

## MASS SCHEDULE

### Saturday:

4:00pm - Saints Peter & Paul

5:30pm - Saint Dominic

### Sunday:

8:00am - Saints Peter & Paul

10:30am - Saints Peter & Paul

### Eucharistic Adoration:

(at Saints Peter & Paul)

First Friday of every month Noon - 3:30pm

### Confession:

Saturday 3:00pm - 3:30pm



## CONTACT US

13 Hudson Road  
Plains, PA 18705-2015

Phone: 570-825-6663

Fax: 570-823-4556

Email: [parishoffice@sspeterandpaulplains.com](mailto:parishoffice@sspeterandpaulplains.com)

[www.sspeterandpaulplains.com](http://www.sspeterandpaulplains.com)

### Office Hours:

Monday: 8am - 4pm

Tuesday: 8am - 4pm

Wednesday: 8am - 2pm

Thursday: 8am - 4pm

Friday: 8am - Noon

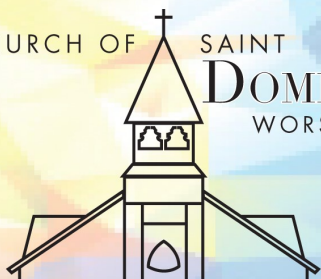
*\*Closed daily Noon - 12:30pm\**

Reverend John C. Lambert M.S.W.  
*Pastor*

Email: [pastor@sspeterandpaulplains.com](mailto:pastor@sspeterandpaulplains.com)

Deacon Don Crane  
*Permanent Deacon*

CHURCH OF SAINT  
**DOMINIC**  
WORSHIP SITE



155 Austin Ave.,  
Wilkes-Barre, PA 18705-2603



13 Hudson Road,  
Plains, PA 18705-2015



Like us on Facebook!  
[Facebook.com/sspeterandpaulplains](https://www.facebook.com/sspeterandpaulplains)

# STEWARDSHIP

## SUNDAY STEWARDS

Contributions for week ending  
November 29, 2020

Saints Peter and Paul

Combined Collection  
\$3,588

## Mass Schedule

**Effective Until Further Notice**

**Saints Peter and Paul**

Monday - Communion Service 7am

Tuesday thru Friday 7am

Wednesday & Friday 12:15pm

Saturday-4:00pm

Sunday-8:00am & 10:30 am

**Saint Dominic**

Saturday-5:30pm

We will continue to Live Stream Mass on the  
parish website [www.sspeterandpaulplains.com](http://www.sspeterandpaulplains.com)  
as well as on the parish facebook page.

God has entrusted us with many gifts:

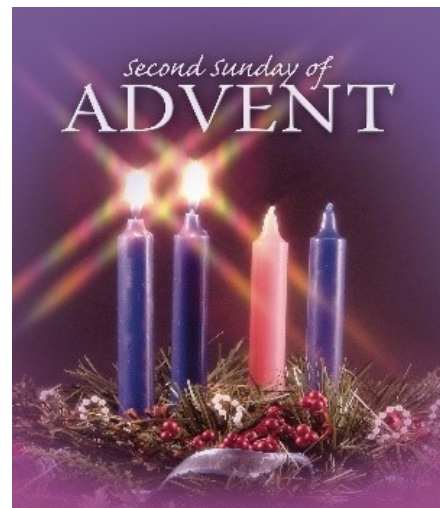
Time, Talent & Treasure. We hope and pray that  
all members will share their gifts, and continue to  
share the Good News of Jesus with all people.

## SAINTS PETER & PAUL LOTTERY

Nov. 30	#450	Saints Peter & Paul
Dec. 01	#141	M. Brennan
Dec. 02	#185	Saints Peter & Paul
Dec. 03	#330	Saints Peter & Paul
Dec. 04	#212	Saints Peter & Paul
Dec. 05	#006	Saints Peter & Paul
Dec. 06	#197	Saints Peter & Paul

## For the safety of all our parishioners...

1. If you are not feeling well please stay home.
2. Please practice proper social distancing.
3. Everyone must wear a mask.  
If you do not have one, we can provide you  
with one.
4. Sanitize appropriately.



