



The Catholic Light

DIOCESE OF SCRANTON

Weekly E-Newsletter

December 14, 2023

Bishop Bambera's Reflection for the Third Week of Advent



O Come, O Come Emmanuel!

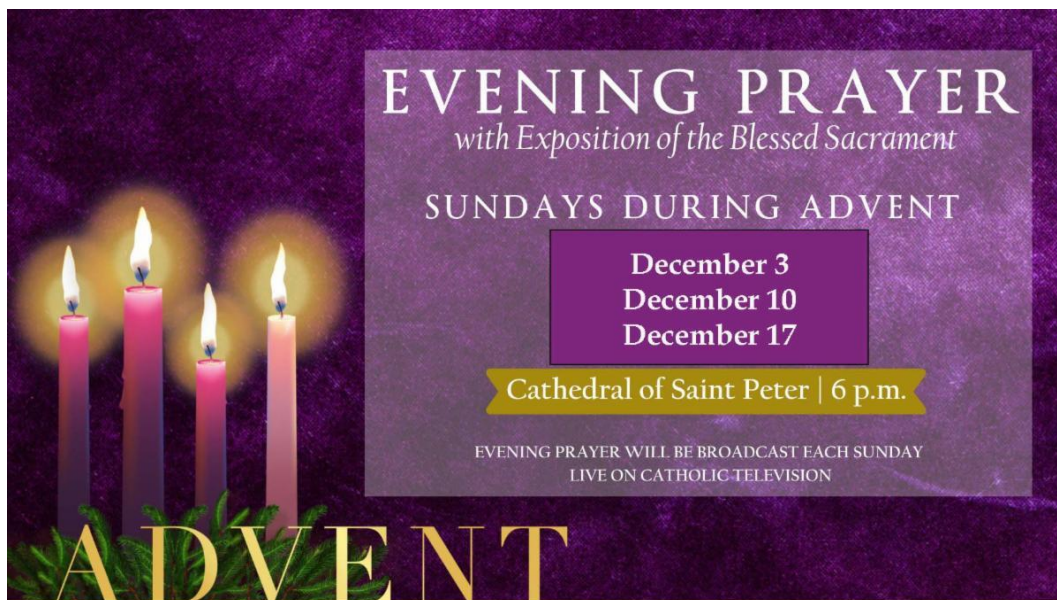
These well-known words of a famous Advent hymn, express the sentiments of these last eight days before Christmas.

These are the days in the Advent liturgy of the traditional singing of the O Antiphons. We know them as the verses of, ***O Come O Come Emmanuel.***

As we make our final preparations for the celebration of Christmas, the Advent liturgy recalls the more immediate events leading to the birth of Jesus: the birth of John the Baptist, the Annunciation to Mary, her Visitation to Elizabeth, the dream of Joseph, and the Holy Family's journey to Bethlehem.

[Watch and Share Bishop Bambera's Reflection from the Diocese of Scranton's YouTube Channel](#)

In addition, all people are invited to join in Evening Prayer during the Sundays in Advent at the Cathedral of Saint Peter as indicated below. These Evening Prayer Services will also be broadcast live on CTV: Catholic Television of the Diocese of Scranton.



Nanticoke parish to present 'Miracle at Bethlehem' on Dec. 16 & 17



A beloved holiday tradition at Saint Faustina Kowalska Parish will continue this weekend as the play 'Miracle at Bethlehem' returns for a two-night showing.

The play, which depicts the birth, life, and death of Jesus Christ, will be performed on Saturday, Dec. 16, and Sunday, Dec. 17, at 7 p.m. at the Saint Faustina Cultural Centre, 38 W. Church Street, Nanticoke. All are welcome to attend. A free will offering will be taken.

"The way the play is performed by the cast, they believe in it, and it draws everyone into the story," director Judy Minsavage said.

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

Catholic Social Services distributes more than 3,000 toys to families in Carbondale



Thanks to the generosity of our community, Catholic Social Services is assisting 142 pre-registered families with Christmas gifts in Carbondale.

In all, 364 children will benefit from this distribution alone. The toys have been supplied from the Marine Corps Toys for Tots Program, several Catholic parishes from the Diocese of Scranton that have held collection drives over the last few weeks and many others who donated to our Amazon Wish-List that was established.

In addition to the toys, each family is also receiving stocking stuffers, books, games for the family, stuffed animals, blankets and winter coats!

Catholic Social Services has also partnered with several other community organizations (Friends of the Poor, Catherine McAuley Center and the Salvation Army) for a similar toy distribution in the greater Scranton area which pre-registered 1,500 families earlier this fall. Those toys will be distributed next week.

For those families in Lackawanna County that missed the pre-registration period, there will be a Gifts For Kids Community Giveaway on Thursday,

Dec. 21 beginning at 9 am at the University of Scranton's Bryon Recreation Complex, 1200 Ridge Row, Scranton.

No pre-registration is required for the 12/21 event. It is first come, first serve until all gifts are gone. Photo ID and proof of Lackawanna County residence (ID, mail, etc.) is required. Income is self-certified so no income documentation is required. Children through age 18 may receive a gift.

[Click Here to Watch a Video from Catholic Television Regarding the Toy Distribution Event in Carbondale](#)

In challenging times, find hope in the example and presence of Mary, Bishop Bambera says on Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe



As he celebrated Masses for the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe in both Scranton and Wilkes-Barre, the Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, told parishioners it is Mary's journey of faith that can help each of us embrace the power and presence of God.

