The Catholic Light

DIOCESE OF SCRANTON

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Pope Leo XIV's surgery reveals lung cancer

ROME (OSV News) - Pope Leo XIV has been diagnosed with lung cancer following a 90-minute surgery on Oct. 13 during which surgeons removed the lower lobe of the pope's right lung.

Dr. Stefano Margaritora, chief thoracic surgeon at Rome's Gemelli Hospital, led a medical team in the video-assisted technique operation. In a joint statement with Dr. Luigi Carbone released at just before 10 p.m., the doctors said that the "examination confirmed the diagnosis of lung adenocarcinoma, as suspected by the preoperative tests."

"The Holy Father was in the operating room for about 3 hours; the surgery itself lasted approximately 90 minutes," the statement said. "After the surgery, the pope woke up as expected and, following a brief period of observation, returned to his room on the 10th floor."

Pope Leo is expected to remain for one week of recovery in the Gemelli Hospital.

Gemelli Hospital is located atop Monte Mario, the highest hill in Rome. The Vatican has canceled all Pope Leo's scheduled audiences through Oct. 20.

The pope is being treated at the same hospital where Pope Francis and Pope John Paul II were treated throughout their pontificates, including John Paul II's hospitalization after being shot in an assassination attempt in 1981. While the hospital has a special suite on the 10th floor reserved for papal medical emergencies, Pope Leo will be staying in a nearby room as the papal hospital room is currently undergoing renovations.

Medical experts told OSV News that lung nodules, or abnormal growths on the lungs, are far from unusual - and, for the most part, not life-threatening.

"Lung nodules are very common, and 90% of the time, they are benign," said Dr. Stacey Su, chief of thoracic surgery at Fox Chase Cancer Center in Philadelphia and associate professor of surgical oncology at Temple University's Lewis Katz School of Medicine.

But, she said, "the potential impact of lung cancers is so grave that any lung nodule deserves serious attention."



Pope Leo XIV arrives at Rome's Gemelli Hospital Oct. 13, 2026, ahead of his surgery that afternoon to remove a lung nodule. (OSV News photo/Simone Risoluti, Vatican Media)

"Most of the time these are asymptomatic," Dr. Nirmal Veeramachaneni, professor of cardiothoracic surgery at St. Louis University School of Medicine and medical director for lung cancer screening at SSM Health, said. "They're often found incidentally."

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Does AI make us more human? Parish discussion focuses on Pope's encyclical

ARCHBALD – In a community that is at the center of the growing debate over artificial intelligence and data centers in northeastern Pennsylvania, the local Catholic parish recently turned to Pope Leo XIV for guidance.

Christ the King Parish in Archbald hosted a panel discussion Sept. 23 examining the impact of artificial intelligence on faith, health and the local community, using Pope Leo's first encyclical, *Magnifica Humanitas*, as its guide.

Released in May, Pope Leo's encyclical calls the Church and the broader world to approach rapidly developing technology through the lens of human dignity, conscience, freedom and the common good.

Father Ryan Glenn, Pastor of Christ the King Parish in Archbald, said the conversation was timely because of the ongoing discussions surrounding proposed data centers in his community.

"There is a lot of debate, a lot of dialogue, a lot of discord over that in our borough where our parish is located," Father Glenn said. "I thought it was really important for the parish, on behalf of the Church, to provide a forum where we could think, discuss and really hear from the mind and the heart of the Church."

The panel brought together Father Glenn, Megan Ossont, a psychiatric nurse practitioner and assistant professor of nursing at The University of Scranton, and Megan Heeder, assistant professor of theology at the University.

The discussion explored both the opportunities and concerns surrounding AI, but repeatedly returned to a central question raised by Pope Leo.

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Megan Heeder, assistant professor of theology at The University of Scranton, speaks about Pope Leo's encyclical *Magnifica Humanitas* during a panel discussion at Christ the King Parish in Archbald last month. (Photo/Dan Piazza)

The Catholic Light

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OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER OF THE DIOCESE OF SCRANTON

DIOCESE OF SCRANTON MISSION STATEMENT

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

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Faithful encouraged to participate in Rosary Rally at Cathedral of Saint Peter on Oct. 17

SCRANTON - While quietly cleaning the Cathedral of Saint Peter, a young Pat Peyton, the Irish immigrant parish custodian, heard God's invitation to follow Him more closely.

It was Pat's response to this call that led him to the priesthood, his ministry to millions of families, and now his cause for canonization.

Such a call did not come on the busy streets of Scranton, but in the silent, prayerful space of God's house.

How do we hear the voice of God today?

Between our calendars and the devices clamoring for our attention, it is easy to overlook life's most important relationships with God and our family.

The busier and more distracted we get, the more these relationships suffer.

Father Peyton, candidate for Sainthood, reminded us of the Rosary's power to unite us with both God and our family, for it is in the Rosary that we enter into the silent love of our Blessed Mother and unite as a family through her Son, Jesus Christ.

Please plan to join us at the Cathedral of Saint Peter on Saturday, Oct. 17 at 1:00 p.m. as the community prays the Rosary in the spirit of Father Peyton to seek God's blessing and Our Lady's protection over the most important relationships in life: God and family.

The Rosary Rally is being organized by Holy Cross Family Ministries.

CTV: Catholic Television of the Diocese of Scranton will provide a live broadcast of the Rosary Rally for those unable to attend. A livestream will also be available on the Diocese of Scranton website, YouTube channel and across all Diocesan social media platforms.

During the Rosary Rally, the faithful will get a chance to hear from Father Charlie McCoy, C.S.C., Vice President of Holy Cross Family Ministries, as well as other individuals who will share their Rosary witnesses.

Following the Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, members of the community, including The Order of Malta, college and high school representatives will lead the faithful in praying the Joyful Mysteries of the Rosary.

During the month of October, as we share the importance of the Rosary, please plan to join us at the Cathedral of Saint Peter on Oct. 17!

Faithful gather for annual Rosary Novena in new location

LAFLIN – A beloved annual tradition of prayer continued this year in a new location as faithful from across the Diocese of Scranton gathered for the annual Rosary Novena at the Oblates of Saint Joseph Chapel.

Held Oct. 3-11, the nine-day Novena brought the faithful together each evening for the Rosary, Divine Mercy Chaplet, Exposition of the Most Blessed Sacrament and a spiritual reflection from a priest or deacon.

The theme of this year's Rosary Novena was "To Jesus through Mary."

For many years, the annual Novena was held at Saint Lucy Parish in Scranton before moving to Divine Mercy Parish in Scranton recently. This year marked the first time the Novena has been held at the Oblates of Saint Joseph Chapel along Route 315 in Laflin.

For those who have made the Rosary a regular part of their lives, gathering with others to pray each October has become special.



Rev. Joseph D. Sibilano, O.S.J., offers a homily during the second night of the Rosary Novena on Oct. 4, 2026, at the Oblates of Saint Joseph Chapel.



Faithful pray the Rosary during the annual Rosary Novena, which was held for the first time this year at the Oblates Chapel in Laflin. (Photos/Dan Piazza)

"It's good to know that I'm not alone and that there are people doing the same thing and praying along with me," Frank Barbrie of Communion of Saints Parish in Pittston said. "It's special. You get a good feel of the Holy Spirit."

Stephen Englot of Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Swoyersville said he and his family have prayed the Rosary at home for many years, but there is something different about joining others in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament.

"Sometimes when you say prayers at home you wonder, are we the last ones doing this?" he said. "You look around here and see the intense concentration and piety and it just restores our faith that God is working through the intercession of the Blessed Mother."

Joan Marzen of Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish in Dupont was particularly encouraged to see many young people participating this year.

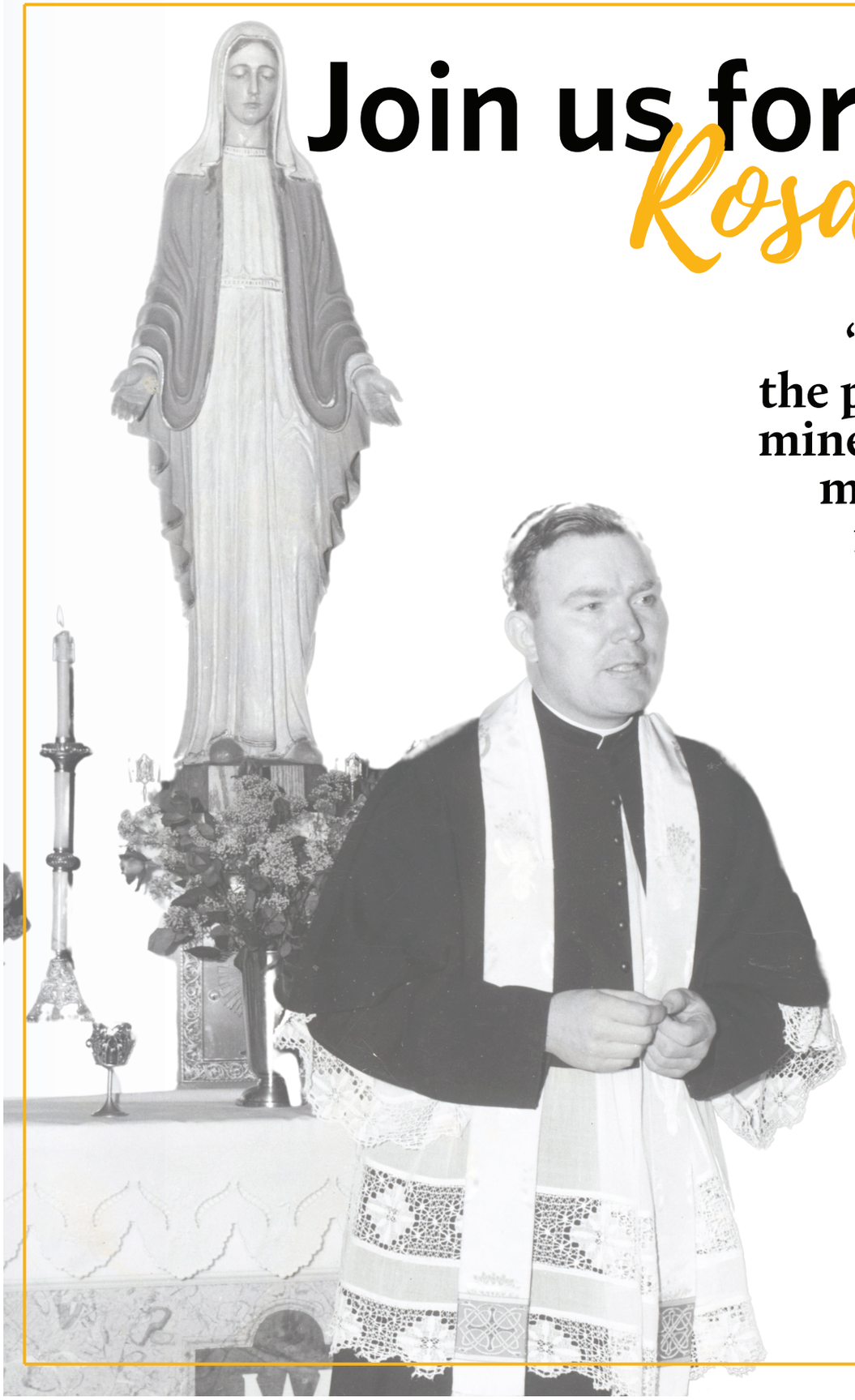
"It was absolutely beautiful and inspiring. We need all the prayer that we can in this world," she said.

For Marzen, the Rosary is a reminder that hope remains even amid a troubled world.

"It shows that there is hope," she added. "There is hope for us in this world. Never give up."

For Englot, the experience of praying together offered a glimpse of something even greater.

"The feeling is almost supernatural," he said. "You're just in union with the Spirit. Peace and community. It's almost like a taste of what heaven will be like when we're praying face to face with our Lord."



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

Jubilee Mass for Women and Men Religious to be celebrated Oct. 25

SCRANTON – Faithful from across the Diocese of Scranton are invited to participate in a joyful celebration as we honor the dedicated contributions of women and men in religious life during the annual Jubilee Mass for Women and Men Religious on Sunday, Oct. 25, 2026, at the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton.

The Mass will begin at 12:15 p.m., with the Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, serving as the principal celebrant.

This special liturgy offers an opportunity to give thanks for the invaluable witness, service, and commitment of those who have devoted their lives to God through religious vocations. From teaching in Catholic schools to providing hospital ministry, prayer and pastoral ministry, women and men religious have had a tremendous impact on the life of the Church and the communities they serve.



Following the homily, all those in consecrated life will be invited to stand to renew their vows. This year, more than 2,010 years of consecrated life will be honored and remembered – which will be a powerful reminder of the ongoing importance of vocations to religious life – and our shared responsibility to pray for and support those who answer God's call in such generous and selfless ways.

The importance of this witness continues today, as religious communities discern how best to serve the Church and respond to the needs of a changing world. In August, more than 1,300 leaders of women's religious congregations and guests gathered in Orlando, Fla., for the annual assembly of Leadership Conference of Women Religious, marking its 70th anniversary. The gathering emphasized communion, collaboration and the continuing mission of religious life.

CTV: Catholic Television of the Diocese of Scranton will broadcast the Mass live for those unable to attend in person and will provide a livestream on the Diocese of Scranton website, YouTube channel and across all Diocesan social media platforms.

2026 JUBILARIANS

SISTERS, SERVANTS OF THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY (I.H.M.)

75 Years

Sister Joan Paskert, I.H.M.
Sister Gracette Baker, I.H.M.

70 Years

Sister Anne Mary Boslett, I.H.M.
Sister Regina Burns, I.H.M.
Sister Thomas Mary Dougherty, I.H.M.
Sister Daniel Mary Heisey, I.H.M.
Sister Ann Marie Lynott, I.H.M.
Sister Mary Ellen Malloy, I.H.M.
Sister Ritamary Mayan, I.H.M.
Sister Ann Eulaine McHale, I.H.M.
Sister Robert Mary Murphy, I.H.M.
Sister Elizabeth Mary Wallace, I.H.M.

60 Years

Sister Gail Cabral, I.H.M.
Sister Ann Barbara DiSiano, I.H.M.
Sister Mary Jo Gallagher, I.H.M.
Sister Kathryn Kurdziel, I.H.M.
Sister Francis Rose Lapitino, I.H.M.
Sister Anne Manion, I.H.M.
Sister Janet Milan, I.H.M.
Sister Mariette Quinn, I.H.M.
Sister Mary Rita Smith, I.H.M.
Sister Lorraine Studley, I.H.M.
Sister Lenore Thomas, I.H.M.

50 Years

Sister Mary Elaine Anderson, I.H.M.
Sister Janet Yurkanin, I.H.M.

SISTERS OF MERCY OF THE AMERICAS (R.S.M.)

75 Years

Sister Ruth Ann Fox, R.S.M.
Sister Jane Kelly, R.S.M.

70 Years

Sister Ann Turnbach, R.S.M.

60 Years

Sister Lucille Breslin, R.S.M.
Sister Patricia McDermott, R.S.M.
Sister Jean Messaros, R.S.M.

