and Bishop Bambera questioned them about their formation and desire to receive the sacraments.

Afterward, the candidates were invited to stand with their sponsors and Bishop Bambera asked the sponsors whether the candidates had received the proper religious instruction and desired to join in full communion with the Church.

Before taking part in the Rite of Election, individuals participated in the Order of Christian Initiation of Adults (OCIA, formerly called RCIA) – which is a gradual process of conversion and initiation into the Catholic Christian community providing individuals the space to encounter God and respond to His invitation to a new way of life in the Catholic faith.

Ed Vanhaute has been a facilitator for the program at Saints Peter and Paul Parish



During the Rite of Election, catechumens sign the 'Book of Elect' for their parish.

in Towanda for several years.

"I think it is well thought out. I think it's necessary to confirm and identify the Catholic concept of prayer and life in Christ," he explained. It is gratifying to

bring people along this journey, just as my parents brought me on this journey many years ago."

As the catechumens and candidates move forward in their preparation for Easter, they are reminded that the journey of faith is a life-long commitment of always turning towards God and his love.

"It was such a consolation to my faith to see this Cathedral full of so many Catholics, the candidates, the catechumens, and their sponsors," Father Mark DeCelles, Assistant Pastor of Saint Teresa of Calcutta Parish in South Scranton, said. "It is just beautiful to watch people grow in their relationship with the Lord and their relationship with one another."

Ash Wednesday Mass draws hundreds of people – plus a bat – to the Cathedral to begin Lenten journey

SCRANTON – Churches throughout the Diocese of Scranton were filled with the faithful on Ash Wednesday as people gathered to mark the beginning of the Lenten season.

From rural churches to the Diocesan Cathedral, people turned out to receive ashes and they began their journey of reflection and renewal.

At the 12:10 p.m. Mass, the Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, began his homily by asking for continued prayers for Pope Francis, who remains in the hospital.

“We pray God’s mercy, love, and healing presence in his life,” the Bishop said.

Bishop Bambera then reflected on how this Lenten season falls within the 2025 Jubilee Year of Hope, saying that the challenges we face in life can provide us with a context for hope. He explained Lent provides every person the opportunity to engage the Lord in a “deeper way” and “walk more closely with Him.”

“There is always hope for the believer in Jesus Christ,” he stated.

The readings for Ash Wednesday spoke of God’s call to repentance, to return to Him with our whole hearts. The bishop explained this message in simple terms, urging people to see the hope in the ashes on their foreheads.

“Yes, they remind us of our mortality, our need for repentance and change, yet the journey we begin today ends not merely with this moment in which ashes are placed on our foreheads. No, it begins something much, much more,” Bishop Bambera explained.

Just as Bishop Bambera was reaching the end of his homily, a sudden rustling from above caused him to pause. Circling the Cathedral was a large bat – its wings beating erratically, flying in unpredictable loops, as though it, too, had come to witness the beginning of Lent.

While some parishioners shifted in their seats and others exchanged nervous



Bishop Bambera places ashes on the forehead of parishioner Eileen Notarianni during an Ash Wednesday Mass at the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton. (Photo/Mike Melisky)

“For some reason, God is calling us to this experience,” the Bishop said with a smile. “We know the power of God, and we know the Lord will indeed protect us, no matter how low that bat flies.”

The faithful laughed, the tension easing as the bat continued its erratic flight until the end of Mass, when it was caught in a collection basket and set free outside of the Cathedral.

Outside the Cathedral, some parishioners shared what they were giving up for Lent – sweets, social media, or other comforts – while others spoke of the things they hoped to do more of, like prayer, charity and acts of kindness.

“I’ll give up my anger, or at least try to quell it,” parishioner Deneal Scrivani of Lykens said. “It’s a difficult time right now so I think that we just have to look deeper into ourselves.”

“I’m actually introducing more. I’m going to increase my prayer life, in the absence of giving something up, adding something to my Catholicism,” Michael Colaneri of Scranton added.

Taste the Tradition: St. Leo’s Lenten food sale offers meatless meals every Friday in Lent

ASHLEY – The highly-anticipated Lenten food sale at Saint Leo Parish is back, marking a 35-year tradition of offering delicious meatless meals every Friday through April 11.

Sponsored by the Holy Name Society, the food sale provides a perfect opportunity for the community to come together while enjoying a variety of flavorful dishes.

“We love to come in here and support them every year,” Theresa Shypulefski of Warrior Run said. “It is good stuff. The guys are great. Everybody is friendly here and we like coming and giving ourselves an easy lunch. The Manhattan clam chowder is awesome.”

In addition to Manhattan clam chowder, the parish also offers haluski, pierogi, mushroom soup, tuna hoagies and potato pancakes.

“All the food is homemade. That is what makes it popular,” volunteer Frank Aukstakalnis said. “The potato pancakes



Bob Hess flips potato pancakes as part of Saint Leo’s Lenten food sale on March 7, 2025. (Photo/Dan Gallagher)

are a big draw. The size of our pancakes are bigger and they have more flavor.”

Each Friday, the Lenten food sale takes place between 11 a.m. and 3 p.m.

Volunteer Kevin Hooper said some of the items sell out quickly.

“We go through about 1500 potato pancakes each week and 15 gallons of soup and probably another 15 gallons of haluski, maybe more,” Hooper explained.

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Potato pancakes and pizza help Pittston parish and bring community together in Lent

PITTSTON – While many Lenten food sales have been ongoing for decades, Saint John the Evangelist Parish just recently decided to get in the game.

“We started just within the last couple of years, but it has been growing and growing each year,” Father Joseph Elston, pastor, said.

Every Friday during Lent, in addition to Good Friday, the parish is selling potato pancakes and take-and-heat pizza to the community.

“The food is really, very tasty and it is fresh. They can come here, and it is ready to go,” employee Cathy Rusnok stated.

About a dozen volunteers come together each week to make the Lenten food sale a reality.

Jackie Rinish helps to prepare all the ingredients and mix up the potato pancake batter. She said the idea for the Lenten food sale started off as a team building project for parish staff and quickly grew into an



Jackie Rinish mixes potato pancake batter at Saint John the Evangelist Parish on March 14, 2025. (Photo/Dan Piazza)

important way for people to support the parish.

“It is fun for us to be together, to cook together, and serve the community,” Rinish explained. “We welcome everyone.”

The potato pancakes are sold for three for \$5, while orders of red pizza or white pizza with broccoli are \$15/tray.

“The food is really great,” parishioner Margie Vetack said.

Continued on Page 21

Bishop Bambera announces next Episcopal Vicar for Clergy

SCRANTON - On March 3, 2025, the Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, announced Rev. Seth D. Wasnock will become the new Episcopal Vicar for Clergy, effective July 1, 2025.

Father Wasnock will succeed Rev. John V. Polednak in that role, upon Father Polednak's retirement later this year.

In making his announcement, Bishop Bambera wrote, "Father Wasnock brings both commitment and dedication to this important role. I have full confidence that Father Wasnock is prepared to provide spiritual and personal support and guidance to all clergy (both priests and deacons), ensuring their well-being, while also helping to manage their assignments and addressing the many and varied opportunities and concerns of our diocesan clergy."

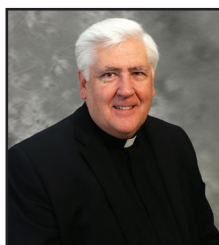
Ordained to the priesthood in June 2015, Father Wasnock has quickly garnered the respect of his brother priests as well as the lay faithful.

Father Wasnock is currently serving as pastor of Our Lady of the Rosary Parish, Carbondale, and is Dean of the Carbondale Deanery. He is also currently a member of the Priest Personnel Board and Presbyteral Council.

Upon the date his appointment takes effect, Father Wasnock will remain as



Rev. Seth Wasnock



Rev. John Polednak

pastor of Our Lady of the Rosary Parish, and he will continue to reside at the parish rectory in Carbondale. The Vicar for Clergy Office will still be based out of the Diocesan Chancery in Scranton and Father Wasnock will split his time between both his pastoral and diocesan responsibilities as appropriate.

"As this announcement is being made, I would like to take this opportunity to extend my deepest gratitude to Father Polednak for serving as Episcopal Vicar for Clergy since August 2021, after more than four decades in priestly ministry. While Father Polednak will continue to serve as Episcopal Vicar for Clergy for the next four months until his retirement, making this announcement well in advance will allow for better planning, preparation, and coordination of responsibilities," Bishop Bambera noted.

APPOINTMENTS

His Excellency, Bishop Joseph C. Bambera, announces the following appointments, effective July 1, 2025:

Reverend John V. Polednak, V.E., from Episcopal Vicar for Clergy to retirement.

Reverend Seth D. Wasnock, V.F., to Episcopal Vicar for Clergy. Father Wasnock will remain Pastor, Our Lady of the Rosary Parish, Carbondale.

Registration opens for Wedding Anniversary Mass on June 1

SCRANTON - The event includes a 2:30 p.m. Mass at the Cathedral of Saint Peter followed by a light reception. The registration deadline for this event is May 11, 2025. To register, please go to dioceseofscranton.org or contact Bridget Guamieri at (570) 207-2213 x 1133 or familylife@dioceseofscranton.org.



BISHOP BAMBERA'S SCHEDULE

- March 20** - Lenten Holy Hour for the Honesdale Deanery
St. John the Evangelist Church, Honesdale, 7:00 p.m.
- March 23** - Bishop's Youth Awards Mass
Cathedral of Saint Peter, Scranton, 2:30 p.m.
- March 24** - Lenten Holy Hour for the Carbondale Deanery
Christ the King Parish, Archbald, 7:00 p.m.
- March 25** - Lenten Holy Hour for the Williamsport Deanery
Saint Boniface Parish, Williamsport, 7:00 p.m.
- March 26** - School Mass for Good Shepherd Academy
Saint Ignatius of Loyola Church, Kingston, 9:00 a.m.
- March 26** - Lenten Holy Hour for the Clarks Summit Deanery
Our Lady of the Snows Parish, Clarks Summit, 7:00 p.m.
- March 27** - School Mass for Saint Jude School
Saint Jude Church, Mountain Top, 7:00 p.m.
- March 27** - Lenten Holy Hour for the Dunmore Deanery
Visitation of the BVM Parish, Dickson City, 7:00 p.m.
- March 30** - Bishop's Youth Awards Mass
Cathedral of Saint Peter, Scranton, 2:30 p.m.
- March 31** - Lenten Holy Hour for the Sayre Deanery
Saint Basil Church, Dushore, 7:00 p.m.
- April 1** - Lenten Holy Hour for the Kingston Deanery
Saint Faustina Kowalska Parish, Nanticoke, 7:00 p.m.
- April 2** - School Mass for Notre Dame High School & Elementary School
Notre Dame High School, East Stroudsburg, 9:00 a.m.
- April 2** - Lenten Holy Hour for the Scranton Deanery
Saint Ann Basilica, Scranton, 7:00 p.m.
- April 3** - School Mass for Saint Clare/Saint Paul School
Saint Paul Church, Scranton, 9:00 a.m.
- April 3** - Lenten Holy Hour for the Stroudsburg Deanery
Saint Matthew Church, East Stroudsburg, 7:00 p.m.
- April 5** - Catholic Men's Retreat Mass
Holy Transfiguration Retreat Center, Dalton, 7:00 a.m.
- April 6** - Bishop's Youth Awards Mass
Cathedral of Saint Peter, Scranton, 2:30 p.m.
- April 7** - Lenten Holy Hour for the Wilkes-Barre Deanery
Saint Nicholas Church, Wilkes-Barre, 7:00 p.m.
- April 10** - Mass for Survivors of Abuse
Cathedral of Saint Peter, Scranton, 12:10 p.m.
- April 13** - Palm Sunday Mass
Cathedral of Saint Peter, Scranton, 12:15 p.m.
- April 15** - Chrism Mass
Cathedral of Saint Peter, Scranton, 4:00 p.m.
- April 17** - Mass of the Lord's Supper
Cathedral of Saint Peter, Scranton, 5:30 p.m.
- April 18** - Commemoration of the Lord's Passion
Cathedral of Saint Peter, Scranton, 12:10 p.m.
- April 19** - Easter Vigil Mass
Cathedral of Saint Peter, Scranton, 8:00 p.m.
- April 20** - Easter Sunday Mass
Cathedral of Saint Peter, Scranton, 10:00 a.m.

