

The Catholic Light

DIOCESE OF SCRANTON

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Diocese of Scranton reestablishes Saint Pius X Seminary

SCRANTON – Forty-eight years ago, a young Joseph Bambera walked through the doors of Saint Pius X Seminary in Dalton as a seminarian on his own journey toward the priesthood.

On Sunday, Aug. 23, 2026, he stood on the other side of that journey, now as Bishop of Scranton, welcoming a new generation of seminarians as the Diocese of Scranton reestablished Saint Pius X Seminary in the former Cathedral Convent building in downtown Scranton.

Four new seminarians have officially moved into the renovated building at 333 Wyoming Avenue, beginning the Propaedeutic Stage of their priestly formation and opening a new chapter in the history of a seminary that helped form generations of priests for the Diocese of Scranton.

“As we reestablish the ministry of Saint Pius X Seminary, what an incredible gift this is,” Bishop Bambera said during his welcome at the Seminary’s first Mass, offering thanks to God for the blessing of faith, families and the many ways people are called to a life of service in Christ and His Church.

The four men beginning their formation at Saint Pius X this fall are Kenneth Francis of Nativity of Our Lord Parish, Duryea; Matthew Kelly of Saint Gregory Parish, Clarks Green; Zachariah Levin of Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish, Brodheadsville; and Stephen Chronowski of Saints Peter and Paul Parish, Plains.

For Father Alex Roche, Diocesan Secretary for Clergy Formation and Rector of Saint Pius X Seminary, the opening represented the culmination of months of

planning, renovation and anticipation.

“We are excited because it’s going to give these men, as they start seminary, an opportunity to get to know the Diocese better,” Father Roche said. “It’s also going to give the people of the Diocese a chance to get to know our seminarians before they go elsewhere to continue their studies in theology.”

The decision to reestablish Saint Pius X Seminary locally grew out of new Vatican guidelines for the Program for Priestly Formation and Bishop Bambera’s desire to make the first stage of priestly formation more closely connected to the Diocese of Scranton and the people the seminarians may one day serve.

“I think this house is a sign of hope and growth,” Father Roche explained. “Our number of seminarians has increased in the country and in this Diocese. Just being



The Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, celebrates an Opening Mass inside the new Saint Pius X Seminary in Scranton on Aug. 23, 2026. (Photo/Eric Deabill)

able to house a part of formation here in the Diocese is a sign that there are wonderful things happening and that we’ve got a lot of great young men who are considering and discerning a call to serve the Diocese as priests.”

Continued on Page 2

Catholic Ministries Appeal launches with goal of \$4.5 million

SCRANTON - The 2026-27 Catholic Ministries Appeal marks the 40th Annual Appeal of the Diocese of Scranton, continuing a tradition of generosity and stewardship that began with the Bishop’s Annual Appeal and transition to the Diocesan Annual Appeal and, most recently, the Catholic Ministries Appeal.

While much has changed over four decades, the purpose remains the same: when we unite as one local Church, we can accomplish far more together.

This year, we see that impact in a special way with the reestablishment of Saint Pius X Seminary in the former Cathedral Convent in Scranton. Through your prayers



and financial support, the Appeal also helps care for those most in need, strengthens our parishes and supports vital ministries throughout the Diocese’s 11 counties.

For more on the many Catholic ministries funded by the Catholic Ministries Appeal, including Vocations and Seminarian Support, Catholic Schools, Catholic Social Services, Catholic Media and Communications, Parish Life and Parish Grant Support, refer to pages 3-6 of this edition of *The Catholic Light*.

As parishes celebrate Commitment Weekend, we invite you to join us in answering this annual call to stewardship and to prayerfully discern your gift toward this year’s \$4.5 million goal.

Thank you for helping us celebrate 40 years of generosity, ministry, and shared mission!

The Catholic Light

(ISSN 0164-9418)

OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER OF THE
DIOCESE OF SCRANTON



DIOCESE OF SCRANTON MISSION STATEMENT

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

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New generation of seminarians begins formation in Scranton

Continued from Page 1

The building that will now serve as Saint Pius X Seminary was formerly home to the Cathedral Convent. Located directly across from the Diocesan Pastoral Center and just steps from the Cathedral of Saint Peter, the facility has undergone months of renovations to prepare it for its new mission.

The building includes individual bedrooms for seminarians, common areas designed to foster fraternity, a dining area and kitchen, and spaces for priests in residence. A chapel provides a place for Mass, Eucharistic Adoration and the Liturgy of the Hours.

The Propaedeutic stage is intentionally focused on preparation. Seminarians will develop habits of prayer, learn to live in community, deepen their understanding of the Catholic faith and participate in pastoral and service opportunities throughout the Diocese.

They also will take coursework at The University of Scranton while participating in retreats and other opportunities.

"As the year goes on, things are going to take shape, we're going to discover things and we're going to have new ideas and we're going to find all the advantages of beginning formation here in the Diocese that maybe we didn't even anticipate," Father Roche added.

A NEW BEGINNING

The name Saint Pius X Seminary carries a special place in the history of the Diocese.

For more than four decades, from 1962 to 2004, the original Saint Pius X Seminary operated in Dalton, forming many men for priestly ministry.

As he celebrated the opening Mass for the new Seminary, Bishop



A renovated common area on the first floor of the new Saint Pius X Seminary in Scranton gives seminarians a place to gather in fellowship as they begin their formation experience.

Bambera wore two specific items to connect the past and present.

First, the Bishop wore the episcopal cross that belonged to Bishop William O'Hara, the first Bishop of Scranton.

"I thought it would be appropriate to wear it," Bishop Bambera explained at the beginning of his homily.

He also pointed to the ring he was wearing – the ring he wore at his own episcopal ordination and one that had previously been given to Bishop Jerome Hannan, who established the first Saint Pius X Seminary.

"So, when people ask, you can tell people that I can be sentimental," the Bishop joked.

The Bishop's message to the four seminarians then turned more serious to the reality of what they were beginning.

Reflecting on his experience at World Youth Day in Denver in 1993, when he traveled with hundreds of young people from the Diocese to see Saint John Paul II, Bishop Bambera recalled words from the Pope that have remained with him for decades.

"Do not be ashamed of the Gospel. Be proud of the Gospel," the Pope told young people.

Bishop Bambera said those words remain relevant for seminarians, priests and all Catholics today.

"We are challenged every day of our lives by a world that does not always appreciate, much less live out, the values of the Gospel for which Jesus gave his life," he said.

The Bishop also focused on a question Jesus asked his disciples in the Gospel for the 21st Sunday in Ordinary Time: "Who do you say that I am?"

Bishop Bambera challenged the four seminarians to bring that question into their own lives in 2026.

"What about us? Who do you – who do we say that Jesus is?" he asked. "Who is Jesus for you?"

It is easy, the Bishop noted, to proclaim faith in Jesus within the safety of a chapel.

The greater challenge comes outside those walls.

He offered hypothetical scenarios of being in a social setting, out to dinner, or standing beside someone whose life is falling apart because a loved one is suffering from cancer.

"How readily do we affirm Jesus?" he asked. "What do you say about Jesus then?"

He reminded the seminarians that even Peter, who boldly proclaimed Jesus as the Messiah, would later struggle and deny knowing him.

Sometimes, the Bishop said, believers struggle with their faith

more than they might want to admit. But, he said, those moments do not have to be failures. He said that they can become opportunities to encounter the mercy of Christ even more deeply.

"That is what I hope for you brothers, as you begin your priestly formation, that you will come to know Jesus more deeply than you do, that you affirm who Jesus is through thick-and-thin, and when you don't, you will know where to turn, back to that same Jesus, who will forgive you and who will bring you closer to Himself through that struggle and through the honesty of your lives," Bishop Bambera added.

BEGINNING THE JOURNEY TOGETHER

For the four men who now call Saint Pius X Seminary home, they are excited about the journey that is beginning.

"For a long time, I've wanted to live in the city and meet more people," Levin said. "I've wanted to serve others and finally I'll begin to start doing pastoral work and I get to live right alongside all my brothers learning the same."

Francis said being able to begin formation close to home offers an important witness to others.

"It's a nice example for other people, to show them that the church is growing and there are young men willing to enter formation and hopefully one day become priests," he said.

Kelly believes the small community will help the four seminarians develop the fraternity they will need as future priests.

"The whole goal is to eventually serve the people in unison with each other," he said. "To truly be in unison with each other, we have to build friendships, and we have to build fraternity and this right here, is where it all begins and starts."



OUR CALL TO SERVE

CATHOLIC MINISTRIES APPEAL

The opening of **Saint Pius X Seminary** in Scranton is a direct result of Vocation efforts that have been nurtured and supported by the **CATHOLIC MINISTRIES APPEAL**.

As the 2026-2027 Catholic Ministries Appeal begins, we invite all faithful in the Diocese of Scranton to unite once again in our shared mission to strengthen our local Church by supporting ministries that proclaim the Gospel, care for those in need and bring hope throughout our community.

\$257

Average Gift to the Catholic
Ministries Appeal

16,486

Number of Donors to Last
Year's Appeal

\$4.5 MILLION

Goal of the 2026-2027
Campaign

Catholic Education & Faith Formation Grants

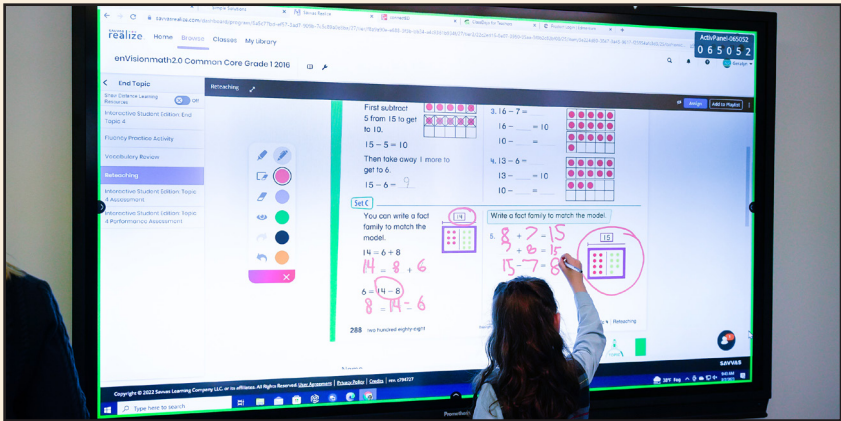


The Catholic Schools Office and Diocesan Office for Parish Life help people of all ages encounter Christ.

Through our Catholic schools, parish faith formation classes, youth and young adult ministry, and family life programs, your support provides resources that help young people, families and adults grow in faith, deepen their relationship with God and become joyful disciples.

Your generosity helps support:

- **4,500+** students receiving a Christ-centered education in one of our 19 Catholic schools
- **9,510** elementary and high school students involved in faith formation classes at their home parish
- **155** young people and chaperones who attended the Steubenville Youth Conference in July 2026
- **86** young people and chaperones who participated in the 2025 National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC)



Vocations & Seminarian Support and Retired Clergy Support

Your support helps form the priests of tomorrow while honoring the priests who have faithfully served our Diocese.

Your support of the Catholic Ministries Appeal helps prepare the next generation of priests to serve the People of God with faith, compassion and fidelity to the Gospel. As the Diocese welcomes its largest group of seminarians in many years, your generosity helps ensure they receive the formation needed to become holy and faithful shepherds.

Your generosity helps support:

- **Saint Pius X Seminary** which has been reestablished as a Propaedeutic House of Formation
- **16** seminarians discerning God's call to the priesthood
- **53** high school students who attended Quo Vadis and Fiat Days, which are summer camps for high school students
- **91** retired/ill priests who receive care and support

Catholic Social Services & Parish Social Justice Grants



Catholic Social Services and our parishes put Christ's call to care for those most in need into action.

Through Catholic Social Services and Parish Social Justice Grants, your generosity provides food, shelter, clothing, emergency assistance and other critical resources while also empowering parishes to respond creatively to the unique needs of their community with compassion and hope.

Your generosity helps support:

- **12,573** nights of emergency shelter to individuals in need
- **55,700+** individuals served by Catholic Social Services food pantries - a significant increase from 2025
- **122,079** meals served at Saint Vincent de Paul Kitchen in Wilkes-Barre - an increase of 4.5% from last year
- **24** parish programs which received grants this year to address local needs, including food and clothing pantries, homelessness, pro-life ministries and grief support.



Catholic Media & Parish Life Evangelization Efforts

The Church stays connected, engaged and ready to serve through strong parishes and effective communication.

Through the Diocesan Office for Communications and Parish Life, your generosity helps strengthen parish communities while sharing the Gospel and connecting people with the faith, resources and ministries of our Diocese.

Your generosity helps support:

- **98** parishes that are supported and accompanied by diocesan staff in fostering vibrant and engaged communities of faith
- **37,540** homes which receive *The Catholic Light* newspaper
- **750,000+** page views on the Diocesan website help people find Mass times, parish and ministry information and other resources
- **405** couples who married last year were assisted through pre-cana programs



More than 92¢
of Every Dollar
Goes Directly to
MINISTRY



6%
Parish Grants
*Faith Formation
and Social Justice*

8%
Appeal
Administration
*(Printing, mailing,
and processing
of gifts)*

15%
Catholic Social
Services

18%
Vocations and
Seminarian Support
&
Retired Clergy
Support

18%
Catholic
Media

18%
Catholic
Schools

17%
Parish
Life

**2026-27
APPEAL GOAL**

**\$4.5
MILLION**

*Thank you for
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MINISTRIES!**



OUR CALL TO
SERVE

CATHOLIC MINISTRIES APPEAL

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Enclosed Amount _____

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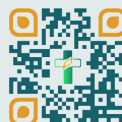
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Christ's love to others,
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OUR CALL TO SERVE**



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call (570) 207-2250, or scan this QR code.