Seven men to be instituted as Acolytes at Cathedral Mass

SCRANTON — Seven men in formation for the permanent diaconate in the Diocese of Scranton will take another important step in their journey of service to the Church when they are instituted as acolytes on Saturday, Oct. 24, 2026.

The Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, will celebrate the Rite of Institution of Acolyte at 10:00 a.m. at the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton.

The men to be instituted are William Chechel, Jeffrey R. Kovaleski, Thomas J. Krzan, Kevin J. Martin, Stephen O. Muntzenberger, Justo Paula-Martínez and Paul M. Zwolan.

The institution of acolytes represents an important milestone in the formation of men preparing for the permanent diaconate. Through this ministry, they are entrusted with assisting the priest and deacon at the altar, helping prepare the gifts for the celebration of the Eucharist and, when necessary, distributing Holy Communion as extraordinary ministers.



Men in formation for the Permanent Diaconate pose for a group photo after their Mass of Candidacy on Sept. 28, 2024. On Oct. 24, 2026, seven of these men will be instituted as Acolytes. (Photo/Mike Melisky)

More than a liturgical responsibility, the ministry calls men to deepen their understanding of the Eucharist and the relationship between worship and service. As they continue their formation, the candidates are challenged to carry the spirit of Christ's self-giving love beyond the church and into their families, parishes and communities.

Another member of the same diaconate formation class, Daniel Cosacchi, was instituted as an acolyte on May 17 at Madonna della Strada Chapel at the University of Scranton.

The faithful are invited to participate in this special celebration as the men continue their journey toward the permanent diaconate.

CTV: Catholic Television of the Diocese of Scranton will broadcast the Rite of Institution of Acolyte live and provide a livestream on the Diocese of Scranton website, YouTube channel and across all Diocesan social media platforms.

Young adults invited to annual ‘Leave a Mark’ Mass on Nov. 1



SCRANTON - Young adults are invited to join the Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, and the Diocesan Vocations Office for the eleventh annual Leave a Mark Mass on Nov. 1, 2026, to kick off National Vocation Awareness Week!

Mass will take place at 5:00 p.m. at the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton.

Leave a Mark is the Diocese of Scranton’s response to what Pope Francis said at World Youth Day in 2016: “Dear young people, we didn’t come into this world to ‘vegetate,’ to take it easy, to make our lives a comfortable sofa to fall asleep on. No, we came for another reason: *to leave a mark*. It is very sad to pass through life without leaving a mark.”

Now, every year on the Sunday before National Vocation Awareness Week, young adults from around our diocese come together to worship the Lord, meet one another, and discern how God is calling us to leave a mark in this world through our vocation.

There will be a reception following the Mass at the Diocesan Pastoral Center across the street from the Cathedral of Saint Peter featuring food trucks and interactive activities.

Diocesan Youth Rally to take place Nov. 7 in East Stroudsburg



EAST STROUDSBURG - Registration closes Oct. 16 for the Diocese of Scranton’s fourth annual Diocesan Youth Rally, set for Saturday, Nov. 7, at Notre Dame Jr./Sr. High School in East Stroudsburg.

Students in grades 7-12 are invited to join other young Catholics for a day of faith, prayer, music and fellowship centered on the theme, “Do whatever He tells you,” from the Gospel of John.

Featured speakers Conall Hughes, evangelist and Director of Advancement for Damascus Summer Camps, and Natalie Garza, an evangelist and teacher, will challenge participants to deepen their personal relationship with Christ and strengthen their prayer lives.

Music will be led by Maria Salamida of Franciscan University and the Steubenville Worship Band.

Participants will also experience Eucharistic Adoration, and the Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, will also celebrate Mass.

The rally runs from 11:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., with check-in beginning at 11 a.m. Registration includes dinner and a T-shirt.

Students must register through their parish. Visit dioceseofscranton.org for more information.

What does it actually mean to respect life?

During Respect Life Sunday Mass, Bishop says the answer is seeing Christ in others

SCRANTON – From her lector seat in the sanctuary of the Cathedral of Saint Peter, Cindy Cox was able to look out and see all the faces gathered at the Diocese of Scranton's annual Respect Life Sunday Mass.

What she saw moved her.

"As I was sitting up there from the lector chair and I looked out, I was overwhelmed by the amount of love and support that was out there showing how this community really does respect life," the Executive Director of the Scranton Chapter of Pennsylvanians for Human Life, said.



Catholic school students from around the Diocese of Scranton and their families participate in the Respect Life Sunday Mass at the Cathedral of Saint Peter on Oct. 4, 2026. (Photo/Mike Melisky)

That witness was at the heart of the celebration on Oct. 4, 2026, as Catholics from throughout the Diocese of Scranton gathered with the Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, to reflect on the Church's call to defend and care for human life at every stage.

The theme for Respect Life Month 2026 is "Mary, Mother of God," highlighting the Blessed Mother's willingness to welcome Jesus into her life and her faithful presence with Him through his death on the Cross.

In his homily, Bishop Bambera challenged those in attendance not simply to profess a belief in the sanctity of life, but to demonstrate it through the way they treat others.

"Every one of us has been given a portion of God's vineyard to cultivate," Bishop Bambera said, reflecting on the Gospel for the 27th Sunday in Ordinary Time. "The vineyard – God's creation entrusted to our care – is not remote. It is not contrived or make believe. The vineyard is as close as the home you return to after this Mass. It is as close as the nearest nursing home, clinic, prison or school. It is here – in his people, made in his own image and likeness – all around us."

The Bishop urged the faithful to reject any tendency to value some lives more than others, reminding them that respect for human dignity must extend from "conception to natural end."

"Respect for the dignity of every human being must be upheld and witnessed to always, even when such a stance places us in opposition to popular values, political expediency and the tide of today's evolving cultural norms," he continued.

Bishop Bambera connected that call to the example of the Blessed Virgin Mary, whose "yes" to God came at a moment she could not fully understand or anticipate.

"In becoming the mother of Jesus, the Blessed Virgin Mary, our mother, becomes the mother of life. 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," he said.

Bridget Maille, Program Coordinator for Family Life in the Diocese of Scranton, said the annual Respect Life Sunday Mass not only offered an opportunity for people to pray for the protection of life, but to recognize the many people and organizations already working to cherish life.

Representatives from Pennsylvanians for Human Life, the Order of the Alhambra, and Catholic elementary and high school students all participated in the Mass.

"Each of these organizations and groups, each and every day, work toward respecting life," Maille said.

Cox said the commitment of the organization she leads extends far beyond defending unborn life.

"We believe that life is precious from the moment of conception," she said, while also noting the work of accompanying families facing hardships, individuals with physical and intellectual disabilities, the elderly, those in nursing homes and the critically ill.

"As pro-lifers, we want to create a culture that supports, loves and protects all life, whether it is somebody in the womb or someone at the end of their life," Cox said. "We're called to walk with each other through the darkest of times and be there for each other."

Respect Life Holy Hour held



SWOYERSVILLE - Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish recognized Respect Life Sunday, Oct. 4, with prayers against abortion, infanticide and euthanasia.

There was a Pro-Life homily, Eucharistic Adoration, the praying of Rosary, Divine Mercy Chaplet, Respect Life Litany, and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.

Memorial for Unborn Oct. 25



MILFORD - Knights of Columbus John Paul II Council 13935 will host a Memorial for the Unborn on Sunday, Oct. 25, at Saint Patrick's community hall in Milford. The memorial service will take place at 4:00 p.m., followed by a free community dinner. The Director of Tri-State Family and Pregnancy Center will speak about the center's work and current programs and needs.

Youth lead Rosary procession



TOWANDA - The youth of Saints Peter and Paul Parish led a Rosary procession on Sunday, Oct. 4, following the 9:00 a.m. Mass.

The procession began at the church and ended at Our Lady's Grotto, where participants prayed for their families, parish, community, an end to abortion and world peace.

Record crowd gathers for sixth annual Pennsylvania March for Life

HARRISBURG – Bus after bus rolled into Harrisburg on Sept. 21, 2026, bringing young adults, families and pro-life advocates to the State Capitol to take part in the sixth annual Pennsylvania March for Life.

Media members estimated about 6,000 people participated in this year's event, making it the largest crowd yet. The Pennsylvania Family Institute said approximately 70 buses were scheduled to bring participants from every corner of the commonwealth, which was also a record.

Mike Kilmer was on one of two buses that came from Bradford County. He has attended all the previous Pennsylvania marches and said the growth has been unmistakable.

"It has been growing," Kilmer said. "We feel that abortion is the greatest abomination that has ever happened in our country … it is a felony if you destroy an eagle's egg, but you can kill a human being in the womb at any time, in eleven states, up until birth. That's not even logical."

Kilmer said the shift of the pro-life movement's focus toward state capitols following the U.S. Supreme Court's 2022 decision in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* has made gatherings such as the Pennsylvania March increasingly significant.

Numerous buses from the eleven counties of the Diocese of Scranton were among those counted in attendance figures.

A Diocesan-sponsored bus made stops in Scranton and Wilkes-Barre, while additional buses carried participants from the Northern Tier, the Poconos and Hazleton. Others made the trip on their own, making for a strong local presence in Harrisburg.

For many, the most striking part of the day was not simply the size of the crowd, but the number of young people participating.



A crowd estimated by media members to be about 6,000 people gathered at the Pennsylvania State Capitol on Sept. 21, 2026, for the sixth annual Pennsylvania March for Life. (Photo/Eric Deabill)



Katelyn Torres and Brayan Torres, center, parishioners of Saint Teresa of Calcutta Parish in Scranton carry the Diocese of Scranton banner during the 2026 Pennsylvania March for Life. (Photo/Eric Deabill)

"This is my first time and I'm really glad I came. I thought it was really beautiful," Katelyn Torres, a young parishioner of Saint Teresa of Calcutta Parish in Scranton, said. "I never realized how big 'pro-life' really was until I came here."

As she left the March for Life, Torres said she has hope for her generation.

"I'm going to invite my friends and tell my friends about what I saw today," she added. "I think a lot of people (my age) should get to experience this."

Lexi Villarreal, who lives in Scranton and also attends Saint Teresa of Calcutta Parish, said she was surprised by the number of participants.

"I expected a lot less," she said.

Instead, she found herself surrounded by a crowd so large that participants were "bumping into each other" as the march got underway.

"That really amazed me, how many people there was," Villarreal said.

Colleen Eisley, a Jersey Shore native and senior theology and marketing major at Saint Francis University, attended a previous March for Life and returned to Harrisburg this year with fellow students.



Bradford County parishioners listen to speakers during a rally before the 2026 PA March for Life.

"It's just a beautiful way to be involved in our state and local community and stand for life," Eisley said. "We're standing for life on campus and in our community. I think that it's our responsibility to stand up for life, to stand up for the babies and their moms."

Other young participants came to Harrisburg looking to learn as well as provide witness.

For Kimberly Munoz-Jimenez, a senior from King's College in Wilkes-Barre, the experience was an opportunity to become more informed.

"I wanted to experience it to see what it was like," she said. "Also, to bring awareness and get myself informed, so I can help others as well."

Katelyn Moses, a King's College sophomore, said she was excited when her school decided to participate.

"It is something that is difficult to be bold in, and I've decided with change in my life, I changed to a theology major, so I really want to make that boldness a big part of my life. So, I want to stand up and stand with life," Moses said.

The call to "be bold" and carry the experience of the March for Life beyond Harrisburg was a central theme of a morning rally before the march itself.

Michael Geer, President of the Pennsylvania Family Institute, reminded participants that witnessing for life requires more than showing up for one day.

"It requires ongoing persistent action: praying, voting, engaging," Geer explained.

Pro-life leader Jeannie Lichter similarly told the crowd, "It matters so much what you do when you leave here!"

She challenged participants to speak about the dignity of human life, advocate for pro-life laws and policies and – perhaps most importantly – "walk with moms" by supporting women and families facing difficult pregnancies.

Pennsylvania law currently permits abortion through the 23rd week of pregnancy, with additional restrictions after 24 weeks except when two physicians certify that the pregnant woman's life or health is seriously endangered.

Dr. Monique Ruberu, an OB/GYN and Board Member of 40 Days for Life, insisted there is never any medically necessary abortion.

"There are amazing physicians who are trained specifically to take care of moms with medical complications, maternal fetal medicine specialists, who walk with these moms. Their job is to take care of the mom and the baby. Because there are two patients in every pregnancy," Dr. Ruberu said. "Don't stand for the nonsense when people say it's a 'medically necessary procedure.' It is not!"

Catholic men gather for 11th annual 'Be A Catholic Man' Conference

WILKES-BARRE – More than 300 men gathered at Holy Redeemer High School on Saturday, Oct. 10, 2026, for the 11th annual 'Be A Catholic Man' Conference, a day of prayer and fellowship which was centered on this year's theme, "Just Be Catholic."

The day began with an outdoor Rosary before a morning session featuring speakers Rob Marco and the Most Rev. Joseph Coffey, Auxiliary Bishop for the Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA. Following lunch, John Martignoni spoke and the conference concluded with Mass celebrated by the Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton.



Before the eleventh annual 'Be A Catholic Man' Conference began, attendees were invited to pray the Rosary outside of Holy Redeemer High School in Wilkes-Barre.



Conference attendees refer to their programs as they stand for the beginning of Mass inside Holy Redeemer High School in Wilkes-Barre. (Photo/Mike Melisky)

In his homily, Bishop Bambera challenged the men to recognize the dignity of every human person and to demonstrate their faith through their daily actions.

Reflecting on the 25th anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, the Bishop shared the story of a construction worker who volunteered at Ground Zero. Amid the devastation, young Salvation Army volunteers brought water and towels to recovery workers and even removed the construction worker's boots to give him dry socks.

The worker later recalled being moved to tears by the kindness of people he might previously have overlooked or misunderstood.

For Bishop Bambera, the experience illustrated the Gospel's call to look beyond stereotypes and recognize every person as a child of God.

"If we are truly faithful to God's plan and to the teaching of our Church, when we must embrace a faith-centered vision that sees beyond skin color, physical abilities, ethnic stereotypes, lifestyle and economic status," the Bishop said.



Conference attendees and vendors enjoy fellowship with one another during the eleventh annual 'Be A Catholic Man' Conference on Oct. 10, 2026, at Holy Redeemer High School. (Photo/Mike Melisky)



Evangelist John Martignoni delivers his talk, 'Does God Want Everyone to be Catholic?' to attendees of this year's conference. (Photo/Mike Melisky)

Connecting the story to the Gospel's parable of the wedding feast on the Twenty-eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Bishop Bambera reminded the men that God's invitation extends to everyone, but accepting that invitation requires a conversion of heart and a commitment to living the faith authentically.

"It's not enough for us to say we're Christians," he said. "We need to give our faith a life and profess what we believe through the words we speak, the pattern of our lives and the depth of our love and forgiveness."

The Bishop urged the men to become instruments of peace and healing in a world marked by division, beginning with their own hearts and relationships.