LIVING A  
**STEWARDSHIP**

It is all about your heart...

Everything we have is a gift from God  
that we are to use to help others.

*Life*

# WORSHIP

## WE REMEMBER

### MASSES AT SAINTS PETER & PAUL

Monday	12-7	7am	<b>Communion Service</b>
Tuesday	12-8	7am	<b>Theresa Pachucki</b> by Family
		<b>12:15</b>	<b>Pagnotti Family</b> by Family
Wednesday	12-9	7am	<b>John Harowicz</b> by Jerry & Linda Matous
			<b>Edward Ciprich</b> by Merritt Family
Thursday	12-10	7am	<b>Ruth Jescavage</b> by Mark & Debbie Sobak
			<b>Anthony Bartoletti</b> by Eleanor Stevens
Friday	12-11	7am	<b>Shirley Stark (A)</b> by Eleanor & Pete Bednar
			<b>Robert Schuster</b> by Bill Mitchell

### WEEKEND MASS SCHEDULE SAINTS PETER & PAUL

Saturday	12-12	4pm	<b>Living &amp; Deceased Parishioners</b>
Sunday	12-13	8am	<b>Anso &amp; Marie Dominick</b> by Daughters
		10:30am	<b>Nellie Wasmanski</b> by Clem Wasmanski

### WEEKEND MASS SCHEDULE SAINT DOMINIC

Saturday	12-12	5:30pm	<b>Rosemary McCarthy</b> by Family
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### MASSES FOR THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

**Monday, December 7th 5:30pm - Saint Dominic Church**

**Tuesday, December 8th 7am & 12:15pm - Saints Peter & Paul Church**

#### SAINTS PETER & PAUL PARISH

##### **Sanctuary Candle**

Richard Smith

##### **Lady of Lourdes**

Mary S. Rymar



##### **Floral Arrangement**

Special Intention

##### **Holy Family Votive**

Leonard Jaszczak

# WORD

## MINISTRY OF THE MONTH-DECEMBER

*Each month, a Ministry of the parishes will be highlighted. You are asked to prayerfully consider each ministry, and to participate in whatever capacity that suits your availability, interest, and needs.*

### Lectors

Readers proclaim the Word of God at Eucharistic celebrations. Their goal is to provide inspiration to those listening to the Gospel readings. They serve at weekend liturgies, Holy Days, and, if available, at daily Masses.

Any parishioner who is in high school or older is available to participate in this Ministry.

Lectors are scheduled in advance for dates and Masses of preference. The scheduling program allows for individuals to submit substitute and volunteer requests.

**Contact:** *Dave Loiacono* [dav040@comcast.net](mailto:dav040@comcast.net)

## WEEKLY READINGS

### Second Sunday of Advent

#### Sunday

Is 40:1-5, 9-11;  
2 Pt 3:8-14;  
Mk 1:1-8

#### Monday

Is 35:1-10;  
Lk 5:17-26

#### Tuesday

Gn 3:9-15, 20;  
Eph 1:3-6, 11-12;  
Lk 1:26-38

#### Wednesday

Is 40:25-31;  
Mt 11:28-30

#### Thursday

Is 41:13-20;  
Mt 11:11-15

#### Friday

Is 48:17-19;  
Mt 11:16-19

#### Saturday

Zec 2:14-17 or Rv 11:19a, 12:1-6a,  
10ab; Lk 1:26-38

or Lk 1:39-47 or any readings from  
the *Lectionary for*

*Mass* (vol. IV), the Common of the  
Blessed Virgin

Mary, nos. 707-712

Exciting news! We have Christmas Cards available at the Parish Center! Your children can fill them out and return them to the church to be shipped out to our Military overseas!

Please help us spread some Christmas cheer to our valued service women and men.

