



The Catholic Light

DIOCESE OF SCRANTON

Weekly E-Newsletter

December 8, 2022

Bishop Bambera's Reflection for the Third Week of Advent



**Spirit of giving highlighted on Feast Day of
Saint Nicholas at Wilkes-Barre Parish**



The spirit of giving and generosity filled Saint Nicholas Church on Dec. 6 as parishioners came together to celebrate their patronal feast day.

After several years of subdued celebrations because of the COVID-19 pandemic, children and families were invited to bring forth to the altar toys, games and gifts which will benefit people in need in the community.

“It is a wonderful experience to show the kindness and the giving of the people of Saint Nicholas Parish,” parishioner Bob Hines explained. “It is not just one group of people that get involved, it is everybody. It’s our Social Concerns Committee, our Liturgy Committee, and our Events Committee.”

Father Joseph Verespy, pastor of Saint Nicholas and Our Lady of Fatima Parishes, felt the energy inside the church during the special 6 p.m. Mass.

“The last couple years were very low key because of the pandemic. This year, we really wanted to revive the spirit and enthusiasm so we reached out to the kids in faith formation, the kids in Saint Nicholas/Saint Mary School. I think we succeeded in stirring up the fire again. We’re really happy,” Father Verespy said.

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**Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe being
celebrated in parishes throughout Diocese**



Through the intercession of “Virgen de Guadalupe,” plans for the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe are proceeding in many different parishes.

Particularly in the areas of large Latino populations in the Diocese of Scranton, the annual observance commemorates the appearance of the Virgin Mary to a Mexican Indian peasant — now venerated as Saint Juan Diego — in December 1531 in Tepeyac, near present-day Mexico City.

The Blessed Mother’s appearance is believed to have resulted in millions of conversions to Catholicism, and her message of hope continues to inspire those of Hispanic descent.

In 1946, Pope Pius XII declared Our Lady of Guadalupe as Patroness of the Americas.

[For A Full Listing of Our Lady of Guadalupe Celebrations Across the Diocese of Scranton](#)

For second consecutive year, Diocese of Scranton receives top score in Independent Financial Transparency Report



For the second consecutive year, a lay organization of faithful Catholics has named the Diocese of Scranton as being one of the most financially transparent dioceses in the United States.

For six years, Voice of the Faithful has reviewed all U.S. Catholic dioceses' online financial transparency. The group's 2022 report identifies the Diocese of Scranton as one of only five dioceses to receive an overall score of 100% in regards to transparency. This year's other top-scoring dioceses include Charleston, Lexington, Orlando and Rochester.

The Diocese of Scranton also received an overall score of 100% for financial transparency in 2021.

The Voice of the Faithful's sixth annual review of all dioceses was conducted between June 1 and Aug. 31 by three independent reviewers and their report, "Measuring and Ranking Diocesan Online Financial Transparency: 2022 Report," was released on Nov. 28, 2022.

[Read the Full Story from The Catholic Light](#)

Diocese of Scranton to hold collection this weekend to aid Catholic aging religious

**Retirement Fund
for Religious**

**Please give to
those who have
given a lifetime.**



The National Religious Retirement Office (NRRO) announces that on Dec. 10-11, the Diocese of Scranton will hold the annual Retirement Fund for Religious collection in parishes throughout the diocese.

Last year, the parishioners in the diocese donated \$68,433.29 to the collection. About the upcoming collection, NRRO Executive Director Sister Stephanie Still, a member of the Sisters of the Presentation of San Francisco, said, "The care of our aging religious presents an enormous financial responsibility. It is our privilege to care for those who gave a lifetime of tireless service, and I feel we are deeply blessed by all the U.S. Catholic donors who have steadfastly contributed to this fund."

Historically, Catholic sisters, brothers, and religious order priests—known collectively as women and men religious—served for little to no pay. With rising health-care expenses, hundreds of U.S. religious communities face a large gap between the needs of their older members and the funds

available to support their care. As a result, many now lack adequate retirement savings.

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**Nothing is impossible for God, not even
peace in Ukraine, pope says**



Pope Francis asked Catholics around the world to join him in entrusting to Mary "the universal desire for peace, especially for the martyred Ukraine, which is suffering so much."

Reciting the Angelus prayer at midday Dec. 8, the feast of the Immaculate Conception, Pope Francis noted the Angel Gabriel's words to Mary that "nothing will be impossible for God."

"With God's help, peace is possible; disarmament is possible," the pope told people gathered in St. Peter's Square. "But God wants our goodwill. May Our Lady help us to convert to God's plans."