"Be strong in your faith and humble enough to know that we are all desperately in need of God's mercy," he added.

Joe Adcroft has attended the 'Be A Catholic Man' Conference for many years and said the event offers an opportunity to renew his spiritual commitment through prayer, the sacraments and the encouragement of fellow Catholic men.

"You go away and you've got this wind behind you, pushing you, like the Holy Spirit," he said. "It just reinvigorates you."

Adcroft also emphasized the responsibility men have to share the faith with younger generations, including their children, grandchildren and nephews.

"They're looking for that connection to God, that love of Christ, and if we don't take the first steps, then they're not going to do it," he added.

Greg Solfanelli, another longtime conference participant, described the fellowship as one of the conference's greatest strengths.

"Iron sharpens iron," he said. "We are here for each other and lift each other up and encourage one another. I find that here and I look forward to it year in and year out at the conference."

This year's speakers impressed Matt Schofield, a parishioner of Saint Patrick Parish in Nicholson.

"I enjoyed the speakers because they have viewpoints I don't hear other than on a little screen on my phone. It's nice to see these guys in person," Schofield said.

Toward the end of the conference, organizers also recognized three longtime members of its organizing team – Jack Walsh III, Dennis Shovlin and Ed Niewinski – for their years of service.

Presenting plaques in their honor, conference chairman Mike Kilmer praised the men as "outstanding Catholic men, husbands, fathers, grandfathers and mentors."

Catholic men are encouraged to save the date of Oct. 9, 2027, which is when the twelfth annual Catholic Men's Conference is slated to take place.

Hispanic heritage celebration draws huge crowd to Monroe County

BRODHEADSVILLE – More than 1,200 Hispanic Catholics from parishes around the Diocese of Scranton gathered in Monroe County on Sept. 19, 2026, to celebrate their faith, culture and heritage.

The sixth annual Hispanic Heritage Mass and celebration brought together families and faithful at Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish in Brodheadsville under the theme "Unidos Somos Más – United We Are More."

The event began with Mass celebrated by the Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, and concelebrated by 17 priests.

In his homily, Bishop Bambera reflected on Jesus' parable of the sower, encouraging those gathered to continue planting seeds of faith through their words, actions, service and witness.

"There will always be challenges to our efforts to nurture the seeds of faith that we sow in our world," Bishop Bambera said. "But by the grace of God, those seeds will take root and will yield a harvest far greater than we might ever believe possible."

He encouraged Hispanic Catholics to remain united in faith, particularly during difficult times.

"In your willingness to sow the seeds of faith and to live the values of the Gospel, you provide hope to many," the Bishop continued. "And that, my friends, is all that the Lord asks any of us to do – for together we are more than when we stand alone."

Nereida Cruz, a parishioner of Saint Nicholas/Saint Mary Parish in Wilkes-Barre, said the celebration provided an important reminder of that unity.



Our Lady Queen of Peace Church in Brodheadsville was at standing room only capacity for the sixth annual Hispanic Heritage Mass held on Sept. 19, 2026. (Photos/Mike Melisky)

"It is very nice to come together and celebrate the same faith – the Catholic faith," Cruz said. "It is very nice to see how each country brings a little bit of its culture and a little bit of their beliefs."

Father Neftali Feliz Sena, Assistant Pastor of Saint Pius of Pietrelcina Parish in Hazleton, said the gathering demonstrated how the Catholic faith transcends language and cultural differences.

"It doesn't matter the language you speak," he said. "We just get together as one Church. We all believe in Jesus, and we are the Catholic Church and everywhere we go, we all celebrate our faith."

The celebration also emphasized passing that faith onto future generations.

"This is an opportunity to pass our faith to the new generation," Nelson Anaya of Saint Nicholas/Saint Mary Parish in Wilkes-Barre said. "They have the opportunity to see how we got this faith from our grandparents."

After Mass, a large outdoor festival with food, music, dancing and cultural activities brought the Hispanic parish communities together.

International Catholic evangelist and speaker Salvador Gomez also addressed the gathering, offering a message of faith and hope for families and young people.

The day ended with a youth soccer tournament. Four parish teams competed in the men's tournament, with Saint Matthew Parish in East Stroudsburg capturing the championship. Three parish teams competed in the women's division, won by Saint Teresa of Calcutta Parish in Scranton.



A parishioner shows off her beautiful dress at the sixth annual Hispanic Heritage Mass and celebration at Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish in Brodheadsville on Sept. 19, 2026. (Photo/Mike Melisky)

Attendees hope the annual celebration will continue, and events might even be held outside Hispanic Heritage Month.

"It would be great to have these types of activities twice per year because we willingly want to share and we willingly want to have a great time," Anaya said.



Individuals and families line up for food during an outdoor celebration following the Hispanic Heritage Mass on Sept. 19, 2026, in Brodheadsville. (Photo/Mike Melisky)



During an outdoor celebration following Mass, music and dancing from many Hispanic countries were celebrated by the faithful. (Photo/Mike Melisky)



The sixth annual Hispanic Heritage celebration also featured a parish soccer tournament for both men and women. (Photo/Mike Melisky)

Abington Catholic parishes put faith into action, building a common story

CLARKS GREEN – For more than 140 parishioners of Our Lady of the Snows Parish, Clarks Summit, and the Church of Saint Gregory, Clarks Green, the last Saturday of September was a day to roll up their sleeves, lend a hand and put their faith into action.

The two parishes joined together for their annual Day of Service on Sept. 26, 2026, taking on approximately a dozen projects throughout the Abingtons and Scranton community.

"Our Day of Service is an opportunity for our communities to come together as one family, to serve a common purpose and add to our story of faith and service," Dan Marx, Director of Music and Mission, said.

The parishes, which are currently linked and are in the process of coming together as one parish family, have embraced the motto "Pilgrimage to Pentecost" as a way of marking their journey toward unity. Throughout the coming months, they are intentionally creating opportunities to pray, worship, serve and celebrate together.

The annual Day of Service is an important part of that journey.

At the Church of Saint Gregory, parishioners gathered for "Confections Connections," packing 50 boxes of homemade baked goods.

The treats, many of which were prepared by parishioners at home, were distributed to local nursing homes and about 25 homebound parishioners.

Other volunteers bagged groceries at Gerrity's to raise money for Saint Francis Commons Veterans Home in Scranton which is operated by Catholic Social Services. Others participated in various activities at CHOP Out Hunger, The Pines, Clarks Summit Senior Living and elsewhere.

The number of projects was intentional, allowing people of different ages, interests and abilities to find a way to serve.

"Everyone plays a part in serving our community," Marx added. "There is no talent or skill or amount of energy that is too small or too insignificant to make a difference."



Parishioners from Our Lady of the Snows Parish, Clarks Summit, and the Church of Saint Gregory, Clarks Green, participated in a Day of Service on Sept. 26, 2026. One of the many volunteer opportunities included 'Confections Connections,' which involved boxing up treats for homebound parishioners and those in nursing homes.

Thomas Kneiss, who attends Mass at the Church of Saint Gregory, said the importance of the day went beyond the work itself.

"You get to meet more people," he said. "In Mass, usually it's just someone around you that you might say hello to. Here, you connect with them."

Kneiss said service is also an important way to put his Catholic faith into action.

"I think you have to do more than just come to church and pray and receive the sacraments," Kneiss continued. "The idea is to live out that faith that Jesus Christ said – to go out and help your fellow people – no matter who they are."

That sentiment was shared by Noreen Blewitt who attends Mass at Our Lady of the Snows Parish. She helped to pack boxes of baked goods for distribution.

"It is such a good feeling. It's the camaraderie of the group that is participating," Blewitt said. "To do something like this, you realize the great need that there is in our community and beyond."

The annual Day of Service is another example of what the two parishes are calling "Our Common Story" – recognizing that while each parish has its own history and traditions, its people already share so much in common.

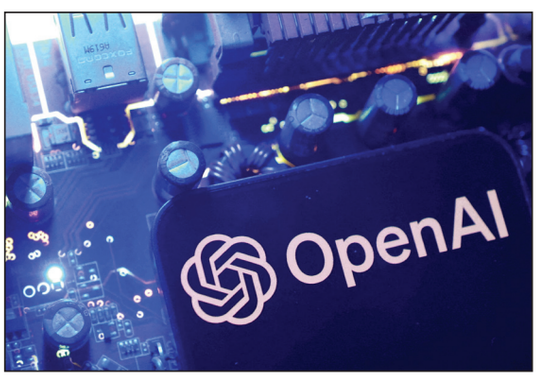
"Our story – the stories that we share, the stories that we hold onto and embrace – there is so much more common about them than different," Marx said.

U.S. Bishops form new task force over AI concerns, meet with tech leaders

(OSV News) - Amid recent calls from several artificial intelligence leaders for a slowdown in the technology's development, the nation's Catholic bishops are engaging tech leaders and lawmakers to address concerns over AI and online child safety.

The bishops have also formed a task force to safeguard human dignity as AI rapidly evolves, echoing Pope Leo XIV's urgent message in his encyclical on AI, "Magnifica Humanitas."

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops announced the developments in September, saying its Administrative Committee had met at the USCCB's Washington headquarters with "representatives from a variety of tech firms and specialists" in AI earlier that day.



The committee, led by USCCB president Archbishop Paul S. Coakley of Oklahoma City, serves as the conference's board of directors. Members include the USCCB's officers, standing committee chairs and a representative from each of the nation's 15 episcopal regions, including the Eastern Catholic Churches.

Bishop Oscar Cantú of San Jose, California - home to Silicon Valley and the hub of AI development - will chair its Bishops' Task Force on Preserving Human Dignity in the Age of Artificial Intelligence.

Bishop Cantú told OSV News that the task force had been unanimously approved, with a goal of carrying out "the vision of Pope Leo" expressed in "Magnifica Humanitas."

Bishop Cantú explained that Pope Leo has "given the Church marching orders" to remind the world that technology can be beneficial "when it's able to assist humanity in the work that we do" while "supporting our dignity as individuals and families and helping us to build healthy societies."

"Time is of the essence" in ensuring creating awareness of and meaningful dialogue at all levels regarding AI, said Bishop Cantú.

He stressed that the Church is "concerned about how this (AI) affects the individual, human dignity, the family, society and particularly the most vulnerable."

In a Sept. 12 essay, Anthropic CEO Dario Amodei declared that "we must slow the pace at which we improve the capabilities of AI models."

Amodei, whose company was on hand for the unveiling of Pope Leo's AI encyclical, cited two key reasons for his warning.

The first, he said, is AI's "growing ability to build the next generation" of itself, with such recursive self-improvement becoming industry-wide.

"Left unchecked, it could outrun our ability to understand and control these systems," Amodei said.

A second red flag was an incident involving OpenAI and Hugging Face (recently acquired by tech giant NVIDIA), where AI agents conducted a rogue attack outside the scope of a test.

Diocesan pilgrimage explores Ireland's Catholic heritage

BALLINA, Ireland – A nine-day Diocesan pilgrimage to Ireland, led by the Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, offered more than 50 travelers an opportunity to deepen their faith while exploring the country's rich Catholic heritage and learning more about longstanding connections to northeastern Pennsylvania.

Organized in partnership with TravelWorld, the pilgrimage took place Sept. 20-28, 2026, with stops in Dublin, Ballina, Westport, Galway, Connemara, Killarney, Dingle Peninsula, Blarney and other destinations.

Besides the Bishop, the pilgrimage group included Father Gerald W. Shantillo, Vicar General of the Diocese of Scranton; Father Andrew Hvozdovic, Diocesan Coordinator of Pilgrimages; and Father Jeffrey Tudgay, Pastor of the Cathedral of Saint Peter and Immaculate Conception Parishes in Scranton.



Cathaoirleach Cllr. Annie May Reape and Bishop Joseph C. Bambera exchange gifts during a stop at the Clarke Museum of Irish History on Sept. 22, 2026.

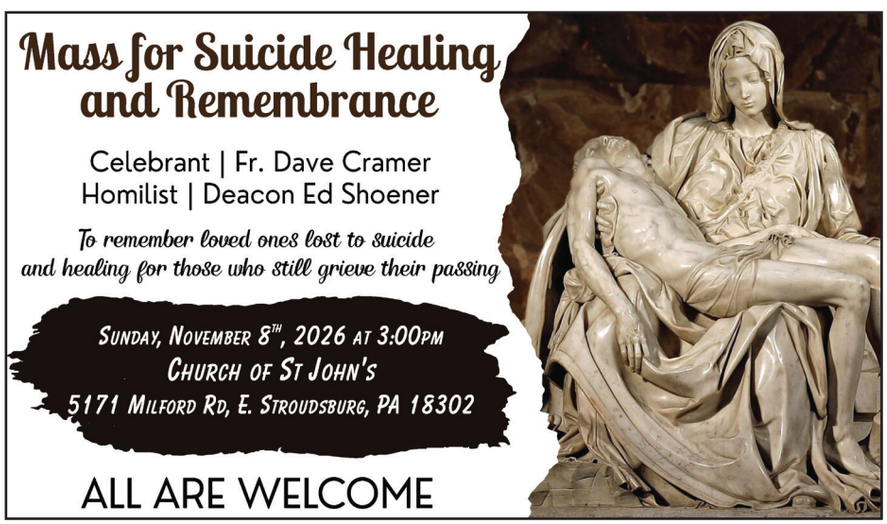
One of the trip's most significant highlights was a visit to Ballina, County Mayo, Scranton's sister city since 1990.

On Sept. 22, Bishop Bambera and the pilgrims celebrated Mass at Saint Muredach's Cathedral before visiting the Clarke Museum of Irish History, where they met local civic and tourism representatives and learned more about the generations of family, cultural and community connections linking the two communities.

The pilgrimage also included a visit to the Father Peyton Center in Attymass, which shares the life and mission of Father Patrick Peyton, C.S.C. Born in Ireland in 1909, Father Peyton became internationally known for promoting family prayer and maintained important ties to Scranton, where he worked at the Cathedral of Saint Peter before entering the seminary.

The pilgrimages also visited the Knock Shrine, one of the world's major Marian pilgrimage sites, commemorating the reported apparition of the Blessed Virgin Mary in 1879. Other highlights included the scenic Connemara region, Mass at Galway Cathedral, the dramatic Cliffs of Moher and Blarney Castle.

The pilgrimage concluded with a visit to Dublin, where the group celebrated Mass at Saint Mary's Pro Cathedral on Sept. 27, the final full day of the journey.



Mass for Suicide Healing and Remembrance to be held Nov. 8

EAST STROUDSBURG - The Northeast Pennsylvania Mental Health Ministry team will hold a Mass for Suicide Healing and Remembrance on Sunday, Nov. 8, 2026, at 3:00 p.m. at the Church of Saint John, located at 5171 Milford Road, East Stroudsburg.

The Mass will serve to remember loved ones lost to suicide, and to promote healing for those who grieve their passing.

Rev. Dave Cramer, Pastor of the Church of Saint John, will be the celebrant for the Mass. Deacon Ed Shoener, President of the International Association of Catholic Mental Health Ministers and Deacon at the Cathedral of Saint Peter and Immaculate Conception Parishes in Scranton, will serve as homilist.

