



The Catholic Light

DIOCESE OF SCRANTON

Weekly E-Newsletter

March 27, 2025

Pope returns to Vatican after long hospitalization



Immediately before leaving Rome's Gemelli hospital after more than five weeks of treatment for breathing difficulties, double pneumonia and infections, Pope Francis greeted hundreds of people who gathered outside the hospital March 23.

With a very weak voice, Pope Francis thanked the crowd, waving his hands and giving a thumbs up.

He also pointed to a woman carrying a yellow-wrapped bouquet of flowers and told the crowd, “She’s good.”

An aide had pushed Pope Francis in his wheelchair onto the balcony overlooking the square outside the hospital. Some 600 people had gathered at the hospital, including Rome’s Mayor Roberto Gualtieri. Hundreds of people also gathered in front of video screens in St. Peter’s Square to see the pope for the first time since he was hospitalized Feb. 14.

The pope left the hospital almost immediately after his appearance on the balcony.

[Click Here to Read the Full Story from Catholic News Service](#)



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Pope knew he 'might not make it,' physician says

Dr. Sergio Alfieri, the coordinator of Pope Francis' medical team, said in an interview this week that there were consequential choices that needed to be made during the pope's treatment and time in the hospital.

First of three Masses for 2025 Bishop's Youth Award recipients takes place at Cathedral



Over the course of the next several weeks, more than 500 young people will be receiving the 2025 Bishop's Youth Award.

Since 1996, the Bishop's Youth Award has honored students in 8th and 12th grade for their commitment to the Catholic Church and service to their parish, school, and local community.

Students from the Western and Eastern regions of the Diocese gathered for the first Bishop's Youth Awards Mass on March 23 at the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton. Students from the Southern Region will participate in a Mass on March 30, followed by students from the Northern Region on April 6.

Students who were honored with the award on March 23 were very excited to participate in the event.

"It truly demonstrates how many extraordinary young kids there are that demonstrate their faith very well," Sienna Simmons of Saint Peter Parish in Wellsboro, Tioga County, said.

"I'm really excited to be here and have my family supporting me. They are the inspiration for my faith because they believe in God and have led me down the path to also believe in God as well," Ella Carroll of Saint Joseph Parish in Matamoras, Pike County, added.

[Click Here to Watch a Short Video from Catholic Television Featuring some of the 2025 Bishop's Youth Award Recipients](#)

High school students participate in ISLI weekend retreat



More than 40 high school students from parishes around the Diocese of Scranton participated in the ISLI retreat on the weekend of March 21-23.

ISLI, which stands for the International Student Leadership Institute, is a peer-facilitated, faith-based retreat designed to help young people enhance and expand their leadership qualities.

"We're learning how to support each other, definitely communicate, and see how kids our own age take the Lord and put Him in their everyday life," participant Stephanie Kucharski of Nativity of Our Lord Parish in Duryea said.

The retreat was held at Transfiguration Retreat Center in Dalton.

"I think it's a great opportunity to meet new people, to grow in my faith, and to develop leadership skills," participant Kevin Osipower of Saint Therese Parish in Shavertown added.

[Click Here to Watch a Short Video from Catholic Television Featuring some of the ISLI Participants and Activities](#)

**Join us this coming week for Lenten
Holy Hours in Dickson City, Dushore,
Nanticoke, Scranton and East
Stroudsburg**

LENTE HOLY HOURS WITH BISHOP BAMBERA

BEGINNING AT 7 P.M. EACH NIGHT

**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**

 DIOCESE OF
SCRANTON



Bishop Bambera is visiting the Dunmore, Sayre, Kingston, Scranton and Stroudsburg deaneries within the next week to celebrate a Lenten Holy Hour with the faithful.

Tonight, March 27, the Bishop will visit Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish in Dickson City at 7:00 p.m.

On Monday, March 31, the Bishop will visit Saint Basil Church in Dushore at 7:00 p.m. On Tuesday, he will be at Saint Faustina Kowalska Parish in Nanticoke, followed by Saint Ann Basilica Parish on Wednesday and Saint Matthew Parish in East Stroudsburg 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](#)

Knights of Columbus John Paul II Council honors St. Joseph's Day with procession and devotion



On the evening of St. Joseph's Day, the Knights of Columbus John Paul II Council 13935 participated in a moving celebration at the 7:00 p.m. Mass at St. Joseph's Church in Matamoras.

In a powerful display of faith and fraternity, the Council processed into the church carrying their newly acquired statue of St. Joseph, elevated on a handcrafted litter.

The statue, which made its public debut that evening, is a traditional depiction of St. Joseph the Worker, holding a carpenter's square and lilies, symbols of his vocation, his purity, and his role as a humble, steadfast guardian of the Holy Family. The litter, which had been used just three days earlier in the local St. Patrick's Day Parade, was designed and built by members of the Council to support processions throughout the liturgical year. Its elegant, sturdy frame added a solemn beauty to the moment as the Knights brought St. Joseph into his namesake parish.

[Click Here to Read the Full Story from The Catholic Light](#)

Vatican statistics: Baptisms down, but first communions, confirmations up



The number of Catholics and permanent deacons in the world rose in 2023, while the number of seminarians, priests, men and women in religious orders, and baptisms all declined, according to Vatican statistics.