Twenty-five years after 9/11, Avoca parish continues holding Blue Mass

AVOCA – Beneath a large American flag suspended between two fire trucks, a procession of Boy Scouts carrying the colors and first responders in full dress made their way through the streets of Avoca to Queen of the Apostles Parish on Sept. 11, 2026.

Twenty-five years after the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, the community continues to gather in prayer – remembering those who lost their lives, honoring the first responders who made the ultimate sacrifice and giving thanks for the men and women who continue to serve their communities today.

The annual Blue Mass and 9/11 Memorial Service at Queen of the Apostles Parish brought together local police, firefighters, emergency medical personnel, Scouts, elected officials, families, and parishioners for an evening of remembrance and gratitude.

“Since 1874, Christians have been coming to Saint Mary Church in Avoca to pray for their many needs,” Father Thomas Petro, Pastor of Queen of the Apostles Parish, said. “For the past 25 years, we’ve been gathering in prayer to pray for the victims and the heroes of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attack.”



Emergency services personnel participate in the annual Blue Mass and 9/11 Memorial Service at Saint Mary Church in Avoca on Sept. 11, 2026. (Photo/Dan Piazza)

The Mass began with a bagpipe escort and the presentation of the colors. Avoca Scouts Troop 316 and Pack 316 participated in the procession.

Inside the church, a framed photograph commemorating the FDNY firefighters who died on Sept. 11 was displayed near the ambo, serving as a visible reminder of the lives lost that day.

Father Petro said the annual Mass has become both an act of remembrance

and a spiritual responsibility.

“We look forward to hosting this Mass as an act of gratitude and our own spiritual duty for those who have cared for us,” he said. “We wish to care for them spiritually and to remember them in our prayers.”

For retired Avoca Fire Chief Chris VanLuvender, continuing the tradition for 25 years has been an important way to honor both the victims and the heroes of 9/11.

“At the beginning of this, we thought it would be a nice tribute to have this every year and continue it every year,” Van Luvender said. “So far, it has been going on for the last 25 years.”

Donald Hudzinski, President of the Pittston Township Ambulance, said

the Blue Mass provides an opportunity for the parish and emergency services communities to come together.

“Through this service, together we pray not only for our municipalities, but for the emergency service providers,” he said. “Not just for who they are, but for what they are called on to do.”

Hudzinski emphasized the critical role first responders play when others are in crisis.

“It’s a very challenging profession. But it’s very rewarding personally – that all these people carry out their duties with care, compassion, and service, and do it for people that they’ve probably never met,” he added.

The evening concluded with one of Father Petro’s favorite traditions: the blessing of emergency vehicles parked outside the church along Hawthorne Street.

“I feel like a little boy walking around those big shiny red trucks and saying prayers and blessing them,” Father Petro said.

The vehicles, Hudzinski noted, are more than equipment.

“They are an instrument of what we do,” he said.

Pope Leo commemorates 9/11, praying for all who ‘bear wounds of that tragic day’

ROME (OSV News) - Pope Leo XIV commemorated the 25th anniversary of the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, in his Sunday Angelus address, praying for “those who continue to bear the wounds of that tragic day.”

Speaking from the window of the Vatican’s Apostolic Palace Sept. 13, the first U.S.-born pope said, “Two days ago marked the 25th anniversary of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks in the United States of America.”

“I renew my prayers for those who lost their lives and for those who continue to bear the wounds of that tragic day,” he said. “At a time when conflict and violence afflict so many of our brothers and sisters, I invite everyone to pray that the Lord will bestow his gift of peace upon the world.”

Switching from English to Italian, the pope added that the memory of the tragic



Pope Leo XIV delivers the Angelus prayer in St. Peter’s Square at the Vatican Sept. 13, 2026. (OSV News photo/Matteo Pernasceli, Vatican Media)

events of 9/11 “prompts us to renew our commitment to peace, first and foremost through prayer, which we entrust to the intercession of the Virgin Mary.”

Then-Father Robert Prevost was in Rome attending the Augustinian Order’s general chapter when the attacks occurred.

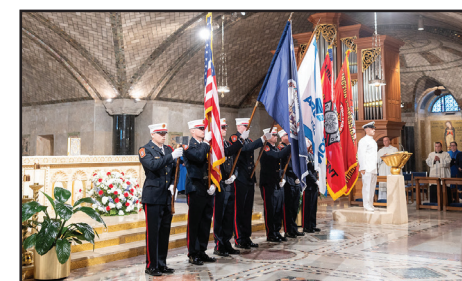
9/11 Mass at the National Shrine calls on Catholics to be agents of reconciliation

WASHINGTON (OSV News) - While overwhelming sorrow at the memory of the dead from 9/11 comes easily, the continuing challenge for Catholics is forgiveness and reconciliation in a fractured world, Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio said in his Sept. 11 homily.

Archbishop Broglio, head of the U.S. Archdiocese for the Military Services, called for “reconciliation, dialogue, and rebuilding a sense of our common humanity.”

The afternoon Mass celebrated by the military archbishop in the Crypt Church of the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception was a quiet and reflective commemoration.

Recalling the horrors of 9/11, Archbishop Broglio said, “We find it difficult to forgive, and more difficult to work for reconciliation. We find challenging the notion that I cannot



Members of a color guard stand with the U.S. flag and other service flags at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington commemorating the 25th anniversary of Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. (OSV News photo/Mihoko Owada)

change another, or his or her perceptions,” he reflected. “But I can change mine,” he said, adding, “Drawing on divine grace, I can be an instrument of reconciliation.”

Every Human Life is a 'Treasured Gift of God'

Bishop Bambera's Message for Respect Life Month 2026

Dear Friends,

During his pastoral visit to Spain earlier this year, Pope Leo XIV shared these words: "The defense of human life is neither a partisan issue nor a confessional interest: it is a goal of civilization. Every human life must be recognized and safeguarded from conception to its natural end, in every circumstance of its existence. When this certainty is obscured, the most vulnerable are the first victims, and the law loses its deepest meaning: to serve and protect every person. For this reason, the moral greatness of a nation is manifested, above all, in its capacity to accompany, protect and love those lives that are most fragile."

While the Holy Father addressed these words to the people of Spain, he could have just as easily addressed these words to most any country in the world, including our own. For every step forward that has been achieved in the endless battle to protect human life, there is always an equal and opposite step taken that diminishes respect and reverence for the sanctity of God's greatest gift.

Human life continues to be threatened far more today than we realize or are willing to acknowledge. While the decades-long fight to overturn *Roe v. Wade*, the landmark 1973 Supreme Court decision that established a constitutional right to abortion, was finally won in 2022, authority to regulate or ban the procedure was returned to individual states. As such, although abortion is prohibited or very limited in numerous states, in August, Massachusetts became the tenth state to allow the procedure at any point in a pregnancy.

What is more, euthanasia and assisted suicide practices are increasingly prevalent in various parts of the world, with assisted suicide currently authorized in thirteen states in our own land. The death penalty, opposed by the Church in recent papal pronouncements, continues to be an option for the punishment of certain crimes. Efforts to achieve human cloning and illicit reproductive technologies continue to be developed. And human trafficking is rampant as well as unjust immigration laws and actions that serve to diminish the dignity of God's people.

The good news, however, is that the voices of faithful, selfless disciples of Jesus and countless others from different faith traditions continue to be heard in our world, proclaiming the value of human life as the treasured gift of God that it is.

The theme for this year's Respect Life Month focuses on the Blessed Virgin Mary as *Mother of Life*. In becoming the mother of Jesus, her acceptance in that unplanned and unforeseen moment demonstrates how each of us is called to welcome the gift of human life, even when that gift is unexpected or calls us to make sacrifices.

This past July in his monthly prayer request, Pope Leo urged Catholics across the globe to join him in praying for respect for human life.

In his prayer, the Pope recognized that "each person is a sacred gift, from the first instant of existence to the final breath of their journey on earth." He expressed his wish that we learn to "welcome life unconditionally," to "accompany each stage with respect," and "to bravely defend those who have no voice." And the Holy Father concluded his prayer – as I do this letter – by imploring the Lord "to help His Church become a living witness of the Gospel of life, an open home where every life is celebrated, where no one feels unwanted, and where dignity is always honored and protected."

Faithfully yours in Christ,

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

Queridos amigos,

Durante su visita pastoral a España a principios de este año, el Papa León XIV compartió estas palabras: "La defensa de la vida humana no es una cuestión partidista ni un interés confesional: es una meta de la civilización. Toda vida humana debe ser reconocida y protegida desde la concepción hasta su fin natural, en cualquier circunstancia de su existencia. Cuando esta certeza se oscurece, los más vulnerables son las primeras víctimas, y la ley pierde su significado más profundo: servir y proteger a cada persona. Por esta razón, la grandeza moral de una nación se manifiesta, sobre todo, en su capacidad de acompañar, proteger y amar aquellas vidas que son más frágiles".

Aunque el Santo Padre dirigió estas palabras al pueblo de España, podría haberlas dirigido igualmente a casi cualquier país del mundo, incluido el nuestro. Por cada paso adelante que se ha logrado en la interminable lucha por proteger la vida humana, siempre hay un paso igual y contrario que disminuye el respeto y la reverencia por la santidad del mayor regalo de Dios.

La vida humana continúa estando amenazada mucho más de lo que nos damos cuenta o estamos dispuestos a reconocer. Aunque la lucha de décadas para revocar *Roe v. Wade*, la histórica decisión de la Corte Suprema de 1973 que estableció un derecho constitucional al aborto, finalmente triunfó en 2022, la autoridad para regular o prohibir el procedimiento fue devuelta a los estados individuales. Por ello, aunque el aborto está prohibido o muy limitado en numerosos estados, en agosto, Massachusetts se convirtió en el décimo estado en permitir el procedimiento en cualquier momento del embarazo.

Además, las prácticas de eutanasia y suicidio asistido son cada vez más frecuentes en diversas partes del mundo, y actualmente el suicidio asistido está autorizado en trece estados de nuestro propio país. La pena de muerte, a la que

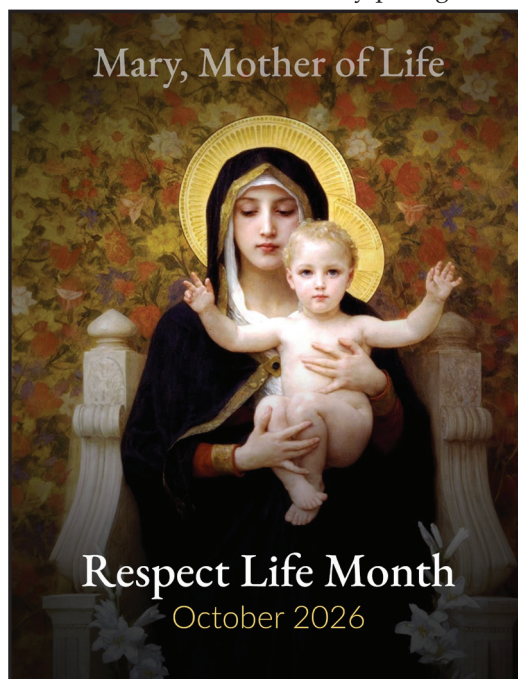
la Iglesia se ha opuesto en recientes pronunciamientos papales, continúa siendo una opción para el castigo de ciertos delitos. Continúan desarrollándose esfuerzos para lograr la clonación humana y tecnologías reproductivas ilícitas. Y la trata de personas sigue siendo generalizada, al igual que las leyes y acciones migratorias injustas que sirven para menoscabar la dignidad del pueblo de Dios.

La buena noticia, sin embargo, es que las voces de discípulos fieles y desinteresados de Jesús, así como las de innumerables personas de diferentes tradiciones religiosas, continúan haciéndose escuchar en nuestro mundo, proclamando el valor de la vida humana como el preciado regalo de Dios que verdaderamente es.

El tema del Mes del Respeto a la Vida de este año se centra en la Santísima Virgen María como *Madre de la Vida*. Al convertirse en la madre de Jesús, su aceptación en aquel momento imprevisto e inesperado nos demuestra cómo cada uno de nosotros está llamado a acoger el don de la vida humana, incluso cuando ese don es inesperado o nos exige hacer sacrificios.

El pasado mes de julio, en su intención mensual de oración, el Papa León exhortó a los católicos de todo el mundo a unirse a él para orar por el respeto a la vida humana. En su oración, el Papa reconoció que "cada persona es un don sagrado, desde el primer instante de su existencia hasta el último aliento de su camino en la tierra". Expresó su deseo de que aprendamos a "acoger la vida incondicionalmente", a "acompañar cada etapa con respeto" y a "defender con valentía a quienes no tienen voz". Y el Santo Padre concluyó su oración — como yo concluyo esta carta — implorando al Señor "que ayude a su Iglesia a convertirse en un testimonio vivo del Evangelio de la vida, un hogar abierto donde toda vida sea celebrada, donde nadie se sienta no deseado y donde la dignidad sea siempre honrada y protegida".

Reverendísimo Joseph C. Bambera, D.D., J.C.L.
Obispo de Scranton



Bishop Bambera to celebrate Respect Life Sunday Mass on Oct. 4 at Cathedral

SCRANTON – The Catholic Church recognizes the month of October as Respect Life Month and the first Sunday in October is designated as Respect Life Sunday.

The Most Reverend Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, will celebrate Respect Life Sunday Mass on Oct. 4, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. at the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton.

The Mass is open to the public. Faithful from across the Diocese of Scranton are invited to attend the Respect Life Sunday Mass and focus on God's precious gift of human life and our responsibility to care for, protect and defend the lives of our brothers and sisters.

For those unable to attend in-person, the Mass will be broadcast live on CTV: Catholic Television of the Diocese of Scranton and the Diocese of Scranton's YouTube Channel. The Mass will also be livestream on the Diocese of Scranton website with links provided on the Diocese of Scranton social media platforms.

The theme for the 2026 Respect Life celebration is "Mary, Mother of Life."

The life of the Blessed Mother teaches us to respect each human life in every stage and circumstance.