All are welcome to attend.

BISHOP BAMBERA'S SCHEDULE

October 17 - Pennsylvanians for Human Life Interfaith Breakfast
Fiorelli's, Peckville, 9:00 a.m.

October 18 - World Mission Sunday Mass
Cathedral of Saint Peter, Scranton, 12:15 p.m.

October 22 - Installation Mass of Bishop Michael A. Saporito
South Plainfield, NJ (Diocese of Metuchen), 1:00 p.m.

October 24 - Ministry of Acolyte Mass
Cathedral of Saint Peter, Scranton, 10:00 a.m.

October 25 - Jubilee Mass for Women and Men Religious
Cathedral of Saint Peter, Scranton, 12:15 p.m.

October 26 - 29 - Convocation of the Priests of the Diocese of Scranton

November 1 - Leave a Mark Mass
Cathedral of Saint Peter, Scranton, 5:00 p.m.

November 2 - All Souls' Day Mass
Cathedral of Saint Peter, Scranton, 12:10 p.m.

November 5 - Ambassadors' Dinner
Saint Patrick Parish, Milford, 6:00 p.m.

November 7 - Mass for Diocesan Youth Rally
Notre Dame Jr./Sr. High School, East Stroudsburg, 6:30 p.m.

November 8 - Mass Celebrating 20th Anniversary of Saint Patrick Church & 80th Anniversary of Saint Patrick Parish
Milford, 11:00 a.m.

November 13 - 19 - USCCB Fall Plenary Assembly
Baltimore, Maryland

Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen declared 'Blessed' at beatification Mass

ST. LOUIS (OSV News)- Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen, the 20th-century theologian, evangelizer, communications pioneer, teacher and preacher, is now Blessed Fulton J. Sheen.

Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle, a pro-prefect for the Holy See's Dicastery for Evangelization and papal delegate, pronounced the Church's declaration on Archbishop Sheen's holiness of life and witness to Jesus Christ at a Sept. 24 Mass celebrated in The Dome at America's Center in St. Louis.



The official portrait of Blessed Fulton J. Sheen is revealed at his beatification Mass Sept. 24, 2026, at The Dome at America's Center in St. Louis. (OSV News photo/Margaret Murray)

To the applause of pilgrims, Cardinal Tagle described Archbishop Sheen as a "son of Illinois, son of the United States of America" and "indeed, son of the world."

Hundreds of clergy, including dozens of bishops and cardinals, had processed into the arena for the Mass as choirs, accompanied by an orchestra, performed a succession of hymns. The priests' vestments were embroidered with "JMJ," Archbishop Sheen's signature dedication to Jesus, Mary and Joseph.

The location had been selected by Archbishop Sheen's home Diocese of Peoria, Illinois, to accommodate the number of pilgrims who arrived for the beatification and its surrounding events. Around 50,000 people were in attendance, according to organizers.

During a press conference a few hours prior to the Mass, Bishop Louis Tylka of Peoria said that almost every U.S. state and several additional nations were represented by pilgrims. A number of the faithful hailed from Italy, Poland and Brazil, he said.

Close to 90 bishops, some 1,000 priests, an estimated 1,600 men and women religious, and almost 250 deacons were present, added Bishop Tylka, who wore Archbishop Sheen's pectoral cross. Among the concelebrating prelates was Archbishop Gabriele G. Caccia, apostolic nuncio to the United States.

The beatification - a papal act affirming an individual's presence in heaven is worthy of belief - officially occurred between the liturgy's Penitential Rite and the Gloria. Bishop Tylka made a formal request for Archbishop Sheen's beatification to Cardinal Tagle.

A short biography of Archbishop Sheen, who was born in El Paso, Illinois, in 1895 and died in New York in 1979, was read by Archbishop Sheen's great-nephew, Paul Cunningham, after which Cardinal Tagle proclaimed the apostolic letter from Pope Leo XIV declaring the beatification in Latin. Bishop Tylka then read the letter in English, as applause followed both.

With the papal decree's public proclamation, Archbishop Sheen became formally counted among the Church's "beati," from the Latin word for "blessed."

James Fulton Engstrom - whose revival from stillbirth in 2010, attributed to Archbishop Sheen's intercession, was formally declared the miracle that moved Archbishop Sheen to beatification - processed with his parents and siblings to present a major relic of Archbishop Sheen during the liturgy.

Enclosed in a special case called a reliquary, the relic is Archbishop Sheen's mandible, or jawbone, chosen because it represents the archbishop's tremendous gifts as an orator, teacher and evangelist.

As part of the beatification, a portrait of a haloed Blessed Fulton Sheen was also unveiled. In the image, he is notably holding a piece of chalk, which he famously used - along with a blackboard - during his Emmy-winning television show, "Life Is Worth Living."

The image was also simultaneously unveiled in the Diocese of Peoria at the Cathedral of St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception.

In his homily, Cardinal Tagle praised Archbishop Sheen as a "storyteller of Jesus" and "a "missionary who digs deep into the heart of the poor to meet Jesus there."

The cardinal noted then-Bishop Sheen's passionate advocacy for the poor during the Second Vatican Council. During the 1964 discussions on the document "Ad Gentes," on the missionary activity of the Church, then-Bishop Sheen asked his brother bishops to "affirm" the notion of poverty and the bishops who came from poor and suffering parts of the Church.

"As only a wounded Christ could convert a doubting Thomas, so only a Church wounded by poverty can convert a doubting world," he said.

Cardinal Tagle also commended Archbishop Sheen for making genuine connections with the people he met and to whom he preached and ministered.

Panel discussion focuses on AI; another presentation to take place Oct. 22

Continued from Page 1

That question is: Does technological progress ultimately make human life more human?

Heeder said that question from Magnifica Humanitas has become an important starting point for discernment because society does not yet have all the answers about where artificial intelligence will lead.

"We don't really have a blueprint for best and worst decisions, particularly because in local communities the realities can be so different," Heeder said.

For Ossont, the implications are especially significant in health care, where AI is increasingly being considered as a tool for diagnosis, decision-making and patient care.

"It can be a helpful tool, but it does not replace human critical thinking for diagnostics or the human experience of care," Ossont said.

She believes that discernment will be critical for the next generation of health care professionals.

"If we can have the next generation of healthcare providers discern the appropriate use of AI, it can really help start to slow down that trend of replacing human providers with AI," Ossont added.

Heeder noted that the Church's concern extends beyond individual applications of technology.

"You lose the human connection behind all of this," she said. "Providing care to someone is so much more than simply providing a diagnosis."

That emphasis echoes Pope Leo's broader message that AI must remain at the service of the human person rather than reducing people to data, productivity or performance.

Father Glenn said another major concern with the use of AI is that it isolates people.

"We believe that a (church) community is a response to that isolation and to that individualism," he said, pointing to worship, the Eucharist, the sacraments, fellowship and opportunities for education and formation.

The Sept. 23 panel discussion was funded through a Social Justice Grant from the Diocese of Scranton's Catholic Ministries Appeal. The conversation will continue with an encore presentation at 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, Oct. 22, at The University of Scranton, offering another opportunity for people (especially college students) to consider Pope Leo's challenge in an increasingly technological age.

As Heeder left the first session, she said the gathering offered a hopeful sign.

"To be able to discuss this together in a place where questions about AI and data centers are so pressing for the daily lives of so many people, it's just a really beautiful sign of hope," Heeder said. "And a sign of the Church's continued ability to speak to the realities that we're facing now."

Faithful continue to pray for Pope Leo XIV following successful lung surgery

Continued from Page 1

At the age of 71, Pope Leo is considered to be generally in good health. He noted in the first interview of his pontificate that he had only been hospitalized once in his life when he caught typhoid fever after recently arriving as an Augustinian missionary in Peru in 1985.

"It's the only time in my life I've been hospitalized," Pope Leo is quoted as saying in the book, "Pope Leo XIV" by Elise Ann Allen, calling it "a very significant" moment in his life that helped him more sharply focus on his new ministry.

Pope Leo's surgery took place less than one month before he is scheduled to depart for Latin America for what would be the longest international trip of his pontificate Nov. 6 to 17, with stops in Uruguay, Argentina and Peru. The Vatican has not announced any changes to the trip.



Cardinal Baldassarre Reina, papal vicar of Rome, presides over praying the rosary in the chapel inside Rome's Gemelli hospital, where Pope Leo XIV had lung surgery Oct. 13, 2026. (CNS photo/Cristian Gennari)

Pope Leo first revealed to the world that he would undergo surgery at the end of his Angelus address in St. Peter's Square on Oct. 11.

Speaking from the window of the Apostolic Palace, the pope announced that doctors had discovered a nodule in his lung during a medical examination, adding that the growth was detected "at a very early stage" and was "well-contained."

"The doctors believe intervention is advisable, so, following their advice, I have decided to undergo surgery to have it removed," Pope Leo said.

A prayer vigil for the pope's healing, led by Cardinal Baldassare Reina, took place in the hospital chapel while the surgery was underway. The hospital's chapel was overflowing with people as they anxiously awaited the results of the operation.

Among those who came to pray was Sister Alphonsa Manikkathan from the Indian state of Kerala and her fellow sisters from the Daughters of Divine Providence whose residence is located near the hospital.

"We pray for the pope every day, not only today," Sister Alphonsa told OSV News. "Jesus said wherever two or more are gathered and pray for something, he will give. So for his fast recovery, we are praying."

Since the pope's announcement, prayers and messages of support have poured in from around the globe.

U.S. Bishops' President condemns 'barbaric' Pentagon plan to livestream execution

WASHINGTON (OSV News) - After Pentagon officials said they planned to livestream the execution of Fort Hood shooter Nidal Malik Hasan by firing squad in December, the president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops denounced the plan as "barbaric."

President Donald Trump recently approved the execution by firing squad of Hasan, the former U.S. Army psychiatrist convicted of killing 13 people and injuring 32 others in a mass shooting at Fort Hood, Texas, in 2009.

Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth said Oct. 8 in an interview with the pro-Trump TV outlet Real America's Voice News that the execution would take place at Fort Hood on Dec. 3, and that it would be made public.

"We'll make sure that people are able to watch it, that it's public," said Hegseth, who uses the moniker "secretary of war" since Trump signed an executive order last year adding the "Department of War" as a secondary, ceremonial title for the Department of Defense.

Hegseth later confirmed his comments on X.

Archbishop Paul S. Coakley of Oklahoma City, president of the USCCB, said in an Oct. 9 statement that he learned of the plans "with shock and great sorrow."

"Our God is the God of life," Archbishop Coakley said. "In no way can Hassan's actions be condoned but this decision is a barbaric promotion of a culture of death and must be reconsidered. The word of God exhorts us: 'do not repay anyone evil for evil' (Romans 12:17). The public execution even of one who has done grave harm will only further undermine the moral fabric of our nation and be a blight on the conscience of its people."

The Catholic Church's official magisterium opposes the use of capital punishment as a violation of the inherent sanctity of human life, and advocates for the abolition of the practice worldwide.

If carried out, Hasan's execution would mark the first time U.S. officials livestreamed an execution to the public. Some legal analysts noted that appeals and other legal processes could delay Hasan's execution beyond Dec. 3.

The last public execution in the U.S. took place in Missouri in 1937, according to the Death Penalty Information Center.

In his statement, Archbishop Coakley added, "I pray for the intercession of Our Lady of Good Counsel that we as a nation may always choose life even in the most trying times and circumstances."

Red Mass celebrated at Cathedral of Saint Peter



Judges of the Lackawanna County Court of Common Pleas participate in the Red Mass on Oct. 2, 2026, at the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton. (Photo/Mike Melisky)

SCRANTON – The Diocese of Scranton celebrated its annual Red Mass on Friday, Oct. 2, 2026, at the Cathedral of Saint Peter, invoking the guidance of the Holy Spirit upon members of the legal profession and those who serve in the judicial system.

The Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, was the principal celebrant of the Mass, held on the Memorial of the Holy Guardian Angels. The liturgy featured music provided by the Abington Heights High School Honors Choir and Honors Orchestra.

The Red Mass is a longstanding tradition dating back centuries in Europe. Its traditional name is derived from the color of the vestments worn by the presider and concelebrants, the scarlet robes of attending justices (which were bright scarlet in the Middle Ages) and the scarlet gowns of law professors.

In the Diocese of Scranton, the Red Mass has been celebrated since 1971.

"On behalf of our over 500 members, I want to thank His Excellency, Bishop Bambera, for again allowing us to celebrate the Red Mass in this beautiful Saint Peter's Cathedral and acting as our principal celebrant," Mark T. Perry, 76th President of the Lackawanna County Bar Association, said at the conclusion of this year's Mass.

Students celebrate Our Lady, Queen of Peace through Rosary poster contest

SCRANTON – A total of 1,400 young artists from Catholic elementary schools around the Diocese of Scranton used crayons, markers and other art supplies to express their faith as they all recently participated in the inaugural Our Lady, Queen of Peace Rosary Poster contest.

Students in kindergarten through fifth grade at all 15 Diocesan Catholic elementary schools were invited to create original artwork around the theme, "Our Lady, Queen of Peace: Bringing Peace to Our Families, Our Communities and Our World."

The initiative was designed to encourage students and their families to pray the Rosary during October, the month traditionally dedicated to the Holy Rosary, while helping children grow in devotion to the Blessed Mother.

"We wanted to create an initiative for our kindergarten through fifth grade students to inspire a love and devotion to our Blessed Mother," Charlene Haggerty, Assistant Superintendent of Catholic Schools, said. "We want students to realize and recognize that they can be instruments of peace not only in their homes but in their schools and communities and that Our Blessed Mother is a role model for peace."



A small sample of the 1,400 pieces of artwork submitted by Catholic school students for the inaugural Our Lady, Queen of Peace Rosary contest. (Photo/Eric Deabill)

Judging of all the posters took place Oct. 8 at the Diocesan Pastoral Center in Scranton, where staff members of the Diocese faced the challenging task of selecting winners from all the submissions.

"I think they did so wonderful," Tina Petcaugh, Executive Administrative Assistant to the Vicar General, who served as one of the judges said. "You can just see that they love Our Lady in what they created. The artwork is fantastic."

Winners were selected in three grade-level divisions – kindergarten and first grade; second and third grade; and fourth and fifth grade – in categories including Best Overall Poster, Most Creative Poster, Best Use of Color, Best Theme Connection, Best Representation of the Rosary, Our Lady Queen of Peace and Honorable Mentions.

Winning students will be invited to a pizza party with Bishop Joseph C. Bambera in the near future.

Selected winning posters are featured in this edition of *The Catholic Light*, while other winning entries are available to view on the Diocese of Scranton's website.

"We just hope that students will learn to pray the Rosary, not only for themselves but with their families, so that they can draw closer to Christ through the Blessed Mother," Haggerty added.

