

The Catholic Light

DIOCESE OF SCRANTON

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Shine His Light

*Catholic schools prepare for
a new year of faith, growth
and opportunity*

SCRANTON – In the coming days, classrooms in the Diocese of Scranton’s 19 Catholic schools will once again be filled with students, teachers, and the excitement of a new academic year.

This year, a simple invitation will serve as a guiding light for the year ahead: *Shine His Light*.

That is the theme for the 2026-2027 school year, calling students, families, faculty, staff, and administrators to live out their Catholic faith not simply in words, but through acts of service, compassion and love.

Rooted in Jesus’ words from the Gospel of Matthew – “Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven” (5:16) – the theme will be highlighted throughout the school year through the principles of Catholic Social Teaching.

Each month, students will explore a unique way of shining Christ’s light, beginning with solidarity. Throughout the rest of the school year, they will also



focus on respect for life and the dignity of the human person; care for the poor and vulnerable; call to family, community and participation; rights and responsibilities; care for God’s creation; and ending with the dignity of work and rights of workers.

The goal is not simply to teach students about the seven themes of Catholic Social Teaching, but to help them put their faith into action.

“Catholic education is about forming the whole person,” Kristen Donohue, Diocesan Secretary for

Catholic Education/Superintendent said. “As we continue to implement our Catholic Schools Strategic Growth Plan, we want our students to understand their faith is not something they simply learn about in a classroom or experience at Mass on a weekend. It is something they live. Focusing on the theme ‘Shine His Light,’ we will help our students see Christ in others, serve those in need and recognize they have a responsibility to bring His light into the world.”

Continued on Page 3

Pennsylvania March for Life to bring thousands to Harrisburg on Sept. 21



HARRISBURG – When people from across Pennsylvania gather at the State Capitol next month for the 2026 Pennsylvania March for Life, they will do more than simply march.

They will publicly affirm the dignity and God-given worth of every human life.

The sixth annual Pennsylvania March for Life is scheduled to take place on Monday, Sept. 21, 2026, bringing people from throughout the Commonwealth together for a day of prayer and public witness on behalf of life.

Organized by the Pennsylvania Family Institute and the national March for Life organization, the event invites participants to “be a voice for the voiceless” and stand for

the dignity of every person, beginning in the womb.

For Catholics attending from the Diocese of Scranton and elsewhere, the day will offer an opportunity to unite that public witness with prayer and the celebration of the Eucharist.

The Diocese of Harrisburg will host overnight Eucharistic Adoration at the Cathedral of Saint Patrick beginning at 1:30 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 20, and continuing through 9:00 a.m. Monday.

On Monday morning, Benediction will be celebrated at 9:00 a.m., followed by the March for Life Opening Mass at 9:30 a.m. at the Cathedral.

Continued on Page 7

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

Eric M. Deabill

Managing Editor:

Kevin G. McDonnell

Advertising Coordinator:

Eileen Manley

Circulation Coordinator:

Pamela Haeefe

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Diocese continues to invest in school facility work

SCRANTON - The Diocese of Scranton Catholic School System is continuing to invest money in much-needed infrastructure projects. With 19 schools across five counties, and with many of those buildings approaching a century old, the Catholic Schools Strategic Growth Plan made it clear that deferred maintenance had accumulated for many years.

For the second summer in a row, renovations have been underway across multiple schools with the help of \$8 million in financing.