Mary's role as the Mother of Life extends from the Annunciation all the way to the

Crucifixion. On Calvary, Mary stood at the foot of the Cross with Saint John. The Gospel tells us: "When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple there whom he loved, he said to his mother, 'Woman, behold, your son.' Then he said to the disciple, 'Behold, your mother.' And from that hour the disciple took her into his home" (Jn 19:26-27).

With his final breaths on the Cross, Jesus entrusted Mary and the Beloved Disciple to one another, and by extension established a maternal relationship between Mary and the Church.

Jesus' words were addressed not only to Saint John, but to each one of us. In that moment, the

Respect Life Sunday Mass

Sunday, Oct. 4
10:00 a.m.
Cathedral of Saint Peter
315 Wyoming Ave., Scranton



physical mother of Jesus became the spiritual mother of the Church and all the faithful. Saint John went on to take Mary into his home and cared for her as she advanced in age, demonstrating

our responsibility to continue our care for human life, from conception to natural death. Mary, who taught us how to nurture human life, became the recipient of that same honor and care.

Bishops launch nationwide prayer and action effort amid rising abortion rate

WASHINGTON (OSV News) - The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Pro-Life Activities is inviting Catholics to join a focused effort of prayer and action to stop the spread of abortion pills.

Launched on Aug. 18, the effort will continue through Oct. 31, which includes the month-long commemoration of Respect Life Month observed each October by the Catholic Church in the United States.

"Every abortion involves the death of a child and harm to the mother. Now with easier access to abortion pills, the abortion rate is tragically climbing, along with increased health risks," Archbishop Paul S. Coakley of Oklahoma City, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, and Bishop Daniel E. Thomas of Toledo, chairman of the USCCB Committee on Pro-Life Activities, said in joint remarks.

According to an estimate from Guttmacher Institute, a



Boxes of mifepristone under the label Mifeprex are seen at a clinic in Illinois in 2024. The U.S. Catholic bishops have launched a nationwide call to prayer and action to mobilize Catholics to address the rising abortion rate. (OSV News photo/Evelyn Hockstein, via Reuters)

research firm for the abortion industry, 1.12 million abortions took place in 2025, marking a 21% increase from 2020. Guttmacher said 2020 marked "the last year of comprehensive

national estimates" before the 2022 U.S. Supreme Court's *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* decision. *Dobbs* overturned the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision and its related abortion precedents, returning the matter of abortion back to the legislative branch.

Guttmacher found the figures for 2025 were largely unchanged from the prior year, but suggested abortion numbers overall may be an undercount due to people acquiring abortion pills in advance or obtaining them by means other than U.S. abortion clinic providers.

Abortion rates in the U.S. bottomed out in 2017, when they were estimated to be just over 862,000, and began increasing again in the first Trump administration, which also approved the first generic for mifepristone, commonly called "the abortion pill," in 2019. The pill is commonly used in combination with misoprostol for

early abortion, although the same combination is also used in some miscarriage care protocols that were more recently recommended for consideration by the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists.

More than six of 10 abortions in the U.S. are performed through a combination of mifepristone and misoprostol, according to recent estimates.

The Catholic Church teaches that all human life is sacred from conception to natural death, and as such, opposes direct abortion. Following the *Dobbs* decision, U.S. Church officials have reaffirmed the Church's concern for both mother and child, and have called for enhancing support to those made vulnerable to abortion through poverty and other factors.

RESPECT LIFE

Prayer
& Action

From now through the end of October, the USCCB Committee on Pro-Life Activities is inviting Catholics to join a focused effort of prayer and action to STOP the spread of abortion pills.

Please take action to send a message to pharmacies and pharmaceutical companies that are involved.

Visit the Diocese of Scranton website for a message that you can send directly to pharmacy representatives with just a few clicks. The website is [dioceseofscranton.org](https://www.dioceseofscranton.org).

Look for the "Action Alert" tile on the main landing page.

Rosary Hike connects young adults with God and creation

NORTH ABINGTON TWP—As the Catholic Church entered the ‘Season of Creation’ at the beginning of September, a group of young adults from across the Diocese of Scranton found a simple way to celebrate the beauty of God’s creation.

On Saturday, Sept. 4, 2026, the Diocesan Office for Parish Life hosted its second annual Young Adult Rosary Hike at Lackawanna State Park, bringing together seven dozen people from communities stretching from Conyngham and Drums to Meshoppen and Scranton.

The group followed the Turkey Hill Trail and part of the Abington Trail on a 2.7-mile hike, pausing along the way to pray the Rosary.

Bridget Maille, Program Coordinator for Family Life in the Diocesan Office for Parish Life, said combining prayer with the outdoors was intentional.

“Being that we work with young adults, we want them to start engaging their faith in the things that they do on a regular



Young adults from around the Diocese of Scranton participate in a Rosary Hike at Lackawanna State Park on Saturday, Sept. 4, 2026.

basis,” she explained. “A hike is a really good way to gather and come together in community, but also to unite what you love to do with your faith.”

After holding a similar Rosary Hike last year at Rickett’s Glen State Park, organizers decided to switch up locations and had a whole new group of people sign up.

“The response has been very, very positive,” Maille said.

“Everybody is meeting new people; they’re smiling and having a good time. It is also a gorgeous day – praise God.”

Participants say the Rosary Hike was an enjoyable afternoon that brought them closer to God.

Tristan Cole of Holy Name of Mary Parish in Montrose said being surrounded by nature helped him recognize God’s presence in a tangible way.

“It’s very good for us to see the gifts that He’s given us firsthand,” he said. “Sitting in prayer is very important, but getting out here in nature is very helpful. It definitely helps us connect with God.”

Ava Rockey, a Misericordia University student from New

Jersey, only started praying the Rosary last year and heard about the event through an email.

“I feel so connected to God with nature,” she said. “That’s how I can feel that presence. It can be a quiet time of reflective prayer for me too.”

The hike offered Rockey more than an opportunity to pray. She also made new friends.

“It was beautiful. I had some great conversations with some new people and I’m really excited about those connections,” she added.

Matthias Mooris of Saint Michael Parish in Scranton also appreciated the opportunity to meet other young Catholics.

“Regardless of your age, you should be connecting to people with common values,” Mooris said. “Nature, for me, has always been one of the best places to get your mind straight and get right with God. You’re looking around and how could you not think about God, especially out here in these beautiful woods.”

Rosary Rally to take place Oct. 17

SCRANTON – The faithful of the Diocese of Scranton are invited to come together in prayer during a Rosary Rally at 1:00 p.m. on Saturday, Oct. 17, 2026, at the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton.

The upcoming gathering, sponsored by Holy Cross Family Ministries, follows two reflection sessions on the Rosary that the organization sponsored on Aug. 24, 2026, at the Diocesan Pastoral Center in Scranton.

The afternoon and evening sessions invited participants to look more deeply at the Rosary as a way of encountering Christ and finding peace amid the distractions and challenges of daily life.

“The primary message is to share the power of the Rosary – that it is an encounter with Jesus Christ,” Craig Dyke, Director of Programs and Mission Outreach for Holy Cross Family Ministries, said. “We contemplate the face of Jesus by putting our prayers together with Mary.”

Dyke also encouraged people not to approach the Rosary simply as a prayer to rush through.

“Better to pray one mystery well than five poorly,” he said, encouraging participants to meditate on the life of Jesus and recognize His presence in their own lives.

Pat Williams of Our Lady of the Abingtons Parish in Dalton attended the August reflection and said it offered meaningful insights into the Blessed Mother.

“I think we need to do more praying, more rosaries,” Williams said. “She’s open and willing to listen.”

The upcoming Rosary Rally on Oct. 17 is open to all.

Diocesan Youth Rally to be held Nov. 7 in East Stroudsburg

SCRANTON - The Diocese of Scranton is pleased to announce that the Diocesan Youth Rally is back for a fourth year!

Students in 7th-12th grade are invited to participate in the event on Saturday, Nov. 7, at Notre Dame Jr./Sr. High School in East Stroudsburg.

The theme of this year’s Rally is “Do whatever He tells you,” taken from the second chapter of the Gospel of John, where Mary - the mother of Jesus - intercedes for a couple when the wine runs out at their wedding.

Participants are invited to dive deep into prayer. When the wine runs dry in our own lives - whether that is when

prayer becomes difficult, when our circumstances seem to overwhelm us, or when we deeply need God to meet us wherever we find ourselves - we can look to Mary to point us back to her Son by her instruction to “Do whatever He tells you.”

The day will focus on who God is, how to listen to His Voice, and how we as the Young Church can more fully align our wills to the will of God. It will be a day for students to deepen their faith, make new friends, and experience fun and fellowship.

The 2026 Diocesan Youth Rally will begin at 11:30 a.m. and run through 8:00 p.m.

Check-in will open at 11:00 a.m.

Youth will hear from several engaging speakers and musicians.

The speakers for this year’s Youth Rally are Conall Hughes, evangelist and Director of Advancement for Damascus Summer Camps, and Natalie Garza, evangelist and teacher who has spoken at several youth conferences in the United States.

Conall and Natalie plan to speak about the importance of cultivating a personal relationship with Christ, why it is important to “Do whatever He tells you,” and how to cultivate a deep prayer life.

Music will be led by Maria Salamida, from Franciscan University, and her Steubenville Worship Band!

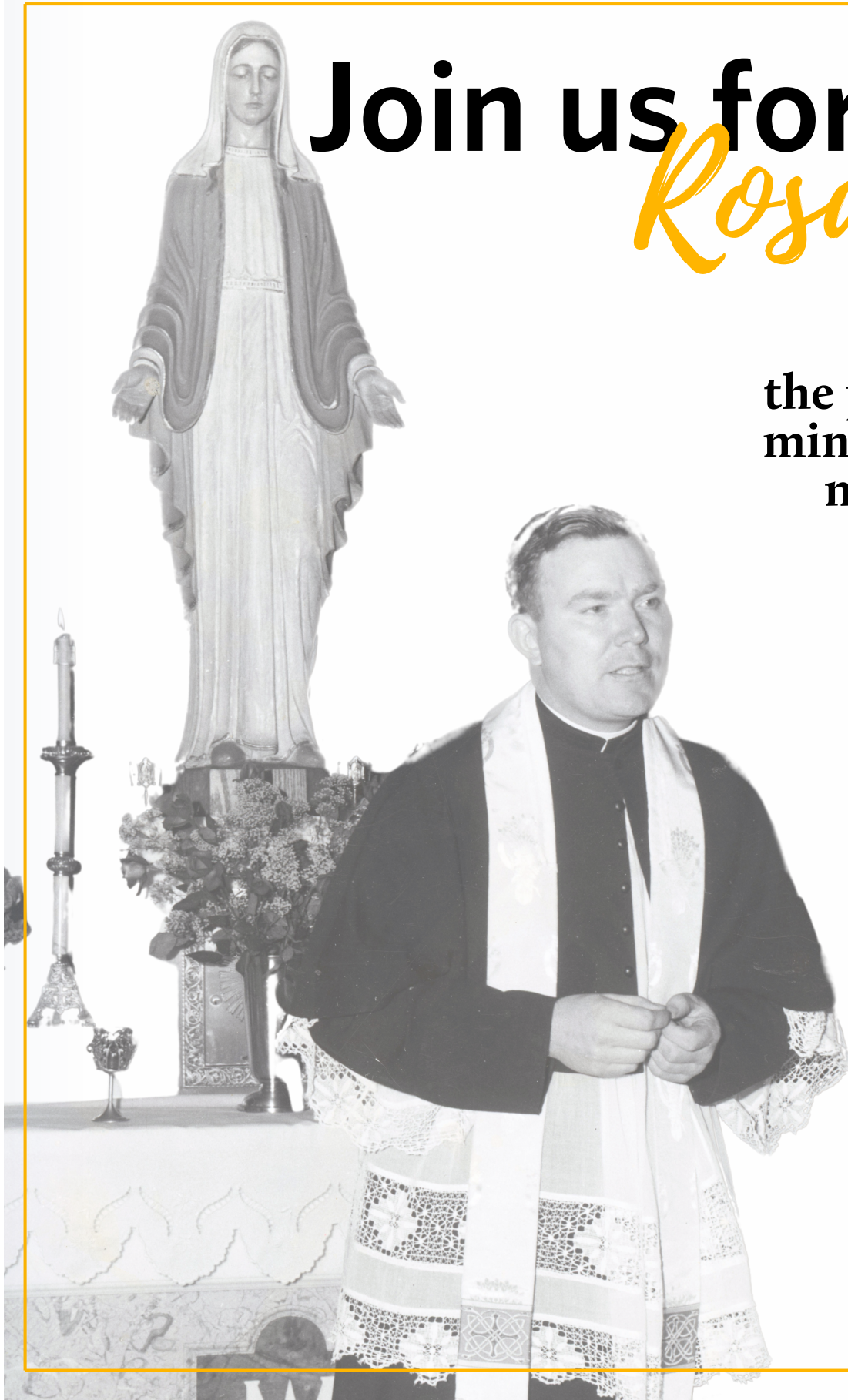
In addition, participants will have the opportunity to experience Eucharistic Adoration with all of the other young Catholics who are participating in the event.

The Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, will also celebrate Mass with all of the young attendees at the Diocesan Youth Rally.

Registration includes dinner and a t-shirt.

Anyone who is interested in attending the 2026 Diocesan Youth Rally should contact their Director of Religious Education or Youth Minister because all registrations must come through a Diocesan parish.

Registration closes Oct. 16. ¡Viva Cristo Rey!



Join us for a *Rosary Rally*

“He called my brother to the priesthood from the coal mines of Scranton. He called me from being the janitor in St. Peter’s Cathedral.”

—Venerable Patrick Peyton

 **St. Peter’s Cathedral,
Scranton, PA**

 **October 17, 2026**

 **1:00 pm**

**In the silence,
God calls**



Family Rosary

HOLY CROSS
FAMILY MINISTRIES

'This Far by Faith'

Saint Vincent de Paul Parish marks 50 years with year-long celebration

DINGMAN TOWNSHIP – Fifty years of faith and community were celebrated on Sunday, Aug. 30, 2026, as Saint Vincent de Paul Parish in Pike County marked its golden anniversary with a special Mass celebrated by the Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton.

