



# The Catholic Light

DIOCESE OF SCRANTON

Weekly E-Newsletter

March 20, 2025

## Saint Padre Pio's glove among relics venerated at Swoyersville parish



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 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."

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**Catholic Foundation receives 100-percent board support in first year**

# CATHOLIC FOUNDATION

*for the Diocese of 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.

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## Lenten Holy Hour draws newlyweds closer to faith and each other



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.”

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**Five more Lenten Holy Hours to take place in the next week; Join us in Honesdale, Archbald, Williamsport, Clarks Summit and Dickson City**

**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**

Bishop Bambera is visiting the Honesdale, Carbondale, Williamsport, Clarks Summit and Dunmore deaneries within the next week to celebrate a Lenten Holy Hour with the faithful.

Tonight, March 20, the Bishop will visit Saint John the Evangelist Parish in Honesdale at 7:00 p.m.

On Monday, March 24, the Bishop will visit Christ the King Parish in Archbald at 7:00 p.m. On Tuesday, he will be at Saint Boniface Parish in Williamsport, followed by Our Lady of the Snows Parish in Clarks Summit on Wednesday and Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish in Dickson City on Thursday.

All are invited to attend.

During this year's Holy Hour, Bishop Bambera is not only reflecting on the third and final year of the National Eucharistic Revival that remains underway, but also the 2025 Jubilee Year of Hope that the Church is celebrating.

[Click Here to See all of the Dates and Locations of the 2025 Lenten Holy Hours with Bishop Bambera](#)

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



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.

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**Pope's doctors report more improvement, but no date for his release**





Pope Francis no longer needs the “noninvasive mechanical ventilation” he has used most nights since experiencing a breathing “crisis” Feb. 28, his doctors reported in a bulletin released by the Vatican press office March 19.

“The Holy Father’s clinical condition is confirmed to be improving,” the bulletin said.

In addition to discontinuing the nightly use of the ventilation, the doctors said the 88-year-old pope also has a reduced need for the “high-flow oxygen therapy” through a nasal tube that he had been using during the day.

The Vatican press office had said Pope Francis had spent the night of March 17-18 without needing the ventilation through a mask. Instead, it had said, the pope received high-flow oxygen through a nasal tube overnight.

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## **Cosmopolitan Seniors Group disbands and donates funds to Catholic Social Services**



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.

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



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.

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



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.

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### **Pope approves next phase of Synod, setting path to 2028 assembly**



Pope Francis has approved the next phase of the Synod of Bishops on synodality, launching a three-year implementation process that will culminate in an ecclesial assembly at the Vatican in October 2028.

In a letter published March 15, Cardinal Mario Grech, secretary-general of the synod, announced that the synod's new phase will focus on applying its

conclusions at all levels of the church, with dioceses, bishops' conferences and religious communities working to integrate synodality into daily

church life before the meeting at the Vatican in 2028.

“For now, therefore, a new synod will not be convened; instead, the focus will be on consolidating the path taken so far,” he wrote in the letter addressed to all bishops, eparchs and the presidents of national and regional bishops' conferences.

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