### Faith Formation





# The Sunday Good News

CHURCH OF SAINTS PETER & PAUL

DECEMBER 6, 2020



*God of my heart,  
Some days I just feel  
like I am stumbling  
around in the darkness.  
It is then - and only  
then - that I turn to  
you.*

*Soften my hardened  
heart, open my closed-  
in spirit and take away  
the darkness in my life.  
If I just let myself feel  
your glory dawning,  
full of brightness,  
I could look around to  
see myself revealed in  
you.*

*Let me be a child of  
your light and feel the  
fire of your love and  
the glory of your  
words.*

*Most of all, let me be  
grateful to you.*

*Amen.*

## SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

### First Reading: Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11

Isaiah emphasizes that from the desert to the mountains, all people must prepare for “the glory of the Lord to be revealed.” Rather than looking only at God’s power, Isaiah focuses on God’s kindness, comparing it to a shepherd who feeds and cares for his flock.

### Second Reading: 2 Peter 3:8-14

For those who are impatient for the Second Coming, Peter explains that time is different to God than to people. He reminds them that they should be grateful for the extra time to prepare, and concentrate on striving to become all that God would want them to be.

### Gospel: Mark 1:1-8

In this passage, John the Baptist stressed the importance of the coming of the Messiah. He acknowledged that he was only the messenger, and unfit to “stoop and untie his sandal straps.” John urged them to prepare for one far holier than he, who would walk among them.

## A FRESH PERSPECTIVE ON THE SUNDAY READINGS

**HIS WORD TODAY** by Rev. William J. Reilly

### Second Sunday of Advent

December 6, 2020

**“Go up onto a high mountain, Zion, herald of glad tidings; cry out at the top of your voice, Jerusalem, herald of good news! Fear not to cry out and say to the cities of Judah: Here is your God! He comes with power, the Lord God, who rules by his strong arm... Like a shepherd he feeds his flock, in his arms he gathers the lambs, carrying them in his bosom, and leading the ewes with care.”**

Writing centuries before Christ, the prophet calls us today to once again make the same great announcement. The ‘hear ye, hear ye’ of the Isaiah era, echoes in our hearts as we speak not only of the need of Jesus’ saving grace, but its coming to us once more. We too are called to reveal His coming in grace, His power.

Today we call this the work of heralding ‘evangelization’, and our advent task is to prepare His way and make sure He is known. The same Jesus feeds, gathers and carries us, leading with care. What a beautiful image!

# SERVICE

## *We are Called to Serve...*

*"Do you understand what I just did for you?  
You address me as 'Teacher' and 'Lord' and fittingly  
enough, for that is what I am. But if I washed your  
feet—I who am Teacher and Lord—then you must wash  
each other's feet. What I just did was to give an  
example: as I have done, so you must do."*

*(John 12:2-15)*

### Loaves and Fishes

For the month of **December** will be collecting  
**canned vegetables**

### Food Pantry

Anyone in the Plains, Miners Mills, and Parsons  
area in need of food can contact Pauline at  
570-592-6798 to register. Food is distributed to  
the community on the third Friday of every month.  
**Non perishable** food donations are always  
accepted. Please place them in the basket in the  
vestibule of the Church.

### Treasures

We are now accepting clean, gently used **Fall/  
Winter clothing** for men, women, and children.  
Donations may be dropped off during business  
hours only.  
**Mondays from 6-8pm and Fridays 10am-12 pm.**

### Prayer Shawls

can be given to anyone for many reasons! Comfort,  
illness, occasions, friendship & joy. If there is  
anyone that would like to receive a shawl or request  
one for someone, please contact the Parish Office  
at 570-825-6663 or call Mary Jo at 570-825-6969.

### Saints Peter & Paul and Saint Dominic Ministries

Pauline Makowski, Food Pantry

Janet Soller, Quilting

Mary Jo Marek, Prayer Shawl

Laura Rudloff, Treasures

Irene Martin, Women's Society of Saints Peter & Paul

Barbara Zirmhelt, Council of Catholic Women

Kathy Grinaway, Hospitality

Donna Mansfield, Hospitality



### Christmas Flowers

Anyone who would like to help  
sponsor our Christmas Flowers can fill  
out a form and return it to the Parish  
Office or drop in collection basket. Forms are in the  
back of the Church so you can take one as you are  
leaving. The offering is \$10 PER NAME. Thank you!