'Wait Until 8th' pledge program encourages parents to delay smartphone usage

DUNMORE – Two Catholic schools in Lackawanna County are piloting a new program to empower parents to delay giving their children a smartphone until at least the end of eighth grade.

The “Wait Until 8th” program officially kicked off at Saint Mary of Mount Carmel School in Dunmore on March 6 and Our Lady of Peace School in Clarks Green on March 12.

As a part of each school’s kick-off, parents of students in pre-K through third grade were invited to attend a community panel discussion on the possible harm that smartphones can pose to young children.

Melissa Gregory, a parent and licensed professional counselor, said smartphone use amongst children can increase the risk for anxiety, depression, eating disorders, body image issues and addictions.

“The human brain isn’t fully developed until after 25, so the pre-frontal cortex isn’t yet developed. That is your decision-making skills,” Gregory said. “Your executive functioning comes from that. That is why it is so important to delay kids’ exposure to certain things, before they’re able to emotionally handle that information.”

Ten years old is now the average-age children get their first smartphone.

“Let your children be children. Let them go outside and play with each other. Let them go ride a bike,” Kristen Donohue, Diocesan Secretary for Catholic Education/Superintendent of Schools, said.

As a mother of three children, Donohue knows first-hand the struggles parents face when their kids ask for a smartphone



A community panel discusses the possible harm that smartphones can pose to young children as part of the 'Wait Until 8th Pledge' at Saint Mary of Mount Carmel Church in Dunmore on March 6, 2025. (Photo/Eric Deabill)

because many of their friends have one.

In unveiling the “Wait Until 8th” pledge, Donohue said parents – especially parents of young children – can rally together to delay giving children a smartphone until at least the end of eighth grade. She said banding together will help decrease the “pressure” to have a phone at an early age.

“If you band together and say, ‘we’re doing this together,’ that decision does get easier,” Donohue noted. “If we can make that shift, we will do a tremendous amount of good for generations to come.”

Panelists at each kick-off meeting included members of the Lackawanna County District Attorney’s Office, Pennsylvania State Police, a pediatrician, psychologist, and pastor.

At the kickoff meeting at Saint Mary’s,

Father David Cappelloni, pastor, Saints Anthony and Rocco Parish and Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish, discussed the moral implications of smartphone usage.

“Our primary relationship should be with God,” Father Cappelloni noted. However, as he held up a smartphone, he said that many young people believe, “this is God.”

Trooper Robert Urban, Public Information Officer for Pennsylvania State Police Troop R, played several videos for parents – including one that highlighted the dangers of location tracking – of which many people are unaware.

“Every single app that you use, whether it’s on your electronic device, tablet, or cell phone, has location services in them. You need to know, as a parent, to turn these off,” Trooper Urban explained.

Trooper Urban also touched on several other topics – including smartphones putting children at risk for cyber bullying and exposing them to sexual content.

After the initial kick-off meetings earlier this month, parents are being invited back for a second session in which they will be able to sign the “Wait Until 8th” pledge. The second session at Our Lady of Peace School will be held April 9, and April 10 at Saint Mary of Mount Carmel School.

“Take this information and please share it,” Saint Mary of Mount Carmel principal Maryelizabeth Shattin said. “There was a lot of eye-opening information.”

Nationwide, nearly 100,000 parents have already taken the “Wait Until 8th” pledge, saying they recognize the distractions and dangers of smartphone usage for their children.

For more information on the pledge, visit waituntil8th.org.

St. Clare/St. Paul School takes State CYO Title

SCRANTON

Congratulations to the Saint Clare/Saint Paul 8th Grade Boys’ Basketball Team, which won the 2025 Catholic Youth Organization (CYO)



Pennsylvania State Championship on Sunday, March 16, 2025.

The team beat OLP from the Diocese of Erie 63-23 at Marywood University. The last time Saint Clare/Saint Paul’s School won the State CYO title was 18 years ago. The team finished with a 35-0 record and over the last three years has had a 102-3 record overall.

The Crusaders also beat teams from the Diocese of Harrisburg and Archdiocese of Philadelphia to take the CYO State Championship title.

HEALING MASS FOR SURVIVORS OF ABUSE

Celebrated by Bishop Joseph C. Bambera



**Thursday, April 10 at 12:10 P.M.
Cathedral of Saint Peter, Scranton**

Diocese to hold annual Healing Mass for Survivors of Abuse April 10

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

The Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, will celebrate a Healing Mass for Survivors of Abuse at 12:10 p.m. on Thursday, April 10, 2025, at the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton.

The Healing Mass provides space for those affected by abuse to find solace, strength, and support. Through prayer, reflection, and healing, the Diocese of Scranton remains committed to offering care and compassion to survivors

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

Diocese of Scranton
CATHOLIC
 SCHOOL SYSTEM
 FAITH • ACADEMICS • SERVICE

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.

The Most Reverend Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, continues his visits to each Catholic School in the Diocese of Scranton during the 2024-25 academic year. In his homilies, the Bishop asks the students to allow Jesus to live in their lives and hearts and, in gratitude for all He does for them, serve one another by becoming like Him: loving, forgiving, caring, and healing others



Our Lady of Peace School in Clarks Green



La Salle Academy in Jessup



Holy Rosary School in Duryea



Saint Mary of Mount Carmel School in Dunmore



Saint Nicholas/Saint Mary School in Wilkes-Barre



Mrs. Ellen Spain, mathematics teacher at **Notre Dame Jr./Sr. High School in East Stroudsburg**, distributes ashes to student Emilee Thompson during the Ash Wednesday Liturgy.

In honor of "Read Across America Week," students at **All Saints Academy in Scranton** take a week to celebrate literacy by having a variety of dress-up and dress-down days, all themed around Dr. Seuss and his classic stories. Part of the celebration includes guest readers, which this year included Officer Joe Flesher from the Scranton Police Department.





Students at **Holy Family Academy in Hazleton** discovered a new way to enjoy geography with a visit from “The Earth Dome,” a 19’ by 22’ inflatable that teaches all about our planet on the outside and the inside of the balloon.



Students in grades 4-5 at **Wyoming Area Catholic School in Exeter** participated in the NEIU Reading Tournament, placing fourth against many other schools and sending them to the finals.



At **Saint Agnes School in Towanda**, the Stations of the Cross are presented by the sixth grade students with their first grade buddies holding hand-drawn depictions.



Seventh grade students at **Saint John Neumann Jr./Sr. High School in Williamsport** dive into the world of biomes, with students creating shadow boxes bringing to life a scene from their biome.



Carson Che, first grade student at **Notre Dame Elementary School in East Stroudsburg**, stands next to his teacher, Mrs. Kusienski, proudly wearing the medal awarded to him as the regional winner in the Zaner-Bloser Handwriting Contest.



Madison Gallagher, Ella Daderko, and Brynn Deom, students at **Saint Jude School in Mountain Top**, celebrate Read Across America Week with kindergarten students reading with their second grade buddies.



Pre-Kindergarten students at **Saint John Neumann Elementary School in Williamsport** celebrated Valentine’s Day with arts, crafts, and a snack.



Pre-Kindergarten students from **Saint Clare/Saint Paul School in Scranton** took advantage of some winter weather to explore and learn more about snow.



Several of the Individualized Instruction graduates from **Good Shepherd Academy in Kingston** returned to read to several library classes, and as shown here, Grace Ferretti and Morgan Morrissey assisted the current students with checking out books during Read Across America Week.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Diocese of Scranton Fiscal Year 2023-2024



Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

“Honor the Lord with your wealth, with first fruits of all your produce. Then will your barns be filled with plenty, with new wine your vats will overflow.” (Proverbs 3:9-10)

I write to you today with immense gratitude for your continued generosity and unwavering support of the life and mission of our Diocese. As stewards of God’s abundant grace, we are called to manage and direct the resources entrusted to us with great care and fidelity.

It is with this sense of duty that I present to you the audited financial statements of the Administrative Offices of the Diocese of Scranton for the 2023-2024 fiscal year. This report outlines in detail the stewardship of the resources entrusted to our care over the past year.

The Book of Proverbs reminds us that honoring the Lord with our wealth is not only an act of gratitude but also a pathway to abundant blessings. Each and every dollar that the Diocese receives - whether through our parishes, special donations or other forms of support - is a gift from God. It is because of your generous hearts and faithfulness that we are able to carry out the work of the Church in the 11-counties of northeastern and north central Pennsylvania.

Through your sacrificial gifts, we are able to support our priests, maintain our sacred spaces, fund essential ministries, and serve the most vulnerable among us. It is only fitting, then, that we are transparent with you regarding how your contributions are used, and how they enable us to continue fulfilling our mission.

The gifts you share are an extension of your faith and your trust in the Church, and it is my sacred duty to ensure that these resources are used wisely, prudently, and in a way that honors God. Over the last year, we have continued to focus on several of our key Diocesan initiatives, including but not limited to:

- Vision 2030 Blueprint Process: Our long-range pastoral planning process that looks proactively at the realities of our local church in the present moment, while striving to meet the opportunities and challenges of the coming decade to create vibrant parishes rooted in the life of Jesus Christ.
- “Our Faith. Our Students. Our Future”: After 21 months of work, in January 2025, we completed and published our Strategic Growth Plan for our 19 Catholic Schools. We are now focused on implementing goals identified in the areas of Catholic Mission and Identity; Academic Excellence; Governance and Leadership; Enrollment Management; Development; Facilities and Finances.
- We have initiated a Pastoral Planning Process for Hispanic Ministry that includes collecting data from our parishes that offer Spanish-speaking and listening to parishioners to help formulate an updated plan for Hispanic Ministry in the Diocese of Scranton.

As you review this report, I once again express my profound gratitude to you. Your faithfulness, your sacrifices, and your love for God and our Church are the foundation of everything we do. Together, we are living witnesses of the love of Christ, and through our collective efforts, we can continue to bring His light to the world.

May God bless you abundantly for all that you do in His name.