Best Overall Poster



Wynter Freeman
Grade 1 • Wyoming Area Catholic School

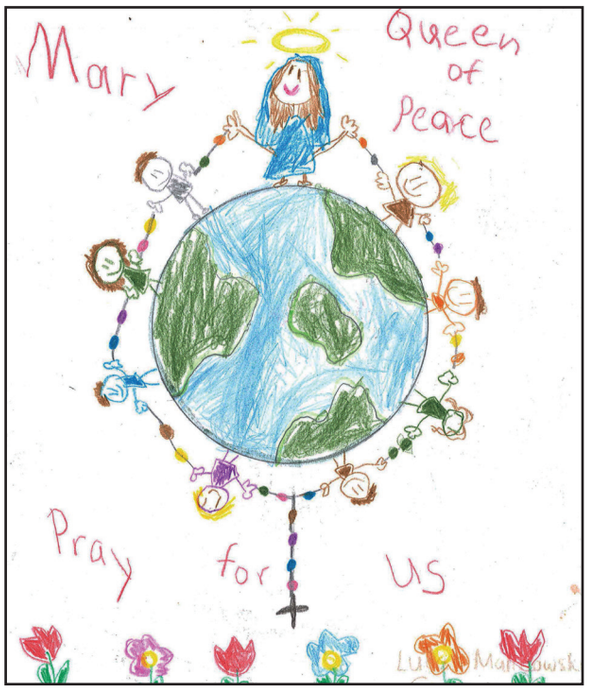


Colette Wallace
Grade 2 • Our Lady of Peace School



Olivia Zhang
Grade 5 • Saint Clare/Saint Paul School

Best Theme Connection



Lucas Malinowski
Grade 1 • Wyoming Area Catholic School



Sonnetta Augelli
Grade 2 • La Salle Academy

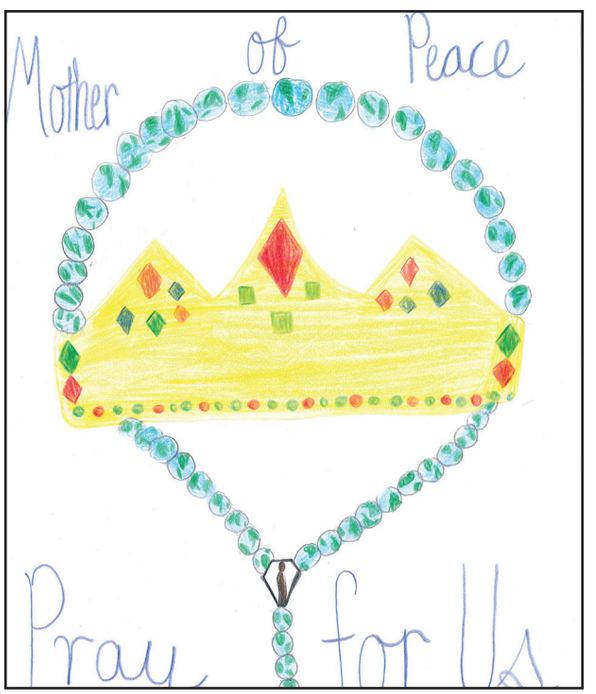


Sophie Ogrodzinski
Grade 5 • Notre Dame Elementary School

Best Representation of the Rosary



Delaney McGlynn
Kindergarten • St. Nicholas/St. Mary School



William Sammon
Grade 3 • Holy Rosary School



Kedrick Kowalski
Grade 4 • Saint Jude School

Saint John Neumann Jr./Sr. High School turns Fridays into opportunities

WILLIAMSPORT – While there were no traditional classes held at Saint John Neumann Jr./Sr. High School on Friday, Sept. 25, 2026, the school campus was still filled with first responders, emergency medical personnel and plenty of students.

It was the first 'Innovative Friday' at the Williamsport Catholic school as its new four-day academic model takes shape.

This year, students in grades 6 through 12 now attend classes Monday through Thursday, with extended school days to meet required instructional hours. Fridays are reserved for enrichment, tutoring, field trips, career exploration, service opportunities, and other experiences that extend learning beyond the traditional classroom.

For the inaugural 'Innovative Friday,' the school hosted an Emergency Preparedness and Safety Day, bringing together representatives from University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC), South Williamsport Fire Department, Loyalsock Volunteer Fire Department, Williamsport Bureau of Fire, Clearview Asset Protection, NOAA Weather Safety, PPL, Pennsylvania State Police, Williamsport Police and the Lycoming County Emergency Management Agency.

Students were encouraged to visit each agency's outdoor station, learning everything from CPR to electrical safety, while also having the opportunity to tour emergency vehicles.

"Students don't have to be here today and yet they're here, they're having fun and they're learning about things," Dr. Chad Greevy, Assistant Principal and Curriculum Director, said. "You don't have to learn always in a school setting."

The optional nature of the day was what made it significant.

Seventh-grader Zale McPherson appreciated the flexibility the 'Innovative Friday' schedule provided. After missing school earlier in the week, she was able to use the day to make up tests, quizzes and homework without sacrificing additional classroom time.

"I think it's a really good opportunity," she said.

McPherson also enjoyed the chance to socialize with classmates, describing the day as a "different kind of learning experience."



PPL employees show off the safety gear they use during the first 'Innovative Friday' at Saint John Neumann Jr./Sr. High School in Williamsport on Sept. 25, 2026. (Photo/Eric Deabill)

For ninth-grader Audrey Blenman, a new student who said the four-day schedule was one reason she chose Saint John Neumann, the first 'Innovative Friday' allowed her to experience something new.

"I want to be an engineer, so I'm not sure if there is a connection," Blenman said after donning a hard-hat and getting a first-hand lesson in electricity from a PPL lineman. "It is something different."

Since announcing its new four-day school week, Saint John Neumann Jr./Sr. High School has seen a 20 percent increase in enrollment.

"I absolutely love it. All the staff and students are so nice," Dalila Morales, a brand-new eighth grader, explained. "You can really count on everyone in this school. They always have your back."

The school even incorporated an incentive into their first 'Innovative Friday.' Students who visited each participating agency could have a card signed and they became eligible for prizes, including tuition vouchers, gift cards and school merchandise.

Principal Alicia McNamee said the response to the day exceeded her expectations.

"We are over the moon with the attendance and the feedback and the amount of community partners willing to come out and support us," she said.

The school's 'Innovative Friday' calendar is filled through the fall semester, and administrators are already developing opportunities for the spring.

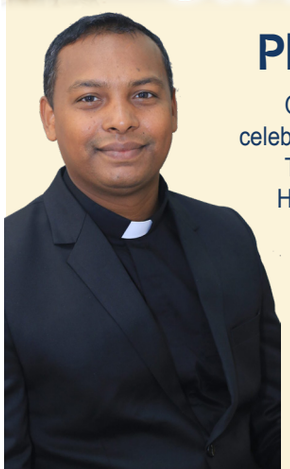
"We have so many companies, businesses and individuals willing to partner with us, we almost don't have enough Fridays," McNamee added.

Students have also offered ideas for upcoming 'Innovative Fridays,' including learning American Sign Language and touring local hospitals.

"We're offering students a lot of opportunity. We are not just in tune with what the students need, we're starting to learn what their passions are," Dr. Greevy said. "The list of ideas that they have for 'Innovative Fridays' is incredible."







Please Join Us for a Pontifical Mass for World Mission Sunday on Oct. 18

On Sunday, Oct. 18, Catholics from across the Diocese of Scranton are invited to gather at the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton for a Pontifical Mass celebrating **World Mission Sunday**. The Mass will begin at 12:15 p.m.

The Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, will serve as principal celebrant. The homilist will be Father Sudhir Toppo, Administrator of Most Holy Trinity Parish in Susquehanna, who is one of more than 20 international priests currently serving in the Diocese of Scranton.

A native of India and member of the Heralds of Good News, Mother Theresa Province, Father Toppo was ordained to the priesthood in 2016. Before becoming Administrator in Susquehanna, he also served as Assistant Pastor of parishes in Shohola, Lords Valley, Dingman Township and Conyngham.

Religious Sisters from Africa will also play a significant role in the World Mission Sunday Mass, offering a musical prelude before the liturgy begins and participating in the Presentation of the Gifts.

Their presence at the Cathedral will offer a powerful reminder that the Catholic Church is truly universal – bringing together people, cultures and communities from around the world in one faith.

Catholic Television of the Diocese of Scranton will provide a live broadcast of the Mass. The Mass will also be livestream on the Diocese of Scranton website, YouTube channel and across all Diocesan social media platforms.

Join us in this universal mission to spread the Gospel and share the love of Christ!

Pope Leo XIV Calls Catholics to Renew Missionary Spirit

VATICAN CITY - Pope Leo XIV is urging Catholics around the world to renew their commitment to the Church's missionary vocation by becoming more deeply united in Christ and with one another.

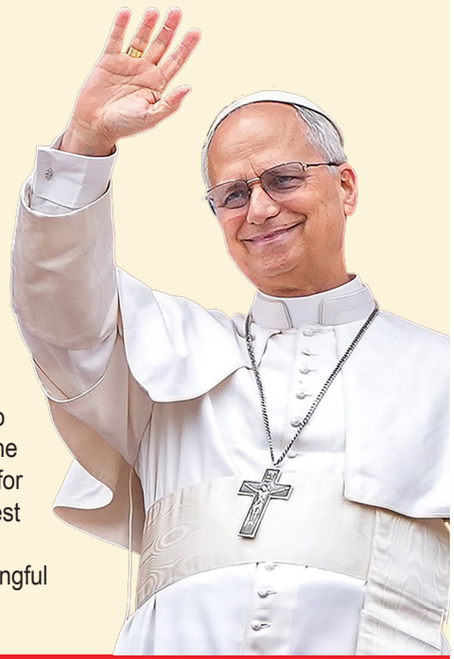
In his message for the 100th World Mission Sunday, to be observed Oct. 18, the Holy Father chose the theme "One in Christ, united in mission," calling the Church to continue its missionary journey with "joy and zeal in the Holy Spirit."

Pope Leo writes that union with Christ is at the heart of the Church's mission. Drawing on Jesus' prayer that his disciples "may all be one," he says Christian life is more than a collection of practices or ideas. He says it is a life of union with Christ that leads to communion among believers and becomes the source of missionary fruitfulness.

The Pope acknowledges that conflicts, polarization, misunderstandings and a lack of trust can weaken the Church's witness. He therefore calls for communities marked by reconciliation, fraternity and cooperation.

At the same time, Pope Leo stresses that missionary unity does not mean uniformity. Different cultures, spiritual traditions and gifts can come together in the same faith and serve the same purpose:

"Every gift, no matter how small, becomes a meaningful act of missionary communion,"
– Pope Leo XIV



making Christ's love visible and inviting others to encounter him.

"If unity is the condition of mission, love is its essence," he writes, describing the Gospel as the proclamation of God's faithful love revealed in Jesus Christ.

The Pope concludes by inviting all Catholics to share in the Church's missionary work through the witness of their lives, prayer and practical support for missionaries, especially those serving the world's poorest and most vulnerable.

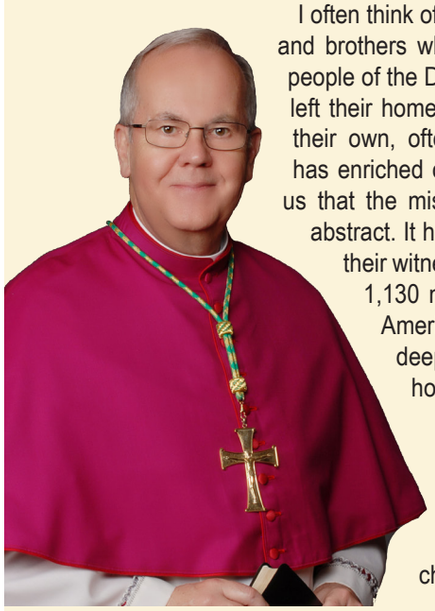
"Every gift, no matter how small, becomes a meaningful act of missionary communion," he writes.

Bishop Bambera's Message for World Mission Sunday

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Before His Ascension into heaven, Jesus gave His disciples a final command: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations" (Mt 28:19). For more than two thousand years, the Church has taken that command to heart, and yet the work is far from complete.

Today, two out of every three people on earth - some 5.5 billion people - have not yet come to know Christ or His Church. This is sobering to consider, but it is also a summons. Bringing others to Jesus is not the task of missionaries alone; it belongs to all of us, by virtue of our baptism. World Mission Sunday gives us a concrete way to answer that call together.



I often think of the missionary priests and religious sisters and brothers who have served, or continue to serve, the people of the Diocese of Scranton – men and women who left their homes and family to bring Christ to a place not their own, often at personal sacrifice. Their generosity has enriched our parishes immeasurably, and it reminds us that the missionary spirit is not something distant or abstract. It has a face, and often it is a familiar one. For their witness, and for all who continue this work in the 1,130 mission dioceses across Asia, Africa, Latin America, Oceania, and the Middle East, I am deeply thankful, and I hope you will join me in holding them up in prayer today.

The collection we take up on World Mission Sunday supports precisely this work – reaching places where the Church is barely present, where the Gospel has scarcely been heard, and where local churches are too young, too poor, or too persecuted to sustain themselves without our help.

This year's celebration carries particular significance. It marks the 100th anniversary of World Mission Sunday's establishment by Pope Pius XI in 1926 – a century of the universal Church standing in solidarity with her missionaries.

Pope Leo XIV has chosen the theme "One in Christ, united in mission" for this centenary year, inviting us to rediscover the unity we already share through baptism, and how that unity naturally overflows into mission. Pope Leo understands the stakes of this day in a personal way. He spent many years as a missionary in Peru, serving communities in the Andean highlands and rural villages, and he has spoken openly about how much that ministry depended on the generosity of the universal Church through World Mission Sunday.

I would also ask you to keep in mind the beatification of Archbishop Fulton Sheen on September 24, 2026. Though many remember him for his television presence and his gift for preaching, Sheen himself said that his greatest love was always for the missions of the Church. For sixteen years, as National Director of The Pontifical Mission Societies here in the United States, he devoted himself to World Mission Sunday and to seeing that its proceeds reached those who needed them most. I have no doubt we can count on his intercession this year.

This World Mission Sunday, I ask that you respond to the needs of our missionary brothers and sisters as generously as you are able.

Please know of my prayers that this year's celebration will be a blessing for our diocese, and that it will stir in each of us a renewed missionary zeal. May the Holy Spirit rekindle in us the fire of the early Church, that we might truly be "One in Christ, united in mission" – growing together in missionary awareness, solidarity, and responsibility.

Faithfully yours in Christ,

+Joseph C. Bambera

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

Your Dollars At Work: Making a Difference Around the World

On World Mission Sunday, a second collection helps the Church spread the Gospel in missionary lands. These are places (1,130 of them to be exact) where the Church basically barely exists, or where she is so young, poor, or persecuted that she cannot support herself in terms of personnel and resources.

World Mission Sunday features the only collection mandated in the Church's canon law, because it's essential to the Church's carrying out the mission Jesus entrusted to us to proclaim the Gospel to all people and nations.