**The Giving Trees at Saints Peter and  
Paul** will be in place on Thanksgiving  
weekend decorated with gift tags.

*Anyone wishing to participate in this  
Christmas project* is asked to take a tag,  
purchase a gift for the person, wrap the present, placing  
the giving tree tag on the outside of gift and **return it to  
the Church by December 13<sup>th</sup>**. The gifts will be  
distributed through our Food Pantry on Dec. 18<sup>th</sup>.  
Anyone wishing to donate gloves, socks, scarves, hats  
etc.. (for children infant to 12) may drop them off at the  
Parish Office.



With the season of Christmas upon us, what better  
way to support the Church than to give your friends a  
lottery ticket! Lottery tickets also make great  
stocking stuffers, or gifts for Teachers, Mail Carriers,  
etc. Thank you for your support!

God bless and Merry Christmas!!!

### Winter Lottery Tickets

Awards will begin Jan.1 - March 31

Prizes are \$25 Mon. through Sat., \$100 on Sun.

\$300 on Special Days

Solemnity of Mary-Jan. 1

Ash Wednesday-Feb. 17

Feast of St. Joseph-March 19

Cost is \$10

Winners match the PA Lottery Pick 3 Evening Drawing

**Tickets will be sold in the Parish Office  
during business hours.**

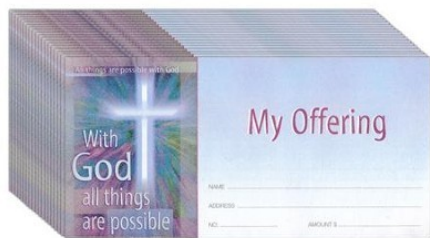
# SERVICE

## DECEMBER

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13 Giving Tree Gifts Due	14	15	16	17 Food Pantry Prep	18 Food Pantry Giving Tree gifts distributed	19
20	21	22	23	24 Office Closed	25 Office Closed	26
27	28	29	30	31 Office Closed	1 Office Closed	



**Year of Saint Joseph** This year marks the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Pope Pius IX's decree naming Saint Joseph, husband of the Blessed Virgin Mary and foster-father of Jesus, as the Patron of the Universal Church. In commemoration of this anniversary and recognizing the fitting time for the Church to invoke the intercession of this guardian, His Excellency, Bishop Joseph C. Bambera has declared this year as a "Year of Saint Joseph" to be observed in the Diocese of Scranton from March 19, 2020 to March 19, 2021. Bishop Bambera states, "Just as Saint Joseph watched over and protected the Lord Jesus while he was on earth, we need Saint Joseph to watch over and provide for the Church today. His intercession on behalf of the Universal Church is vital as the world faces so much upheaval and pain, and particularly as it confronts the uncertainty and pain of the coronavirus epidemic."



## Envelopes for Saint Dominic's Church

Starting in January 2021, envelopes for Saint Dominic's Church **will be sent via mail** instead of being picked up in Church.

Checks should be made out to Saints Peter & Paul Church.

## Suppression of Saint Benedict's Parish

In June 2017 Saint Benedict Parish, Wilkes-Barre, was linked to Saints Peter and Paul Parish, Plains, with the Reverend John C. Lambert serving as Pastor of both parishes. The buildings of Saint Benedict Parish in Wilkes-Barre consist of Saint Dominic's Church and Rectory. Following extensive consultation among its members and in consideration of its desire to maintain its primary mission of service, a request has been made of the Bishop of Scranton to close Saint Benedict Parish. The parishioners previously belonging to Saint Benedict Parish will now belong to Saints Peter and Paul Parish, and the new territorial boundaries of Saints Peter and Paul Parish will take in the previous territorial boundaries of Saint Benedict Parish. The Church of Saint Dominic will remain open as a secondary worship site of Saints Peter and Paul Parish.