However, the Vatican's Statistical Yearbook of the Church said, 9.1 million people received their first Communion in 2023, up from 8.68 million people the previous year, and almost 7.7 million people were confirmed, up from 7.4 million people in 2022.

At the end of 2023, the number of Catholics in the world reached 1.405 billion, up 1.15% from 1.389 billion Catholics at the end of 2022, according to the Vatican's Central Office of Church Statistics, which publishes the yearbook.

This came despite a smaller growth rate in the world's population, which, for that period was 0.88%. According to the United Nations' Demographic Yearbook, the estimated mid-year world population for 2023 was approximately 8.045 billion.

[Click Here to Read the Full Story from Catholic News Service](#)

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

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**

**Mass will be broadcast live on CTV: Catholic Television and livestream on the
Diocese of Scranton website, YouTube Channel and social media platforms**

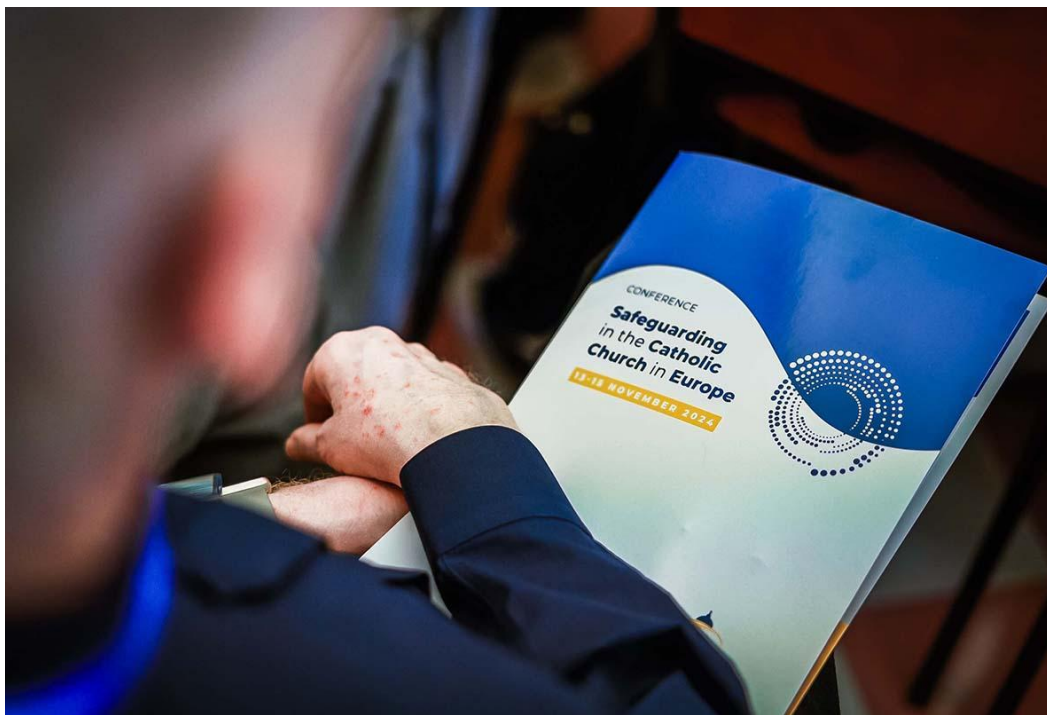
SCRANTON – The month of April is Child Abuse Prevention Month. It is a time to recognize the importance of families and communities working together to prevent child mistreatment.

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.

Safeguarding children is essential to being faithful to Gospel, papal message says



Those who work to keep children and vulnerable adults safe are serving and honoring Christ, Pope Francis said in a written message.

“Abuse prevention is not a blanket to be spread over emergencies, but one of the foundations on which to build communities faithful to the Gospel,” said the message, released by the Vatican March 25.

The message, which was dated March 20 while Pope Francis was still recovering at Rome’s Gemelli hospital, was addressed to members and

guests attending the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors' plenary assembly in Rome March 24-28.

[Click Here to Read the Full Story from Catholic News Service](#)

Churches East and West celebrate Easter the same day in 2025; Could it be a step to unity?



Does Easter belong to Jesus Christ, or to a calendar?

For Pope Francis, the answer is clear: “Easter belongs to Christ!” the pontiff declared in September 2024, when he met with representatives of the Pasqua Together 2025 Initiative, an assemblage of various lay associations and movements of several Christian confessions.

They were gathered to discuss a coincidence and a concern that, for all involved, represents an occasion of unity the pope said “must not be allowed to pass by in vain.”

Because this year, churches both East and West will celebrate Easter, the Day of Resurrection, on the same date: Sunday, April 20, 2025.

It's notable because Western churches — Catholics of the Latin Church and most Protestants — follow the Gregorian calendar. So do most Eastern Catholic churches. The Eastern Orthodox churches — along with some Eastern Catholic churches — use the older or revised Julian calendar.

[Click Here to Read the Full Story from Our Sunday Visitor](#)

**Lenten Men's Retreat to be held April 4-
5**



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

Viva Cristo Rey!

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

[Click Here for More Information about the Men's Retreat or to Register
for the Event](#)

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