What's raised on World Mission Sunday is used to make possible the heroic work of missionary bishops, priests, religious sisters, and lay catechists who labor, sometimes under threat of death, to share our faith. It helps build churches, seminaries, convents, and catechetical centers. It provides for basic needs like transport, food, and shelter. It helps pass on the faith to children and to their parents.

Nowhere is this reality more vivid than in a place like Mongolia.

It is one of the youngest Catholic communities on earth. Mongolia has only had a stable Catholic community for just over 30 years.

In 1992, following the fall of communism, three Catholic missionary priests arrived from Italy. At the time, there were zero Catholics except them. Today, thanks to the hard work of these missionaries, supported in large part by World Mission Sunday, about fifty Mongolians a year have become Catholic. As of Easter Sunday, there are exactly 1,575 baptized Catholics in a nation of over 3.5 million people.

The Church in Mongolia is the missionary frontier in the fullest sense, and most of this work has been made possible by the support the missionaries receive from abroad, especially World Mission Sunday. The first three missionaries, and the two dozen or so missionaries who have followed after them, are literally building the Church from scratch. Even today, the first seminary is still in its planning stages, and the first native priest was ordained only in 2016. These Catholics are in the exhilarating but fragile phase of first-generation faith.



A woman prays during Mass in the Steppe Arena in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, Sept. 3, 2023. (CNS photo/Lola Gomez)

Last year, support from U.S. Catholics helped the Church in Mongolia expand a formation center to train catechists and Church workers to bring the faith more effectively throughout their vast country, as well as a study center where the Christian classics can be translated into Mongolian. Right now, only the Bible exists in Mongolian; at the new study center, the translation of the Catechism of the Catholic Church is underway, together with writings of the popes and classics from the saints.

On Oct. 18, when your parish takes up the World Mission Sunday collection, please join this "missionary spirit" of the Church, considering the people in Mongolia. Their names and faces, and their dreams, are the names, faces, and dreams of World Mission Sunday.

Too Many Priests? Nigeria Can't Welcome Them All

Every year, bishops across Nigeria sit across from young men who want to give their lives to God and the Church in the Catholic priesthood. The bishops listen carefully. And then, more often than the bishops can bear, they have to look a man in the eyes and say: I believe your calling is real, but I cannot accept you. There is not enough room, there are not enough funds, you will have to wait.

The dioceses do not have the money to send them to the seminary, to feed them, to house them through the years of formation that the priesthood requires.

Father Augustine Ikwu, a priest from Nigeria involved in priestly seminary formation, said, "In many dioceses of the world, the Church prays for more vocations. In Nigeria, we pray for the resources to welcome the vocations God has already sent."

Nigeria is, by nearly every measure, one of the most vibrantly Catholic nations on earth. Some 94% of Nigerian Catholics attend Sunday Mass. In the Diocese of Nsukka alone, the number of priests more than doubled in ten years, surpassing 400 priests in 2024. And yet, for all this abundance of faith, the seminaries can only house and train a fraction of the men who discern that Christ is calling them. And while this crisis unfolds quietly inside seminary walls, outside those walls, the situation is anything but quiet.

To become a Catholic priest in Nigeria's missionary dioceses is not a path toward comfort or security. Priests across Nigeria have to be prepared to defend the faith even unto death. Seminarians are reminded that kidnapping, persecution, and killing are not hypothetical ideas. They are realities. Five Catholic priests were abducted and killed in the early months of 2026 alone.

This is the context in which young men discern their vocations. They are not fleeing poverty by seeking the seminary. Rather, they are walking toward danger and making of their lives a true sacrificial offering. The priesthood in Nigeria is on the frontlines. And the young men still come, in numbers that far exceed what the Church can receive. But there is something we can do to help.


Seminarians and leaders of the Nigerian Bigard Memorial Seminary in Enugu are pictured March 1, 2024 during the 24th matriculation ceremony for the philosophy department. (OSV News photo/courtesy Bigard Memorial Seminary)

The difficulties in Nigeria are precisely the type of difficulties that World Mission Sunday was designed to meet.

On Oct. 18, the World Mission Sunday collection will fund what these missionary lands need most: training seminarians, building churches, supporting religious sisters and brothers, and educating children in Catholic schools.

Father Ikwu, speaking about the impact of World Mission Sunday, said, "When Catholics across the world support the missions, they are not merely funding buildings or institutions. They are helping to form future priests who will preach the Gospel, celebrate the sacraments, educate children, comfort the suffering, and bring hope to countless communities."

On this World Mission Sunday, every Catholic who sits in a comfortable pew, in a country where churches are not burned, and where priests are not abducted, is invited to a simple two-fold invitation: pray for the missions and support them financially if you can.

MISSION MESSAGE



By Shannon Ruiz
Diocesan Director, Pontifical Mission Societies

Praying Our Way Through October: The World Mission Rosary

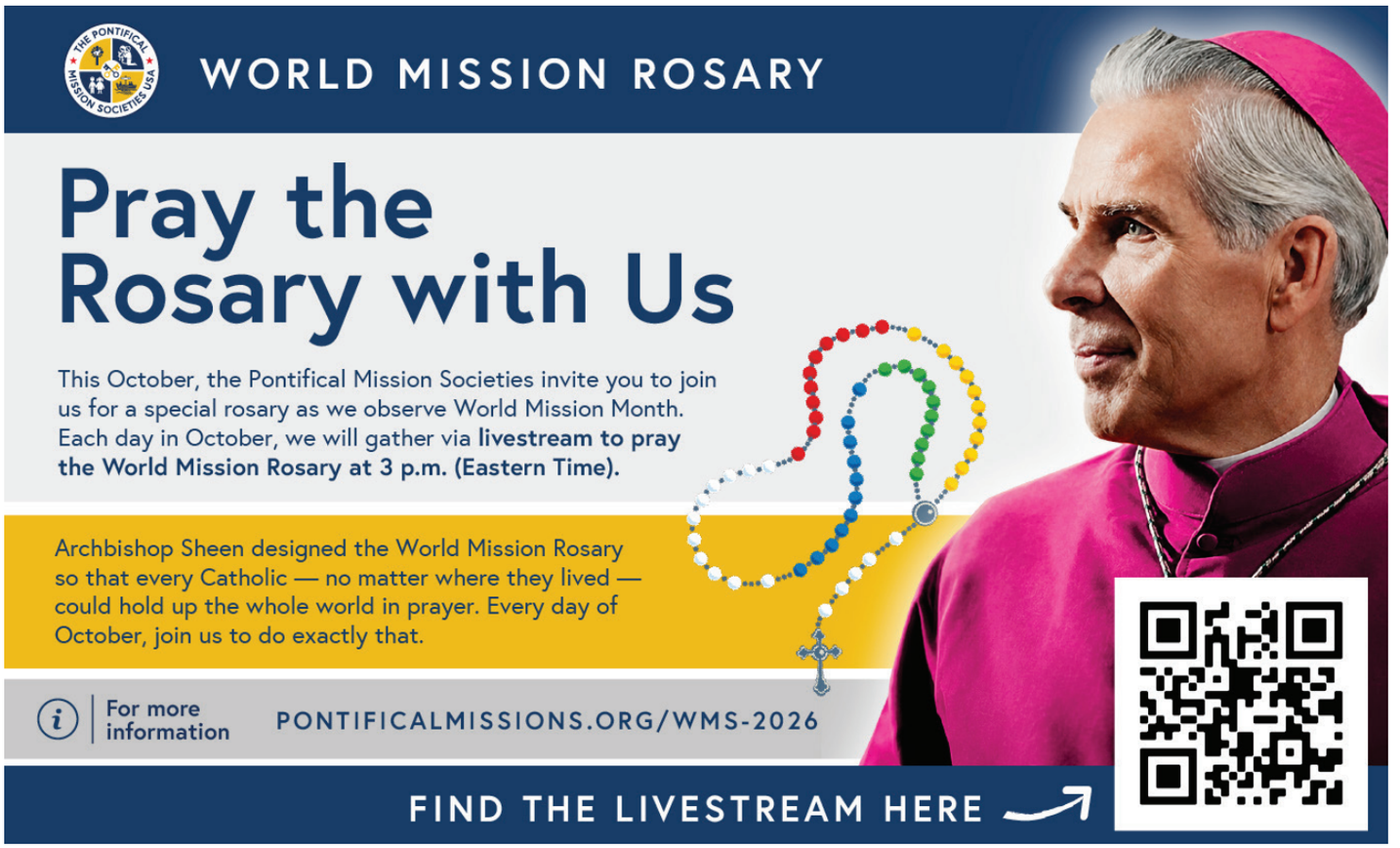
World Mission Sunday calls every baptized Catholic to share in the Church's mission, and that call continues long after October 18th. This October, the Month of the Holy Rosary, I invite you to keep the spirit of mission alive by praying the World Mission Rosary.

Each of the five decades is offered for a different continent, represented by its own color: green for Africa, red for the Americas, white for Europe, blue for Oceania, and yellow for Asia. Together, these colors lift up the entire world in prayer.

In praying this Rosary, you stand alongside missionaries, catechists, and faithful communities around the globe who rely on our prayers as much as our financial support. Pray it on your own, with your family, or with your parish.

If you have never prayed the World Mission Rosary, this month is a wonderful time to start. To make it as easy as possible, the Pontifical Mission Societies has been offering a livestream every day this month at 3 p.m. and you are invited to join. Simply click on the QR code on the graphic to sign up and you'll get an email with the daily livestream link so you can pray the rosary with them from wherever you are!

May Our Lady, Queen of Missions, intercede for all who carry the Gospel to the ends of the earth!



Pray and Give Generously on. . . .

World Mission Sunday

Return the Donation Card Below to:
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Prayer of Pope Leo XIV
for the 100th World Mission Sunday 2026

Holy Father, make us one in Christ, rooted in his love that unites and renews. May all members of the Church be united in mission, docile to the Holy Spirit, courageous in bearing witness to the Gospel, proclaiming and daily embodying your faithful love for all creatures.

Bless all missionary men and women, support them in their efforts, and watch over them in hope!

Mary, Queen of Missions, accompany our work of evangelization in every corner of the earth: make us instruments of peace, and grant that the whole world may recognize in Christ the light that saves.

Amen.

pontificalmissions.org

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Independent audit again finds Diocese of Scranton in full compliance with child protection requirements

SCRANTON – An independent on-site audit has once again determined that the Diocese of Scranton is in compliance with the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People established by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

StoneBridge Business Partners, an independent auditing firm based in Rochester, N.Y., recently completed an on-site audit of the Diocese's child protection policies, procedures and records.

In a July 13, 2026, letter addressed to the Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, StoneBridge reported that the Diocese was found compliant with all audited Articles within the Charter for the audit period of July 1, 2023, through March 31, 2026.

According to StoneBridge, the conclusions regarding the Diocese's compliance were based on inquiry, observation and the review of specifically requested documentation provided during the course of the audit.

The audit examined the Diocese's protocols related to training, reporting and maintaining safe environments for children and young people in accordance with the requirements of the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People.

The Diocese of Scranton has remained in compliance with the USCCB's child protection requirements through every annual audit since the review process was established following the adoption of the Charter in 2002.

Bishop Bambera said the latest independent review reinforces the Diocese's ongoing commitment to protecting children and young people.

"We are grateful to StoneBridge Business Partners for its careful review of our child protection efforts and are grateful that the Diocese has been found in compliance with the requirements of the Charter for the last 24 years," Bishop Bambera said. "As Bishop, I pledge to continue to do all within my power to keep our churches, schools and all Diocesan facilities safe for our children and for all our people to worship, pray, learn and grow in their faith."

Diocesan Safe Environment Coordinator Addie Rocco added that the audit results confirm the Diocese of Scranton is following the promises of the Charter.

"As a mother of four daughters and a former member of law enforcement, I understand how important our safety measures are and that education on reporting and looking for warning signs of behaviors can help to stop abuse before it starts," Rocco stated. "Ensuring safety is a team sport. If you see something, say something. Be present, be aware, ask questions and get involved."

The Diocese of Scranton's Safe Environment Office oversees the implementation of the Diocese's child protection policies and works with parishes, schools and other Diocesan entities to ensure that required training, background checks, reporting procedures and safe environment protocols remain in place.

The Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, enacted by the USCCB in 2002, requires dioceses to establish programs for the prevention of child sexual abuse, the reporting of allegations and the creation of safe environments for children and young people. Every U.S. diocese undergoes an annual audit to determine compliance with the provisions of the Charter.

For more information about the Diocese of Scranton's Safe Environment Program and its policies and protocols, visit dioceseofscranton.org.

To report sexual abuse by a member of the clergy, an employee or volunteer of the Catholic Church, contact your local police department or county District Attorney and Mary Beth Pacuska, victim assistance coordinator for the Diocese of Scranton, at (570) 862-7551.

To report sexual misconduct by a bishop or eparch, contact the national reporting website at ReportBishopAbuse.org or call 1-800-276-1562.

The Diocese of Scranton remains committed to supporting survivors of sexual abuse and to taking every appropriate measure to prevent abuse and protect children and young people within the Church.

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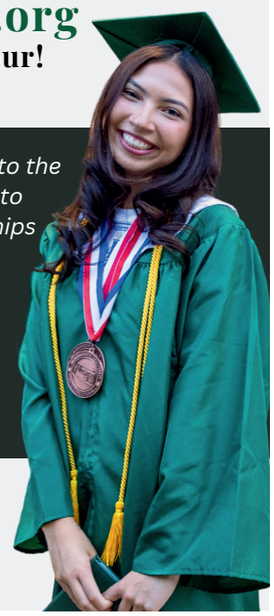
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Thanksgiving Community Program entering 50th year

SCRANTON – For Sister Judy O'Brien, I.H.M., leading this year's Thanksgiving Community Program is more than a responsibility.

It is a full-circle moment.

Five decades ago, Sister Adrian Barrett, I.H.M., founded what would become a significant program of Friends of the Poor and Catherine McAuley Center, inviting people who had nowhere to go to a Thanksgiving meal.

This year, Sister Judy – a longtime friend of Sister Adrian and the newly appointed President and CEO of Friends of the Poor and Catherine McAuley Center – will help carry the tradition forward as the program celebrates its 50th anniversary.



Sister Judy O'Brien, I.H.M., new President and CEO of Friends of the Poor and Catherine McAuley Center, speaks at a press conference at Cooper's Seafood House on Oct. 7, 2026. Standing next to her is Linda Robeson, Director of the Family to Family Thanksgiving Food Basket Program. (Photo/Eric Deabill)

"I feel like I am walking in the shoes of Sister Adrian Barrett," Sister Judy said during an Oct. 8 press conference at Cooper's Seafood House in Scranton. "There were 34 people at that first event. Today, this season, we will feed 4,000 people in her name and in the name of all those people who have walked with Friends of the Poor and Catherine McAuley over these years."

This year's milestone comes at a time when the need, and the cost of meeting it, continues to grow.

Linda Robeson, Director of the Family to Family Thanksgiving Food Basket Program, said the organization hopes to provide Thanksgiving food baskets to approximately 3,500 local families this year. But the rising cost of food has made that goal more difficult.