The 11:15 a.m. Mass, held at the parish in Dingman Township, served as the official kickoff to more than a year of anniversary activities designed to celebrate the church's past while looking toward its future.

Parishioners have chosen the theme "This Far By Faith" for the year-long celebration, reflecting the parish's journey since its founding in 1976.

"It actually brought me to tears," Sue Casey, chairperson of the anniversary celebrations, said describing the Mass. "We started this about eight months ago. I met with maybe 50 parishioners to come up with ideas about how we wanted to represent this year. It turned out that everybody said that beginning with a Mass, beginning with the Bishop and the Word (of God), was the way we wanted to do it."

Casey said the theme reflects both gratitude for the parish's history and confidence in where God is leading it next.

"The energy is here. Over the next year, we're going to be doing something every month and I think that is really going to build on it," Casey explained.

The 50th Anniversary Mass brought together current and former parish leaders, deacons, parishioners and families who have helped shape Saint Vincent de Paul over the past five decades.

For Father Ed Casey, Pastor of Saint Vincent de Paul Parish, as well as Saint Ann Parish, Shohola, and Saint John Neumann Parish, Lords Valley, the Anniversary



Bishop Joseph C. Bambera celebrates the Liturgy of the Eucharist at the 50th Anniversary Mass for Saint Vincent de Paul Parish in Pike County on Aug. 30, 2026. (Photo/Dan Piazza)

Mass offered an opportunity to celebrate something positive and meaningful.

"A lot of times, when you hear news on the radio or TV, it is usually negative," Father Casey said. "We thought there is such a good spirit here, that we celebrate something positive, something that has lasted for 50 years, against many difficulties, but has survived and continues to preach the Gospel of Christ."

The parish's location along the Route 739 corridor of Pike County places it some distance from the Diocese of Scranton's urban center. Father Casey said having Bishop Bambera present was especially meaningful for parishioners.

"What is important for the people here, because of their distance from the city, they don't get to see who is the real pastor of the Diocese of Scranton, and that is Bishop Bambera," he said. "So we were so glad that he was able to come and be with us today."

For those who call Saint Vincent de Paul their "home parish," they say its greatest strength is not in its location or facilities, but in its people.

Laurie Hanley, a member of the anniversary committee,

describes the parish as a place where people feel welcomed and invited to participate.

"Everybody says, 'all are welcome here at this parish,' and we feel that," she said.

That spirit of welcome extends across generations.

Jennifer Alfaro-Martinez, chairperson of the anniversary potluck committee, has been a parishioner for only a few years, but said her family was welcomed immediately.

"This church is a God-send for us," she said. "They're giving, they're welcoming, and it is really a beautiful parish."

Alfaro-Martinez was particularly impressed by the Children's Choir which performed at the Anniversary Mass. Parishioners say the Children's Choir has not performed in a long time.

"The Children's Choir was adorable. My two children were in it. It was amazing," she said.

For Cathy Davidson, who became active in the parish after moving to the area with her family, Saint Vincent de Paul quickly became a "second home."

"It feels like I came home," she said. "It feels like God built the parish for me and this is where I belong."



The faithful filled the pews of Saint Vincent de Paul Parish for the 50th Anniversary Mass, which was a kickoff to a year-long series of celebratory events and programs. (Photo/Dan Piazza)

Now, as the parish looks toward its next 50 years, its anniversary celebration will continue to bring parishioners together throughout the next year.

From a ministry fair and veterans' tribute to a children's birthday celebration for Jesus, special bingo, Lenten activities, service at a nursing facility, a musical celebration, family fun day and more, the parish has planned a different activity each month throughout the coming year.

For Sue Casey, these activities are not simply a way to

commemorate a milestone. They are an opportunity to remember the moments – both ordinary and extraordinary – that have made Saint Vincent de Paul Parish what it is.

During the Anniversary Mass, she recalled one particularly meaningful memory: the baptism of her grandson in the parish after her son-in-law was deployed to Iraq in 2009.

"Those were times through those last 50 years which we may have forgotten," she said. "But we came this far by faith – and it's good to have those memories."

A Year-Long Celebration

Saint Vincent de Paul Parish will continue its 50th anniversary celebration with special events planned throughout the coming year under the theme "This Far By Faith." The parish welcomes volunteers to assist with the anniversary activities. More information is available on the Saint Vincent de Paul Parish website.

- **September 2026** – Ministry Fair
- **October 2026** – Tricky Tray
- **November 2026** – Honoring Veterans
- **December 2026** – Jesus' Birthday Party for Kids
- **January 2027** – Special 50th Anniversary Bingo
- **February/March 2027** – Lenten Journeys
- **April 2027** – Celebrating the Environment
- **May 2027** – Serving at a Nursing Facility
- **June 2027** – "This Far By Faith" in Music
- **July 2027** – Family Fun Day
- **August 2027** – Appreciation Dinner

King's College marks 80 years with Anniversary Mass

Saint Pius X relic presented to Bishop Bambera for newly re-established seminary

WILKES-BARRE – Exactly eighty years after King's College celebrated its first Convocation Mass in 1946, students, administrators and alumni gathered in both thanksgiving and hope.

On Tuesday, Sept. 8, 2026, an 80th Anniversary Mass for King's College was celebrated in the Chapel of Christ the King on the Wilkes-Barre college's campus. The Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, served as principal celebrant while Father Thomas P. Looney, C.S.C., President of King's College, delivered the homily.

Father Looney invited the King's community to celebrate how the college has grown from a single building and rented playing fields into a 31-acre downtown campus with a 33-

acre athletic complex, more than 40 undergraduate majors, 11 graduate programs and 28 NCAA Division III athletic teams.

The student body, once all male, has also grown into a diverse community of women and men from a variety of cultural, ethnic, religious, and racial backgrounds.

Yet, Father Looney emphasized that the most essential element of the last eight decades isn't measured in buildings or programs. Instead, it is the fact that King's has remained faithful to its founding mission as a Catholic institution committed to transforming students in both mind and heart.

"The birth of King's College was – and our continued mission is – a condition of possibility for the transformation of the lives of the students who come to us," Father Looney said.



A relic of Saint Pius X was gifted to Bishop Bambera from King's College during its 80th Anniversary Mass on Sept. 8, 2026.

More than 22,000 alumni have gone forth from King's to

serve in the fields of education, medicine, engineering, health care, business and more, while also raising families, serving their communities and caring for those most in need.

"We are small, but we are mighty and we are great. We do amazing, transformative work," Father Looney emphasized.

During his homily, Father Looney described the founding of King's as a "risky" collaboration between the Diocese of Scranton, the Congregation of Holy Cross and lay collaborators – a mission that required a "yes" so many decades ago and continues to require that same spirit of commitment today.

"That same Holy Spirit has drawn us together today to offer praise and thanksgiving to God for these past 80 years of King's

College. And we gather together and we pray that the same Holy Spirit will enable us to live, ever more deeply, the mission God's loving providence has entrusted to us," Father Looney said.

The connection between the past and the future took on a particularly meaningful form during the Mass when Father Looney presented Bishop Bambera with a relic of Saint Pius X as a gift from King's College.

Bishop Bambera accepted the relic on behalf of Saint Pius X Seminary, which was re-established in downtown Scranton just weeks earlier.

The gift will be a tangible connection between King's College and the Diocese of Scranton which are both committed to formation and service.

Faith at the heart of La Festa Italiana for 50 years

SCRANTON – The Cathedral of Saint Peter was filled to capacity earlier this month as generations of Italian Americans gathered to celebrate their faith and heritage.

The annual Mass in Italian, which has been part of La Festa Italiana since its beginning 50 years ago, was held on Sunday, Sept. 6, 2026.

Father David Cappelloni, La Festa chaplain and Pastor of Saint John Paul II Parish in Dunmore, served as the principal celebrant of the Mass. The Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, was in attendance and delivered the homily.

"It is pretty obvious to me this morning from this gathering, that our ancestors didn't simply bring to this country recipes and traditions ... they brought faith," Bishop Bambera said. "That is



The Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton was filled to capacity for the 50th annual Mass in Italian on Sept. 6, 2026, which is held in connection with La Festa Italiana. (Photo/Mike Melisky)

why this Cathedral is packed this morning to standing room only."

The Bishop emphasized it is that faith that sustained them and brought them hope.

"They built community. They shared from their bounty

and even from their poverty. And they served," he said. "They served – as the Lord whom they worshiped – gave them example."

For La Festa Italiana President and Chairman Chris DiMattio, that combination of

faith and heritage is precisely why the Mass remains so important.

"It is a way to bring family tradition and faith together and to celebrate with music and prayer. It's wonderful," DiMattio said.

DiMattio said continuing to celebrate the Mass largely in Italian is also important for preserving the Italian heritage for future generations.

"Once you lose the language, you lose the culture," he added. "So, we're so happy that we continue to do most of the Mass in Italian. That keeps our culture alive."

Father Cappelloni said the whole four-day La Festa Italiana event in downtown Scranton, which features dozens of food vendors and bringing in more than 100,000 people, would not be complete without the Cathedral liturgy.

"We couldn't have La Festa without the Mass," he said, noting

that faith was as much a part of the Italian immigrant experience as food, language and other traditions.

For some people, the weekend serves as a homecoming.

Rick DiLiberto, second vice president of UNICO National, traveled from Delaware with his wife, and met up with his daughter who now lives in Florida.

"It's important for us to be together," he said.

A Hazleton native, DiLiberto said the Mass remains integral to Italian American history and tradition.

As he participated in the Sign of Peace during Mass, DiLiberto reflected on its importance.

"In today's world, that is really what we need, which is finding commonalities and similarities rather than differences," he said.

Bishop from India finds vibrant faith during first U.S. visit

WYALUSING – When the Most Rev. Ambrose Puthenveetil traveled from Kerala, India, to the United States for the first time as a Bishop, he came with a simple purpose – to see his priests.

But as he spent time visiting the priests from his Diocese, the Diocese of Kottapuram, who are serving across the United States, the Bishop said he left with something more: a renewed appreciation for the vibrancy of the Catholic Church in the United States.

“I came especially to greet and meet my priests,” Bishop Ambrose said following Masses Sept. 13 at Saints Peter and Paul Parish in Towanda and Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish in Wyalusing. “I also wanted to meet some of the people.”

The Diocese of Kottapuram currently has 11 priests serving in the United States. During his pastoral visit, Bishop Ambrose traveled to meet priests in Florida, Iowa, Colorado, and Michigan, while also spending almost a full week in northeastern and central Pennsylvania.

Three of his priests currently serve in the Diocese of Scranton.

Father Shinu Vazhakkootathil John is Assistant Pastor of Saint Eulalia Parish, Roaring Brook Township, and Saint Catherine of Siena Parish, Moscow. Father



The Most Rev. Ambrose Puthenveetil, right, Bishop of Kottapuram, India, made a pastoral visit to the United States earlier this month. One of the many places he visited was Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish in Wyalusing. (Photo/Dan Piazza)

Dias Antony Valiamarathungal is Assistant Pastor of Saint Boniface Parish and Saint Ann Parish, both in Williamsport. Father Jose Joseph Kuriappilly is Pastor of Saints Peter and Paul Parish, Towanda, and Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish, Wyalusing.

For Bishop Ambrose, the visit provided an opportunity to see firsthand how his priests have become part of the communities they serve.

“He has come into their hearts, and

he has become a member of their family,” the Bishop said of Father Jose Kuriappilly. “The people love him very much. They were telling me that they don’t want to let him go from this place.”

In Williamsport, parishioners welcomed Bishop Ambrose to celebrate Mass at Saint Boniface Church with Father Dias, calling the visit a reminder that the Catholic Church connects people “across countries, cultures and continents.”

The Bishop also celebrated Mass in Roaring Brook Township, where parishioners welcomed him alongside Father Shinu.

His visit to the Diocese of Scranton ended with Father Jose, celebrating Masses in both Towanda and Wyalusing. Parishioners gathered afterward for meals and had the opportunity to meet their pastor’s Bishop.

“It was a great day for me because my Bishop was with me in both parishes,” Father Jose said. “You see the people – they are so happy here today.”

Bishop Ambrose also had the opportunity to meet with the Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, to help strengthen the relationship between their two dioceses. During their time together, the Bishops discussed the growing bond between their local churches and the continued need for priests.

Bishop Ambrose said his pastoral visit gave him a positive perspective on the Church in the United States.

“I have been a Bishop for two and a half years, and I got the impression that the Catholic Church has a future in the USA,” he said.

He pointed to the faithful he encountered at Mass and the young men discerning priestly vocations as signs of hope.

“I got the conviction that the Catholic faith is very vibrant,” he added. “Jesus has told us, don’t worry, I will always be with you. He guides His Church.”

Father Jose said that was one of the most important things he hoped his Bishop would discover during his visit.

“He experienced real faith in our American Church,” Father Jose said. “He has realized how the faith is growing here again. It is emerging and growing. I can feel that.”

Forest City parish brings community together for Family Fun Day

FOREST CITY – Hamburgers, hot dogs, games, and face painting helped bring families together before the start of the new school year on Aug. 22, 2026, as Ascension Parish hosted a Family Fun Day at Saint Joseph Church in Forest City.

The gathering welcomed children and families from Ascension Parish, Saint Katharine Drexel Parish, and the surrounding community for an afternoon of food, fellowship and fun.

“We are very excited for the whole parish to see the children of our parishes and community and to bring them together to share joy and fun before they go to school,” Father Arun Lakra, Pastor, explained.

In addition to games and free food, school supplies and other necessities were distributed to help local students prepare for the year ahead.



Parishioners and families from Ascension Parish and Saint Katharine Drexel Parish participate in a Family Fun Day on Aug. 22, 2026, in Forest City. (Photos/Dan Piazza)

Parishioner Kathryn Pavlovich said the event also provided an opportunity for neighbors to get to know one another.