Faithfully yours in Christ,

+ Joseph C. Bambera

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



The financial information contained on the following pages is derived from the audited financial statements of the Administrative Offices of the Diocese of Scranton as of June 30, 2024 and 2023. The full report is available under the “Financial Services” page at www.dioceseofscranton.org

CATHOLIC COMMUNITY AT A GLANCE

STATISTICS REFLECT THE 2024 CALENDAR YEAR

TOTAL POPULATION
1,104,932
CATHOLIC POPULATION
317,426



1
BISHOP

1
RETIRED BISHOP

78
PRIESTS ASSIGNED IN
THE DIOCESE

5
PRIESTS ASSIGNED
OUTSIDE DIOCESE

94
RETIRED OR ILL
PRIESTS

177
TOTAL NUMBER OF
DIOCESAN PRIESTS



23
INTERNATIONAL PRIESTS
SERVING IN THE DIOCESE

54
RELIGIOUS ORDER
PRIESTS

5
RELIGIOUS ORDER
BROTHERS

343
RELIGIOUS ORDER
SISTERS

94
PERMANENT
DEACONS

10
SEMINARIANS



2,162
BAPTISMS

1,828
FIRST COMMUNIONS

1,804
CONFIRMATIONS

3,476
FUNERAL SERVICES

381
MARRIAGES
303 CATHOLIC
78 INTERFAITH

106
NUMBER OF PARISHES
ACROSS 11 COUNTIES

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

Dear Friends,

As the Chief Financial Officer of the Diocese of Scranton, it is my privilege to present the 2023-2024 audited financial report for the Diocese of Scranton Administrative Offices. This report provides an overview of the prudent use of funds that have been received for the period covering July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2024.

I want to take a moment to express our ongoing commitment to transparency and the wise use of the financial gifts entrusted to us by our parishioners, donors, and supporters. Our mission to serve the community, support our Catholic ministries, and sustain the work of the Diocese of Scranton depends on the careful stewardship of resources.

In line with our core values, we have worked diligently to manage our finances with integrity, making sure that all funds are spent with purpose and in alignment with our shared mission.

Below I would like to highlight some key changes in both revenue and expenses from the past 2023-2024 Fiscal Year.

- Due to increased stewardship efforts at the parish level, assessment revenue to the Diocese of Scranton increased during the 2023-2024 Fiscal Year. This increase from last fiscal year was largely offset by one-time Employee Retention Tax Credit income of \$1,743,921 which was included in Fiscal Year 2022-2023 and not 2023-2024. Catholic school assessments also increased and, while billed through the Diocesan Administrative Office, are passed directly onto the Diocesan Catholic School System.

- The Diocese experienced higher self-insurance premiums in all of its categories due to the increase cost of claims, inflation, and continued increases in the insurance premium market.

- One-time bequests in the 2023-2024 Fiscal Year did not replicate the levels of the 2022-2023 Fiscal Year. There was a significant decrease in the current fiscal year of \$769,609.

- Funds raised by the 2023 Diocesan Annual Appeal totaled \$4,030,270. The Diocese returned \$164,911 directly to parishes that exceeded their goal for the campaign. This means the revenue from the Appeal to the Diocese totaled \$3.86 million. Funds raised by the 2022 Diocesan Annual Appeal totaled \$4,245,866. In that year, the Diocese returned \$192,860 directly to parishes that exceeded their goal for the campaign. Revenue from the 2021 Appeal totaled just over \$4 million.

- Parishioners were extremely generous to National collections in the 2023-2024 Fiscal Year. The amount collected this fiscal year was \$912,884 compared to \$645,129 the previous fiscal year.

- The 2023-2024 Fiscal Year report includes a bad debt expense of nearly \$2.4 million due to the Catholic School System struggling to pay self-insurance premiums. The Strategic Growth Plan for the Catholic School System that was released in January 2025 highlights many goals and objectives that are expected to help the School System achieve financial stability.

- While the Diocesan Finance Office has focused on controlling costs, there were targeted increases in certain areas connected to our goals and objectives, including in evangelization programming, clergy formation, Hispanic ministry and our international clergy program.

- As in previous years, the financial statements of the Diocesan Administrative Offices have been independently audited by McGrail Merkel Quinn & Associates, P.C., Certified Public Accountants. The statements include activities related to the Diocesan Administrative Offices, not activities related to Catholic Social Services or the Catholic School System. These organizations are audited separately. The statements also do not include parish activities.

I invite you to view the complete audited financial statement for the 2023-2024 fiscal year on the Diocese of Scranton website at dioceseofscranton.org/directory/offices/financial-services.

I want to publicly thank the members of the Diocesan Finance Council for the support they provide to the Bishop and my staff. I also want to thank all parishioners for the continuing generosity they provide and for the sharing of their time, talent and treasure to help us continue building a financially sound foundation for future generations to thrive in faith and service.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Eileen Giombetti

Eileen Giombetti

Diocesan Secretary for Financial Services



SERVING AS MISSIONARY DISCIPLES

YOUR GIFTS TO THE CATHOLIC MINISTRIES APPEAL ALLOW US TO BUILD UP GOD'S KINGDOM EACH YEAR!

WE ARE APPROACHING 90% OF OUR APPEAL GOAL. WILL YOU HELP ENSURE ALL MINISTRIES ARE FUNDED NEXT YEAR?



Make Your Gift Count!



AnnualAppeal.org



"I just feel that Catholic Television is a blessing from God. I love to hear the stories from all the priests."
Angela Howland, Clarks Summit



"Catholic Social Services cares about you. They care about your needs. They care about what your family needs."

**Nancy Craig, Hazleton
 Saint Joseph Food Pantry Client and Volunteer**

"There is an intense investment in us and we don't forget it and we don't not notice it. It's humbling that people would give that to us - people that they might not have ever met."
**Rev. William A. Asinari
 Newly Ordained Priest**



"If I wasn't at Epiphany School, I wouldn't know a lot about all of God's great adventures and miracles."
**Finn Heffron
 Student, Epiphany School, Sayre**



"Every month, we see 50 new families that we have never seen before."

**LeeAnn Lywiski
 Hazleton Material Assistance Supervisor
 Catholic Social Services**



"The Daily Mass from the Cathedral and other Diocesan events provide the formation and provide the sustenance and the Word of God for many folks who are at home, who maybe can't participate in the active dimension of the church but are still able to take up the great responsibility of being able to pray for the life of the Church. CTV is essential for that."

Fr. Jeffrey Tudgay, Pastor, Cathedral of Saint Peter

"As someone who works closely with a lot of different programs in our parish, many are supported through the grants we get through the Appeal, both the Social Justice Trust Fund Grants and the Faith Formation Grants."
**Tommy Flynn
 Director of Religious Education
 Saint John the Evangelist Parish, Pittston**



"Nutrition is a huge factor with us. We want people to have well-balanced meals and while I think that all food pantries try, that is something we really focus on."
**Dominique Jordan
 Carbondale Food Pantry Supervisor
 Catholic Social Services**



REVENUE FOR DIOCESAN ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES (Years Ending June 30, 2024 and 2023)

The Diocese of Scranton's operating revenue for the 2022-2023 fiscal year was \$37.2 million.

The Diocese's Self-Insurance Program (both medical and general) were once again two of the largest sources of revenue in the 2023-2024 fiscal year budget.

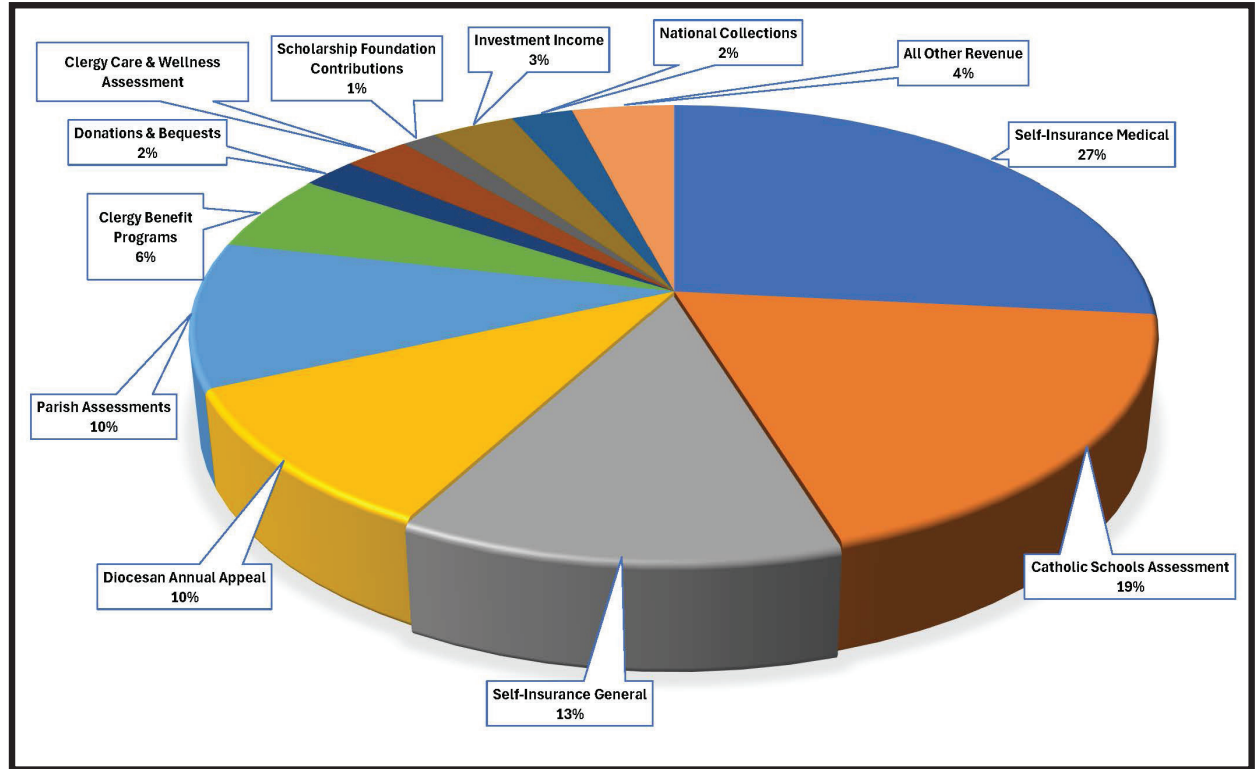
In total, the two self-insurance programs accounted for \$14,697,454 (or roughly 40%) of all revenue.

Under the self-insurance programs, the Diocese assumes responsibility for all claims up to its self-insured retention limits. In effect, this means that every parish or agency is sharing in the payment of claims through its premiums.

Another large source of revenue for the support

of programs and ministries continues to be parish assessments. Catholic School Assessments brought in nearly \$7 million. That money was passed directly onto the Catholic School System to support the cost of educating students. Diocesan Assessments brought in more than \$3.9 million. Diocesan assessments fund administration support services, human resources, financial services, information technology and much more.

The Diocesan Annual Appeal, which brought in \$3,864,989 after parish rebates, continues to support the charitable, educational and pastoral services of the Diocese. Funds support Catholic Schools, Catholic Social Services, Parish Life, Communications and Vocations and Clergy Support.