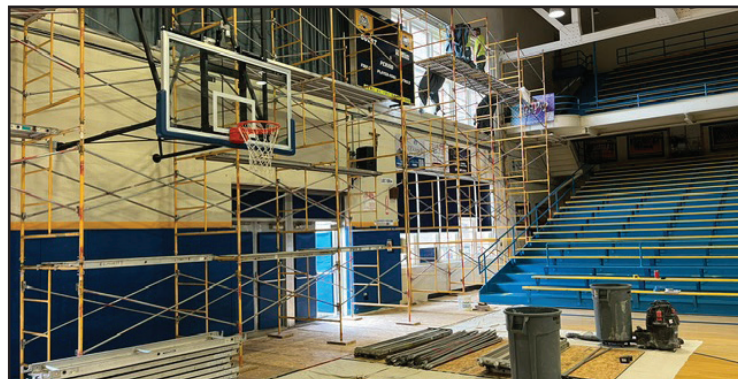
After concentrating on roofs last summer, this year many projects were focused on heating/cooling systems and replacing windows. Some of the more significant projects completed over the summer are highlighted below.

HOLY REDEEMER HIGH SCHOOL, WILKES-BARRE



Multiple projects have been completed, including eliminating storm water back-up in the basement, replacing 97 windows and providing enhanced lighting in the school auditorium.

GOOD SHEPHERD ACADEMY, KINGSTON



New windows were installed in the school gymnasium and stairwells. The new windows have transformed the gym by restoring natural light, creating a brighter, more welcoming environment.

SAINT JUDE SCHOOL, MOUNTAIN TOP



Site work, including storm water drainage improvements, were made across the school campus. The school also received a new boiler for its lower classroom wing and heating/cooling upgrades for its gym.

OUR LADY OF PEACE SCHOOL, CLARKS GREEN



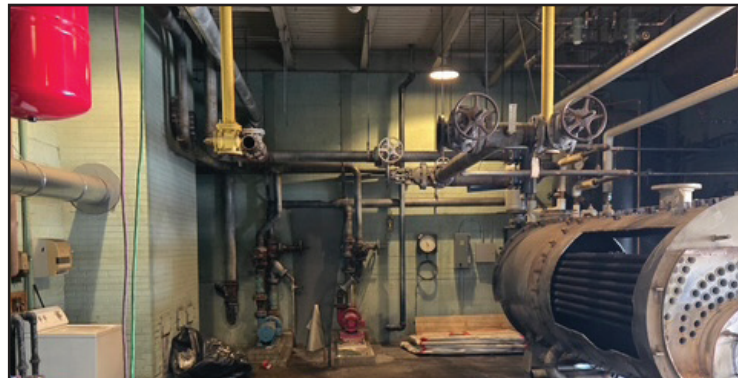
The back parking lot has been resurfaced and designed to drain storm water which will create a safer environment for students. New walkways between the school and Saint Gregory Parish were installed.

NOTRE DAME SCHOOLS, EAST STROUDSBURG



The boiler was replaced, and the elementary and high school heating and cooling systems were separated. The fire alarm system also was upgraded, replacing an outdated system from the 1960s.

HOLY CROSS HIGH SCHOOL, DUNMORE



The school's two original boilers from the 1960s are being replaced with energy efficient boilers along with upgrading its hot water. In addition, the school's fire alarm system received an upgrade.

Diocese welcomes three new Catholic school principals this year

SCRANTON – As the new school year begins, three Catholic schools in the Diocese of Scranton are welcoming new principals.

Kathy Maguire will serve as principal of All Saints Academy in Scranton, Jason Schlingman has taken the helm at Holy Family Academy in Hazleton, and Michael Catrillo has become principal of Notre Dame Jr./Sr. High School in East Stroudsburg.

While their paths to Catholic school leadership are different, the three new principals share a common desire to place students at the center of their work while strengthening the faith and academics in their buildings.

For Catrillo, becoming a Catholic school principal is a dream that came unexpectedly after five years of retirement.

A veteran educator entering his 40th year in education, Catrillo spent much of his career in public education, most recently serving as principal of East Stroudsburg High School South. He retired in 2021 and spent the next several years traveling with his wife.

In June, during a conversation with his parish priest, Father Brian J.T. Clarke of Saint Matthew Parish, Catrillo casually mentioned that he had always wanted to lead a Catholic school.

When Father Clarke asked if he was interested in Notre Dame, Catrillo said he felt the Holy Spirit urging him to take the opportunity.