“There are a lot of people that really



don’t know each other in the community, and I think a gathering (like this) will help them communicate with each other,” she said.

Madison Franckowiak, a young parishioner who was volunteering to get community service hours for the National Junior Honor Society, helped to distribute hygiene supplies to those needing them.

“It was a nice fun day before school starts,” she said. “It’s a get together for the community.”

Parishioner Jennifer Pearson said the event reflected the parish’s desire to support local families while strengthening connections between generations.

“We want to bring more young people into our community,” Pearson said. “I like to see the connections between the kids and the adults.”

Red Mass to be celebrated on Oct. 2

SCRANTON – The Diocese of Scranton’s annual Red Mass will be celebrated on Friday, Oct. 2, 2026, at 12:10 p.m. at the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton.

Historically, the Red Mass is attended by judges, lawyers and legislators for the purpose of invoking God’s blessing and guidance in the administration of justice. Its traditional name is derived from the color of vestments worn by the celebrants of the Mass, symbolizing the tongues of fire, which indicate the presence of the Holy Spirit. Moreover, the robes of the attending royal judges were, in ancient days, bright scarlet.

The public is invited to the Red Mass to pray for those in the legal profession. Members of the county bar associations from across the 11-county Diocese and the Diocesan Tribunal staff are also invited to participate.

CTV: Catholic Television of the Diocese of Scranton will broadcast the Red Mass live and a livestream will be available on the Diocese of Scranton website, YouTube channel and links will be provided on all social media platforms.

Red Mass

Join us to pray for those in the legal, judicial and government professions.

FRIDAY, OCT. 2, 2026

12:10 p.m.

CATHEDRAL OF SAINT PETER
315 Wyoming Avenue, Scranton



Irish roots bring Queen of the Apostles Parish community together

AVOCA – Irish music filled Saint Mary’s Hall late last month as parishioners of Queen of the Apostles Parish gathered for an evening of food, fellowship and a celebration of the heritage that has been part of their community for generations.

An “Irish Night” held on Aug. 29, 2026, brought approximately 125 people together to enjoy traditional Irish food, live Celtic music, and a performance by the Joyce School of Irish Dance.

When asked why the parish decided to put the event together, chairman Jimbo McMahon smiled and offered a short, simple response.

“Because it’s Avoca and Avoca is Irish,” he said.

The evening featured a traditional Irish buffet prepared by Chef Eugene



More than 100 people attended an Irish Night at Queen of the Apostles Parish in Avoca on Aug. 29, 2026.

Philbin, an Avoca native and parishioner, including Irish sausage with red onion and whiskey gravy, tender beef prepared with Guinness stout and red wine gravy, roasted

garlic mashed potatoes with cabbage and greens, seasonal vegetables, Irish soda bread and homemade desserts.

Guests also enjoyed live music from The Quietmen, a Dalton-based group performing Irish and Celtic music, folk favorites and popular acoustic songs spanning several decades.

For Father Thomas Petro, who became Pastor of Queen of the Apostles Parish in July 2025, the evening was an opportunity to honor parishioner’s cultural roots that stretch back more than 150 years.

“Our parish was established in the year 1871. The church (Saint Mary Church) was built in 1874,” Father Petro explained.

“Since that time, Irish Catholics have been living and praying and celebrating in Avoca and we wanted to continue a little bit of that tradition.”

The celebration also provided an opportunity for parishioners to gather with one another and spend time with Father Petro, if they hadn’t yet had the opportunity to meet him.

“Here at Saint Mary’s, we have a long tradition in Avoca of being Irish, Catholic and being proud of that,” Father Petro added.

For parishioner Jackie Galvin, the evening was particularly meaningful.

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DEACON APPOINTMENTS

His Excellency, Bishop Joseph C. Bambera, announces the following appointments, effective as follows:

Deacon William F. Behm, from diaconal ministry, Our Lady of Hope Parish, Wilkes-Barre, to Saint Nicholas-Saint Mary Parish, Wilkes-Barre, effective September 15, 2026.

Deacon Albert V. Giacometti, from diaconal ministry, Saint Teresa of Calcutta Parish, Scranton, to retirement, effective September 24, 2026.

Deacon Walter G. Janoski, from diaconal ministry, Corpus Christi Parish, West Pittston, to retirement, effective July 26, 2026.

Deacon Gerard P. Pernot, from diaconal ministry, Holy Family Parish, Luzerne, and Saint Ignatius Loyola Parish, Kingston, to Leave of Absence for personal reasons, effective August 11, 2026.



BISHOP BAMBERA’S SCHEDULE

- September 19** - Hispanic Heritage Mass & Celebration
Our Lady Queen of Peace Church, Brodheadsville, Noon
- September 20-28** - Diocesan Pilgrimage to Ireland
- October 2** - Red Mass
Cathedral of Saint Peter, Scranton, 12:10 p.m.
- October 4** - Respect Life Sunday Mass
Cathedral of Saint Peter, Scranton, 10:00 a.m.
- October 5-8** - Christian Churches Together Forum
Birmingham, Alabama
- October 10** - Mass for Catholic Men’s Conference
Holy Redeemer High School, Wilkes-Barre, 2:00 p.m.

La Salle Academy begins year celebrating its bi-ritual Catholic identity

JESSUP – As the new school year began at La Salle Academy, students did something that few other Catholic school students in the country can say they have done: They began their school year worshipping in two Catholic churches, experiencing two distinct liturgical traditions, but being reminded that both lead them to Christ.

On Thursday, Sept. 10, 2026, students began their day at Saint Michael Church in Jessup, the principal worship site of Queen of Angels Parish, which is located directly across the street from their school. The students gathered for a Roman Catholic Mass celebrated by Father Andrew Kurovsky, Pastor of Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish in Peckville.

Father Roman Vasylynka, Administrator of Holy Ghost Byzantine Catholic Church in Jessup, concelebrated the Mass.

But the morning did not end when the final blessing was given.

The students then crossed the street to Holy Ghost Byzantine Catholic Church, located directly beside La Salle Academy, where they received a special blessing and an introduction to the Byzantine Catholic tradition from Father Vasylynka and Father Bert James Olechnowicz, Parochial Vicar.

The experience highlighted one of the things that makes La Salle Academy unique.

It is a bi-ritual Catholic school, where both the Roman Catholic and Byzantine Catholic traditions are recognized and celebrated. La Salle Academy believes it remains the only elementary school in the United States with this distinction.

La Salle Principal Shaina Aquilina believes the school's Catholic identity is enriched by its bi-ritual heritage.

"Our students are blessed to experience the beauty of both traditions and to see that – although we may express our faith differently – both lead us to the same Christ," she said.

The morning's Mass gave Father Kurovsky an opportunity to reflect on another form of difference – the differences students encounter in one another.

Reflecting on the Gospel's call to love others, including those who may be difficult to love, Father Kurovsky



Father Andrew Kurovsky, center, celebrates an opening Mass for the new school year of La Salle Academy on Sept. 10, 2026, at Saint Michael Church in Jessup. Following Mass, the students also received a blessing at Holy Ghost Byzantine Catholic Church, since the elementary school is bi-ritual. (Photo/Eric Deabill)

encouraged students not to dismiss people simply because they belong to a different group or see the world differently.

"Every day of our lives, in every class, at every assembly, during every minute, we're given the opportunity to shine God's light through us. Don't miss it and don't ever miss the opportunity to find that light – to see that light – in one another," Father Kurovsky told the students.

After crossing the street and entering Holy Ghost Church, the young people got even more lessons in symbolism.

Father Olechnowicz introduced students to some of the distinctive features of a Byzantine Catholic church, including the icon screen, or iconostasis, which separates the sanctuary from the nave.

He explained that Byzantine Catholic churches engage the senses through icons, incense, and bells, noting that icons historically served as a way of teaching the faith to people who could not read.

"The important thing is we recognize we are all Catholics," Father Olechnowicz told the students. "No matter how we celebrate – we come from Byzantium, the other side of the church comes from Rome – but we are all Catholic."

He reminded them that Roman and Byzantine Catholics share the same Pope, Sacraments, faith, and theology.

"Whether you're Roman Catholic or Byzantine Catholic, you're always welcome here," he added.



Father Bert James Olechnowicz, Parochial Vicar; and Father Roman Vasylynka, Administrator, Holy Ghost Byzantine Catholic Church in Jessup, sprinkle La Salle Academy students and families with holy water at the conclusion of a blessing ceremony to begin the new school year on Sept. 10, 2026. (Photo/Eric Deabill)

The students and teachers then received a special blessing and were sprinkled with holy water before returning to school.

Father Vasylynka said the morning represented more than a unique educational experience, it was a sign of two Catholic communities coming together.

"I believe it is a great sign and great example for other communities in this area

as well," he said.

Father Vasylynka also welcomed the opportunity to build on the relationship between Holy Ghost and La Salle Academy throughout the school year.

"We are the two lungs of the Catholic Church. It is nice to see both communities united in prayer and moving forward. We do the same things, we serve the same Catholic Church," he added.

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Wyoming Area Catholic School family turns to prayer after fire

LAFLIN – Just 24 hours after fire forced the evacuation of Wyoming Area Catholic School in Exeter, its students, families, teachers, staff, and administrators gathered at Saint Maria Goretti Parish – not simply to pray – but to express gratitude.

The school community came together Wednesday morning, Sept. 2, 2026, grateful that every student and adult made it safely outside the building.

“This is step one, to come together before God, to come together as a school community to give thanks to one another and to be thankful for our safety,” Father Michael Drevitch, Pastor of Saint Maria Goretti Parish, said during his homily at the 11:00 a.m. Mass.

Throughout his homily, Father Drevitch returned to a theme he had shared with the students just two days earlier at their first school Mass of the year: Sometimes, God is found in the least expected places.

Earlier in the week, he had encouraged students to recognize God’s presence not only in the Eucharist and the Word of God, but also through sports, academics, the arts, and other ordinary moments of school life.

“Then yesterday,” he said, “we came to recognize that God definitely presents himself in unexpected ways.”

Father Drevitch acknowledged the fire could be viewed as a disaster and a loss. Classrooms were damaged and books and supplies were lost.

But Father Drevitch urged the community to see something more.

“You can look at what happened yesterday as a disaster, as an emergency,



Just 24 hours after fire damaged Wyoming Area Catholic School in Exeter, students, families, educators and administrators gathered for Mass at Saint Maria Goretti Parish in Laffin. They offered prayers of gratitude that no one was injured in the fire. (Photo/Eric Deabill)

as a loss,” he said. “Or you can look at it and recognize how God was present in our teachers and staff, how God was present in the first responders who literally put their lives at risk for our sake, and you can recognize how God was present in our children who stayed safe, brave, and listened to instructions and did what they were expected to do.”

Near the end of his homily, Father Drevitch, who teaches religion at Wyoming Area Catholic School, added a short example to emphasize how the situation had students reflecting God’s love.

“As students were dismissed, I saw some siblings come out, who sometimes would normally be fighting with one another, yesterday, they were holding hands and embracing one another. I saw it in a very beautiful way,” he said.

For Wyoming Area Catholic Principal Eileen Rishcoff, the sight of so many families gathered at Mass made her emotional.

“I am overwhelmed at the number of people that are here,” she told families and students before Mass.

Rishcoff reminded them that a school is

about far more than books, supplies and belongings that were left behind when students evacuated.

“Sometimes things happen,” Rishcoff said. “But the most important thing is that we got out of the school safely.”

And they did so quickly.

Just after 10:00 a.m. Tuesday, Sept. 1, a teacher noticed that lights were flickering in the lower end of the school, near the younger grades.

When Amy Rosencrance, School Safety and Security Coordinator, went to investigate, she noticed smoke in the area.

“We quickly evacuated all of the kids from there and basically made sure that everyone got out of the building,” Rosencrance said. “At that moment, as I was checking to make sure everyone was safe and all of the kids were out, there were flames.”

The fire alarm was pulled, and students immediately began evacuating.

Seventh grader Victoria Sabetta had just finished math class when the fire alarm sounded.

“I was about to put my books away and all of a sudden we heard the fire alarm, so I dropped my books and I just went out,” Sabetta said.

It wasn’t until Sabetta was outside that she first saw smoke.

“It wasn’t until we got outside and the police officers started coming,” she added.

Ironically, the school had planned to conduct its first fire drill of the school year that same day. Instead, the students and staff found themselves responding to a real emergency.

“It was definitely well executed,” Rosencrance said while thanking first responders for their quick response. “I absolutely thank each and every one of them. Two police officers showed up immediately and we were inside the building together and they started to put out the fire. Within minutes, we had Exeter, West Pittston, Hughesstown, Pittston city, Pittston Township, Kingston, every fire person was here. We had the Greater Pittston Ambulance and their response and how quickly they got here, I’m so thankful for that, because that really helped contain it and save this building.”

Students were transported to Wyoming Area High School, where they were reunited with their families.

The Pennsylvania State Police fire marshal is investigating the cause of the fire. School officials said there was considerable damage to at least two classrooms, with smoke and water damage affecting other portions of the building.

As school administrators face the work of beginning cleanup and restoration, students have been continuing their education at Saint Maria Goretti Parish in Laffin.

The parish opened its religious education facilities, including classrooms and other spaces, to Wyoming Area Catholic School beginning Tuesday, Sept. 8, following Labor Day.

Since that time, school operations have been moving forward seamlessly.

For Father Drevitch, the temporary relocation is itself an expression of what a parish is meant to be.

“A parish isn’t just a group of people who go to church,” he said. “A parish is a community who helps people when they need something. A parish is God’s hands at work as we take care of our children, as we keep them safe and provide them an education.”