## Virtual Grief Support Group

Winter and the post-holiday season can be difficult times to navigate grief, particularly during an ongoing period of social distancing. Please consider joining the virtual grief support group offered by Cathedral of Saint Peter Parish in Scranton. Anyone is welcome; you do not have to be a member of the parish to participate. The group will convene online, Wednesday evenings 6:30 to 7:30. The dates of the virtual meetings will be January 6, 13, 20 and 27.

For more information please contact Deacon Ed Shoener at 570-814-5133

or the parish office at 570-344-7231.



## Christmas Wafers/Oplatki

Are now available after all Masses or at the Parish Center during office hours.

Donations are appreciated.

## Cemetery Donation

**In memory of Joseph Adamczyk** by Charlotte Dominick for \$75



# SAINTS PETER & PAUL PARISH STAFF

## **Pastor**

Rev. John C. Lambert

[pastor@sspeterandpaulplains.com](mailto:pastor@sspeterandpaulplains.com)

## **Permanent Deacon**

Deacon Don Crane

## **Administrative Assistants**

Mary Ann Gottlieb

Mary Pilarcik

[parishoffice@sspeterandpaulplains.com](mailto:parishoffice@sspeterandpaulplains.com)

Nina Cinti

## **Faith Formation Coordinator**

[faithformation@sspeterandpaulplains.com](mailto:faithformation@sspeterandpaulplains.com)

## **Scholarships (Awarded to High School Seniors)**

[scholarships@sspeterandpaulplains.com](mailto:scholarships@sspeterandpaulplains.com)

## **Business Office**

[businessoffice@sspeterandpaulplains.com](mailto:businessoffice@sspeterandpaulplains.com)

## **Youth Ministry**

Jason Garcia

[youthministry@sspeterandpaulplains.com](mailto:youthministry@sspeterandpaulplains.com)

## **Music Ministry**

Scott Coates - Music Director

[music@sspeterandpaulplains.com](mailto:music@sspeterandpaulplains.com)

Gina Macaravage –Organist

Jay Garcia –Organist

Jill Fiedorczyk– Organist

## **Maintenance**

Greg Day

Michael Lambert

## **Sacristan**

Ben Berrini

## **Ministers Scheduler**

Dave Loiacono

[davl040@comcast.net](mailto:davl040@comcast.net)

## **Ushers**

Paul Muczynski

[pmuczynski@epix.net](mailto:pmuczynski@epix.net)

## **Altar Servers**

Nathan Smith

[nrsmith822@gmail.com](mailto:nrsmith822@gmail.com)

## **Bernardine Hall Coordinator**

Jason Garcia

[hallrental@sspeterandpaulplains.com](mailto:hallrental@sspeterandpaulplains.com)

## **Parish Cemeteries**

Nina Cinti

[cemeteries@sspeterandpaulplains.com](mailto:cemeteries@sspeterandpaulplains.com)

Saints Peter & Paul

Sacred Heart

Saint Joseph

Saint Francis

## **Combined Pastoral Council**

Kathy Grinaway, *Chairperson*

Donna Mansfield, *Vice Chairperson*

JoAnn Chukinas, *Secretary*

Barbara Gubbiotti

Debby Zuzelski

Harold Golomb

Jack Keeley

Joanne Bague

Lou Zuzelski

Steven McGough

## **Saints Peter & Paul Finance Committee**

Don Prescavage, *Chairman*

Ben Berrini, *Vice Chairman*

Charlotte Dominick, *Secretary*

Gerald Cross

Tony Dente

Tracy Schooley

## **Saints Peter & Paul Mission Statement**

As members of Saints Peter and Paul,  
we have as our mission the sharing of  
our faith and our talents.

We proclaim the Word of God through  
compassion for our community and sharing  
of our treasures as Disciples of Christ.