“I want to do this to continue my work with teachers and young people and be able to share my faith with them,” he said.

Catrillo is particularly looking forward to the smaller school environment at Notre Dame, where he hopes to know students and staff personally – greeting students outside, visiting classrooms and talking with them in the cafeteria.



The Diocese of Scranton is welcoming three new principals for the 2026-2027 academic year. Pictured, from left: Charlene Haggerty, Assistant Superintendent; Jason Schlingman, Holy Family Academy; Kathy Maguire, All Saints Academy; Michael Catrillo, Notre Dame Jr./Sr. High School; Kristen Donohue, Diocesan Secretary of Catholic Education/ Superintendent; and Christopher Tighe, Assistant Superintendent.

Continued on Page 17

New initiatives, investments and renewed Catholic identity mark year ahead

Continued from Page 1

The implementation of the ‘Shine His Light’ initiative reflects one of the central priorities outlined in the Diocese’s “Our Faith. Our Students. Our Future” Strategic Growth Plan, which was released in January 2025 following two years of consultation. The plan outlined goals in seven areas for continued growth: Catholic Mission & Identity, Academic Excellence, Governance & Leadership, Enrollment Management, Development, Infrastructure and Financial Stability.

Now in its implementation phase, the plan is increasingly visible throughout the Catholic School System, with work underway to strengthen student support and expand development efforts.

SUPPORTING INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS

Brittany Krupski, the former principal of All Saints Academy in Scranton, has joined the Catholic Schools Administrative Office in a new role of Director of Student Services.

Krupski will oversee student data and enrollment while also working with special programs, including the ABC Council and Individualized Instruction Program.

Her work will further advance the Strategic Growth Plan’s goal of ensuring

that student support services are clearly defined, assessed, and refined so that data can help inform student learning.

“Our goal has always been to look at each student as an individual and use the information we have to understand where that student is and where he or she needs to go next,” Krupski explained.

The Diocese’s use of NWEA Map Growth assessments several times throughout the school year provides educators with valuable information about individual student progress and helps teachers determine what students are ready to learn next.

“Growth data gives our teachers a valuable tool to differentiate instruction and make sure we are meeting students where they are, while helping them reach their full potential,” Krupski added.

The approach reinforces the Diocese’s commitment to academic excellence while recognizing that every student brings different gifts, needs, and challenges into the classroom.

CREATING SAFER SCHOOLS

The new school year will also bring significant investments in safety.

Diocesan Catholic schools recently received more than \$1.1 million in Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) safety grant funding.

This money will support a wide range of projects designed to strengthen security throughout individual school communities.

The awards will support projects including new security cameras, access-control systems, door and classroom locks, exterior lighting, bollards and school resource officers.

The funds will help fulfill the Strategic Growth Plan’s commitment to infrastructure and ensuring that Catholic schools provide safe, secure environments where students can learn and grow.

NEW MODEL FOR LEARNING

The new school year will also bring a notable change to the academic calendar at Saint John Neumann Jr./Sr. High School in Williamsport, where students in grades 6 through 12 will begin a four-day school week.

With the innovative learning model, students will attend classes Monday through Thursday, with extended school days allowing the school to meet and exceed Pennsylvania’s required instructional hours.

Fridays are being reimaged as opportunities for enrichment rather than simply an additional day away from school. Students will have opportunities for academic support, tutoring, internships, college visits, field trips, guest speakers, and other experiences designed to

complement classroom learning.

In line with the Strategic Growth Plan, school leaders believe the change will create new opportunities for academic and personal growth.

INVESTING IN THE FUTURE

The Diocese is also continuing to strengthen the financial foundation of Catholic education through advancement and development initiatives.

A new Diocesan advancement and development position specifically for Catholic schools has been established to assist individual schools with third-source funding, philanthropy, and fundraising.

Sandra Snyder is overseeing this effort, concentrating on growth of the Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) Program, which provides scholarships for eligible students and makes a Catholic education more accessible to families.