“The Light Still Shines at WAC”

A Fire Recovery Campaign has been established to help Wyoming Area Catholic recover from the fire. Visit:

<https://boostmyschool.com/wacs-fire>



A fire truck’s ladder extends to the roof of Wyoming Area Catholic School in Exeter on Sept. 1, 2026, following a fire in the school that morning. (Photo/Eric Deabill)



Students from **All Saints Academy in Scranton** were all smiles during their return to the new school year. First graders pictured, from left, are Patrick Gallagher, Joey Holland, Adriel Torres, Jackson Spindler, Dean Kofira, Evan Powell, Jack Hinton and Angelo DePrimo.



Father Andrew McCarroll blessed the Falcons at **Our Lady of Peace School in Clarks Green** on the first day of school, wishing them a happy, healthy and safe school year.



Physics students at **Holy Cross High School in Dunmore** started off the school year by putting their teamwork skills to the test with a cup-stacking competition. While working together, communicating and thinking strategically, students discovered that success takes more than just speed – it takes teamwork, too!



Holy Redeemer High School in Wilkes-Barre recently held its first Alumni Connections & Career Day. Current students were invited to meet with alumni from Holy Redeemer, Bishop Hoban, Bishop O'Reilly, Seton Catholic and Bishop Haffey to talk about their professional experiences.



Ayla Chmielewski, Elliott Dudley, Riley Fennie and Violet Franklin, fifth graders at **Saint Mary of Mount Carmel School in Dunmore**, organize their lockers at the start of the new school year.



Students at **Epiphany School in Sayre** participated in a special 9/11 Memorial Prayer Service which was led by third and fourth graders.



Kerry Blaum, Gracie Holtz, Olivia Medico, Emmerson Gulyas, Emily Benyo, Grace Fox and Karly Welgosh, sixth graders at **Saint Jude School in Mountain Top** have fun together at the school's annual 'Back to School Bash.'



Members of the Class of 2027 at **Saint Clare/Saint Paul School in Scranton** pose together at the start of the school year. The Class of 2027 will be the 100th graduating class from Saint Paul School!



Seventh grade and first grade students at **Holy Rosary School in Duryea** began their “Buddy Program” by introducing themselves and illustrating drawings of one another. Pictured are Zaiah Lubinski, Vincent O’Haire and Thomas Dohman.



Father Brian J.T. Clarke celebrated Mass for the opening of the new school year at **Notre Dame Elementary School in East Stroudsburg**. Sixth grade students were responsible for planning the liturgy, and students Luke Stillmayer and Madison McGeehan helped to serve.



Good Shepherd Academy in Kingston started the school year with a visit from its mascot, Dash. Students Joseph Woloski, Jacob Woloski and Julian Biscontini joined principal Jim Jones for a photo with Dash.



What better way to start the school year than with a little Crescent pride! On the first day of school at **Saint Nicholas/Saint Mary School in Wilkes-Barre**, first grader McKeena Crawford and sixth grader Brayden Crawford stopped for a photo with the school’s giant Crescent to kick off the new year.



Students at **La Salle Academy in Jessup** show what solidarity looks like – coming together to help fellow Catholic school students at Wyoming Area Catholic rebuild after the fire. With the help of our neighbor, Holy Ghost Byzantine Catholic Church, families donated new school supplies.



Students from **Saint Agnes School in Towanda** welcomed Bishop Ambrose Puthenveetil of the Diocese of Kottapuram in Kerala, India, to their school recently. He spoke about his country, his job as a Bishop, and sang songs with the students.



A large group of upperclassmen from **Notre Dame Jr./Sr. High School in East Stroudsburg** gave up part of the last day of their summer vacation to help out at the school’s new student orientation.

Three longtime Catholic educators honored for 25 years of service

WILKES-BARRE – For 25 years, Deborah Brady, Candice Lee and Jeanine Queralt have walked into Catholic school classrooms with a shared mission: to educate young people while helping them know, love and live their Catholic faith.

Their quarter-century of service was celebrated on Monday, Sept. 14, 2026, as the Diocese of Scranton held its annual Diocesan Teachers' Institute at Holy Redeemer High School in Wilkes-Barre.

The day began with Mass celebrated by the Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, followed by a keynote address, lunch and breakout sessions for the educators.

At the conclusion of Mass, Bishop Bambera and Kristen Donohue, Diocesan Secretary for Catholic Education/Superintendent, presented the three longtime educators with the Saint John Paul II Awards, which recognize Catholic school educators who have completed 25 years of dedicated service in Catholic education in the Diocese of Scranton.

This year's honorees were Brady of Holy Rosary School in Duryea, Lee of La



Three educators were presented with the Saint John Paul II Award for 25 years of dedicated service in Catholic education on Sept. 14, 2026. Participating in the award presentation, from left: Charlene Haggerty, Assistant Superintendent; Christopher Tigue, Assistant Superintendent; Deborah Brady, Holy Rosary School; Bishop Joseph C. Bambera; Jeanine Queralt, Our Lady of Peace School; Candice Lee, La Salle Academy; and Kristen Donohue, Diocesan Secretary for Catholic Education/Superintendent. (Photo/Eric Deabill)

Salle Academy in Jessup, and Queralt of Our Lady of Peace School in Clarks Green.

"Catholic school educators impart a distinctive character to the education

profession," Assistant Superintendent Christopher Tigue said in introducing the awards. "Most especially, they are witnesses to the faith, serving as sharers in the mission of Jesus Christ by leading young people to know, love and serve God."

Brady, who teaches students in sixth through eighth grades, said she has seen a lot of changes since first walking in the doors of Holy Rosary School.

"I've seen a lot of growth. I've seen a lot of change," she reflected. "To see the growth in the kids that you start off with ... and they come back to visit you, it's actually life changing to see that you can make an impact in somebody's life."

Brady previously taught at a public high school in New Jersey, but she said becoming part of Catholic education quickly became a calling. She said one of the greatest blessings has been the opportunity to share her faith with her students.

"What is the big hook for me? Sharing the faith," she said. "I am very faithful and faith-filled, so to be able to present that to the kids, and live it, is incredible."

Continued on Page 21

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25 Years of Faithful Service: Diocese honors Catholic educators

Continued from Page 20

Lee also began her Catholic school career at Holy Rosary School before spending the past decade teaching first grade at La Salle Academy.

For her, like Brady, teaching in a Catholic school is more than a profession.

“I feel Catholic education is truly my vocation,” Lee said. “Teaching in particular in a Catholic education system is my vocation. Just learning and living the faith and teaching it to the children and families.”

Her favorite part of teaching first grade is watching children grow throughout the school year.

“Just to get to see their smiling faces where they love school,” she said. “They walk in so young and they leave being able to read and so confident, I love it.”

Queralt currently teaches Pre-K at Our Lady of Peace School in Clarks Green. She spent 20 years at Monsignor McHugh School in Cresco before its closure during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Queralt’s own Catholic education experience helped shape her vocation. She attended Catholic schools beginning with Saint Patrick’s School, later



Bishop Joseph C. Bambera celebrates Mass during the Diocesan Teachers’ Institute on Sept. 14, 2026. (Photo/Eric Deabill)

attending Bishop Hannan High School.

“I couldn’t imagine teaching and not being able to talk about God,” she said.

At the Pre-K level, Queralt said faith formation often begins with something as simple and profound as kindness.

“How would Jesus treat other people? What would Jesus do?” she explained. “Just setting an example for them, modeling for them, it’s a lot about kindness at that age.”

And even at such a young age, she said, children respond to learning about their faith.

“They love hearing about God. They love religion class. They love to hear the stories,”

Queralt said. “They quiet down and they’re so interested in it.”

During his homily at Mass, Bishop Bambera reminded all Catholic educators that their ministry extends far beyond academics.

“As Catholic educators, we entrust to you our most sacred treasure – our children,” Bishop Bambera said. “You sacrifice daily to give them the very best of what you have – your wisdom, your common sense, your patience.”

But he added, educators offer

something even greater: the love they have received from God.

“At the heart of who you are, that is your greatest gift,” he said. “Thank you for sharing your love and thank you for sharing your faith.”

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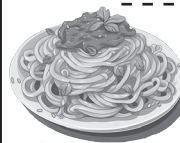
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Irish heritage celebrated

Continued from Page 15

“It’s just really nice to have an event where we can celebrate all those things that are important to us, in terms of our heritage and our faith,” she said.

Galvin, a third-generation Irish American, said her family has deep ties to Saint Mary Church, where she and her husband were married and where their son is receiving his sacraments.

“I think it’s important to

remember where you came from,” she said. “Our ancestors came here for a better life and to help build America.”

The turnout of parishioners was especially encouraging for organizers, who hope to hold similar events in the future.

“Everybody was so happy. The food was delicious,” McMahon said. “I’m glad everybody showed up and I’m looking forward to doing it again.”



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Passionist religious community announces change in leadership at Saint Ann's Monastery

SCRANTON — As the 2026 Solemn Novena to Saint Ann came to a close this summer at the venerable Basilica of the National Shrine of Saint Ann in West Scranton, devotees learned their longtime rector would be taking on a new role in the Scranton Passionist community.

Passionist Father Richard Burke has been reassigned after serving a total of 26 years — during three separate tenures — as rector of Saint Ann's Monastery.

The announcement by Very

Rev. James Price, CP, newly elected Provincial Superior of the Passionist Congregation based in Jamaica, N.Y., accompanied the news that Saint Ann's in Scranton has been designated as the Passionist Novitiate for Saint Paul of the Cross Province — with Father Richard serving as the new Novice Director.

"I have cherished every year of my time as rector," Father Richard shared, quickly adding, "The people of Saint Ann's are really quite marvelous. They are



Father Richard Burke, CP

deeply dedicated to God and Good Saint Ann, and are genuinely grateful for any and all presence



Father Paul Fagan, CP

and help they receive in living their God-given faith."

His time as rector certainly had its challenges, Father Richard noted, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic years.

"It has been a privilege to have been part of all of this for so long a time," he commented.

Passionist Father Paul Fagan has been appointed to succeed Father Richard and will begin his four-year term of office as rector on Sept. 19.

"Father Paul is looking forward to being with us

to enhance our presence and our ministerial outreach as the Passionist community," Father Richard said, noting that the new rector is no stranger to Saint Ann's.

"Father Paul has preached the Solemn Novena several times," Father remarked. "He has great affection for the people of Saint Ann's and Scranton, and looks forward to providing pastoral care for all who come to our Monastery and Shrine Basilica."

As new Novice Director, Father Richard has already received two young men aspiring to join the Passionist community, either as a religious priest or Brother.

Father Richard also announced a new addition to their Scranton pastoral community — Passionist Father Michael Rowe, who has been assigned to Saint Ann's from his home in Jamaica, West Indies.

"Like Father Paul, Father Michael already feels at home in our Passionist community and with the faithful of Saint Ann's," Father Richard remarked.

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New Rector for Pittston OSJ Community

LAFLIN — On July 1, Saint Joseph Oblate Father Jackson Pinhero was installed as the new Superior of the Oblates of Saint Joseph religious community based in the Pittston area — succeeding Oblate Father Paul McDonnell, who recently completed his maximum two terms (six years) of service in the leadership role.

Father McDonnell continues to reside at the Saint Joseph Oblate chapel and religious house in Laflin, where he will continue his duties in the community while serving as pastor of Divine Mercy Parish in Scranton.

Father Jackson is pictured (shown right) in the Oblate chapel prayerfully taking the oath for his new office, administered and witnessed by Very Rev. John Shearer, OSJ, Provincial



Superior of the USA Saint Joseph Oblate Province.

Many other Oblates of Saint Joseph were in attendance, as they had gathered in the Diocese of Scranton for the Mass of Ordination for Father Jose Batista, OSJ, later that day in Hazleton.

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Ahead of beatification, Archbishop Sheen's missionary work remembered

(OSV News) - When Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen is beatified Sept. 24 in St. Louis, attention will rightly fall on the celebrated television preacher whose broadcasts brought Catholic teaching into millions of American homes.

But for almost two decades, behind Archbishop Sheen's extraordinary reach stood a largely unknown group of women who opened thousands of letters, recorded donations, thanked contributors, and helped transform his words into material support for missionaries and young churches around the world.

Archbishop Sheen served from 1950 to 1966 as the national director of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, one of the four Pontifical Mission Societies. The society coordinates World Mission Sunday, the annual worldwide day of giving that supports the Church's work in more than 1,100 mission territories.

It was a responsibility central to Archbishop Sheen's priesthood and public ministry. Alongside his radio and television work, he traveled, preached missionary appeals and served as editor of MISSION Magazine, which began being published by the national office of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith in 1951.

When the prelate spoke about the missions on television, preached an appeal or published a new issue of the magazine, the response would arrive in the form of 8,000 to 10,000 letters a day, filled with thank-you notes and donations.

Envelopes poured into the society's national office in New York. Some contained large checks. Others held a few dollars, coins saved by children or brief notes explaining the sacrifice behind the gift.

And behind the scenes, a small army of women opened those envelopes, recorded the

offerings and made sure the donors received a response.

Helen Fitzpatrick was one of "the gals," as she still affectionately calls them.

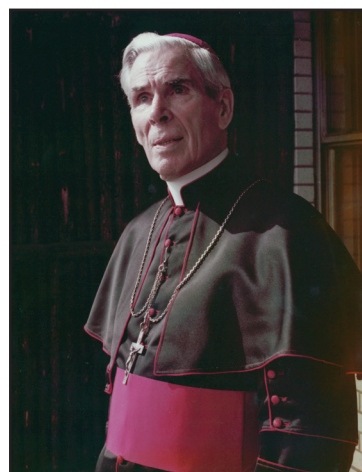
Now 89, Fitzpatrick began working part-time at the society in 1954, while a senior at St. Vincent Ferrer High School in Manhattan. After graduation, she joined the staff full-time and remained for about a decade.

Her main responsibility was ensuring that acknowledgment notes were sent to those who supported the missions. The work was constant.

"No matter where he (Archbishop Sheen) was, the office was never without work," Fitzpatrick recalled. "Every time he would send out an appeal or print the magazine, our office would be swamped."

