

HAPPY EASTER!



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'THE REAL BLESSING'

Clergy's Easter message to Christians: Jesus gives reason to hope



Bishop Joseph Bambera reads Scripture during the Commemoration of the Lord's Passion on Good Friday at St. Peter's Cathedral in Scranton on Friday. SEAN MCKEAG/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Some officials hesitant to spend opioid funds

Only 14% of more than \$1.5M settlement funds went to opioid remediation programs

By Stephen Mocarsky
SMOCARSKY@CITIZENSVOICE.COM

Fifteen Luzerne County municipalities that joined a lawsuit against opioid manufacturers have received settlement funds so far totaling more than \$1.5 million, but some haven't spent a dime of it in the last three years.

The City of Hazleton, Fairview Twp. and the boroughs of Edwardsville, Sugar Notch and West Pittston have received a combined total of at least \$481,099 in funding since 2022, and officials in those municipalities said they have spent none of it on opioid remediation programs.

Officials with the City of Nanticoke, Kingston borough, Wilkes-Barre Twp. and Wright Twp. did not return messages left for them this past Wednesday and requesting settlement funding information. But, according to the Pennsylvania Opioid Settlement Data website, no funding had been spent or committed there as of June 30, 2025.

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WAR IN IRAN

Iran calls on the public to find the 'enemy pilot'

By Sam Mednick, Sammy Magdy and Jon Gambrell
ASSOCIATED PRESS

TEL AVIV, Israel — The U.S. military on Saturday searched for a missing pilot shot down over a remote area in Iran, while President Donald Trump remained silent on the incident but reminded Tehran of his Monday deadline to open the Strait of Hormuz: "48 hours before all Hell will reign down on them."

The U.S. warplane, identified by Iran as a F-15E Strike Eagle, was one of two attacked on Friday,

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Father Tyler Parry delivers his homily during a Good Friday service at St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Scranton on Friday. REBECCA PARTICKA/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

By Matt Warren
MWARREN@SCRANTONTIMES.COM

In a year marked by war, political division and economic uncertainty, religious leaders say Easter's main message remains timeless and timely.

Easter is a Christian holy day commemorating the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who Christians believe was raised from the dead three days after his crucifixion. Religious leaders in Northeast Pennsylvania said their Easter sermons and homilies will deliver messages of hope for people who are suffering. They will recall how Jesus' suffering during his crucifixion led to hope for humanity through his resurrection.

The religious leaders will also focus on the importance of living in the image of Jesus.

"God doesn't promise us, because we have faith, a perfect world. He doesn't promise us that because we believe in Jesus' resurrection that there will never be a cross to carry," said the Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, bishop of Scranton. "The real blessing and hope that we have as Christians is not rooted in the absence of suffering and pain ... but a relationship that gives us a reason to hope, the realization that we need a power bigger than ourselves to make sense of this."

During the 10 a.m. Mass

on Easter Sunday at St. Peter's Cathedral in Scranton, the bishop's homily will be centered around the traditional message that Christian leaders deliver every Easter.

"At the heart of the message that we all provide is our hope in the resurrection of Jesus," he said. "That's the central reality of Easter, that Jesus, who died on a cross to save us, was raised from the dead (and) rose from the dead to give us life and a way forward in this world."

The bishop will also focus his message on the idea that the hope of the resurrection comes with the responsibility of living like Jesus and treating

others as he did.

"For as much as we derive hope from the resurrection of Jesus, which we do, which gives us a way forward, in the midst of everything that surrounds us, Easter also places a demand on us to live like Jesus, to treat our brothers and sisters with respect and dignity," the bishop said. "The message of Easter becomes more and more believable when people live in the path of Christ."

The bishop said he feels he has an obligation to relate his message to the current state of the world, which he described as "fractured." He specifically mentioned military conflicts

abroad and political turmoil at home.

"There's a war with Iran, which has our attention more than anything else, but there is still a war in Ukraine. There are wars and civil wars, particularly in parts of Africa and other areas of the world. So, our world is not at peace. ... Immigrants in our land who have the right to a way forward, innocent people who simply come here, not with a lot of baggage, not with criminal records, but individuals who simply are looking, like my grandparents, for a way forward for themselves and their families, sadly, are in the midst at times of treatment that is very unjust," the bishop said.

REMINDER OF GOD'S LOVE

At St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Scranton, Rev. Tyler Parry will focus on delivering his own translation of a Bible verse.

"The message that I plan to deliver on Easter Sunday is a pretty straightforward reflection on Jeremiah 31:3, which is part of our Hebrew Bible reading, read through the lens of the story of Christ's death and resurrection. The verse is in God's voice, and says, 'I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore, I have drawn you with loving kindness,'" Parry said.

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