*Every donation counts !!!*

*If you have not yet pledged, please....*

*Help us reach our Annual Appeal Parish Goal!*

**Saints Peter & Paul is at**

**15.18%**

We are grateful to the parishioners who supported the 2020 Annual Appeal to date. If you have not yet given your support, please:

- Call the Development Office at 570-207-2250 to make a pledge or give a gift by credit card
- Mail a check to the Diocesan Appeal Office at 300 Wyoming Ave., Scranton, Pa 18503 or
- Give online at [www.DiocesefofScranton.org](http://www.DiocesefofScranton.org)

*Every donation counts !!!*

*If you have not yet pledged, please....*

*Help us reach our Annual Appeal Parish Goal!*

**Saint Dominic is at**

**14.10%**

We are grateful to the parishioners who supported the 2020 Annual Appeal to date. If you have not yet given your support, please:

- Call the Development Office at 570-207-2250 to make a pledge or give a gift by credit card
- Mail a check to the Diocesan Appeal Office at 300 Wyoming Ave., Scranton, Pa 18503 or
- Give online at [www.DiocesefofScranton.org](http://www.DiocesefofScranton.org)

Diocese of Scranton

2020 DIOCESAN ANNUAL APPEAL

BOUND TOGETHER IN Hope

**Join us with a gift on**  
**APPEAL ONLINE COMMITMENT**  
**WEEKEND**  
**November 21 & 22**

**Support our Diocesan Ministries and Help**  
**Our Parish Reach its Annual Appeal Goal**

**Go to**  
**<https://annualappeal.org/donate-now/>**

**or**  
**Scan the QR Code**  
**at Right**  
**Using the Camera on**  
**your Smartphone.**



***Thank you for your kind generosity!***

## **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. In accordance with the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's Child Protective Laws, reports of suspected child abuse should also be made immediately by phone to the 24 hour Child Abuse hotline (Childline) at 1-800-932-0313 or electronically at [www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis](http://www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis). 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

# VISION 2020

## *Seeing a Future Full of Hope*

### **SHAPING A BLUEPRINT FOR THE FUTURE OF THE DIOCESE**

In Today's homily for the Second Sunday of Advent, Bishop Bambera explained to us that it is time for the whole Church of Scranton to take a good look at the life of our parishes and to project a future vision in response to God's call today.

Your Pastors have taken first steps in this conversation in recent deanery meetings, and now it is essential to broaden this conversation to include all of the faithful. Bishop Bambera Pointed out to us the reality of change in our world and in our local communities, and so we know that we will continue to face and respond to change within the church. "I'm inviting all of the faithful," he said, "to simply focus on how we best engage the mission of the gospel in these changing times." Some of these changes include shifting demographics, differing attitudes about formal church participation, and diminishment in numbers of ordained priests available to serve as full-time pastors.

In the coming year, then, Bishop Bambera is asking us to continue working together to fashion a "blueprint" if you will— a pathway for our local Church, tailored to each deanery and to each parish—for how we will meet both the challenges and opportunities we will face in the next ten year period.

In his Homily he stressed that, "while every parish is similar in what is being asked to do and to be, each parish will respond to this process in ways that are unique to its situation and circumstances.

### **PLANNING GUIDANCE FOR EACH DEANERY**

Guiding the overall process are these planning assumptions as common elements across the Diocese:

- The benchmarks for vibrant parishes are in accord with the vision expressed in Bishop Bambera's Pastoral letter, especially pages 7-13
- In every local circumstances, efforts are made to best utilize the particular ministry gifts of the clergy and, at the same time, to mobilize the gifts of all the baptized.
- Each deanery blueprint implementation is unique, and may consider such questions as: number of worship sites, Mass schedules and wise investment of resources.
- No deanery is planning in isolation—the circumstances in one may occasion change in another.
- Parish pastoral plans are respected and help to inform deanery level plans.
- Recommendations from deaneries or parishes are brought to Diocesan review.
- Parishes in linked relationship, sharing a Pastor, will be given additional planning support to evaluate and craft the best path forward.
- Every parish calls forth those individuals whose capacity for pastoral leadership could be developed through vocational discernment for priesthood, religious life, lay ministry or permanent diaconate.