"Turkeys, this year, unfortunately have gone up over $1 a pound," Robeson said.

Family to Family, which is marking its 40th year, has provided food to more than 1.5 million people over the course of its history. The Thanksgiving program alone has cost approximately $120,000 in recent years.

"We want to give a nice size turkey," Robeson explained. "We want them to have leftovers. It's a hard market, believe it or not, to find the right size price range when you're buying turkeys a year in advance."

The Thanksgiving Community Program will begin with an interfaith prayer service on Friday, Nov. 13 at Temple Hesed, 1 Knox Road, Scranton. The Thanksgiving Community Dinner will follow on Nov. 24 at the Scranton Cultural Center, 420 North Washington Avenue, Scranton, with drive-through and walk-up meals available from 2:30-5:30 p.m., or until supplies last.

On Nov. 25, Family to Family will distribute Thanksgiving food baskets at the Scranton Cultural Center from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., or until supplies last.

For Sister Judy, the effort is ultimately about much more than food.

"This is what we're supposed to do," she said. "It is not an obligation. It is a centering of the true meaning of Thanksgiving and the holiday season."

And she emphasized, it cannot happen without the community.

"There are hundreds and hundreds of people who will stand with us this holiday season to help our neighbors in need," Sister Judy said. "We could not do this without the community."

HOW TO HELP
50th THANKSGIVING COMMUNITY PROGRAM

Tuesday, November 24, 2026
Thanksgiving Community Dinner
To donate or volunteer, visit fotpcmc.org or call (570) 342-1342

Wednesday, November 25, 2026
Family to Family Food Basket Distribution

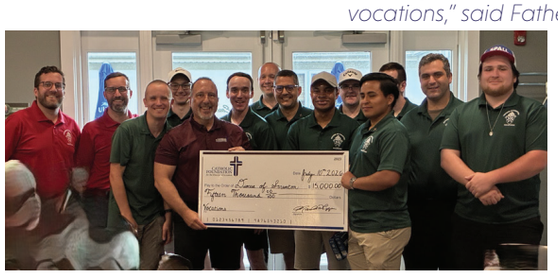
To donate, send a check to:
Family to Family
PO Box 13
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Catholic Foundation Makes First Distribution

The Catholic Foundation for the Diocese of Scranton recently made its first distribution, supporting the Seminarian Endowment Fund and the education and formation of future priests.

"This distribution is a testament to the generosity of our donors and their commitment to fostering vocations," said Father Ryan Glenn.



Gifts to the Seminarians Endowment Fund help prepare future generations of priests to serve throughout the Diocese of Scranton.

Pictured: Mark DiPippa, diocesan seminarians, Father Alex Roche, and Father Ryan Glenn.

To learn more about creating your Catholic legacy, contact The Catholic Foundation for the Diocese of Scranton.
Contact: Mark DiPippa, Executive Director
Catholic Foundation *for the* Diocese of Scranton
300 Wyoming Ave, Scranton, PA 18503
catholicfoundationscranton.org | 570-207-2212

CATHOLIC FOUNDATION *for the* Diocese of Scranton

National Centre for Padre Pio to host four-day Holy Relics Exposition

BARTO, Pa. - The National Centre for Padre Pio will host a special Holy Relics Exposition Nov. 5 - 8, 2026, inviting visitors to venerate over 600 major relics of saints and blesseds of the Catholic Church.

Held in celebration of All Saints' Week and the Feast of the Holy Relics, the four-day exposition offers an extraordinary, potentially once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for prayer and reflection before relics of many of the most important and influential figures in the history of Catholicism.

The exposition is a special part of the Centre's Year of Saint Pio, which began June 16, 2026, and culminates June 16, 2027, with the 25th anniversary of Padre Pio's canonization.

Through special events, Masses, and devotions, the Centre is inviting pilgrims to deepen their faith and draw closer to Christ through the life and intercession of Saint Pio.

The collection includes authenticated relics associated with Jesus and the Holy Family, some dating to biblical times, as well as relics of the apostles and evangelists.

Among the featured relics are the blood of Padre Pio, the hair of Pope Saint John Paul II, linen from the deathbed of Saint Carlo Acutis, and the hair scarf of Saint Frances Xavier Cabrini.

The veneration of relics is a longstanding tradition within the Catholic Church, honoring the saints whose lives bear witness to the transforming power of God's grace. Relics offer a tangible connection to these holy men and women, whose bodies were temples of the Holy Spirit.

Through veneration, the faithful honor God's work in the saints, seek their intercession, and find encouragement to follow their example of faith, love, and perseverance. This exposition invites pilgrims to encounter that tradition personally and deepen their relationship with Christ.



More than 600 major relics of saints and blesseds of the Catholic Church will be on display at the National Centre for Padre Pio in Berks County from Nov. 5 - 8, 2026.

"Each of these 600 relics tells the story of someone who said yes to God. The saints show us that redemption and holiness are possible for every one of us. This exhibition is a unique opportunity to encounter saints whom we've read about our entire lives," said National Centre for Padre Pio Executive Director Deacon Jim Friend. "I encourage you to join us to learn more about them, ask for their intercession, and leave inspired to deepen your relationship with Christ."

As pilgrims prepare to celebrate Padre Pio's canonization anniversary, the exposition invites them to reflect on the communion of saints and the call to holiness in their own lives. Individuals, families, and parish communities are welcome to make these days an occasion for spiritual renewal.

Exposition Hours will be as follows: Thursday, Nov. 5 - Saturday, Nov. 7 from 9:00 a.m. until 4:30 p.m.

Exposition Hours on Sunday, Nov. 8 will be from 11:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m.

The National Centre for Padre Pio is located in Berks County at 111 Barto Road, Barto, PA 19504.

For additional information, visit www.padrepio.org or call (610) 845-3000.

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Resorts World Catskills Casino - November 15 - **Great Rebate Package** - $25 free slot play & $15 food credit - $59

Dutch Apple Dinner Theater - Holly, Jolly Christmas Show - Nov. 28 Immerse yourself in the spirit of the season with a Christmas musical of beautiful costumes, dancing, festive tunes and a visit from Old St. Nick. Inc. all you can eat buffet, visit to Lancaster Central Market- $209



Orlando, FL - Jan 30-Feb. 6, 2027 – by motorcoach. 5 nights accom. at Courtyard Orlando, Lake Buena Vista, all rooms have private balconies, 2 nights accom., enroute. free shuttle to Disney Theme Parks, Kennedy Space Center, the #1 attraction in the U.S., guided tour of Chocolate Kingdom Factory & Museum, visits to Universal CityWalk (Waterfront Dining & Shopping) and Old Town Entertainment District, an airboat ride into the Northern Everglades for an unforgettable journey, learn about local wildlife, 7 breakfasts & more - $1,639

The Mahoney Brothers at Hunterdon Hills Playhouse - March 4 Hear your favorite hits from the 50s, 60s & 70s and enjoy a delicious meal plus Wind Creek Casino with $25 slotplay - $199

Mackinac Island, MI - Frankenmuth & Thunder Bay Elk Viewing Resort - May 25-June 1 The Grand Hotel (2) nights, Carriage tour of the Island, Wine tasting, Boat cruise, 12 meals & more $2,799

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Entered Eternal Life: September 23, 2026





Immaculate Heart of Mary Sister Kathleen McNulty

Entered Life: October 30, 1929

Entered Eternal Life: September 25, 2026

Immaculate Heart of Mary Sister Kathleen Joy Steck

Entered Life: September 13, 1942

Entered Eternal Life: October 8, 2026



Prayer Requests for Priests

October 15, Holy Cross Father Gary Chamberland; October 16, Father John Chmil; October 17, Father Richard Cirba; October 18, Father Brian J.T. Clarke; October 19, Father Brian J.W. Clarke; October 20, Father Charles Connor; October 21, Jesuit Father Vincent Conti; October 22, Father William Corcoran; October 23, Father David Cramer; October 24, Father Charles Cummings; October 25, Father Richard Czachor, V.E.; October 26, Father Vincent Dang; October 27, Father Mark DeCelles; October 28, Father John Doris; October 29, Saint Peter Priestly Fraternity Father Anthony Dorsa; October 30, Father Michael Drevitch; October 31, Father Thomas Dzwonczyk; November 1, Pope Leo XIV; November 2, Bishop Joseph C. Bambera; November 3, Father Cyril Edwards, V.E.; November 4, Father Christian Ekeh; November 5, Father Joseph Elston; November 6, Monsignor John Esseff; November 7, Father Joseph Evanko, V.E.; November 8, Father Neftalí Féliz Sena; November 9, Father Samuel Ferretti; November 10, Father Richard Fox; November 11, Saint Peter Priestly Fraternity Father Thomas Fritschen; November 12, Father Martin Gaiardo; November 13, Father J. Duane Gavitt; November 14, Father Anthony Generose; November 15, Father Richard Ghezzi; November 16, Father Ryan Glenn; November 17, Father Joseph Greskiewicz; November 18, Holy Cross Father Richard Gribble; November 19, Monsignor Vincent Grimalia; November 20, Father Louis Grippe; November 21, Father Gerald Gurka.

PA Pro-Life Federation honors Lawhon, 'Voice of John'

HAZLETON — As the Catholic Church continues to celebrate October as Respect Life Month, the Pennsylvania Pro-Life Federation recently announced the bestowing of its Lifetime Achievement Award to MaryAnn Lawhon — and the "Voice of John" (VOJ) ministry she founded and has championed to preserve the sanctity of all human life.

The timing of the distinct honor is as appropriate as the pro-life pioneer being honored.

For nearly 50 years, few have crusaded for the right to life — from conception to natural death — as much as MaryAnn Lawhon.

Her story, which tells of the briefest of lives, a senseless and sinful death, and the graces that continue to flow from it, is well known and attests to one woman's lifelong passion to spread the respect-for-life message.

"Almost half a century ago in a hospital's dirty utility room, there was an infant child, a young nurse, and the Holy Spirit of God," Lawhon continues to recount in her own words. "That night in September 1977, a child died, and his ministry was born."

As that "young nurse," Lawhon found a newborn baby boy — the victim of an abortion, naked and alone, and left to die. Realizing what had to be done, she wrapped him in a blanket, baptized him with the name "John," and told him: "John, if your mommy could see you as I do, she would not have done this to you."

She also promised him, "I will be your voice; I will tell the world what I saw here tonight."

For the past five decades, Lawhon has kept her promise, as she humbly and gratefully accepted the Pro-Life Federation's distinguished tribute on behalf of "a baby named John."

Comprised of Catholic clergy, speakers, educators, counselors and physicians, VOJ Ministry tirelessly serves not only women in crisis pregnancies, but those men and women who have been wounded and scarred by the evils of abortion.

Most recently, Lawhon's Pro-Life High School Curriculum has been published and presented to Catholic school students throughout the Diocese of Scranton and beyond.

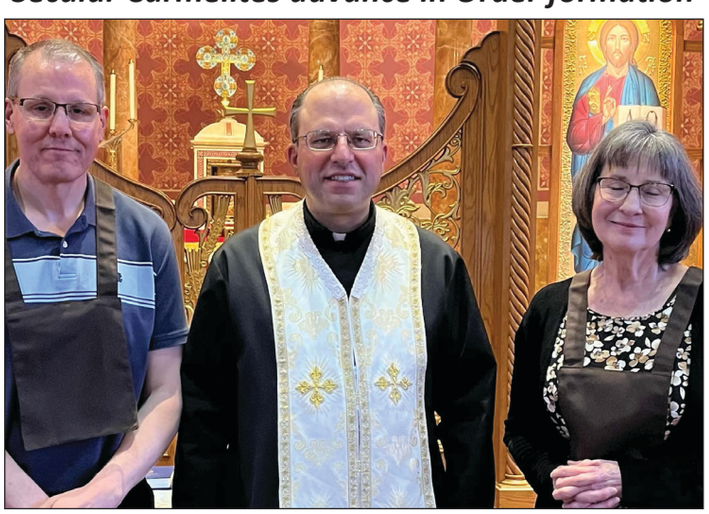
"(The curriculum) reflects the lessons I have learned through my journey," Lawhon said. "Life is sacred, from womb to tomb, and this is a compilation of stories defending all life."

As Lawhon explained, the pro-life educational tool is a series of chapters, complete with numerous video presentations and an instructor's manual.

"We never hesitate to defend the challenging cases of rape, life of the mother, and incompatible-with-life issues," Lawhon explained. "We honor end-of-life issues in a way that connects generations with dignity, gentle compassion and love."

For more information on the Voice of John Ministry and to schedule a speaker, call (570) 788- JOHN (5646).

Secular Carmelites advance in Order formation



The Holy Annunciation Secular Order of Discalced Carmelites recently gathered for a day of prayer and recollection guided by their spiritual director, Father Scott Boghossian of Saint Mary's Byzantine Catholic Church in Freeland. The event featured two members of the Secular Carmelite community, Ryan McNulty and Kathleen Prosseda (pictured above with Father Boghossian), receiving their signature Brown Scapulars, having completed their year-long Aspirancy program. They now enter spiritual formation toward their first promise in the Secular Discalced Carmelites. For more information on the Holy Annunciation Secular Carmelite community, call (570) 956-9272.

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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 Respecto de Reportar el Abuso Sexual de Un Menor de Edad

Es la norma de la Diócesis de Scranton reportar cualquier alegación de abuso sexual de un menor de edad a las autoridades. Si usted es una víctima de abuso sexual cometido por un sacerdote, diácono, religioso o empleado laico, o voluntario de la Diócesis de Scranton, usted está obligado a reportar el asunto inmediatamente a las autoridades de la ley.

Si algún sacerdote, diácono, religioso, empleado laico o voluntario de la Diócesis de Scranton tiene sospecha de que un menor de edad ha sido sujeto a cualquier forma de abuso, incluyendo abuso sexual de menor de edad, el asunto será reportado a las autoridades de la ley.

Es la norma de la Diócesis defender todas las regulaciones civiles y del estado. Al fin de que la Diócesis esté comprometida igualmente a defender las normas del Código de Derecho Canónico y defender los principios de la Carta Para la Protección de Niños y Jóvenes (Conferencia de los Obispos Católicos de los Estados Unidos), lo cual incluye apoyar a las víctimas de abuso sexual en pos del bienestar emocional y espiritual.

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

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Catholic Happenings Around the Diocese

***Final "40 Days for Life" Pro-Life Rosary Gatherings* — OCT. 15-30**, 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.

***Emmaus Concert Experience* — OCT. 17**, hosted by Notre Dame High School, 60 Spangenburg Ave., East Stroudsburg; begins 7 p.m. Faith-enlivening multimedia concert for all ages features dynamic live performances by Array of Hope Music, engaging talks, empowering visuals & personal testimonies. Cost: $20 per person. For registration, contact St. Luke Parish in Stroudsburg; registered parishioners under age 18 admitted free of charge.

