

## The University of Scranton Holds Inauguration for Twenty-fourth President

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Rev. Scott R. Pilarz, S.J., used his Presidential Inauguration Ceremony at The University of Scranton as a chance to recommit the University to its mission as a Catholic and Jesuit university.

Approximately 2,000 attended his Inauguration Ceremony as The University of Scranton's twenty-fourth president, including delegates representing more than 100 colleges and universities. The ceremony was held Friday, September 26, in the university's Byron Recreation Complex.

"This university, this miracle in the mountains, began as an engine of opportunity, a gateway to the American dream," said Fr. Pilarz in his Inauguration Address. "Like the city of Scranton and the region of northeastern Pennsylvania, The University of Scranton has always welcomed those who were looking to find their place in the world, to find their place as citizens, to find their place as full participants in our society."

Fr. Pilarz recalled the university's early challenges as it evolved from the 8-room schoolhouse founded in 1888 by Bishop O'Hara, the first Bishop of Scranton, to the 52-acre campus that exists today.

He also praised the successes of the university's students, from its first class to the class of 2003.

"As educators in the Jesuit tradition we must read the signs of the times and respond accordingly, always honing our mission to meet the needs of an ever-emerging world. As Jesuit educators we can never slavishly imitate what has been done in the past," said Fr. Pilarz.

Award-winning author Suzanne Strempek Shea delivered the keynote address and received an honorary degree at the Inauguration Ceremony.

"For 500 years, Jesuit educators have recognized that literature can provide a moral and spiritual compass," said Fr. Pilarz. "Suzanne Strempek Shea is one of today's authors whose works encourage a more gentle and just society. She writes from a sacramental perspective, seeing grace operative in the ordinary."

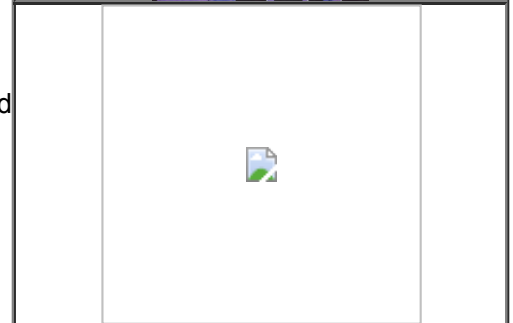
Ms. Shea's novels include *Selling the Lite of Heaven*, *Hoopi Shoopi Donna*, *Lily of the Valley*, and *Around Again*, all published by Pocket Books. Her autobiographical book, *Songs From a Lead-lined Room*, published in 2002 by Beacon Press, is an insightful and inspirational account of her experience with breast cancer. The book was named the Best Consumer Health Book of 2002 by the *Library Journal*.

Ms. Shea received the Polish American Historical Association Oskar Halecki Prize in 1998 and the Polish American Historical Association's Creative Arts Award in 2001.

A native of Camden, N.J., Fr. Pilarz was selected as president of The University of Scranton after a national search.

Fr. Pilarz entered the Society of Jesus in 1981 and was ordained a priest in 1992. He received his bachelor's degree in English from Georgetown University and a master's degree in philosophy from Fordham University. He received master's degrees in divinity and theology from the Weston School of Theology, Cambridge, Mass., and a Ph.D. in English at the City University of New York.

Fr. Pilarz has delivered numerous papers at scholarly conferences on various aspects of medieval and renaissance literature. He has also lectured and published on topics related to Jesuit education. His book, *Robert Southwell, S.J., and the Mission of Literature 1561-1595: Writing Reconciliation*, will be published by Ashgate Press.



The University of Scranton conducted the Inauguration Ceremony for its Twenty-fourth President Rev. Scott R. Pilarz, S.J., on Friday, September 26.

He serves on the boards of Boston College; Loyola University Chicago; the Community Medical Center, Scranton; and Camden Catholic High School, Cherry Hill, N.J., from which he graduated.