

From: Diocese of Scranton <e-newsletter@dioceseofscranton.org>
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Diocese of Scranton *News Briefing*

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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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Closing of the Holy Door of Mercy this Sunday

As the Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy concludes this Sunday, November 20, the Solemnity of Christ the King, the Diocese will join with the Universal Church in a celebration of the special graces that so many have experienced during this time when God's love and mercy have been extended by us to our sisters and brothers everywhere.

Pope Francis, who called us to embrace this Year of Mercy, will symbolically bring it to a culmination when he closes the Holy Door of Mercy at Saint Peter's Basilica in Rome. Bishop Joseph C. Bambera will emulate the Holy Father when he closes the Holy Door at the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton at the 10 a.m. Mass.

This liturgy has also been designated a special Mass of Thanksgiving, at which all prayer intentions offered by donors to the Diocesan Annual Appeal will be remembered. The theme for the 2016 campaign is "Living Faith, Serving with Mercy." The Mass will be followed by a reception in the Diocesan Pastoral Center.

All are invited to participate. CTV: Catholic Television will broadcast the Mass.

Diocesan Annual Appeal at 78% of Goal

"Living Faith, Serving with Mercy"

The **2016 Diocesan Annual Appeal: Living Faith, Serving with Mercy**, has raised more than \$3.9 million in gifts and pledges, bringing the campaign to 78% of the \$5 million goal. St. Mary Parish, Waymart, was the first parish to surpass its goal. A total of 13 parishes have met their goal for the Annual Appeal and several more are approaching their parish goal.

The parishes that have surpassed their goal, in addition to St. Mary Parish, are Blessed Sacrament Parish, Throop; Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen of Peace Parish, Hawley; Holy Child Parish, Mansfield; Holy Rosary Parish, Hazleton; Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish, Lake Silkworth; Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish, Brodheadsville; Our Lady of Victory Parish, Harveys Lake; SS. Cyril & Methodius Parish, Hazleton; St. Ann Parish, Shohola; St. Barbara Parish, Exeter; St. John Neumann Parish, Lords Valley; and St. Maximilian Kolbe Parish, Pocono Pines.

"As we complete this Extraordinary Year of Mercy, I am grateful to all of our parishioners who have responded to the call to support this year's Diocesan Annual Appeal," said Bishop Joseph C. Bambera. "May we continue to embrace the mission of our local Church with hearts filled with gratitude for God's mercy and presence in our lives."

Many Diocesan ministries are supported by gifts to the Annual Appeal - ministries such as Catholic Social Services and parish social justice programs; education for students in our 20 Catholic schools and in our religious education programs in our parishes; care for our current and retired priests and support for seminarians preparing for the priesthood; parish life and pastoral planning efforts that strengthen our parish communities; and communication programs such as *The Catholic Light* and CTV: Catholic Television that spread the good news of the Gospel throughout our Diocese.

"More than 24,000 families have contributed to the Diocesan Annual Appeal this year and we know that many more parishioners will support the Appeal in the next few months," said Jim Bebla, Diocesan Secretary for Development. "This wonderful support is deeply appreciated and allows our Diocesan ministries to respond to the many needs of our Diocese with mercy, compassion and care."

Parishioners and friends may make an online gift to the Diocesan Annual Appeal by visiting www.annualappeal.org. Gifts may also be made by text (text the word Appeal to 91999), by calling the Diocesan Development Office at 570-207-2250 or by sending a donation to: Diocesan Annual Appeal, 300 Wyoming Ave., Scranton, PA, 18503-1279.

**Bishop Leading Pilgrimage to Spain and Portugal
for Our Lady of Fatima Centennial**

September 18-26, 2017 - reservations being taken now

Bishop Joseph C. Bambera invites the faithful to join him on a special pilgrimage to Spain and Portugal in honor of the 100th anniversary of Our Lady of Fatima's appearance to three young shepherd children in 1917.

The pilgrimage will take place September 18-26, 2017 and will include Masses celebrated by the Bishop and visits to many sacred and historic sites, including nearly two days in Fatima where the Marian apparitions occurred.

The Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, appeared six times to the children - Lucia, Francisco and Jacinta - near the town of Fatima, Portugal between May 13 and October 13, 1917. During a time of war and turmoil, she told them that she had been sent by God with a message that Heaven would grant peace to all the world if her requests for prayer, reparation and consecration were heard and obeyed. The apparitions culminated in an inexplicable spectacle on October 13, when 70,000 onlookers witnessed the sun spinning like a ball in the sky.

The area where the apparitions happened is one of the principal places of pilgrimage in the Roman Catholic world.

"I am privileged to be leading another pilgrimage of faithful from our Diocese to a holy place that has such meaning for Catholics," said Bishop Bambera, who in the last few years has joined with local pilgrims on journeys to Rome, France and Poland for World Youth Day.

"It will be a particular treasure for us to be in Fatima during the commemoration of the centennial anniversary of the Blessed Mother's appearances there. This will surely be a memorable experience and one that will provide special graces and blessings for all who can go on the pilgrimage as well as those who participate through their prayers and devotions to Our Lady of Fatima."

Space is limited, so it is recommended that you call as soon as possible for reservations. All arrangements and reservations are to be made through TRAVELWORLD.

For information, call TRAVELWORLD at 800-828-6029 or visit www.asktravelworld.com.

Collection for the Retirement Fund for Religious Communities

Faithful in the Diocese of Scranton will have an opportunity to express their appreciation for the service of sisters, brothers and religious order priests by supporting the annual collection for the Retirement Fund for Religious, which will be taken up at Masses the weekend of December 10-11.

The U.S. bishops launched the Retirement Fund for Religious collection in 1988 to address the profound deficit in retirement funding among the nation's religious communities. Traditionally, Catholic sisters, brothers and religious order priests - known collectively as women and men religious - served for small stipends that did not include retirement benefits. Today, many religious communities lack adequate retirement savings. At the same time, health-care costs have risen dramatically while the number of religious able to serve in compensated ministry has declined.

Proceeds from the collection support the retirement needs of these women and men who spent their lives in church ministries such as education, health care and social services. In 2015, the collection raised \$30.7 million nationwide.

The collection for the Religious Retirement Fund is distinct and separate from the monthly collection taken in parishes for the Care and Education of Priests of the Diocese of Scranton.

Office for Parish Life

Musicians' Mass

This Monday, November 21, 2016 at 7:00PM, Bishop Bambera will recognize the music ministers of the Diocese for the ministry which they embrace. This will take place at the Memorial of St. Cecilia Musicians' Mass at the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton. After the Communion Rite, Bishop Bambera will recognize and bless all musicians who are present through a special ceremony and blessing. A light reception after Mass will be held in the Diocesan Pastoral Center across from the Cathedral. All cantors, choir members, instrumentalists and anyone else who enjoys singing at Mass is encouraged to attend. The Mass will be the first gathering of the season for the members of the Scranton Chapter of the National Association of Pastoral Musicians. Please join us!

Living Your Strengths Evening Retreat

Tuesday, Dec. 6, 5:30-9:00PM

**Diocesan Pastoral Center,
330 Wyoming Ave, Scranton**

The Advent/Christmas season is a time for giving gifts as a sign of love. Have you ever thought of yourself as a gift? God has never made another person like you. Statistics bear this out! Unwrap the science and the spirituality of *Living Your Strengths* this Advent. You will see how God has laid out your path in the talents you have been given and how everyone around you likewise has a different (and complementary) set of strengths. Celebrate St. Nicholas Day by celebrating the unique and wonderful gifts God has given you!

- * Presenter: Bernadette Rudolph, Director for Family and Community Development, Diocesan Office for Parish Life
- * Cost: \$10 for dinner. Also you need to get a code from the book, *StrengthsFinder 2.0* by Tom Rath. You can purchase a hard copy from [Amazon](#) - making sure it is new so you get an unused code - or an e-book directly from [Gallup](#).
- * Please take the *StrengthsFinder 2.0* survey and bring the results with you Dec. 6!
- * Please contact Jennifer at 570-207-2213 or oplgeneral@dioceseofscranton.org to register.