Bernadette Schumann, also in her 80s, remembers that the women worked across two rooms, surrounded by correspondence that connected ordinary American Catholics with the missionary Church.

"There were so many letters and so much work, but we knew every envelope represented someone who cared about the missions," said Schumann, who



Venerable Fulton J. Sheen, pictured in an undated photo, is remembered as one of the most influential and innovative evangelists in American history. On March 25, 2026, the Dicastery for the Causes of Saints announced the beatification of Archbishop Sheen will take place on Sept. 24 in St. Louis. (OSV News photo/courtesy Archbishop Fulton Sheen Foundation)

goes by "Bernie." "We were proud to be part of it."

Archbishop Sheen also made sure the staff understood the spiritual purpose behind the work.

"At 3 every afternoon, we stopped whatever we were doing and prayed the world mission rosary together," Schumann said. "Bishop Sheen made sure that the work we did for the missions was always rooted in prayer. He also took the time to introduce us to visiting missionaries, to make sure we could 'see' who we were helping, even if we couldn't all come to the missions with him."

Dozens of women helped sustain the Society for the Propagation of the Faith during Archbishop Sheen's 16 years as national director. Some of the women married and raised families. Others entered religious life. Most are no longer living, and their contributions were often known only to their colleagues and families.

Mary Regis McLoughlin, who died in 2022, served as the working editor of MISSION Magazine during the 1960s, managing its day-to-day production while Archbishop Sheen remained its named editor.

Sister Marlene Brownnett, a member of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus who died in 2024, worked in the Propagation of the Faith office before entering religious life. She later became

Archbishop Sheen's close friend and served on the board of the Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen Foundation.

None of the women interviewed by OSV News expects to be in St. Louis for the beatification. But the celebration will also belong, in a small way, to them - and to the many women whose names are now lost to history.



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Catholic Men's Conference to be held Oct. 10 in Wilkes-Barre

WILKES-BARRE - 8 a.m. to 3 p.m., Saturday, Oct. 10, 2026, at Holy Redeemer High School, 159 S. Pennsylvania Ave., Wilkes-Barre. Mass offered by the Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton.

Members of the 'Be a Catholic Man' group recently gathered to plan for its 11th annual Catholic Men's Conference under the theme, 'Just Be Catholic.'

The event will be held from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m., Saturday, Oct. 10, 2026, at Holy Redeemer High School, 159 S. Pennsylvania Ave., Wilkes-Barre. This year's conference speakers include the Most Rev. Joseph Coffey, Auxiliary Bishop for the Archdiocese for the

Military Services, USA; author and evangelist John Martignoni; and commentator Brian Holdsworth.

Bishop Coffey has dedicated his life to ministry, focusing on spiritual guidance and pastoral care, especially for military personnel and their families. His compassionate leadership and commitment to strengthening faith communities have earned him widespread respect.

Martignoni, author of Blue Collar Apologetics, is a full time evangelist. He hosts the "EWTN Open Line" radio show. He is the founder/president of Queen of Heaven Catholic Radio; 1480 AM in Birmingham, Alabama. He's also founder/president of the Bible Christian Society and Director of the Office of New Evangelization in the Diocese of Birmingham.

Holdsworth, a convert to the Catholic Church, is a writer,

speaker, commentator and evangelist producing content in the service of the mission of the Church. He has a substantial online and social media presence including YouTube videos.

All men are invited and encouraged to attend to go further in their imitation of Christ for the sake of themselves and their loved ones.

Tickets are \$30 if registered by Sept. 21, and \$40 after that date.

Students are \$15. Priests, Deacons, and Seminarians are free.

To register, mail a check to "Be A Catholic Man," P.O. Box 669, Wyalusing, PA 18853.

Write "Men's Conference" on the check memo and include one's contact information, e-mail, and parish.

Registration can also be done online at BeACatholicMan.com.

For more information call (570) 721-0872.

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Members of the 'Be A Catholic Man' group recently gathered to plan for its 11th annual Catholic Men's Conference on Oct. 10, 2026, at Holy Redeemer High School in Wilkes-Barre. Members of the committee include, first row, from left: Raphael Micca; Joe Alinoski; Tony DePaola; Jack Walsh; Dr. Chris Carr; Dr. Lou Guarnieri; Ralph Marino; Kevin Burleigh; Jerome Smith and John Witkosky. Second row, from left: Jim Biondi; Alex Piechoki; Jim Gerichten; Mike Kilmer, Conference Chairman; Paul Binner; Ed Niewinski; Tim Pawlik; Mike Kabonick; Joe Adcroft and Rev. Brian VanFossen, Conference Chaplain. Absent from the photo, but in attendance for the planning session, Christopher Calore.

Bishop Bambera, Catholic Biblical Association endorse scholar's appointment amid antisemitic backlash

(OSV News) - The head of the U.S. Bishop's Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs has expressed his robust support for biblical scholar Amy-Jill Levine, as she faces antisemitic backlash for her recent appointment as the first Jewish president of the Catholic Biblical Association of America.

The association also issued a statement of support for Levine, noting that "the vitriol of some of the comments only reinforces the need to address the problem" of antisemitism.

In an Aug. 28 letter, Bishop Joseph C. Bambera of Scranton, offered his "warmest congratulations" to Levine, who is the Rabbi Stanley M. Kessler Distinguished Professor of New Testament and Jewish Studies at Hartford International University for Religion and Peace, and professor emerita of New Testament and Jewish studies at Vanderbilt University.

Levine is also co-editor with Marc Zvi Brettler of "The Bible With and Without Jesus: How Jews and Christians Read the Same Stories Differently" and "The Jewish Annotated New Testament."

An internationally recognized New Testament expert, Levine was named president of the CBA in July, with the association - of which she has been a longtime member - announcing the appointment in early August.

"This is a historic moment for the Association," wrote Bishop Bambera in his letter to Levine.

Founded in 1936, the CBA works to further biblical scholarship and research in related disciplines, and to foster dialogue between Christian and Jewish biblical scholars.

Levine is the first Jewish person to lead the organization,

which has previously been directed by various scholars of Roman Catholic and Protestant affiliations. Among the CBA's past presidents were Paul J. Achtemeier and Charles H. Talbert, who were ministers, respectively, in the United Church of Christ and Baptist traditions.

Bishop Bambera highlighted Levine's "many years of dedicated service to the CBA," including her "important work as an editor of The Catholic Biblical Quarterly," the association's official, peer-reviewed journal.

News of Levine's appointment sparked antisemitic backlash on a number of social media platforms, including X and Facebook. In an earlier interview with OSV News, Levine said she had "been denounced as a child of Satan, a baby-eater, out to destroy the Church, a supporter of Palestinian genocide, a hater of Jesus and the Church."

She shared with OSV News one Facebook message that denounced her as a "satanic (expletive)" and called for her to be burned at the stake. Levine also said "some people have contacted the CBA office to insist that I be removed."

Both Levine and the CBA reposted Bishop Bambera's letter, which said that Levine's appointment is a "fitting celebration of the genuinely interfaith character of biblical scholarship and of the many years of faithful Jewish-Catholic collaboration in the study of Scripture."

"This spirit of collaboration reflects the vision articulated in Nostra Aetate," said Bishop Bambera, referencing the Second Vatican Council's declaration on the Catholic Church's relationship with Judaism and other non-Christian religions.

The document "called Catholics to deeper understanding and mutual respect with the Jewish people," said Bishop Bambera. "I am confident that the Catholic Biblical Association will continue to be enriched by your leadership, scholarship, and longstanding commitment to Jewish-Catholic dialogue."

In an Aug. 26 statement posted to its website, the association addressed the antisemitic backlash to Levine's appointment.

CBA board chair Gregory E. Sterling and executive director Archie Wright said that "unfortunately, some neither understand the role of the president nor the nature of a professional society.

"She was not elected because she is Jewish, but because she is an exceptional scholar and has played a very important role in Catholic-Jewish dialogue," said Sterling and Wright.

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Notice Regarding Reporting Sexual Abuse of a Minor

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

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

Aviso al Respeto 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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MISSION MESSAGE

From the Telethon to the Collection Basket: A Lifetime of Giving

By Shannon Ruiz
Diocesan Director,
Pontifical Mission Societies



Do you remember the Jerry Lewis MDA Labor Day Telethon? More importantly, do you remember the first time you made a charitable donation? I do.

I vividly remember sitting on the floor in my living room, watching Jerry Lewis and the various stories of people living with Muscular Dystrophy tug at my seven-year-old heartstrings. I had no money of my own, so I begged my mom to donate for me.

I was so proud to see my name scroll across the bottom of the television screen. I was too young to understand what Muscular Dystrophy was, but I knew I wanted to help.

For several years after that, I received a personal solicitation in the mail. That was a big deal to a kid who rarely ever got mail, and it made me feel like I was making a difference in people's lives. I'm grateful my mom humored my request because, by giving me that opportunity, she helped plant the seeds of philanthropy in my life.

The Labor Day tradition of the MDA telethon ended in 2015, but many important causes still need our support today. I invite you to consider the difference you can

make in the world by supporting World Mission Sunday 2026 on Sunday, October 18, 2026.

There will be no telethons or celebrity-backed campaigns to support World Mission Sunday, but every parish in our diocese will hold a second collection. We will also celebrate our missionary faith with a Pontifical Mass celebrated by Bishop Bambera at the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton at 12:15 p.m.

Funds collected through World Mission Sunday are distributed by the Pontifical Mission Societies to support missionary priests, religious sisters and brothers, and lay catechists serving in mission dioceses worldwide. Some funds help missionary dioceses run and survive, while the rest build churches, seminaries, convents, and pastoral centers.

World Mission Sunday is the Church's annual invitation to remember that our faith does not end at our parish doors, but that it extends to every corner of the globe where the Gospel is still being carried into communities in need.

As Catholics, we are baptized into a missionary Church, called

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by Christ to care for our brothers and sisters near and far.

Just as a childhood donation once planted a seed of generosity in my own life, your gift this October 18 may be the very seed that grows into someone else's lifeline of hope, faith, and human dignity.



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Parishes Announce Fall Festivals & Events

Our Lady of Lourdes in Montoursville — Sept. 18 & 19. Annual Parish Festival on the parish grounds, 100 Walnut St., Montoursville, held Friday & Saturday from 5 to 9 p.m. Featuring live music, basket raffle, cake wheel, pumpkin stand, wine wheel & children's games. Nightly dinner specials (tickets available at parish office): Friday — Barbecued chicken, potato, cole slaw, roll & dessert; cost: \$15. Featured entertainment: Leo & KG with Family Traditions; Saturday — Spaghetti & homemade meatballs, salad, roll & dessert; cost: \$15. Featured entertainment: Kevin Mix, local musician. Traditional picnic foods include hot sausages, pizza, fries, funnel cakes, fresh lemonade & ice cream. Basket raffle in the parish hall on Sunday at 11:30 a.m.

Our Lady of the Abingtons in Dalton — Sept. 19 & 20. Annual Fall Festival hosted at Our Lady of the Abingtons Church, 207 Seminary Road, Dalton, on Saturday, 5 to 10 p.m., and Sunday, noon to 6 p.m. Event features a pork barbecue dinner on Saturday; and chicken barbecue dinner on Sunday. Festival includes bountiful theme baskets, homemade clam chowder, pizza, hot dogs/hamburgers, pierogi, and homemade desserts; children's games, grand prize raffles, wheelbarrow of cheer, beer tent, silent auction & white elephant sales. Live music provided by Megaband Duo (Saturday) & The Quietmen (Sunday).

Resurrection in Muncy — Sept. 25 & 26. Resurrection Parish will host its annual Fall Festival on Friday, 4 to 7 p.m., and Saturday, 1:30 to 7:30 p.m., on the parish grounds. Festival foods featuring homemade ethnic favorites, including kielbasa, stuffed cabbage, pierogi & halushki, in addition to hot dogs, burgers & fries. Games for all ages include a candy wheel, big six and ring toss; prize, quilt, cooler of cheer, basket & cash raffle drawings. Also featuring homemade baked goods and silent auction. Live musical entertainment starting at 4 p.m.: Friday, Rich Ahearn & Rick Kerstetter; and Saturday, Catawissa Military Band.

Saint Thomas More & Saint Mary's in Lake Ariel — Oct. 2. The Lake Ariel parish community will host an all-you-can-eat Potato Soup & Chili fundraiser on Friday from 4:30 to 7 p.m. at the Father Scott Parish Center, 105 Gravity Road, Lake Ariel. Proceeds from

the free-will offerings by patrons will be split between the St. Francis Commons Shelter for Homeless Veterans and the parish. The event will also feature theme basket raffles and a 50/50 cash drawing. For more information, call (570) 698-5584.

Saint Teresa of Calcutta in Scranton — Oct. 2-4. The South Scranton Catholic parish hosts its weekend Fall Festival & Rummage Sale on the grounds of the parish church, 1217 Prospect Ave., Scranton. Festival hours: Friday, 3 to 8 p.m. (food & games begin 4 p.m.); Saturday, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. (food/games, 11 a.m.); and Sunday, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. (food/games, 11 a.m.). Event features extensive rummage sale, kids' games, Hispanic & American foods, theme baskets, instant bingo, and homemade desserts.

Saint Patrick in Nicholson — Oct. 4. Parish's Sunday afternoon Fall Festival held from noon to 4 p.m. on the church grounds. Festivities include a pork loin dinner, homemade desserts and soups; basket raffles & grand prize and cash drawings.

Saint John Vianney in Scott Township — Oct. 4. Annual Harvest Festival held on the grounds of the parish's Corpus Christi Church, 704 Montdale Road, Scott Township. Event features a full-course turkey dinner, with drive-thru/takeout service from 11:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Dinners cost \$15; tickets available on site. Tent-covered outdoor variety booths feature bountiful baskets, baked goods, and raffle drawings, including cash grand prize (drawings begin at 3:30 p.m.).