“The EITC Program is an incredible opportunity for individuals and businesses to invest in the future of our students. By redirecting state tax dollars you’re already paying to scholarships, donors can make a Catholic education possible for more families while receiving a 90 percent tax credit,” Snyder said. “We are so grateful for the support we have already received and encourage even more people to take advantage of this opportunity.”

Young Catholics travel to NEPA to serve others, put faith into action



Young adults and their chaperones participating in Catholic HEART Workcamp 2026 pose for a photo with staff from Saint Clare/Saint Paul School in Scranton.

SCRANTON – While many teenagers spend their summer vacation sleeping in, hanging out with friends, or simply scrolling through social media, dozens of young Catholics from across the country spent a week rolling up their sleeves and putting their faith into action in northeastern Pennsylvania.

As part of Catholic HEART Workcamp, a national Catholic youth mission program, the young adults traveled to the Scranton/Wilkes-Barre area July 12-17, volunteering at nearly 30 sites, including schools, parishes, nonprofit organizations, and other outreach ministries.

At Saint Clare/Saint Paul School in Scranton, volunteers painted walls and playground areas, stained door frames, cleaned classrooms, organized school merchandise, and tackled numerous projects at both the primary and main campuses, helping to prepare the school for the upcoming academic year.

“We come here to serve others, but primarily we come here to grow closer to Christ through our service,” Father Matthew Conley, a priest from the Archdiocese of Boston who was serving as the group chaplain, said. Catholic HEART Workcamp fundamentally is an organization that exists to give teenagers an opportunity to serve while being uplifted by Christ Himself. It’s service through Christ.”

For Deacon Timothy Dolan, Director of Social Concerns for the Diocese of New Ulm in Minnesota, the week is about far more than just completing projects.

“Catholic HEART Workcamp is a mission to empower our youth to understand who Christ is in their life, enhance their faith, build relationships with others and be able to see Christ in whoever they meet,” he said. “These projects always seem to be able to build character in the kids and camaraderie.”

For many of the young volunteers, the opportunity to give back was just as meaningful as the work itself.

“I love taking part in Catholic HEART Workcamp. I did it last year and had a lot of fun. It’s nice to see the joy that we see in the people we’re helping,” Eva Cox, a senior from Aurora, Illinois, said. “At the Primary campus, we painted a bunch of door frames. We dusted all the lights and fans in the school. We painted dots on the playground that were faded. We brought color back into the playground.”

“I love serving and I love seeing the smiles and happiness that we bring,” Layla Vilone, a sophomore from Dover, Delaware, added.

Throughout the week, the students stayed at King’s College and faith remained at the center of their experience. Participants celebrated Mass each morning and had many other opportunities for prayer, Eucharistic Adoration and Reconciliation.

Olivia Chapman, an eighth grader from Poquoson, Virginia, said the experience reminded her that even ordinary tasks can become an act of discipleship.

“It’s giving back to the community and working for God and His servants,” she said.

Parish’s summer swim drive makes a splash in the community



Jennifer Pitts, left, from Mary, Mother of God Parish in North Scranton helps to distribute swim supplies at Connell Park in Scranton on July 11, 2026. (Photo/Dan Piazza)

SCRANTON – Under two pop-up tents near the Connell Park pool, children and families browsed through brightly colored beach towels and swimsuits on Saturday, July 11, 2026, searching for just the right size and design.

But the display wasn’t a summer sale.

It was another act of quiet generosity by parishioners from Mary Mother of God Parish, who were distributing free swim supplies to local kids as part of the parish’s 10th annual Summer Swim Drive.

The giveaway at Connell Park was the third of several poolside distributions coordinated by volunteers from the parish’s Community and Service Coordinating Team. Throughout late spring, the group collected hundreds of new towels and swimsuits, along with sunscreen, goggles, flip flops, and other swimming essentials from parishioners.