	2024			2023		
	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total
Parish Assessments						
Diocesan	\$3,905,722	-	\$3,905,722	\$3,638,798	-	\$3,638,798
Clergy Care & Wellness	\$960,012	-	\$960,012	\$959,987	-	\$959,987
Catholic Schools	\$6,974,069	-	\$6,974,069	\$6,041,629	-	\$6,041,629
Intra-Diocesan Billings						
Self-Insurance Premiums (General)	\$4,725,748	-	\$4,725,748	\$4,379,604	-	\$4,379,604
Self-Insurance Premiums (Medical)	\$9,971,706	-	\$9,971,706	\$9,846,276	-	\$9,846,276
Clergy Benefit Programs	\$2,069,173	-	\$2,069,173	\$2,015,321	-	\$2,015,321
Diocesan Program Revenues (Schedule 1)	\$273,900	-	\$273,900	\$223,104	\$35,000	\$258,104
Diocesan Annual Appeal	-	\$3,864,989	\$3,864,989	-	\$4,053,006	\$4,053,006
Special Collections	-	\$26,374	\$26,374	-	\$27,304	\$27,304
Donations and Bequests	\$596,763	\$210,364	\$807,127	\$611,584	\$965,152	\$1,576,736
Scholarship Foundation Contributions	-	\$527,559	\$527,559	-	\$838,282	\$838,282
Custodial Receipts						
National Collections	-	\$912,884	\$912,884	-	\$645,129	\$645,129
Unemployment	\$287,424	-	\$287,424	\$226,178	-	\$226,178
Propagation Collections	\$444,983	-	\$444,983	\$168,657	-	\$168,657
Other Revenue	\$469,904	-	\$469,904	\$358,701	-	\$358,701
Employee Retention Credit Income	-	-	-	\$1,743,921	-	\$1,743,921
Investment Income, Net	\$337,380	\$847,056	\$1,224,436	\$590,061	\$275,630	\$865,691
Net Realized (Loss) Gain on Sale of Investments	(\$172,952)	(\$79,182)	(\$252,134)	(\$254,895)	(\$40,403)	(\$295,298)
Net Realized Gain on Sale of Property	\$9,301	-	\$9,301	\$47,150	-	\$47,150
Net Assets Released from Restrictions (Note 7):						
Satisfaction of Program Restrictions	\$6,376,748	(\$6,376,748)	-	\$5,913,906	(\$5,913,906)	-
Total Revenues, Gains and Other Support	\$37,269,881	(\$66,704)	\$37,203,177	\$36,509,982	\$885,194	\$37,395,176

EXPENSES FOR DIOCESAN ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES (Years Ending June 30, 2024 and 2023)

The Diocese of Scranton's expenses for the 2023-2024 fiscal year were \$36.4 million.

During the 2023-2024 fiscal year, the Diocese of Scranton continued to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ throughout the 11 counties of northeastern and north central Pennsylvania.

The largest expense at the Diocesan level involves administrative costs. As the Diocese of Scranton continues to respond to the spiritual and physical needs of our community, we have strengthened our administrative functions to better

serve our parishes, schools, and the ministries within our care.

Administrative cost increases ensure that we can meet the needs of our community in a more efficient and effective manner.

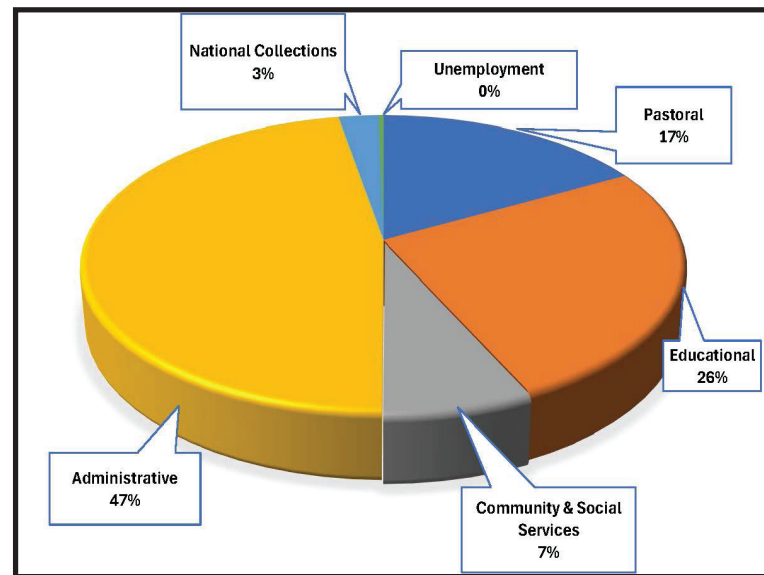
The second largest area of spending in the 2023-2024 fiscal year centered around educational expenses.

Educating the next generation in the Catholic faith is an essential part of our mission, and this spending ensures that we continue to equip our young people with not only knowledge, but the spiritual growth opportunities necessary to nurture their passion to be life-

long learners and community leaders.

The Diocesan Finance Office continued its work to administer the temporal goods entrusted to the Diocese of Scranton, exercising prudence in all decisions related to financial and administrative operations.

The office consists of a dedicated team of motivated professionals who efficiently and effectively service the needs of the Diocese, while also providing help, guidance and assistance to pastors, business managers, parishes, schools and other diocesan organizations and agencies.



	2024			2023		
	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total
Total Revenues, Gains and Other Support	\$37,269,881	(\$66,704)	\$37,203,177	\$36,509,982	\$885,194	\$37,395,176
Expenses						
Pastoral	\$6,191,180	-	\$6,191,180	\$6,316,256	-	\$6,316,256
Educational	\$9,493,728	-	\$9,493,728	\$8,780,381	-	\$8,780,381
Community & Social Service	\$2,548,617	-	\$2,548,617	\$2,121,794	-	\$2,121,794
Administrative	\$17,153,918	-	\$17,153,918	\$16,819,982	-	\$16,819,982
Custodial Disbursements						
National Collections	\$912,884	-	\$912,884	\$645,129	-	\$645,129
Unemployment	\$104,185	-	\$104,185	\$134,735	-	\$134,735
Total Expenses	\$36,404,512	-	\$36,404,512	\$34,818,277	-	\$34,818,277
Excess of Revenues Over Expenses	\$865,369	(\$66,704)	\$798,665	\$1,691,705	\$885,194	\$2,576,899
OTHER CHANGES						
Change in Value of Beneficial Interest in						
Perpetual Trust	-	\$124,049	\$124,049	-	\$10,002	\$10,002
Provision for Bad Debt	(\$2,388,312)	-	(\$2,388,312)	-	-	-
Other Components of Net Periodic Pension Cost	\$186,577	-	\$186,577	\$15,101	-	\$15,101
Pension-Related Changes Other Than Net						
Periodic Pension Cost	\$1,097,243	-	\$1,097,243	\$1,923,168	-	\$1,923,168
Change in Net Unrealized Gains and Losses on Investments	\$1,546,741	\$659,658	\$2,206,399	\$1,032,109	\$165,998	\$1,198,107
Increase in Net Assets	\$1,307,618	\$717,003	\$2,024,621	\$4,662,083	\$1,061,194	\$5,723,277
Net Assets (Beginning)	\$7,558,924	\$10,549,087	\$18,108,011	\$2,896,841	\$9,487,893	\$12,384,734
Net Assets (Ending)	\$8,866,542	\$11,266,090	\$20,132,632	\$7,558,924	\$10,549,087	\$18,108,011

Diocesan Offices Supporting the Clergy, all 106 Parishes and the Faithful of the Church of Scranton

Administrative Offices and Chancellor: The Chancery is composed of those institutes and persons who assist the Bishop in governing the entire Diocese, especially in providing for the administration of the Diocese and directing pastoral action.

Catholic Schools: The Catholic Schools Office is committed to educating students and their families in the Catholic faith. The office provides a Catholic education that is spiritually sound and academically excellent and strives to prepare students to be faith-filled leaders and life-long leaders dedicated to serving the Church and society.

Catholic Social Services: Catholic Social Services serves individuals and families in poverty and hardship, responding compassionately to their needs. The agency advocates for individual dignity and self-sufficiency and actively works to replace despair with hope.

Child Protection/Victim Assistance: The Safe Environment Office oversees the creation and implementation of child protection programs and policies across the Diocese. Staff ensures the safest possible place in which children, young people and adults can minister, study and work.

Communications: The mission of the Communications Office is to evangelize through informing all about the Good News of the Catholic faith, the teachings of the Holy Father and our Bishop, Diocesan and parish ministries, programs and events.

Development Office: Offers assistance and support to the development and stewardship programs of all Diocesan parishes, schools and other Catholic institutions. This office helps secure necessary funds to assist the Diocese in its mission to serve God's people.

Finance Office: The Diocesan Finance Office is responsible for administering the temporal resources of the Diocese under the authority of the Bishop. The Finance Office provides assistance with financial activities for diocesan parishes and schools and other related organizations.

Human Resources: Serves more than 1,200 employees of our parishes, schools and Diocesan offices, centrally administering insurance and benefit programs such as medical, dental, life insurance and 403(b) retirement savings plans.

Information Technology: Provides information technology support for diocesan ministries, parishes and offices.

Parish Life Office: The Office for Parish Life works directly on-site in parishes to provide leadership formation, spiritual renewal, program design and resourcing, training for people in all types of parish ministry and consulting on specific parish needs.

Pontifical Mission Societies: The Pontifical Mission Societies of the Diocese of Scranton promotes a mission spirituality and global vision in the hearts and minds of the faithful.

Property and Risk Management: Provides technical and fiduciary oversight in addition to project management for the physical development and maintenance of parish and diocesan properties. The office manages claims and administration of the self-insurance program.

Tribunal: The Diocesan Tribunal acts as the Judicial Arm of the Diocesan Bishop upholding rights and responding to grievances relating to Church Law. Deals mainly in the investigation of and pronouncements on petitions regarding invalidity of marriage (Annulments).

Vocations/Clergy Formation: The Vocations Office seeks to foster vocations to the Priesthood and Religious Life and provide opportunities for discernment and mentoring of potential seminary candidates.

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION June 30, 2024 and 2023

	ASSETS	
	2024	2023
Cash and Equivalents	\$18,127,400	\$10,926,979
Accounts Receivable, Less Allowance for Doubtful Accounts of \$8,013,913 in 2024 and \$5,625,602 in 2023	\$1,181,805	\$4,434,009
Accrued Interest Receivable	\$106,610	\$58,379
Contributions Receivable	\$440,998	\$451,911
Prepaid Expense	\$298,173	\$688,145
Cash Subject to Program Restrictions	\$2,232,010	\$8,901,248
Notes and Loans Receivable	\$2,444,315	\$2,637,031
Investments	\$20,815,771	\$19,642,275
Land, Buildings & Equipment, Net	\$5,809,280	\$5,744,059
Other Assets	\$512,230	\$442,875
Beneficial Interest in Charitable Trust	\$370,655	\$246,606
TOTAL ASSETS	<u>\$52,339,247</u>	<u>\$54,173,517</u>

	LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	
	2024	2023
Accounts Payable	\$796,203	\$1,299,736
Custodial Funds Payable	\$86,606	\$303,771
Contributions Payable	\$614,377	\$812,916
Scholarships Payable	\$535,622	\$610,788
Liability for Pension Benefits	\$3,096,706	\$4,862,024
Accrued Claim Expense	\$1,456,514	\$1,500,340
Accrued Post-Retirement Benefit Obligation	\$6,991,662	\$6,911,279
Loans Payable	\$2,444,315	\$2,637,031
Due to Catholic Cemeteries	\$16,052	\$965,481
Due to Diocese of Scranton Institute	\$16,168,558	\$16,162,140
TOTAL LIABILITIES	<u>\$32,206,615</u>	<u>\$36,065,506</u>
NET ASSETS		
Without Donor Restrictions	\$8,866,542	\$7,558,924
With Donor Restrictions	\$11,266,090	\$10,549,087
TOTAL NET ASSETS	<u>\$20,132,632</u>	<u>\$18,108,011</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	<u>\$52,339,247</u>	<u>\$54,173,517</u>