Still Time to apply! - Diocesan Certificate in Lay Ministry Program, 2016

The Office for Parish Life is still **accepting applications for the Diocesan Certificate in Lay Ministry**. The *Diocesan Certificate in Lay Ministry* is a ministry formation program designed to equip and advance the servant leadership capacities of individuals serving in areas such as: Parish Pastoral Councils, Directors of Religious Education and Catechists, Liturgical Coordinators, Parish Staff, as well as members of Volunteer Ministry teams, and others.

Through independent online study with the University of Dayton's Virtual Learning Community for Faith Formation (VLCFF), as well as regional skills workshops and opportunities for prayer and reflection, *Diocesan Certificate* candidates enrich their knowledge base, while also learning practical tools for effective parish ministry in serving their local faith communities.

Prospective candidates are encouraged to contact Kitty MacLean, Coordinator for Lay Ministry Formation, at 570-207-2213, or by email at Kitty-MacLean@dioceseofscranton.org for application information, materials, and application submissions.

ARISE 2016

Eight parishes in the Diocese of Scranton have entered into their third season of "ARISE Together in Christ," a RENEW International process.

Through faith-sharing, breaking open the Sacred Scripture, and putting their faith into action, ARISE participants have grown closer together within their parish communities.

We invite parishes who are still interested in getting started with ARISE, to take part in a RENEW program during the Advent season. New ARISE parish members can also join with a neighboring parish to explore the process this Fall.

To learn more about the benefits of this experience of awakening and deepening faith, call the Office for Parish Life at 570-207-2213.

Jubilee Year of Mercy Resources

Calling the Church, calling each of us, to a Year of mercy, Pope Francis tells us: "*Mercy is the very foundation of the Church's life. All of her pastoral activity should be caught up in the tenderness she makes present to believers; nothing in her preaching and in her witness to the world can be lacking in mercy. The Church's very credibility is seen in how she shows merciful, compassionate love.*"

To facilitate your study and action toward becoming more merciful persons and communities during this holy year, the Office for Parish Life has published a calendar titled "Becoming the Church of Mercy." Three copies were mailed to each parish, and it is also posted on the Diocesan website. If your parish would like additional copies, simply call the Office for Parish Life - you are also most welcome to copy any or all of it.

In addition to the many resources offered in this calendar, check the [Year of Mercy page of Diocesan website](#) for monthly updates like:

- * Liturgical Resources for each Liturgical Season
- * Catechetical Resources for the Year of Mercy
- * The Year of Mercy Challenge! - action plan for youth groups
- * *Laudato si'* Study Guides
- * Year of Mercy Intergenerational Catechesis

Fall into a good book ...with the [Little Free Library](#), OPL's collection of good books for the average parishioner, on Catholic spirituality, Scripture, the saints, Eucharist, ecclesiology and more - all in the spirit of Vatican II! This can be a bridge between good materials and parishioners. You can access the site through Pinterest or by emailing [Bernadette Rudolph](#) for a pdf listing. Titles are recommended for various uses:

- The Eucharistic adoration chapel library
- Adult catechesis
- Individual enrichment
- Small group study
- "Thank you" gifts for volunteers
- The parish library

Mark Your Calendar

For a listing of Diocesan and parish events, go to: [Calendar](#)

Follow the Diocese on Social Media

We are pleased to announce a new edition to our social media lineup: the Diocese of Scranton Twitter page: www.twitter.com/DioceseOfScranton

If you're not already doing so, you can follow Bishop Bambera on Twitter by going to: www.twitter.com/BishopBambera

Also check out our Facebook page: www.facebook.com/DioceseOfScranton

You are also encouraged to visit the Facebook pages of other Diocesan departments. They are listed on our website at: <http://www.dioceseofscranton.org/media/social-media/>

Thank you for connecting with us!

Real Estate Availability

The Property & Risk Management Division of the Diocese currently maintains a listing of real estate available for sale or use throughout the Diocese. If interested in learning about the available opportunities, please contact Ed Carlin, Property Assets Director, P&RM Division, at 570-558-4310.

Diocese of Scranton, 300 Wyoming Ave, Scranton, PA 18501

SafeUnsubscribe™_stjosephchurch@optonline.net