“It is our tenth anniversary that our group has collected swim supplies for children and families that don’t necessarily have what you and I have,” Jennifer Pitts, Coordinating Team leader, explained.

The colorful display included everything from Bluey-themed towels to striped swim trunks and bathing suits carefully organized by size, making it easy for children to find just what they needed before enjoying a day at the pool.

The ministry effort began a decade ago after Pitts’ daughter took her first summer job as a lifeguard at Weston Park.

“She would come home at night and say there were people swimming in their

clothes, people swimming in their pajamas, people swimming in their jeans, and they would go home dripping wet because they had no towels,” Pitts recalled. “That is how it all started. She came and told us about a need and our group decided to get together and do mission that is now 10 years strong.”

Prior to the Connell Park distribution, volunteers had already visited Weston Park and Weston Field, distributing at least 120 towels at each location along with many other swimming essentials.

For volunteer Lisa Michaels, the outreach reflects what parish life is meant to be.

“This is important because it’s part of being Church in the community, doing good things for people who might be less fortunate, but just being kind and doing random acts of kindness,” Michaels said. “It is such a wonderful feeling to give back to the community, to do God’s work and help others.”

Pitts credits the generosity of fellow parishioners for making the ministry possible year after year.

“We’re very grateful for our parish which has come through once again to donate all these items,” she said. “They do it year after year.”

**Know of Good News Story
Happening in Your Parish?**

*Let us know at
info@dioceseofscranton.org*

Blessed Rother film sparks hope for new saints inspired by his life

OKLAHOMA CITY (OSVNews) - “He didn’t go back to Guatemala to die. He went back to Guatemala to live.”

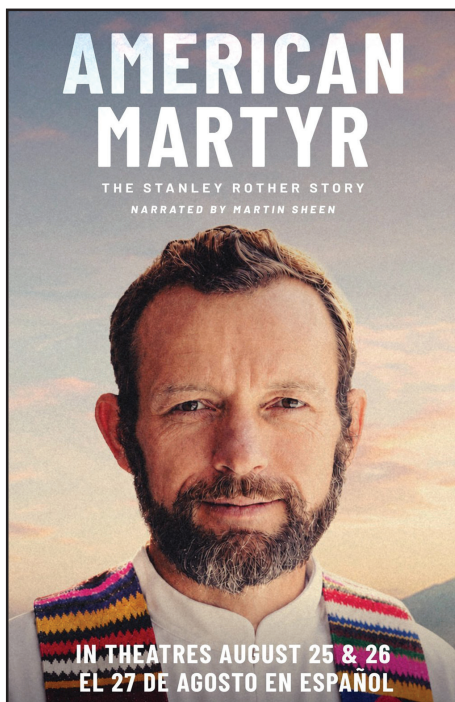
Msgr. Don Wolf, rector of the Blessed Stanley Rother Shrine and a cousin of Blessed Rother, shared these words in a documentary “American Martyr: The Stanley Rother Story.”

This scene still makes Archbishop Paul S. Coakley of Oklahoma City choke up every time he sees it.

“He knew that death awaited him, but he knew that not going back would mean a different kind of death, and only by going back there would he live life to the full, the life that the Lord had called him to, even though that meant laying down his life,” Archbishop Coakley said during a panel discussion. It followed the documentary’s world premiere at the Regal Warren Moore Theater in Moore, Oklahoma, a suburb of Oklahoma City, on July 28, the feast day of Blessed Stanley Rother.

More than 600 people filled three theaters to watch the documentary - one for the English version narrated by award-winning actor Martin Sheen, and two for the Spanish version.

Sheen narrated the documentary for free, said Maria Scaperlanda, one of the executive producers of the documentary



and promoter for the cause. Sheen “fell in love with Father Stan,” she told OSV News.

“I want to help you get Blessed Stanley across the line, have him become a saint. And this is my way of helping,” she recalled Sheen - himself a devout Catholic - telling her.