STATEMENTS OF CASH FLOWS

June 30, 2024 and 2023

OPERATING ACTIVITIES

	2024	2023
Increase in Net Assets	\$2,024,621	\$5,723,277
Adjustments to Reconcile Change in Net Assets to Net Cash Provided By Operating Activities:		
Net Realized Loss on Sale of Investments	\$252,134	\$295,298
Net Unrealized Gain on Investments	(\$2,206,399)	(\$1,198,107)
Net Realized Gain on Sale of Property	(\$9,301)	(\$47,150)
Amortization on Investments	\$20,468	\$41,821
Depreciation Expense	\$364,659	\$350,955
Provision for Credit Losses	\$2,388,312	-
Change in Beneficial Interest in Charitable Trust	(\$124,049)	(\$10,002)
Decrease in Accounts Receivable	\$863,892	\$2,290,928
(Increase) Decrease in Accrued Interest Receivable	(\$48,231)	\$15,447
Decrease (Increase) in Contributions Receivable	\$10,913	(\$11,523)
Decrease in Due from Catholic Cemeteries	-	\$94,744
Decrease (Increase) in Prepaid Expense	\$389,972	(\$451,424)
(Increase) Decrease in Other Assets	(\$69,355)	\$319,931
(Decrease) Increase in Accounts Payable	(\$503,533)	\$551,924
(Decrease) Increase in Custodial Funds Payable	(\$217,165)	\$25,837
Decrease in Contributions & Scholarships Payable	(\$273,705)	(\$596,172)
Decrease in Liability for Pension Benefits	(\$1,765,318)	(\$1,100,315)
Decrease in Accrued Claim Expense	(\$43,826)	(\$1,195,859)
Increase (Decrease) in Accrued Post-Retirement Benefit Obligation	\$80,383	(\$1,239,553)
Decrease in Refundable Advances	-	(\$130,194)
(Decrease) Increase in Due to Catholic Cemeteries	(\$949,429)	\$965,481
Increase (Decrease) in Due to Diocese of Scranton Institute	\$6,418	(\$77,287)
NET CASH PROVIDED BY (USED IN) OPERATING ACTIVITIES	\$191,461	\$4,618,057

INVESTING ACTIVITIES

	2024	2023
Purchase of Fixed Assets	(\$429,880)	(\$464,714)
Proceeds From Sale of Property	\$9,301	\$47,150
Principal Collected-Loans Receivable	\$192,716	\$187,153
Purchase of Investments	(\$6,129,431)	(\$20,472,916)
Proceeds from Sale of Investments	\$6,889,732	\$18,644,128
Net Cash (Used In) Provided By Investing Activities	\$532,438	(\$2,059,199)
Financing Activities		
Principal Payments on Loan	(\$192,716)	(\$187,153)
Net Cash Used in Financing Activities	(\$192,716)	(\$187,153)

Net Increase in Cash	\$531,183	\$2,371,705
Cash, Cash Equivalents and Restricted Cash, Beginning	\$19,828,227	\$17,456,522
Cash, Cash Equivalents and Restricted Cash, Ending	\$20,359,410	\$19,828,227

Financial Accountability

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

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



Diocesan finances are audited by McGrail Merkel Quinn & Associates, P.C., Certified Public Accountants & Consultants. The full audited financial statements for the Fiscal Year 2023-24 are published on the Diocesan website at:
www.dioceseofscranton.org/directory/offices/financial-services

Saint Padre Pio's glove among relics venerated at Swoyersville Parish

SWOYERSVILLE

Hundreds of faithful visited Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish on the weekend of March 15-16, as the Luzerne County church hosted seven relics of Saint Padre Pio, one of the most beloved saints in modern Catholic history.

Among the relics displayed was Padre Pio's glove, a cherished item that helped connect the faithful to his life of extraordinary holiness.

"It's a good opportunity to introduce Padre Pio to our parishioners and the public who



A line of parishioners wait to view seven relics of Saint Padre Pio at Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton in Swoyersville on March 16, 2025. (Photo/Dan Piazza)

might not know who he is," Mark Perugino, Grand Knight, Knights

of Columbus Council 12976, said.

The parish Knights worked with the National Centre for Padre Pio to bring the relics to the Swoyersville parish.

"It's an honor for our parish to have these relics," parishioner Stephen Englot said. "It was peaceful and uplifting being here today."

Englot and his wife, Maria, have always felt a close

connection to Padre Pio.

When their second daughter was suffering from a high fever at the age of four, Maria prayed to Padre Pio and asked for his intercession.

"I asked Padre Pio to please heal her before the day comes. The third time I checked on her, the fever was gone," Maria recalled.

Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish offered veneration viewing of the relics between 1-7 p.m. on March 15 and 8 a.m.-7 p.m. on March 16 with regular Masses held several times in between.

Like many others, Father John Chmil, pastor, has felt a closeness to Padre Pio for many years. When his mother had a stroke and was unable to walk or talk, he prayed to the beloved saint.

"She couldn't walk or talk and now she's 95-percent back with us. I give credit to Padre Pio," Father Chmil said.

The long-time pastor said one of the highlights of the weekend for him was bringing his mother into the church and blessing her with one of the relics.

Continued on Page 21

Catholic Foundation receives 100-percent board support in first year

SCRANTON - Christopher DiMattio, chair of the Catholic Foundation for the Diocese of Scranton Board of Directors, recently announced that 100-percent of the Foundation's 15-member lay and clergy board has made gift pledges to the Catholic Foundation totaling more than \$2 million.

In addition, nearly \$2 million in gifts and pledges have also been received from additional donors throughout the Diocese in the Foundation's first year of operation.

"We are extremely grateful for the financial support, the expertise and the passion for the mission of the Catholic Foundation that our board brings to this worthwhile fundraising effort," DiMattio said. "The board's devoted commitment and the contributions of an initial group of donors has resulted in a successful first year that serves as the foundation of what will continue to be transformational for our Diocesan ministries now and well into the future."

Gifts donated to the Catholic Foundation range from \$500 to \$1 million with several pledges of \$25,000, \$50,000 or \$100,000.

Donors may make outright

gifts or multi-year pledges over a time period best suited for each individual.

Some donors are also including the Catholic Foundation in their estate plans as well as establishing named endowment funds in memory or in honor of a loved one.

Dr. Bryan Frantz, DMD MS, a board member of the Catholic Foundation, spoke recently about the pledge that he and his wife, Dr. Linda Frantz, MD, made to the Foundation this past year,

"Linda and I have always supported philanthropic initiatives related to teaching, education, and research within medicine and dentistry," he said. "Recently we had been discussing doing something impactful both from a community perspective as well as faith-based. The broad range and flexibility of giving options within the Catholic Foundation of the Diocese of Scranton made it easy to fulfill our philanthropic goals."

Gifts and pledges to the Catholic Foundation endowment funds provide long term financial support for a variety of Diocesan ministries to include care of retired priests, seminarian formation, Catholic schools, Catholic Social Services, parish

faith formation programs and historical preservation of the Cathedral of Saint Peter.

Donors may also support the Founders Fund which is a non-endowed fund that helps cover operating expenses.

"The Catholic Foundation staff and board work with donors to design a gift that suits the individual's personal interests and charitable goals," James Bebla, executive director of

the Catholic Foundation, said. "Donors can have a lasting impact on Diocesan ministries that are most meaningful to them and their families."

The mission of the Catholic Foundation for the Diocese of Scranton is to sustain and nurture the pastoral, educational and services ministries of our Diocese, our parishes, our schools and organizations through endowments, planned gifts and

other financial contributions. The long-term viability of these ministries is a sacred calling for Catholics to build up the Kingdom of God in the Diocese of Scranton.

Donors interested in making a gift to the Catholic Foundation for the Diocese of Scranton or who wish to learn more about giving opportunities and the work of the foundation may call 570-207-2212 or e-mail info@catholicfoundationscranton.org

INSPIRING FAITH, BUILDING FOR GENERATIONS.

The Catholic Foundation for the Diocese of Scranton is dedicated to sustaining and nurturing the pastoral, educational, and service ministries of our Diocese, parishes, schools, and organizations. Through endowments, planned gifts, and other financial contributions, we make sure these important ministries have the support they need for the future.

Include the Catholic Foundation in Your Will

Leave a lasting legacy of faith by including the Catholic Foundation in your estate plans. Your generosity will continue to inspire and support future generations. Together, we can cultivate hope, faith, and generosity.

Join us in growing a vibrant Catholic community.

Learn more about how you can make a difference now and for the future.

Visit catholicfoundationscranton.org or call **570-207-2212**.

Catholic Foundation for the Diocese of Scranton
300 Wyoming Ave, Scranton, PA 18503



Cosmopolitan Seniors Group disbands and donates funds to Catholic Social Services

EXETER – After years of serving and enriching the local community, the Cosmopolitan Seniors Group has officially made the decision to disband. In a final act of generosity and commitment to helping others, the group has decided to donate its remaining funds to Catholic Social Services.

On Feb. 20, 2025, group members gathered to present Catholic Social Services with a check for \$1,249.87, which will be used to support Mother Teresa's Haven, an emergency shelter in Wilkes-Barre that assists men experiencing homelessness.

"Nobody could need it more than the homeless," Veronica Spliethoff, Cosmopolitan Seniors Group treasurer, said.

For many years, Cosmopolitan Seniors Group was a community organization dedicated to providing seniors with opportunities to connect, socialize, and contribute to the local community. Through regular bingo games and community bus trips, the group fostered a sense of camaraderie among its members and the wider community.

"We used to have 140 people at a meeting. That is how big it was. You needed to be on a list in order to get in," Marie Cheskiewicz, Cosmopolitan Seniors Group Care and Concerns Committee member, explained. "We were down to only 29 people when COVID came and several more members passed away."

The donation to Catholic Social Services will be specifically earmarked to help Mother Teresa's Haven with its ongoing mission to help those most in need.

In January, the emergency shelter formally dedicated its new permanent location on East Jackson Street in Wilkes-Barre, directly above Saint Vincent de Paul Kitchen. Mother Teresa's



Members of the Cosmopolitan Seniors Group, which is disbanding, present a donation to Catholic Social Services on Feb. 20, 2025. Present for the check presentation are, from left: Rosemary Golenski; Amanda Deisroth, Mother Teresa's Haven manager; Veronica Spliethoff, Cosmopolitan Seniors treasurer; Lorraine Harmanos, Cosmopolitan Seniors president; Marie Cheskiewicz, Cosmopolitan Seniors care and concern committee; and Edith Jones, Cosmopolitan Seniors corresponding secretary. (Photo/Eric Deabill)



The Cosmopolitan Seniors Group donation will help support the men who utilize Mother Teresa's Haven in Wilkes-Barre. The new shelter location officially opened in January 2025.

Haven is open every night of the year (including weekends and holidays) and can accommodate up to 20 men each evening.

"Our volunteers and people who donate to our mission are the backbone of our shelters," Amanda Deisroth, Mother Teresa's Haven manager, stated. "The things that we take for granted – like toothpaste, soap, towels, and washcloths – are things that are always needed at the shelter. Donations like this will go to our clients to help them with daily needs."

To support Catholic Social Services, call (570) 207-3808 or visit dioceseofscranton.org.