The pope also invited people to join him late in the afternoon at the Spanish Steps in the center of Rome, where he planned to pay homage to Mary at a statue of the Immaculate Conception after visiting the Basilica of St. Mary Major. The COVID-19 pandemic had forced the cancellation of the public ceremony at the Spanish Steps in 2020 and 2021.

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**'O Holy Night' tops all hymns used in churches
in December, according to poll**



The Christmas carol “O Holy Night” ranked first in a list of hymns most played in December at Christian churches in the United States.

“O Come All Ye Faithful” and “Silent Night” ranked second and third, respectively.

The list was compiled by Pushpay, which offers electronic giving options for churches and their congregants.

It asked its 15,000 subscribing churches last December what hymns they used that month, and released the results this Dec. 1. A Pushpay spokeswoman, Katie Griffin, could not supply a breakdown of Catholic parishes among those churches.

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Supreme Court appears ready to support web designer in free speech case



In a case examining the scope of free speech protected by the First Amendment, the Supreme Court Dec. 5 ultimately seemed to favor a broad view of free speech.

And in this case, the speech involved what a graphic designer who creates websites should not have to say.

Colorado designer Lorie Smith, who runs a web design company called 303 Creative, has said she should not be required to create wedding websites for same-sex couples based on her Christian beliefs about marriage.

Colorado state law forbids businesses from discriminating based on sexual orientation. Smith contends her First Amendment right to free speech exempts her from the law.

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**As Dallas Charter turns 20, abuse has become
issue for much of society**

Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People



Twenty years ago, in 2002, the revelations of clergy sexual abuse and its cover-up in the Archdiocese of Boston were the metaphorical bombshell that fell on the Catholic Church in the United States.

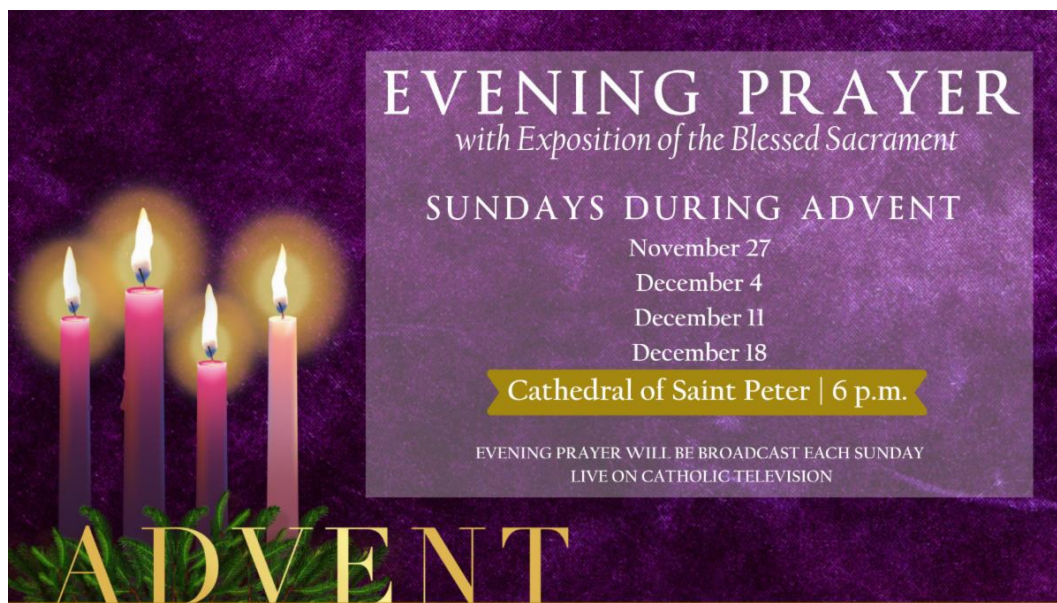
The U.S. bishops, when they met that June in Dallas, approved the “Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People,” a comprehensive set of procedures for addressing allegations of sexual abuse of minors by Catholic clergy.

Its one-strike-and-you’re-out policy did just that — permanently removing from public ministry those priests against whom abuse allegations were substantiated.

Twenty years later, at their assembly in Baltimore Nov. 14-17, the bishops acknowledged the charter’s anniversary and said that they have made steps in addressing clergy sexual abuse and would continue to listen, care for and walk with survivors.

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**Catholic Television to broadcast Evening
Prayer from the Cathedral of Saint Peter on
Sundays During Advent**



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