“We showed up at his house, finished

American Martyr: The Stanley Rother Story will be in two theaters locally on Friday, Aug. 25 & Saturday, Aug. 26

Watch the Trailer and Purchase Reserved Tickets Now at:
fathomentertainment.com/releases

Cinemark Montage Mountain 20 and XD

7:00 p.m. Both Nights

Regal Dickson City

7:00 p.m. Both Nights

all the audio with him. It’s his gift to the cause,” she said.

Scaperlanda, who also wrote the definitive biography on Blessed Rother, “The Shepherd Who Didn’t Run: Father Stanley Rother, Martyr from Oklahoma,” said that people often ask her when a movie will be made.

“There’s a lot of people, very excited, who have been waiting for something visual. God is putting me where he wants me,” she said. “I hope that more and more people will be able to hear the story.”

“American Martyr: The Stanley Rother Story” is scheduled to be released in theaters nationwide Aug. 25-27.

Archbishop Coakley told OSV News that he hopes by spreading the word about Blessed Rother, more people will turn to

him in prayer.

“The Church needs saints, and we have a Catholic priest missionary martyr who’s on the threshold of being declared a saint. But in order for people to have the confidence to turn to him - to seek his intercession - they have to know his story,” he said. “My primary interest and concern is to introduce people to the life of this heroic missionary priest, so that they might imitate his faith in turning to the Lord in seeking what they need.”

For Blessed Rother to be canonized, there must be a verified miracle attributed to his intercession before God. The Rome-based postulator for Rother’s cause, Cristiana Marinelli, said that while she can’t provide details, there are active investigations.

New principals bring experience, faith and fresh energy to Catholic schools

Continued from Page 3

He also plans to make prayer a more visible part of daily life at the school, leading morning and afternoon prayer and utilizing a simple message he hopes students will carry with them: “Pray on it, pray over it, pray through it.”

His goals also include increasing student engagement in the classroom, providing additional help for struggling students and strengthening relationships with families.

Catrillo currently serves as president of the East Stroudsburg School Board and as Grand Knight of the Knights of Columbus at Saint Matthew Parish.

At Holy Family Academy, Schlingman brings 24 years of experience in education and leadership, including time in both Catholic and public schools.

“Returning to Catholic education was more than a career decision,” Schlingman said. “It felt like coming home to an environment where education is about more than academics.”

He hopes to build upon Holy Family Academy’s family-centered atmosphere while creating a school where students are excited to learn, teachers feel supported and families know they are genuine partners in their children’s education.

His vision extends beyond the classroom. Schlingman hopes to grow enrollment and create new opportunities for students through sports, clubs and extracurricular activities.

Most importantly, he wants the entire school community to develop a renewed sense of pride.

“I want people to be excited about coming to school, excited about what we

are building, and proud to say, ‘This is my school,’” he said.

Schlingman also brings a personal appreciation for perseverance and teamwork to his new role. A graduate of King’s College, he was an All-American wrestler and is on the college’s Sports Wall of Fame. He credits wrestling with teaching him lessons in discipline, perseverance and never giving up – lessons that continue to influence his leadership today.

At All Saints Academy, Maguire brings more than two decades of experience in education and a commitment to lifelong learning. She has earned two master’s degrees and is currently pursuing a Doctor of Education degree.

As her career developed, Maguire said she increasingly felt drawn toward school leadership, particularly within the Diocese of Scranton.

“I am looking forward to meeting students and families. I am beyond excited to be a part of the All Saints Academy community,” she said.

For Maguire, her new job also represents a chance to give back to the Catholic educational community that played an important role in her own life. A graduate of Saint Paul’s School, she fondly remembers her experience as a Catholic school student as one that shaped who she has become.

“It was an incredible experience for me personally, academically and socially,” Maguire said. “I am thankful to be able to give back to the Catholic community within the Diocese of Scranton.”

As she begins her first year, Maguire hopes to foster an exceptional school environment where both students and staff can grow academically and spiritually.