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More than 250 men, women and children rely on Saint Francis of Assisi Kitchen each day for hot, nutritious meals, food for their households and clothing for all seasons.

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




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

Calling the Kitchen at 570-342-5556, online at stfranciskitchen.org, 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 30, at 6 p.m. **RSVPs are required by April 15.** Those who would like to sponsor the reception are asked to call the Kitchen at 570-342-5556.





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Celebration of Saint Katharine Drexel's Feast Day

PLEASANT MOUNT - The Feast Day of Saint Katharine Drexel was joyfully commemorated by parishioners of Saint Katharine Drexel Parish, which encompasses the churches of Saint James in Pleasant Mount, and Saint Juliana in Rock Lake, on Sunday, March 2, 2025.

The Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, celebrated the 11:00 a.m. Mass, along with parish pastor, Rev. Arun Lakra, and Deacon Carl Albright.

Fellowship followed Mass with a wonderful feast arranged by the Altar & Rosary Societies of Saint Katharine Drexel and Ascension Parishes and the efforts of many parishioners.

Pictured after Mass are, front row; from left: Allan Raffay, Jamie Hallock, Color Corps Member, Knights of Columbus; Brendan Murphy; William Hallock, Faithful Navigator,



Knights of Columbus; Emily Back row; left to right: Frisbie, Sophia Lombardi, Aiden Seamus Murphy; Nicole Non; Lombardi, Reed Lesjack, Leo Mark Nebzydoski; Rev. Arun Stahl, Clair Lombardi, Brian Lakra, pastor; Most Rev. Joseph Hallock, Master, Knights of C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton; Deacon Carl Albright; Roger Marshal, Knights of Columbus; Aguinaldo; Evan O'Neill; and John Bilsky.



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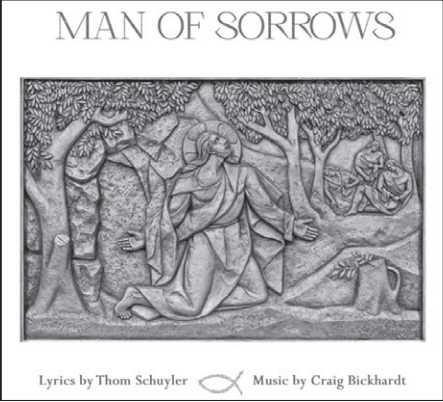
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Add Music Meditation to your Lenten prayer journey with this spiritually moving compilation of songs about the passion of our Lord. This CD provides the opportunity to go deeper into Lenten prayer and reflect on the events that led to the greatest sacrifice of all time. "Man of Sorrows" blends Craig Bickhardt's masterful melodies, Thom Schuyler's insightful lyrics and an array of soulful singers and musicians to shine a unique light on the Easter Passion tale. CD's will be on sale at our Lenten Dinners, Hot Breakfast, and also in the Church of Saint Luke Parish Office, Stroudsburg (570)421-9097. To listen to a sample song go to www.churchofsaintluke.org/lenten-fundraiser

St. Thomas More & St. Mary Church

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St. Thomas More Church

105 Gravity Rd, Lake Ariel, Pa 18436

Relics of Saint Padre Pio draw large crowd to Luzerne County parish

Continued from Page 18

"I was overwhelmed with peace, and I began to cry, and I noticed my mother did too," he added.

A native of an Italian farming village, Saint Padre Pio, born Francesco Forgione, became a Capuchin friar at the age of fifteen, dedicating his life to prayer, penance, and service to others.

Padre Pio bore the stigmata, or wounds of Christ, invisibly from the time of his ordination in 1910 and visibly from 1918. As his reputation as a confessor grew, the Vatican investigated the



Parishioners view relics of Saint Padre Pio at Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Swoyersville on March 16, 2025.

genuineness of his stigmata and ministry of prayer and healing.

Padre Pio built a hospital to treat patients using prayer

and science, as well as a pilgrimage and study complex. Shortly before his death, the stigmata disappeared. He was canonized as a saint by Pope John John II in 2002. Since then, he has inspired millions of Catholics worldwide with his unwavering faith and devotion.

Joseph Santoro, External Program Coordinator at the National Center for Padre Pio, who offered to bring the relics to Swoyersville, is not surprised at why the modern-day saint

fascinates people.

"His life was full of holiness, sacrifice, and suffering, and people are drawn to that, especially during Lent," Santoro said.

Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Cresco.

Parish is the third local community to host the relics in recent weeks. On Feb. 23, Annunciation Parish in Hazleton hosted the relics, and on March 8, they were also venerated at Most Holy Trinity

Pittston parish offers potato pancakes and pizza in Lent

Continued from Page 5

After trying the potato pancakes on the first Friday in Lent and the broccoli pizza on March 14, Vetack already knows what she is getting next.

"I already have my order in for next week to try the red pizza. Everything is very good," she added.

Father Elston said he wasn't

surprised by the sales' success as anticipation builds for the parish's much-anticipated summer festival.

"People love them (potato pancakes) during the picnic in the summer. Now they can get a late winter or early spring taste," he joked.

Pre-orders are appreciated by calling the parish office at (570) 654-0053, but organizers say walk-ins are also welcome. Food

pick-up takes place from 3:30 to 6:00 p.m. in the Monsignor Bendik Pastoral Center.

Lenten food sale is 35-year tradition

Continued from Page 5

While serving as an important fundraiser for the parish, the Lenten food sale also brings parishioners closer together and creates community spirit.

"Everybody looks forward to it," volunteer John Boyle explained. "We have a good time doing it. It's not like work; it is more like fun."

"A good friend of mine asked if I could help out about 18 years ago and I've been helping out ever since," Bob Hess added.

Whether picking up a meal for themselves, family or a

group, many customers return weekly to enjoy this flavorful and meaningful tradition.

"I've been coming here for many years. The food is absolutely terrific, better than I could make," Lisa Brand of Forty Fort said.

"They have a simple menu. They have the same menu each year but what they make is very good," Mary Anne Malone added. "It is like a well-oiled machine."

For those wishing to avoid the line, advance orders are highly encouraged. Orders can be placed by calling (570) 266-8835 or by emailing Lenten.food.sales@gmail.com.

Annual Saint Joseph Day
EAT IN / TAKE OUT BREAKFAST
St. Joseph Melkite Greek-Catholic Church
130 N. St. Frances Cabrini Ave., West Scranton

SUNDAY, MARCH 23, 2025 • 9am - 1pm
Adults \$12.00 • Children 6-10 \$6.00 • Free 5 & under w/adult
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MISSION MESSAGE

Live Lent with the Heart of a Missionary!

By Shannon Kowalski
Diocesan Director,
Pontifical Mission Societies



relinquishing comforts, enduring inconveniences with patience, and responding to difficulties with kindness rather than frustration. Her *Little Way* teaches that every sacrifice, no matter how small, can be transformed into an offering of love. Choosing a smile instead of a complaint, silence instead of gossip, or patience in the face of irritation — these become fasts of the heart, aligning my spirit with Christ's own sacrifice. When seen through this lens, fasting is no longer a burden but a path to grace.

Almsgiving is the natural fruit of prayer and fasting. It is the call to serve others, not just through material giving but through acts of mercy and love. St. Thérèse embodied this in her convent, showing patience and care even to those who challenged her. She understood that the greatest gift we can give is love and that even the smallest gestures — financial, emotional or spiritual — carry eternal value when done with love. Lent calls us to step beyond our comfort zone in generosity. This might mean donating to those in need, offering companionship to the lonely, or simply speaking a word of encouragement. True almsgiving is not measured by the size of the gift but by the love with which it is given.

Though St. Thérèse never set foot in the missions, she is honored as the patroness of missionaries. Her life reminds us that missionary work is not limited to far-off lands — it is found in every heart that seeks to love as Christ loved. This is the heart of Lenten prayer, fasting and almsgiving: offering my life, in small yet meaningful ways, for the good of others.

If you're anything like me, Lent can sometimes feel like a checklist of "must-dos" — prayer, fasting and almsgiving — that we strive to complete in order to have a "good" Lent. I know these practices are not mere obligations but invitations to grow closer to Christ through self-sacrifice and charity. Yet, I often find myself at Holy Week looking back, wishing I had done more.

As I reflected on how to approach Lent this year, I came across a quote from St. Thérèse of Lisieux: *"Miss no single opportunity of making some small sacrifice, here by a smiling look, there by a kindly word; always doing the smallest right and doing it all for love."* Her words remind me that holiness is found even in the seemingly ordinary moments of life and that no act of love, great

or small, is insignificant. They invite me to truly live this Lent with a missionary heart.

For me, prayer is the foundation of Lent — a time to deepen my relationship with God. Through prayer, I seek guidance, strength, and renewal. St. Thérèse, though confined to a cloister, exemplified the missionary power of prayer. She longed to go to Vietnam as a missionary, but her fragile health prevented her from making the journey. Rather than allowing disappointment to diminish her zeal, she devoted her prayers and suffering to support missionaries around the world. Her life reveals that prayer is not passive; it is an active participation in God's mission. This Lent, I am reminded that prayer is not just a personal devotion but a means of lifting up others — interceding for the sick, the poor, those in war-torn regions, and missionaries bringing the Gospel to distant places.

Fasting is often associated with food restrictions, but its spiritual significance runs deeper. It is a discipline of detachment, a way of freeing myself from worldly distractions to focus on what truly matters. St. Thérèse's words challenge me to see fasting not just in dramatic sacrifices but in small, everyday acts

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Apostleship of Prayer

Papal Intention for March 2025

For Families in Crisis —

Let us pray that broken families might discover the cure for their wounds through forgiveness, rediscovering each other's gifts, even in their differences.

Public prayers for ailing pope show affection, faith

VATICAN CITY (CNS)- The nightly recitation of the rosary for Pope Francis and for all the sick “is a beautiful gesture” of affection and of faith, said Cardinal Leonardo Sandri.

“Anyone can come. Praying together is a sign of ecclesiality, of being church,” said the Argentine cardinal, who is the retired prefect of the Dicastery for Eastern Churches.

“Our Lord himself said, ‘Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them,’” the cardinal told Catholic News Service March 4, after hundreds of people had gathered to pray the rosary for Pope Francis at 9 p.m. each night for more than a week.

The rosaries have continued each night since that time.

Twenty years ago, the Argentine cardinal, then-substitute for general affairs in the Vatican Secretariat of State, was leading prayers in St. Peter’s Square for the ailing Pope John Paul II, who left Rome’s Gemelli hospital March 13, 2005, for the last time.

While Pope Francis’ doctors have said their prognosis



A religious sister prays as people gather in St. Peter’s Square at the Vatican to recite the rosary for Pope Francis on March 3, 2025. (CNS photo/Pablo Esparza)

is “guarded,” they had told reporters Feb. 21 that he was not in imminent danger of death. They did say, however, that they expected his condition to have ups and downs as he tried to recover from double pneumonia.

The 88-year-old pope has been in the Gemelli hospital since Feb. 14 when bronchitis led to serious breathing difficulties.

In addition to the pneumonia, the pope has two lung conditions - bronchiectasis and asthmatic bronchitis - caused by years of respiratory problems. The pope had undergone surgery in 1957 to remove part of his right lung after suffering a severe respiratory infection.

Pope Francis continues to recover in the hospital

Continued from Page 1

As he continues to be in stable condition, the doctors have decided not to release daily medical bulletins. The last official bulletin was released March 15, and the next more detailed medical update was expected March 19.