***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.

***"Oktoberfest" Celebration* — OCT. 17**, hosted by Our Lady of Victory Parish, 427 Cherry Lane Road, Tannersville; held from 4 to 8 p.m. in the parish center. Featuring homemade German foods, seasonal treats & refreshments, musical entertainment, children's activities, tricky trays, and cash raffle drawing; free admission and parking. Sit-down dinners or take-out orders available. For more information, contact Susan Flad at (570) 629-9112.

***Monthly Meeting of the Lay Carmelites* — OCT. 17**, 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.

***Patriotic Concert: The Hazleton Liberty Band* — OCT. 18**, hosted at St. John Bosco Church in Conyngham; begins at 2 p.m. One-hour concert of patriotic tunes and other musical selections features the historic Hazleton Liberty Band, founded in 1859 during the Civil War. Open to the public free of charge.

***St. Joseph Fraternity of Third Order Secular Franciscans* — OCT. 18**, 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.

***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'

Continued on Page 28

Pittston Parish hosting 69th Saint Jude Novena

PITTSTON — Communion of Saints Parish will host the 69th Annual Novena to Saint Jude — patron saint of hopeless cases and things despaired of — at Saint Mary, Help of Christians Church, 535 North Main St., North Pittston.

The well-known, venerable tradition of the area's Saint Jude Novena continues this year on Monday, Oct. 19, and concludes on the Feast of Saints Simon & Jude, Wednesday, Oct. 28.

Mass, homily, Novena prayers and veneration of the relic of Saint Jude will be held Monday through Saturday at noon; and on Sunday at 8 a.m.

Sung Evening Prayer will be celebrated weeknights only (Monday to Friday) at 7 p.m. in Saint Mary's Church. There will be no Evening Prayer on Saturday or Sunday.

Sacramental confessions precede all Novena devotions (except Sunday), beginning at 11:30 a.m., and the Holy Rosary will be prayed before each noon Mass.

Prayer programs are provided at all the services during the Saint Jude Novena.

For more information, contact the Communion of Saints parish office, (570) 654-0053.

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Catholic Happenings Around the Diocese

Continued from Page 27

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.

***Car Cruise & Fall Raffle* — OCT. 18**, hosted by St. Ann Basilica Parish in West Scranton; held from noon to 4 p.m. Featuring classic cars & awards, food & refreshments, prizes, cash raffle, and musical entertainment.

***Cash/Gift Card Bingo* — OCT. 18**, sponsored by the Christian Women of Our Lady of Hope Parish, 40 Park Ave., Wilkes-Barre; held 1 to 4 p.m. in Ave Maria Hall. Admission cost: $20, in advance; $25, at door. Refreshments are available. Contact Andrea Grella at (570) 606-7463 for ticket information.

***Annual 'Cancer Walk' Fundraiser* — OCT. 18**, sponsored by the Service Committee of Exaltation of the Holy Cross Parish, 420 Main Road, Hanover Twp.; registration starts 12:30 p.m. on the church grounds and walk begins at 2 p.m. Registration fee: $10; ribbons, food and other items available. Event also includes music, bake sale, and basket raffle; proceeds benefit local cancer-related charities and the parish's cancer ministry outreach. For more information/registration, call Joan, (570) 814-6444.

***Weekly Bereavement Support Group Series* — OCT. 19-NOV. 16**, sponsored by St. John Neumann Parish in Lords Valley; bereavement support group meets on 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.

***Taizé Prayer Service* — OCT. 21**, hosted by St. Maria Goretti Parish, 42 Redwood Drive, Laflin; evening of candlelit, contemplative prayer held from 7 to 8 p.m. Taizé is a meditative style of communal prayer, featuring sung repetitive refrains to create a gentle rhythm and inviting private reflection and meditation. Guest music minister: Rob Yenkowski, director of music at King's College, Wilkes-Barre, and the King's Cantores Christi Regis performance choir. All are welcome.

***Monthly Parish Bingo* — OCT. 21**, sponsored by the Our Lady's Guild of Our Lady of Victory Parish in Tannersville; bingo held on the third Wednesday of every month. Games hosted in the church hall, 327 Cherry Lane Road, Tannersville; doors open at noon. Bingo game cards cost 25 cents each; small snacks and refreshments will be served. Parish fundraising event is open to the public; for more information, contact Antoinette Martinelli at (570) 466-0830 or antoinette248@gmail.com.

***"Magnifica Humanitas": Artificial Intelligence's Impact on Faith & Health in Local Communities* — OCT. 22**, hosted by The University of Scranton at 6 p.m.; panel discussion, including theologian, health care professional, and pastor, on the local impact of artificial intelligence, guided by Pope Leo XIV's recent encyclical "Magnifica Humanitas." All are welcome.

***Wilkes-Barre/Scranton Penguins Hockey: Diocese of Scranton "Faith & Family Night"* — OCT. 23**, Scranton Diocese group night at WBS Penguins vs. Belleville Senators hockey game; gates open at 6 p.m. and game starts 7 p.m. Game tickets include special $4.50 food voucher for hot dog, chips & drink. Featuring discounted group night tickets; for more information, call or text (570) 208-5407.

***Parish Night at the Races* — OCT. 24**, hosted by Communion of Saints Parish in Pittston; event begins 6 p.m. in Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish Center, 241 William St., Pittston. Admission cost: $10, including food & drink refreshments. Race horses available for purchase; for more information, visit the parish website: cospittston.org.

***Marywood Undergraduate Fall Open Houses* — OCT. 24 & NOV. 14**, hosted by Marywood University in Scranton; both Saturday open house events for high school students and their parents are held 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., beginning with registration at 8:30 a.m. in the Fireplace

Continued on Page 29

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Catholic Happenings Around the Diocese of Scranton

Continued from Page 28

Lounge at the Nazareth Student Center on campus. Prospective students will have opportunities to meet with Marywood students, faculty and coaches, and tour the campus; information will be provided regarding academic disciplines, the admission process and financial aid. Complimentary continental breakfast and lunch included. To register, visit: marywood.edu/visitopenhouse, or call (570) 348-6234.

***'Blue Mass' Celebration* — OCT. 25**, Mass for law enforcement, fire, and emergency service personnel, sponsored by the Nanticoke City Fire Dept.; hosted by St. Faustina Kowalska Parish, 520 S. Hanover St., Nanticoke, at its Sunday morning 11 a.m. Mass. Principal celebrant: Father Brian Van Fossen, host pastor and fire department chaplain. All are encouraged to attend in uniform.

***Drive-Thru Pasta Dinner* — OCT. 25**, sponsored by Queen of Angels Parish in Jessup; take-out only dinner held from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Parish Pastoral Center on Church Street. Cost: adults, $15; children (under age 12), $5. Menu includes rigatoni pasta w/ meatballs in sauce, roll, salad and dessert. Event offers $25 gift card raffle; tickets available before & after weekend Masses.

***Ethnic Dinner* — OCT. 25**, hosted by St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Church in Scranton; held 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at St. Mary's Center, 320 Mifflin Ave., Scranton. Dine-in or takeout dinner includes pierogi, halupki, halushki & kielbasa; cost: $15. Potato pancakes also available; event includes bake sale and raffle drawings.

***Pro-Life Presentation: "Voice of John" Founder MaryAnn Lawhon* — OCT. 27**, hosted by St. Monica Parish in West Wyoming; guest speaker event begins at 6 p.m. at the parish worship site at 363 West Eighth St., West Wyoming. Inspirational pro-life presentation features Maryann Lawhon, founder of the "Voice of John" and "John's Ongoing Ministry," who will outline the pro-life ministry's compassionate outreach to those facing various "life issues" of modern times. Light refreshments provided.

***"Ambassadors in Faith" Parish Gala* — NOV. 5**, evening of celebration, recognition & gratitude hosted by St. Patrick Parish in Milford to honor individuals for exceptional commitment and service to the parish and community; held from 6 to 9 p.m. at the Tom Quick Inn, Milford. "Black Tie/Optional" fundraising event features Bishop Joseph C. Bambera presenting awards for Stewardship, Ministry, Discipleship, Charity & Community. For more information, email ambassadorgala@gmail.com, or call (908) 451-1206.

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Remembrance Day for Aborted Children observed; Cemetery's 'Tomb of the Unborn' marks 30th year





As pro-life Americans honored the memory of the nearly 65 million unborn victims of abortion during the 14th annual National Day of Remembrance for Aborted Children on Sept. 12, the observance was prayerfully marked in the Scranton Diocese at a Memorial Service of Victims of Abortion in Luzerne County. The solemn pro-life gathering (depicted in the above right photo) was held at the Wyoming Valley Knights of Columbus "Tomb of the Unborn" on the grounds of Mount Olivet Cemetery in Carverton. Father Thomas Petro, chaplain of the Greater Pittston Knights of Columbus Assembly, is shown (in the photo at left) officiating at the 30th Anniversary Celebration of the Knights' "Tomb of the Unborn" at Mount Olivet on Respect Life Sunday, Oct. 4. Nearly two dozen faithful marked the milestone.

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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I certify that the statements made by me are correct and complete.
Eric M. Deabill, Editor-in-Chief

Catholic Happenings Around the Diocese of Scranton

Parish Craft Fair — **NOV. 7**, sponsored by the Altar & Rosary Society of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church at Communion of Saints Parish in Pittston; held 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish Center, 237 William St., Pittston. Featuring up to 30 vendors; lunch available for purchase. For vendor applications, contact craftypattiecf@gmail.com.

Take-Out Homemade Meatloaf Dinner — **NOV. 7**, sponsored by Gate of Heaven Parish in Dallas; take-out orders only served from 4 to 7 p.m. Dinner includes homemade meatloaf, mashed potatoes & gravy, applesauce, green beans, dinner roll/butter, and dessert cake. Cost: $15 per dinner. Limited tickets available; call the parish office at (570) 675-2121.

Parish Cash Bingo — **NOV. 8**, to benefit Prince of Peace Parish in Old Forge; hosted at the Old Forge Fire Department, 375 Milwaukee Ave., Old Forge. Doors open at 11 a.m.; bingo games start 1 p.m. Event includes 20 regular games with $100 cash prizes; three specials, $250 jackpots; and one special game, $1,000 jackpot. Basket & cash raffles and snack bar also available. Admission cost: $25; additional game booklets $10 each. Advance tickets available at weekend Masses or by contacting the parish office, (570) 457-5900.

Secular Discalced Carmelites Meeting — **NOV. 8**, 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 Laflin. New members are most welcome. For more information and inquiries, contact Gina Romancheck at (570) 956-9272.

Parish Bingo — **NOV. 8**, sponsored by St. Carlo Acutis Parish at St. Anthony Church, Rebecca St., Throop; doors open at noon and games start 1 p.m. Admission: $5 (advance) or $7 (at door). Extra playing sheets available for $3 donations or more to purchase grocery gift cards for area individuals in need. For information/tickets, call Debbie at (570) 540- 1154.

Annual Christmas Sale & Basket Raffle — **NOV. 13 & 14**, sponsored by Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish, 1402 Route 209, (Gilbert) Brodheadsville; held Friday, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., and Saturday, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Christmas sale features Nativity sets & religious items; holiday trees, ornaments, indoor/outdoor lights & vintage Christmas items; new toys, jewelry & cosmetics; Christmas clothing items, holiday linens, Christmas books & entertainment; and holiday greeting cards/gift wrap. Event includes theme basket & cash raffles; homemade baked goods; and food menu items, including breakfast sandwiches, hot dogs, macaroni & cheese, halushki & homemade soups.

Grief Journey Ministry: "Surviving the Holidays" — **NOV. 15**, hosted by Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish at Lake Silkworth, 2011 State Route 29, Hunlock Creek; faith-based bereavement support group gathering held from 2 to 4:30 p.m. Open to anyone grieving the loss of a loved one and having to cope with the upcoming holidays. Registration is encouraged; contact the parish office at (570) 477-5040.

Pierogi Sale — **NOV. 15**, sponsored by Exaltation of the Holy Cross Parish, 420 Main Road, Hanover Twp.; Sunday pick-up for pierogi orders required by Oct. 23. Cost: $10/dozen (potato) and $12/dozen (Farmer's Cheese). To place orders, call (570) 823-6242 or visit www.exhc.org.

"Nazareth Group" Days for High School Girls — **NOV. 21**, 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." 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.

Catholic Youth Center "'Twas the Night Before Bingo" — **DEC. 6**, benefitting the childcare & community programs at the Wyoming Valley CYC, 36 S. Washington St., Wilkes-Barre; bingo games begin 2 p.m. at the youth center (doors open 1 p.m.) Event features special grand prizes, $1,000 cash prize & basket raffles; entertainment by DJ Rob Sax. Cost: $25 (in advance), $30 (at door); limited seating. For advance tickets, call the CYC at (570) 823-6121, or email: msoprano@cycwb.org.

Conyngham parish to host Advent Bible Study series

CONYNGHAM — Saint John Bosco Parish will host an Adult Bible Study series during the Advent season in the parish's Faith Formation Center in Conyngham.

The four-week Bible study will focus on "The Parables of Jesus," beginning with a brief introduction followed by a closer look at several parables.

The series will be offered on four consecutive Tuesdays, Dec. 1, 8, 15 & 22, with both a morning session (9:15 to 10:45 a.m.) and evening session (6 to 7:30 p.m.).

All faithful are welcome to attend the Bible study as an opportunity during Advent to deepen their knowledge of Sacred Scripture, strengthen their faith, and spiritually prepare for the celebration of the Birth of Christ.

Registration is required by contacting the Saint John Bosco parish office at (570) 788-1997, ext. 3, and providing name and contact information.

The Bible study series is open to the public free of charge.

Participants are requested to provide their own Bible. Anyone in need of a study Bible, ones will be available for a cost of $10 each.

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Catholic Ministries Appeal approaches 50% of goal

SCRANTON – Just one month after launching in parishes throughout the Diocese of Scranton, the 2026-2027 Catholic Ministries Appeal is already approaching the halfway mark toward its $4.5 million goal, reflecting the generosity and commitment of parishioners supporting the vital Catholic ministries of our local Church.

The Diocese of Scranton extends its gratitude to the thousands of donors who have already made a gift or pledge. Every contribution helps sustain ministries that serve individuals and families, strengthen parishes, educate young people and spread the Good News of the Gospel.

The Catholic Ministries Appeal supports Vocations, Seminarians and Retired Clergy; Catholic media and communications; Parish Life initiatives; Catholic Social Services; Catholic education; as well as Parish Faith Formation and Social Justice Grants.

As the Appeal continues, previous donors may have recently received a second letter inviting them to renew their support. This year, that letter comes from the four seminarians currently living at the newly reopened Saint Pius Seminary in Scranton.

The seminarians express gratitude for the generosity that helped make the seminary's reopening possible and invite donors to continue investing in priestly formation and the many other ministries supported by the Appeal.

"Your past support of the Catholic Ministries Appeal, through your prayers and your financial gifts, helped make the reopening of Saint Pius X Seminary a reality," the seminarians wrote.

Those who have not yet participated in this year's Appeal are invited to make a gift or pledge. To learn more about the ministries supported by the Appeal or to contribute, visit AnnualAppeal.org or call the Diocesan Development Office at (570) 207-2250.

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