The Wilkes-Barre Deanery, which consists of the following parishes:

Sts. Peter & Paul (Plains), St. Dominic (Wilkes-Barre), Our Lady of Fatima at St. Mary's (Wilkes-Barre), St. Nicholas (Wilkes-Barre), Our Lady of Hope at St. Mary's Maternity (Wilkes-Barre), St. Andrew at St. Patrick's (Wilkes-Barre), St. Andre Bessette (Wilkes-Barre), St. Robert Bellarmine at St. Aloysius (Wilkes-Barre), Exaltation of the Holy Cross (Hanover), St. Leo/Holy Rosary (Ashley), Holy Family (Sugar Notch), Our Lady Help of Christians - St. Mary's (Dorrance), St. Jude (Mountaintop)



## **Report on the Independent Survivors Compensation Program in the Diocese of Scranton**

October 29, 2020

### **INTRODUCTION**

On January 22, 2019, the Diocese of Scranton launched its Independent Survivors Compensation Program (ISCP) to promote healing and recovery for survivors of clergy sexual abuse. The Program was purely voluntary and open to individuals who had submitted a complaint of sexual abuse to the diocese before the Program was first announced as well as individuals who had not previously submitted a complaint.

Survivors of abuse committed by Diocese of Scranton priests, members of religious communities and by lay employees of the diocese were able to submit claims. The Program confronted a dark and difficult chapter in the history of the Church. The diocese created the ISCP in order to publicly recognize the harm caused to survivors of abuse, demonstrate the Church's commitment to those survivors and hopefully to provide validation and a measure of healing.

### **HOW DID THE ISCP WORK?**

The ISCP has been completely independent from the Diocese of Scranton. Kenneth Feinberg and Camille Biros, two nationally recognized claims administration experts, administered the ISCP. Their prior experience involved handling the September 11<sup>th</sup> Victim Compensation Fund, BP Deepwater Horizon Disaster Victim Compensation Fund and similar compensation Programs for numerous other Catholic dioceses.

In addition, the Program has been monitored by an Independent Oversight Committee comprised of Robert Gillespie, Jr., former Luzerne County District Attorney, Ralph H. Meyer, President and Chief Executive Officer Emeritus with Guthrie Healthcare System and Robin Engels, MA, MSW, LCSW, a licensed clinical social worker.

The Program administrators retained complete and sole discretion over eligibility and compensation offers to eligible survivors who participated in the Program. The Diocese of Scranton could not reject any of the administrators' final determinations regarding eligibility and/or compensation.



Serving as independent administrators, Mr. Feinberg and Ms. Biros worked with individuals who had previously submitted a complaint of sexual abuse to the diocese. These individuals were invited by letter to participate in the Program.

Individuals who had not previously filed a complaint with the diocese could register to participate in the Program through a website that was established. New complaints of abuse received through the Program must also have been reported to the appropriate District Attorney's Office.

Individuals were invited to provide any documentation and corroborating information to substantiate the claim. This information aided administrators in making fair and accurate determinations. Claims were handled in the order in which they were received and administrators used information submitted to process and pay claims. One of the most important aspects of the Program was its confidentiality.

### **RESULTS OF THE ISCP**

<b>Total claims submitted:</b>	<b>295</b>
<b>Claims determined ineligible:</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>Total eligible claims:</b>	<b>249</b>
<b>Offers that remain outstanding:</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Rejected offers:</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Total claims paid:</b>	<b>213</b>
<b>Total paid to claimants:</b>	<b>\$24,460,000</b>

The Administrators have processed all claims and have sent determination letters to the claimants. More than 85% of claimants accepted their offers and less than 5% rejected their offers. Under 10% of the claims remain outstanding. The diocese anticipates that these outstanding claims will be resolved in the near future.

Before accepting compensation through the ISCP, all individuals were required to consult with an attorney for the purpose of reviewing documents and understanding agreement language. If the claimant did not have an attorney, the administrators provided an independent attorney for consultation free of charge. By choosing to accept the offered compensation, the individual waives any future legal claim against the Diocese of Scranton related to their sexual abuse claims.