The recitation of the rosary for Pope Francis’ health continued in St. Peter’s Square March 17. The faithful gathered in the square were led in prayer by French Cardinal Dominique Mamberti,

prefect of the Apostolic Signature, the Holy See’s highest court.

“Yesterday at the Angelus, Pope Francis invited us to join him in praising the Lord, ‘who never abandons us and who, in times of sorrow, places people beside us who reflect a ray of his love,’” the cardinal said at the beginning of the prayer service.

“Let us ask the Lord during this time of Lent to purify our hearts so that we may reflect a ray of his love and mercy, especially for those who need it the most,” he said.

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Lenten 'Road to Resurrection' devotions continue in Diocese

Several deaneries around the Diocese of Scranton are partnering with local parishes to offer area faithful special opportunities to increase their Lenten practices of prayer and devotion through participation in weekly Masses, Eucharistic adoration and solemn services.

The "Road to Resurrection" series in the Scranton, Pittston and Williamsport deaneries are well underway during this season of Lent. Remaining series schedules are as follow:

Scranton Deanery (Wednesday/Thursday at 7 p.m.)

March 20 — Immaculate Conception Parish, 801 Taylor Ave., Scranton's Hill section; **March 27 (bilingual)** — Saint Teresa of Calcutta Parish, 1217 Prospect Ave., South Scranton; **April 2 (Lenten Holy Hour with Bishop Bambera)** — Basilica of Saint Ann, 1250 Saint Ann St., West Scranton; **April 3** — Mary, Mother of God Parish, 316 William St., North Scranton; and **April 10** — Divine Mercy Parish, 312 Davis St., Scranton's Minooka section.

Lycoming Deanery (Tuesday/Wednesday at 7 p.m.)

March 25 (Lenten Holy Hour with Bishop Bambera) — Saint Boniface Parish, 326 Washington Blvd., Williamsport; **April 2** — Saint Ann Parish, 1220 Northway Road, Williamsport; **April 9** — Immaculate Conception Parish, 5973 Jacks Hollow Road, Bastress; and **April 16 (Penance service)**

— Saint Boniface Parish, Williamsport.

Pittston Deanery (Wednesday at 7 p.m.)

March 26 — Saint Maria Goretti Parish, 42 Redwood Drive, Laffin; **April 2** — Corpus Christi Parish at Saint Anthony of Padua Church, 28 Memorial St., Exeter; and **April 9** — Nativity of Our Lord Parish, 127 Stephenson St., Duryea.

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Contact us:
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Pope St. JPII pilot to address Charismatics

STROUDSBURG — The Catholic Charismatic Renewal of the Scranton Diocese will host a regional prayer meeting on Tuesday, April 8, at Saint Luke Church, 818 Main St., Stroudsburg.

The gathering will open with prayerful devotion of the Rosary at 6:30 p.m., followed by the prayer meeting at 7 p.m.

The program's teaching presentation will be offered by special guest speaker Kevin Connolly, a retired United States Naval aviator and commercial airline pilot. He and his wife Anne are members of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Malverne on New York's Long Island.

For more than 40 years, Captain Connolly has served as a guest presenter at numerous

Charismatic gatherings, having delivered the main address for the 1996 National Catholic Charismatic Convention. He was also the featured speaker for the 1998 Congress on the Holy Spirit in Syracuse, N.Y.

The guest speaker earned his Naval Aviator "wings" in September 1977, having piloted jet aircraft with the USS Saratoga and USS John F. Kennedy.

Following his retirement from the Navy, Captain Connolly flew international and domestic flights for TWA and American Airlines. In January 1999, he was selected to fly Pope Saint John Paul II from St. Louis to Rome following the late pontiff's visit to the U.S.

Connolly retired as a Captain in May 2016.

Acclaimed actor to perform dramatic St. John Gospel rendition

STROUDSBURG — Pocono Center for the Arts announces Tony Award nominee Ken Jennings will present his dramatic recitation of the Gospel of John in a live performance on Sunday, April 6, at 4 p.m. at Saint Luke Church, 818 Main St., Stroudsburg.

The one-man theatrical presentation is open to the public, with free-will donations being accepted.

A celebrated Broadway actor, Jennings has performed the uniquely inspiring and captivating rendition of the Gospel according

to Saint John the Evangelist throughout the United States.

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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.

Por eso, información respecto a una alegación del asunto sexual de un menor de edad, debe ser reportada a la Coordinadora Diocesana de Asistencia para Las Víctimas, Mary Beth Pacuska, a (570) 862-7551.

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Prayer Requests for Priests

The Daily Prayer Request for Priests schedule is as follows:

March 20, Father James Nash; March 21, Father Theodore Obaza; March 22, Holy Cross Father Thomas O'Hara; March 23, Father Peter O'Rourke; March 24, Father James Paisley; March 25, Father Sergio Leon Pamplona Henao; March 26, Father Francis Pauselli; March 27, Father Jaime Perez Restrepo; March 28, Father Carmen Perry; March 29, Father Thomas Petro; March 30, Father William Petruska; March 31, Father Michael Piccola; April 1, Pope Francis; April 2, Bishop Joseph C. Bambera; April 3, Father William Pickard; April 4, Saint Joseph Oblate Father Jackson Pinhero; April 5, Father Joseph Pisaneschi; April 6, Father John Polednak, V.E.; April 7, Father Richard Polmounter; April 8, Father John Poplawski; April 9, Monsignor Patrick Pratico; April 10, Monsignor Joseph Quinn; April 11, Father Michael Quinnan; April 12, Father Philip Rayappan; April 13, Jesuit Father James Redington; April 14, Father Gregory Reichlen; April 15, Father August Ricciardi; April 16, Father Frederick Riegler; April 17, Jesuit Father Angelo Rizzo; April 18, Father Alex Roche; April 19, Monsignor Walter Rossi; April 20, Monsignor Dale Rupert; April 21, Holy Cross Father Brogan Ryan; April 22, Father Dominic Sabi; April 23, Father Arbogaste Satoun.



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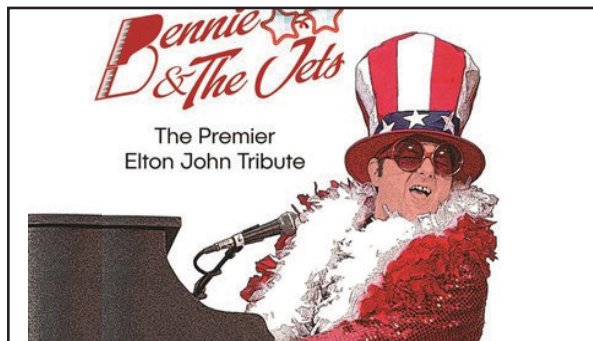
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**Knights of Lithuania
celebrate Saint Casimir
feast day in Pittston**



Knights of Lithuania Council 143, Pittston, celebrated the feast of Saint Casimir with a Mass celebrated March 2 at Saint John the Evangelist Church in Pittston. Third degree honors were also conferred during the liturgy. A luncheon and Amber District meeting in the Monsignor Bendik Center followed the service. Pictured are Council and Amber District members and guests. Front row, from left: Mike Loncoski; Judy Stodolny; Eileen Kelly; Barbara Miller, Amber District president; June Supey, third degree recipient; Tom Wierbowski, Amber District vice president and third degree recipient; Marilyn Fitzgerald; Dennis Palladino; Janet Palladino; Elaine Elko; and Mary Claire Voveris. Second row: Yvonne Branas; Father Joseph Elston, host pastor; Ruth Wnuk, third degree recipient; Sylvia Waxmonsky; Don Waxmonsky; Irene Kovaleski; and John Kovaleski. Third row: Les Distin; Anne Marie Distin; Steve Tichy, Amber District trustee; Tom Miller, Amber District secretary; Bill Sodnik; Tom Vaxmonsky; Donna Albright; and Joe Francik. Absent from photo, Camille Stanis.

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Parish offering youth mental health training session March 29

FOREST CITY — The Mental Health Ministry at Saint Katharine Drexel Parish is sponsoring a Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA) training for adults who interact with youth, ages 12 to 18.

The training program will be held on Saturday, March 29, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Saint James Church, 361 Great Bend Turnpike, Pleasant Mount. Offered free of charge, the session includes a light lunch.

YMHFA training is specifically designed as a support program for parents of teens and other adults who engage with adolescents in the age group, including school staff/teachers/coaches, camp counselors, youth group leaders and youth ministers.

The in-person program requires approximately two hours of online pre-work.

Training objectives include:

- Recognition of the signs and symptoms of mental health challenges that may impact youth.
- Common signs/symptoms of substance use challenges.
- How to interact with a child or adolescent in crisis and connect the youth with help.

Registration is limited and available online at catholicmhm.org/skdpmmh. Deadline is March 26.

Divine Mercy Sunday

APRIL 27, 2025

Divine Mercy Parish, 312 Davis Street, Scranton, PA



Jesus I Trust In You

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

SCHEDULE

- 12:30 PM
Rosary and Sacrament of Reconciliation (Mercy Story)
- 2:00 PM
Liturgy (Mass)
- Exposition of Blessed Sacrament
- 3:00 PM
Chaplet of Divine Mercy
Solemn Benediction
Procession with the Blessed Sacrament
Blessing with Relic of St. Faustina
Veneration of the Divine Mercy Painting

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

All are invited to join in the celebration of
- DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY -

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

BE A CATHOLIC MAN
Lenten Men's Retreat
April 4-5, 2025
BE IMITATORS OF CHRIST

Guest speaker

John Edwards

Founder of Pew Ministries and host of "Just a Guy in the Pew" Podcast



Holy Transfiguration Retreat Center
1000 Seminary Road Dalton, PA 18414

Cost: \$100 includes lodging \$75 w/o lodging
For more information contact
Joe Adcroft, Retreat Coordinator

570-351-6256

Registration at
BeACatholicMan.com

Please register by March 27



Friday April 4

- 6:00 PM Registration
- 7:00 PM Welcome: Mike Killmer
- 7:15 PM **Mind and Heart of a Leader**
- 8:15 PM Q&A Discussion
- 9:00 PM Exposition Adoration
- 9:15 PM Meditation
- 9:30 PM Sacrament of Reconciliation
- 9:45 PM Stations of the Cross/ Night Prayer
- 10:00 PM Night Watch continues until Mass.

Saturday April 5

- 6:00 AM Wake, wash private prayer.
- 6:30 AM Benediction - conclude night watch.
- 7:00 AM Holy Mass - Bishop Barbara
- 8:00 AM Breakfast
- 9:00 AM **What Men Want / What Men Need**
- 10:00 AM Q&A Discussion
- 10:30 AM **How to Build A Successful Men's Group**
- 11:30 AM Q/A and Discussion
- 12:00 PM Angelus and Grace / Lunch
- 1:00 PM **Next Steps / Practical Suggestions / Discussion**
- Update on 2025 Be A Catholic Man Conference
- October 4 "Christ is King"
- 2:00 PM Closing prayer- Divine Mercy Chaplet

Viva Cristo Rey!

Catholic Happenings Around the Scranton Diocese

Tuesday Novena Devotion to Saint Anthony of Padua — **MARCH 18-JUNE 19**, hosted by Our Lady of Hope Parish, 40 Park Ave., Wilkes-Barre; 13-week Saint Anthony Novena devotions are held on Tuesday evenings, beginning at 5:30 p.m. in the parish church. Novena theme: "The Mystery of Suffering & The Saints." Novena services include blessing with the Saint Anthony relic. All faithful are welcome; for more information, call (570) 824-7832.