Parish LGBTQ program Sept. 27 in Scranton

SCRANTON — The LGBTQ program at Mary, Mother of God Parish will resume gatherings on Sunday, Sept. 27, at noon in the parish rectory, 316 William St., North Scranton.

Entitled "Building Faith and Community" and open to all individuals, the program offers faith support and fellowship following the 11 a.m. Sunday Mass, regardless of religious affiliation.

Open discussions and personal sharing are encouraged; topics include sacramental concerns and fostering a welcoming atmosphere within parish life.

For more information, contact Father Edwards, (570) 342-4881.

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Catholic Happenings Around the Diocese of Scranton

St. Lucy's Drive-Thru Pasta Dinner — SEPT. 17, sponsored by St. Michael Parish, Scranton, in conjunction with The Italian Colony of St. Lucy; held from 3 to 6 p.m. in the parking lot of St. Lucy Church, 949 Scranton St., West Scranton. Dinner cost: \$15, includes penne w/meatballs, salad, bread, and two biscotti. St. Lucy's "famous" pasta sauce available for sale. For tickets, call Joe Guido (570) 955-7469.

Lourdes Virtual Pilgrimage Experience — SEPT. 19, sponsored by Gate of Heaven Parish in Dallas; virtual experience of Our Lady of Lourdes Shrine in France begins at 1 p.m. in Gate of Heaven Church, 40 Machell Ave., Dallas. Devotional experience includes Eucharistic adoration & benediction, and Rosary prayers. Free-will offering accepted. Call the parish office, (570) 675-2121, for more information.

Monthly Meeting of the Lay Carmelites — SEPT. 19, hosted by Our Lady of the Mountains Lay Carmelite Community on the third Saturday of each month; gatherings are held from 9 to 11 a.m. at the Oblates of St. Joseph Seminary/Chapel, 1880 Highway 315, Laflin. For more information, contact Chris at (570) 239-8094.

31st Annual Lebanese Heritage Festival — SEPT. 20, hosted by St. Ann Maronite Church, 1320 Price St., West Scranton; held from noon to 7 p.m. Heritage festival features authentic Lebanese food & pastries; live music and entertainment.

St. Joseph Fraternity of Third Order Secular Franciscans —

SEPT. 20, Lay Franciscan Canonical Order gathers on the third Sunday of each month; meetings hosted from 2 to 4 p.m. at the Oblates of St. Joseph Seminary/Chapel, 1880 Highway 315, Laflin. All interested men, women and visitors are welcome. For more information, contact Michele Sisak, OFS, at (570) 807-7996, or visit the Facebook page.

"Magnifica Humanitas": Artificial Intelligence's Impact on Faith & Health in Local Communities — SEPT. 23 & OCT. 22, panel discussions, including theologians, health care professionals, and pastors, on the local impact of artificial intelligence, guided by Pope Leo XIV's recent encyclical "Magnifica Humanitas"; hosted by Christ the King Parish, Archbald, on Wednesday, Sept. 23, at 6:30 p.m., and The University of Scranton on Thursday, Oct. 22, at 6 p.m. All are welcome.

"40 Days for Life" Pro-Life Rosary Gatherings — SEPT. 24-OCT. 30, 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. The pro-life campaign draws attention to the evil of abortion through prayer & fasting, constant vigil, and community outreach.

Parish 27th Annual Craft Fair — SEPT. 26, hosted by Divine Mercy Parish, 312 Davis St., Minooka section of Scranton; held

from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the parish center. Fair features grand display of handmade jewelry, seasonal decorations, ceramics, and gifts from local crafters & vendors. Event also includes food & refreshments for purchase, hourly door prizes, and cash raffle. Admission fee: \$2.

"Nazareth Group" Days for High School Girls — SEPT. 26, hosted by the Capuchin Sisters of Nazareth in Tunkhannock and Williamsport; Saturday programs are presented by the Nazareth Group. Open to all girls in grades 9-12; the experience is offered from 11 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the Capuchin Sisters' two convent locations: Mother of God Convent, 215 Wellwood Drive, Tunkhannock; and Mother of the Eucharist Convent, 6100 Jacks Hollow Road, Williamsport. Theme for the year: "The Holy Family" and other aspects of the Catholic faith. The gatherings foster faith, friendship, and increased love of Jesus through prayer and inspirational

talks. Reservations are required. For Tunkhannock, contact Sister Angela of the Capuchin Sisters at (570) 836-2737; for Williamsport, contact Sister Clare at (570) 745-3334.

13th Annual Knights Golf

Outing — SEPT. 26, sponsored by Knights of Columbus, Monsignor Joseph P. McDonough Council 7403; hosted at Honesdale Golf Club, 121 Golf Hill Road, Honesdale.

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'Tomb of Unborn' 30th anniversary commemoration slated for Oct. 4

Prayerful commemoration of the 30th anniversary of the Knights of Columbus "Tomb of the Unborn," located at the top of Mount Olivet Cemetery in Carverton, will be held on Respect Life Sunday, Oct. 4, beginning at 2 p.m.

Father Thomas Petro, chaplain of Greater Pittston Knights of Columbus Assembly 948, will lead the celebration of the Order for Visiting a Cemetery, followed by recitation of the Glorious Mysteries of the Rosary.

All Wyoming Valley Knights of Columbus and area faithful are welcome to attend.

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Catholic Happenings Around the Diocese

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Registration at 10:30 a.m., followed by lunch at 11 a.m. and noon shotgun start. Entry fee: \$100 per golfer, includes lunch, buffet dinner & prizes. For registration information, contact Kevin Scollan, (917) 710-8031.

Drive-Thru Potato Pancake Fest — **SEPT. 26 & 27**, sponsored by the Men's Club of Exaltation of the Holy Cross Parish, 420 Main Road, Hanover Township; held on the parish grounds Saturday, noon to 5 p.m., and Sunday, noon to 4 p.m. (vehicles may enter drive-thru from the Sans Souci Parkway). Cost: six

potato pancakes for \$10. Cash raffle drawing with \$25,000 in prizes held Sunday at approximately 5 p.m. For more information, call (570) 823-6242, or visit www.exhc.org.

Annual Parish Altar & Rosary Society Birthday Tea — **SEPT. 27**, honoring the 75th Anniversary of Gate of Heaven Parish in Dallas; annual event will be held from noon to 3 p.m. at Appletree Terrace at Newberry Estates, Dallas. Tickets cost \$35 and include dinner, desserts, coffee & teas, and musical entertainment by Changing Habits; event also features basket raffle and cash raffle drawings, and cash bar. All are welcome.

Annual Rosary Novena — **OCT. 3-11**, hosted at the Oblates of St. Joseph Chapel, Route 315, Laflin; services begin each evening at 6:30 p.m. Novena devotions include prayerful recitation of the Holy Rosary and Divine Mercy Chaplet, exposition & benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament, and a spiritual reflection offered by an invited priest or deacon of the Scranton Diocese. For more information, call the Oblates main office, (570) 654-7542.

Holy Dormition Secular Franciscans Retreat — **OCT. 4**, sponsored by the Holy Dormition Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order in the Greater Hazleton area (St. Katharine Drexel Region); Franciscan afternoon retreat held from 1 to 4 p.m. at St. John Bosco

Parish, 573 PA Route 93, Sugarloaf. Retreat leader: Father Brian J.W. Clarke, pastor of SS. Cyril & Methodius Church in Hazleton. Event marks the 800th anniversary of the "Transitus" — the earthly passing of St. Francis of Assisi on Oct. 3, 1226. All are welcome free of charge; reservations appreciated. Call Joan Pesta (570) 926-0326, or email: ofs.franciscan@gmail.com.

'Respect Life Sunday' Mass & Holy Hour — **OCT. 4**, sponsored by Pennsylvanians for Human Life; hosted at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Swoyersville. Respect Life Sunday Mass celebrated at 8:30 a.m. in Holy Trinity Church, 116 Hughes St., Swoyersville, followed by a Holy Hour; concluding with Benediction at 10:30 a.m. All faithful welcome to join in offering prayers for the sanctity of all human life.

Interfaith Vigil Against Hate Violence — **OCT. 4**, sponsored by the Social Concerns Committee of St. Maximilian Kolbe Parish in Pocono Pines and the area interfaith community; begins 3 p.m. at the parish worship site, 5112 Pocono Crest Road, Pocono Pines. Vigil theme: "A vision of healing, a voice of hope." All are welcome; for more information, call/text (570) 242-6165.

Cash Bingo — **OCT. 4**, sponsored by the Ladies of Mary Society of Exaltation of the Holy Cross Parish in Hanover Township;

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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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Centennial Saint Therese Novena begins Sept. 23

WILKES-BARRE — Saint Anthony & Saint George Maronite Catholic Church, 311 Park Ave., Wilkes-Barre, announces the 100th anniversary observance of its annual Novena in honor of Saint Therese of the Child Jesus that began in 1926.

The Maronite church will host this year's centennial Novena devotion beginning on Wednesday, Sept. 23, and continuing daily until the Feast of Saint Therese on Thursday, Oct. 1.

Novena prayers will be offered each day following the 6 p.m. Divine Liturgy, except on Saturday, Sept. 26, when the Holy Mass will be celebrated at 4 p.m., followed by the Novena devotions.

On the memorial feast of Saint Therese, Oct. 1, Mass will be celebrated at 6 p.m., including Novena prayers and veneration and blessing with the Saint Therese relic.

The feast day celebration will conclude with a reception in the church hall. All faithful are welcome to attend the centennial-year Novena celebration.

Catholic Happenings Around the Diocese of Scranton

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hosted at the Warrior Run Fire Hall, 316 Academy St., Warrior Run. Doors open at 11 a.m.; games begin 1 p.m. Admission cost: \$25 (in advance) or \$30 (at door), includes 15 regular bingo games, with \$100 cash prize each; final cover-all special wins \$1,000. Games party also includes five specials, door prizes, basket raffle, food & bake sales, and cash drawing. For tickets and more information, visit www.exhc.org or call (570) 823-6242.

CSS Fundraiser: "Racing to Raffles" — OCT. 9 & 10, sponsored by Catholic Social Services of Greater Hazleton; two-day event benefitting CSS programs & services will be held at Catholic Social Services Family Center, 106 South Church St., Hazleton. Begins with Preview Night on Friday, 4 to 6 p.m., when guests can purchase horses for \$10 each and raffle tickets for gift cards, lottery board, themed baskets, and more; light snacks available for purchase. Doors open at 4 p.m. for Race Night on Saturday, with dinner served at 6 p.m.; raffle drawings held between races. Race Night admission: \$10 (in advance); \$15 (at door). For information, call (570) 455-1521.

"America Needs Fatima" Public Square Rosary Crusade — OCT. 10, hosted by St. Jude Parish in Mountain Top; held in conjunction with more than 20,000 Rosary rallies across America, offered as penitential/conversion prayer gatherings for blessings on the United States through the intercession of the Blessed Mother. The public Rosary Rally begins at noon under the portico of St. Jude Church, Route 309, Mountain Top. For more information, contact Carmen at (570) 262-7373.

Lourdes Virtual Pilgrimage Experience — OCT. 11, hosted by St. Carlo Acutis Parish in Olyphant; virtual experience of Our Lady of Lourdes Shrine in France begins at 2:30 p.m. at St. Patrick Church, 200 Delaware Ave., Olyphant. Devotional experience includes Eucharistic adoration & benediction, and Rosary

prayers. Free-will offering accepted. For more information, call the parish office, (570) 489-0752.

Secular Discalced Carmelites Meeting — OCT. 11, monthly meeting of the Holy Annunciation Secular Community of Discalced Carmelites (OCDS); the community gathers on the second Sunday of the month, from noon to 4 p.m., at the Oblates of St. Joseph Seminary in Laffin. New members are most welcome. For more information and inquiries, contact Gina Romancheck at (570) 956-9272.

Parish Bingo Spectacular — OCT. 11, hosted by Mother, Mary of God Parish in Scranton; doors open at noon and games begin at 1 p.m. in Holy Rosary Center, 316 Market St., North Scranton. Admission fee: \$30, includes 16 regular games with \$150 prize each. Event features four mystery special games (\$5 each with \$300 to \$1,000 in prizes); homemade foods, door prizes, cash & lottery ticket raffle drawings. Advance reservations only; for tickets, call the parish rectory (570) 342-4881.

Rummage Sale — OCT. 12 & 13, sponsored by St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish, 116 Hughes St., Swoyersville; held in the school gymnasium. Sale hours: Monday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Tuesday (\$2 Bag Day), 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Includes bake sale and refreshments.

Weekly Bereavement Support Group Series — OCT. 12-NOV. 16, 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 participants to find healing following the loss of a loved one. All are welcome; advance registration required at stvgriefgroup@att.net or by calling the parish office (570) 775-6791.

"Theology on Tap" Series — OCT. 13, sponsored by the Catholic Community of Epiphany Parish, Sayre; gathering begins at 6:30 p.m. at Sam's Bar & Grill in Sayre. Open to young adults, ages 21 to 40. Cover

charge: \$5; additional drinks and meals are available for purchase.

52nd Annual Prayer Breakfast for Life — OCT. 17, sponsored by the Scranton Chapter of Pennsylvanians for Human Life (PHL); annual celebration begins 9 a.m. (doors open 8 a.m.) at Fiorelli's, 1501 Main St., Peckville. Guest speaker: Vince Smith, executive director, Keystone Family Alliance. Event features buffet breakfast, raffle baskets, and silent auction. For more information and reservations, call the Scranton PHL office at (570) 343-5099, or visit: HumanLifePA.org.

Cash Bingo Bonanza — OCT. 18, hosted by Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish in Dickson City; doors open at noon and games begin 2 p.m. Admission cost: \$30, in advance; \$35, at door. Games party includes 17 bingo games, each with a minimum prize of \$300. Special

games' cash prizes range from \$500 to \$1,500. Event also features bonus gift card & basket raffles, and cash drawings; food and beverages for

sale. For advance tickets and more information, contact the parish office (570) 489-2091.



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