### **HOW WAS THE ISCP FUNDED?**

The Program was primarily funded by the sale proceeds of the Diocese of Scranton's three long-term care facilities in 2019, which was planned long before the ISCP was created. The Diocese received approximately \$26 million from the sale of the properties and subsequent transfer of

assets held by these three facilities. In addition, some funding for the Program was provided by Diocese of Scranton insurers and contributions from other religious orders.

The diocese did not use any funds that had been given by the faithful to support parishes, schools, the Diocesan Annual Appeal, Catholic Social Services of the Diocese of Scranton or any donor-restricted contributions.

### DIOCESAN RESPONSE TO CLERGY CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

The Diocese of Scranton maintains a zero tolerance policy for clergy, lay employees and volunteers who engage in misconduct with minors and takes immediate action when an accusation is made. Any allegation of abuse is reported immediately to law enforcement and any substantiated allegation against a member of the clergy results in immediate and permanent removal from ministry.

The Diocese of Scranton formally established a “Policy Concerning Clerics Accused of Sexual Abuse of Minors” in March 1993. When the bishops of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops adopted a comprehensive plan on this issue in 2002, the Diocese refined and expanded its procedures. After prayerful reflection, extensive research and study, and purposeful review by several external and internal entities, including the Diocesan Review Board, the most recent policy, the *Diocese of Scranton Policy for Response to Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors*, took effect in 2015. A copy of the policy is provided to all members of the clergy and seminarians. The policy is made available to all diocesan employees and members of the general public on the diocesan website.

The Diocese of Scranton continues to address this serious issue with vigilance and fidelity so that its policies, procedures and practices achieve genuine transparency and true accountability. The Diocese’s Safe Environment Program has a multi-faceted approach, including:

- **Background Checks** – Ensuring a thorough background screening is completed for all clergy, paid employees and volunteers that have direct contact and routine interaction with children.
- **Adult and Youth Training** – Providing training, prevention and educational programs in recognizing and reporting any suspicions or knowledge of child abuse to appropriate civil and Church authorities. As of October 2020, more than 31,340 individuals have completed VIRTUS training since 2003.
- **Code of Pastoral Conduct** – A document holding all clergy, employees and volunteers accountable to a Christ-centered, pastoral code of conduct.
- **Office of Victim Assistance** – The role of the Victim Assistance Coordinator is to facilitate the immediate pastoral care of persons that claim to have been sexually abused by a cleric when they were minors. The Victim Assistance Coordinator provides support and services, including arranging for counseling or spiritual direction and referrals to support groups.

- **Diocesan Review Board** – An independent, consultative body comprised of members of the laity, a religious sister and one priest, which performs a case-by-case review of allegations of sexual abuse of a minor, reviews diocesan policies for responding to the accusation of sexual abuse of a minor by Church personnel and advises the bishop in his determination of suitability for ministry of the accused.

The Diocese has passed independent audits of its child protection procedures every year since the policy was adopted by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in 2002. The audit evaluates each diocese's efforts to ensure the protection of children.

## CONCLUSION

The Independent Survivors Compensation Program fulfills two promises made by Bishop Joseph C. Bambera. First, to promote the healing and recovery of survivors. Second, to directly confront a scandal that robbed many of the most vulnerable of their innocence and peace. While nothing can take away their pain, several survivors have commented that their participation in the Program has provided a measure of solace and an opportunity to move forward. Many survivors have also expressed an appreciation for the privacy that the Program provided.

The Diocese of Scranton continues to urge any individual who has been sexually abused by a priest, deacon, religious, lay employee or volunteer of the Diocese to report abuse directly to law enforcement or the Diocese's Victim Assistance Coordinator.

While the Program has concluded, the Diocese's outreach to survivors of clergy sexual abuse continues. The Diocese of Scranton is committed to learning from the mistakes of the past and moving forward with renewed resolve to protect all children from abuse.