Concluding "40 Days for Life" Pro-Life Rosary Gatherings — **MARCH 20-APRIL 11**, offered for the special intentions of an end to abortion and closure of the Planned Parenthood location in Wilkes-Barre; Rosary is prayed each weekday, Monday to Friday, at 10 a.m. in front of the Planned Parenthood offices at 101 North Main St., Wilkes-Barre.

Annual Homemade Pierogi Sale — **MARCH 20-APRIL 11**, sponsored by St. Catherine of Siena Parish, 220 Church St., Moscow; sale held Monday thru Friday, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.,

in the parish hall (lower level of St. Catherine Church) and after all weekend Masses. Cost: potato cheese or cabbage pierogi, \$11 for baker's dozen (13); halushki (cabbage & noodles) also available for \$9/quart. Orders may be placed by calling Mary Ann (570) 266-3198, or Betty Ann (570) 842-6195.

Friday Eucharistic Adoration & Benediction — **MARCH 21**, hosted by St. Maximilian Kolbe Parish at Our Lady of the Lake Church, 5112 Pocono Crest Road, Pocono Pines; Adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament and benediction offered every Friday morning following the 9:15 a.m. Mass. All are invited to spend time in prayer & meditation with the Eucharistic Lord. St. Monica's Army hosts prayerful recitation of the Holy Rosary on the First Friday of each month at 6:30 p.m., followed by adoration.

Lenten Friday Buffet Dinners — **MARCH 21 & APRIL 4**, hosted by St. Maximilian Kolbe Parish in Pocono Pines; dinners served from 4 to 6 p.m. in the social hall at Our Lady of the Lake

Church, 5112 Pocono Crest Road, Pocono Pines. All three buffets feature a variety of meatless dishes. Menu offerings include garden salad, choice of two soups, and meatless entrees: fish, stuffed pasta shells, macaroni & cheese, halushki, baked ziti, veggie penne, pierogi casserole, spinach lasagna, Mexican casserole, penne w/vodka sauce, and steamed & roasted vegetables. Buffet also includes rolls, hot & cold beverages, and dessert table. Menu subject to change. Cost: \$14 per person; seniors (age 65+), \$12. Both dine-in and take-out service available. No reservations needed. For more information, call the parish office (570) 646-6424.

Lenten Fridays Food Sale — **MARCH 21-APRIL 11**, sponsored by the Holy Name Society at St. Leo Parish in Ashley; held next four Fridays in Lent from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the church

hall, 33 Manhattan St., Ashley. Meatless sale items include halushki, pirohy, Manhattan clam chowder, mushroom soup, tuna hoagies/sandwiches & potato

pancakes. Call (570) 266-8835 or email Lenten.food.sales@gmail.com for pre-orders.

Continued on
Page 30

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Confirmation retreat at Milford parish



Eighth grade students in the Children's Faith Formation Program at Saint Patrick Parish in Milford recently participated in a retreat experience in preparation to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation, which will be conferred at the parish on Pentecost Sunday in June. The Confirmation retreat featured prayer, group activities, video presentations, discussion, and the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Participants included Confirmation candidates from Saint Patrick's, Emersyn Delrio, Orlando Huerta, Isabella Johnson, Adele Kahmar, Roger Lake, Tessa Marotta, Kaitlin Murphy and Sofia Rizzo; and Chelsey Samson, who will receive the sacrament as a member of Saint Joseph Parish in Matamoras.

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Catholic Happenings Around the Diocese

Lenten Fridays Food Sale
— MARCH 21-APRIL 18, hosted by St. John the Evangelist Parish, 35 William St., Pittston; held every Friday during Lent (including Good Friday) with order pick-up from 3:30 to 6 p.m. in the Monsignor Bendik Pastoral Center, Church Street. Sale items include potato pancakes (3 for \$5) and take-and-heat red pizza or white pizza with broccoli (\$15/tray). Orders required by Thursday of each week by calling the parish office (570) 654-0053.

13th Annual Polish Lenten Devotion: "Gorzkie Zale"
— MARCH 23, traditional Polish-language devotion for Lent known as "Bitter Lamentations"; begins at 3 p.m. on the Third Sunday of Lent at Exaltation of the Holy Cross Parish, 420 Main Road, Hanover Township. Devotion is a sung reflection on the Passion of Christ and his Sorrowful Mother. Parish music ministry assisted by guest singers. Presiding celebrants: Father Richard Cirba, host pastor, and Father James McGahagan; concludes with benediction & social. To participate in the choir, call Dom Costantino (570) 706-6951; for more information, call Barry Kaminski (570) 899-5080.

Weekly Pierogi & Soup Sale
— MARCH 23 & 26, sponsored by SS. Peter & Paul Church, 1309 West Locust St., West Scranton; sales held each week following

the church's Wednesday 9 a.m. Mass and Sunday 11 a.m. Mass. Packages of homemade pierogi cost \$10 per dozen; soups include shellfish bisque (\$15/quart) and clam chowder, pasta fagioli and vegetable (all \$8/quart).

Lenten Reflection Service
— MARCH 25, hosted by St. Ignatius Loyola Parish in Kingston; held from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. at St. Ignatius Church, 339 North Maple Ave., Kingston. Service offers meditative atmosphere for the season of Lent, including contemplative music performed live under the direction of John Vaida. Musical interludes will be interspersed by brief reflections on the themes of faith, hope and love during the Resurrection journey, offered by the three Notre Dame Echo Apprentices currently serving in the Scranton Diocese.

Continued on next page

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 Communion Breakfast Feb. 16 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. Mary Vincent served as toastmaster for the event, with Alfredo Pisa, Holy Name Society president, offering remarks. The breakfast principal speaker was Rob Williams, executive director of Saint Francis of Assisi Kitchen, Scranton, who also received one of the Christian Witness Awards presented by the parish societies. The other Christian Witness honor was bestowed upon Ann Mellert. Shown above, at left, is Williams receiving the Pio Ferrario, Pat Grady & Gene Loughney Award from Father Cappelloni. At right, Mellert is presented with the Bette Riccardo Award from the Dunmore pastor.

Who makes house calls?

As of October 2015, I will now meet clients either at their home, or at a location they choose and no longer require clients to meet at my office. I have decided that I would change the way I meet with people so it will be as easy and as convenient as possible for the client.

Based on my practice, which consists of estate planning and administration along with elder law, I find that clients are more comfortable discussing such matters in familiar surroundings. While I know this may seem unconventional to some, I believe I will be able to serve clients much better in this fashion.

If anyone is uncomfortable with home visits, I have a few locations where I can meet in an office setting. I look forward to meeting with my existing clients and especially meeting new clients that are looking for any assistance in estate or elder law matters.



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Catholic Happenings Around the Diocese

Tenebrae Lenten Music Service — **MARCH 30**, hosted by St. Boniface Parish in Williamsport; program begins at 2 p.m. in St. Boniface Church, 326 Washington Blvd., Williamsport. Solemn service features meditative music and Scripture for contemplative reflection on the final moments of the Lord's Passion; musical presentation by the St. Boniface Choir includes two motet performances. Free admission.

April Lottery Raffle — **APRIL 1-30**, sponsored by the Ladies of Mary Society at Exaltation of the Holy Cross Parish, Hanover Township; based on the daily Pennsylvania Lottery evening Pick 3 drawing. Raffle calendars (with two numbers each) cost \$20. Cash prizes range from \$100 to \$500. For calendar orders or more information, call (570) 823-6242, or visit: www.exhc.org.

Designer Purse Bingo — **APRIL 5**, 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). Food and beverages available for purchase; event also includes basket raffle & bake sale. For tickets, contact the parish

Taizé Lenten prayer services scheduled

WILKES-BARRE — Saint Nicholas-Saint Mary Parish will host a Taizé Prayer "Around the Cross" service for Lent on Monday, March 31, at 7 p.m. in the upper church of Saint Nicholas Church, 226 South Washington St., Wilkes-Barre.

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

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

A Taizé Lenten prayer service will also be held Sunday, March

office at (570) 655-8956.

Polish Lenten Devotion: "Gorzkie Zale" — **APRIL 6**, traditional Polish-language devotion for Lent known as "Bitter Lamentations"; held at 3 p.m. in Sacred Heart of Jesus Church, 215 Lackawanna Ave., Dupont. Devotion is a sung reflection on the Passion of Christ and his Sorrowful Mother; guest homilist: Monsignor Neil Van Loon, pastor of St. Paul Parish, Scranton. Light reception follows in church hall.

Cash Bingo — **APRIL 6**, 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; advance tickets only. Cash prizes include: 15 regular games, \$100 each; four special games, \$200 each; and \$500 coverall. Event includes bake sale, door prizes, 50/50 cash drawing, basket raffles and lunch. Tickets available at all weekend Masses thru March.

Lenten Food Sale — **APRIL 11**, sponsored by the Queen of the Apostles Parish Social Concerns/Respect Life Ministry in Avoca; Friday pick up of advance orders available from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. & 4:30 to 6 p.m. in the parish hall, 742 Spring St., Avoca. Sale items include: red or white clam chowder,

30, at 2:30 p.m. at the IHM Center Chapel, 1512 University Ave., Dunmore, on the campus of Marywood University. All are welcome

Taizé is a meditative style of communal prayer, featuring sung repetitive refrains to create a gentle rhythm inviting reflection and meditation.

Music ministry for both Taizé events will be provided by Rob Yenkowski, director of music at King's College, Wilkes-Barre, and the Cantores Christi Regis Choir.

\$10/quart; vodka sauce, \$10/quart; and halushki, \$7. Pre-orders only; call Carol Wood (570) 457-8843, or Ruth Lee (570) 457-2111. Order deadline: Sunday, April 6.

"Spirituality: Our Sacred Journey Continues" Spring Conference — **APRIL 12**, hosted by St. Ann Basilica, West Scranton; series program, "Growth Through Our Suffering," presented by Passionist Father Don Ware. Presentation held from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. in the Basilica Shrine dining room (across from gift shop). Register with the Shrine office (570) 347-5691.

Weekly Bereavement Support Group Sessions — **APRIL 14-MAY 19**, sponsored by St. John Neumann Parish in Lords Valley; bereavement support group meets on six 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 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.



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WHAT: Rectory, Set, Cook! IV: Teching it Up A Notch

WHEN: March 4 through 5 p.m. April 10

WHERE: Any desktop, laptop, or mobile device/cell phone

WHY: To feed the hungry and house the homeless within the Diocese of Scranton while also supporting our parishes, which keep half of the money they raise.

HOW:
1 Visit www.dioceseofscranton.org and click on the Rectory, Set, Cook! image on the homepage. OR SCAN THE QR CODE AT BOTTOM RIGHT.

2 Click on the OUR CHEFS tab, which is underneath the SPONSORS • FYI tab. Click the blue View key to see each pastor chef page.

IMPORTANT NOTE, ESPECIALLY FOR THOSE USING PHONES: If you cannot see the videos, click VIEW, then 'Read More' (under the small rectangular image beneath "DONATE TO VOTE") to reveal the PLAY key.

3 Click on a chef's (or team of chefs) page, select DONATE NOW and make at least a \$10 gift to cast one vote. Cast as many votes as you wish as often as you wish for as many chefs as you wish!

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