



# ***The Catholic Light***

DIOCESE OF SCRANTON

**Weekly E-Newsletter**

**December 22, 2022**

## **Merry Christmas!**



**Mary and the Christ Child with angels are depicted in a painting titled "Holy Night" by Carlo Maratti. (CNS/Bridgeman Images)**

## **Bishop Bambera's Video Reflection for Christmas**



**"Embrace the Good News of Christmas"**  
*Bishop Bambera's Christmas Letter to the Faithful*



In the Dec. 15, 2022, edition of *The Catholic Light*, the Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, released his 2022 Christmas letter to the faithful of the Diocese of Scranton.

In his message, the bishop reminds us that through the Incarnation, God immersed himself in our human condition because of his grace and mercy.

"This fundamental belief in the limitless love of God, given human shape and form in Jesus' birth, confronts the brokenness of our lives with hope. It beckons us to move beyond the division and fear that have engulfed our world, our Church and our lives to recognize an essential reality: we are all far more similar than we are different," the bishop wrote.

[Read Bishop Bambera's Full 2022 Christmas Message](#)



*Come Home for Christmas!*

For a full schedule of Mass times for all parishes in the  
**DIOCESE OF SCRANTON**  
visit [dioceseofscranton.org](http://dioceseofscranton.org)

The Most Reverend Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, will celebrate several Masses for the Nativity of Our Lord at the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton.

The bishop, on behalf of the clergy and religious of the Diocese of Scranton, cordially invites the faithful to attend Christmas Masses in person this year, especially if they have been away for a while because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Diocese of Scranton created a brief “Come Home for Christmas” video to invite parishioners from all 11 counties across the Diocese to attend Mass in person.

At the Cathedral of Saint Peter, Bishop Bambera will serve as principal celebrant and homilist at the following Masses:

**4 p.m. – Pontifical Vigil Mass of Christmas**  
**Midnight – Pontifical Mass of Christmas at Midnight**

CTV: Catholic Television will provide a live broadcast of the 4 p.m. Vigil Mass on Catholic Television, with a livestream provided on the Diocese of Scranton website and all social media platforms. CTV will also provide a live broadcast of the 10 a.m. Mass on Christmas Day from the Cathedral.

A full listing of Christmas Mass times and Reconciliation schedules for every parish in the Diocese is also available on the main page of the Diocese of Scranton website at [dioceseofscranton.org](http://dioceseofscranton.org).

[Click Here for a Full Listing of Parish Christmas Mass Times & Reconciliation Schedules](#)

[Watch the 2022 "Come Home for Christmas" Video](#)

**Is there a deeper meaning behind 'The Twelve Days of Christmas'?**





There are birds – lots of birds – gold rings, milking maids, dancing ladies, leaping lords, pipers and drummers, but is there a deeper meaning behind the gifts received in “The Twelve Days of Christmas?”

The song dates to 1714 Newcastle, England, according to the 1864 book “Songs of the Nativity” by William Henry Husk.

It recalls gifts the singer’s “true love” gave them over the course of the 12-day Christmas season, Dec. 25 through Jan. 5, Twelfth Night (defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as “the evening of Jan. 5, the day before Epiphany”), which traditionally marks the end of Christmas celebrations.

For many, the cumulative song is simply a fun Christmas carol.

But in 1979, English teacher and hymnologist Hugh D. McKellar of Canada wrote a short article, “How to Decode the Twelve Days of Christmas,” in which he theorized the song’s lyrics were intended to help teach the catechism of the Catholic Church following the Protestant Reformation when Catholicism was outlawed in England from 1558 through 1829, except during the reign of the Catholic James II (1685-88).

[Read the Full Story from Catholic News Service](#)

## Pope prays for peace in Caucasus, Peru, Ukraine



Leading the recitation of the Angelus prayer, Pope Francis asked thousands of people joining him in St. Peter's Square to pray for peace in the Caucasus region, in Peru and, of course, in Ukraine.

As tensions between Armenia and Azerbaijan continued and the Lachin Corridor, a road linking Armenia and the disputed Nagorno-Karabakh enclave, remained closed, Pope Francis said Dec. 18 he was particularly worried "about the precarious humanitarian conditions of the population which risk further deterioration during the course of the winter season."

"I ask everyone involved to commit themselves to finding peaceful solutions for the good of the people," Pope Francis said.

The pope then turned to Peru, where violent protests have taken place since early December, when President Pedro Castillo announced he was closing the national Congress, and was impeached, arrested and replaced.

“Let us also pray for peace in Peru, that the violence in that country might cease and that the path of dialogue might be embarked upon to overcome the political and social crisis that is afflicting the population,” the pope said.

And he asked Mary “to touch the hearts of those who can stop the war in Ukraine. Let us not forget the suffering of those people, especially of the babies, the elderly, the people who are sick. Let us pray. Let us pray.”

[Read the Full Story from Catholic News Service](#)

**As Christmas draws near, help the poor,  
lonely and vulnerable in our community  
with a gift to the Diocesan Annual Appeal**

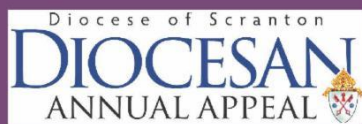
*"Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love."*

- John 4:8



Gifts to the 2022 Diocesan Annual Appeal impact the lives of our brothers and sisters in need each day. As Christmas draws near, ask God what gift you can offer him in support of the poor, lonely and vulnerable in our community.

*Help Our Parish Reach Its  
Goal by the end of 2022*



***Donate now at:***  
**[annualappeal.org](https://annualappeal.org)**  
**or click the QR code below**



**GIFTS OF ALL SIZES ARE NEEDED AND APPRECIATED!**

As Advent comes to an end and the new calendar year quickly approaches, many parishes in the Diocese of Scranton are approaching their goals for the 2022 Diocesan Annual Appeal.

If you have not made your gift yet, we prayerfully ask you to consider supporting our brothers and sisters in need through the work of Catholic Social Services, our students in Catholic Schools, our seminarians discerning the possibility of priesthood and so many other worthy causes.



Gifts of all sizes make a difference. To make your donations online, simply click the link below.

[Click Here to Make a Safe & Secure Online Donation to the 2022  
Diocesan Annual Appeal](#)

**Nativity scenes on display at a record 43 state  
capitols, law firm says**



Private citizen groups have arranged for Nativity scenes to be on display at 43 state capitols around the country, a record number, according to a not-for-profit law firm's tally.

The Chicago-based Thomas More Society said Dec. 20 that the number of displays is notable despite the secularization of Christmas throughout the U.S.

Four new displays depicting the biblical description of the birth of Jesus in a manger have been erected this year, the society said: Alaska, New York, Utah and Virginia.

“The message of hope delivery by the baby Jesus celebrates the joy of new life. This troubled world can benefit from more hope and more joy,” Ed O’Malley, president of the American Nativity Scene, said in a news release from the society.

[Read the Full Story from Catholic News Service](#)

## **Pandemic-era border policy allowed to stay in place for now**



Chief Justice John Roberts temporarily stopped the Biden administration from ending a pandemic-related border restriction with a one-page order Dec. 19.

It gives the Supreme Court time to consider the emergency request filed by 19 states asking the justices to keep in place what is known as Title 42 of the federal Public Health Services Act.

[Read the Full Story from Catholic News Service](#)

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