"Following her election by God to be the mother of the Savior, Mary immediately journeyed to visit Elizabeth. But her willingness to follow God's invitation didn't end with that encounter. She journeyed to

Bethlehem where her son was born and then to Egypt to keep him safe for his mission. She journeyed to Cana where Jesus performed the first sign revealing his glory and then she followed Jesus all the way to the cross. And after Jesus' resurrection, Mary journeyed with his disciples to receive the Spirit and to build the Church – the redeemed People of God,” Bishop Bambera said.

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

Diocese launches new initiative to promote vocations to the priesthood



Nearly 200 people from across the Diocese of Scranton gathered together Nov. 18 to hear speakers Rhonda Gruenewald and Leticia Ramirez teach them how to foster vocations in our parishes.

Pastors first heard from Gruenewald at the annual Priest Convocation in October and were encouraged to invite parishioners to the Hundredfold Vocation Ministry workshops given in English and Spanish at Saint Maria Goretti Parish in Laflin.

The Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, led parishioners in prayer before the sessions began for the day. Rev. Alex Roche, Diocesan Vocation Director, then celebrated Mass and offered a commissioning prayer for the future vocation promoters present at the event.

Gruenewald, a Houston-based convert to Catholicism and founder of Vocation Ministry, shared the story of how her priest asked her and her husband to be part of their parish's vocations committee. In turn, she said the nearly 200 parishioners in attendance at the workshop are now being called to do the same.

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

Lackawanna County parishes joining forces to create Mental Health Ministry Team



For years, faith leaders have talked about the importance of removing the stigma surrounding mental health challenges while emphasizing that those struggling with mental health are loved and valued by the church.

Two parishes in Lackawanna County are now taking action by starting a joint mental health ministry team which is providing free training and other resources.

Saint John Vianney Parish in Montdale and Saint Gregory Parish in Clarks Green recently launched an inter-parish Mental Health Ministry Team. The goal is to support each parish's awareness of, accompaniment with, and advocacy for persons with mental health challenges and those who care for them.

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

Christians must be open to listening to God, helping others, pope says



Christians must be open to the Word of God and to welcoming and serving others, Pope Francis said.

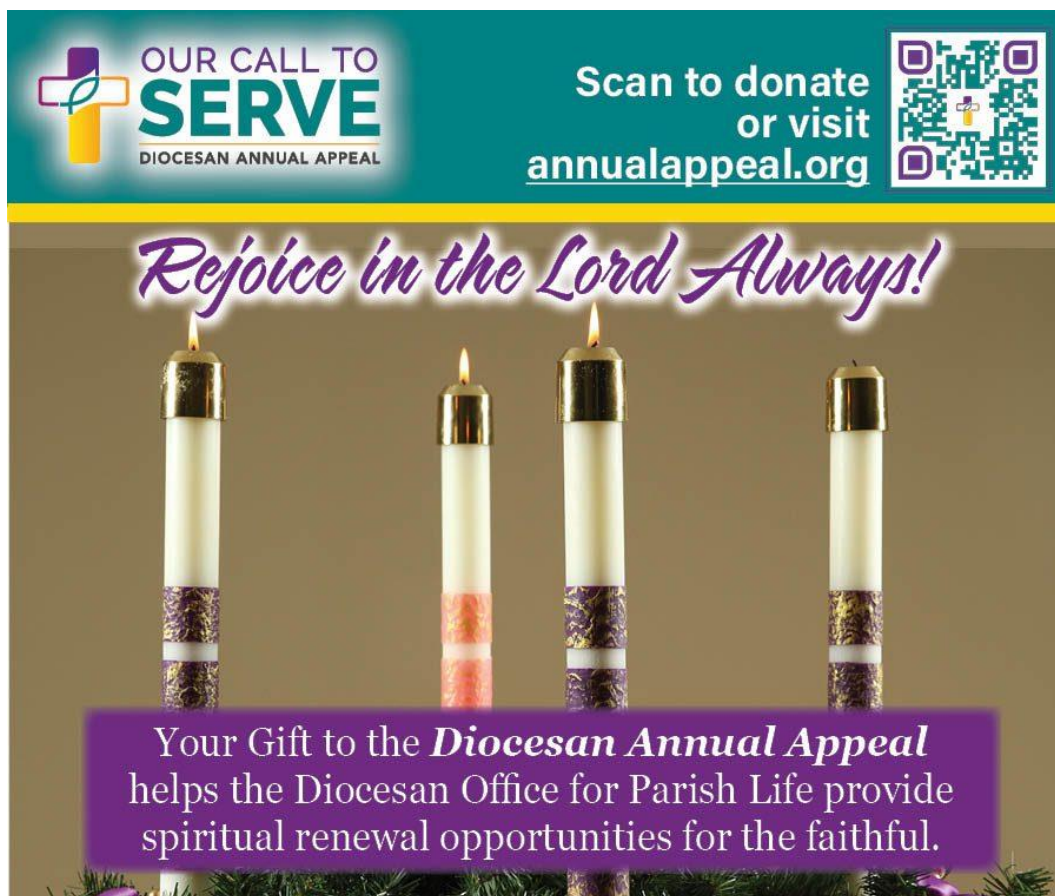
“‘Be open,’ Jesus says to every believer and to his church: be open because the Gospel message needs you to witness to it and proclaim it,” he said during his weekly general audience in the Paul VI hall Dec. 13.

The pope also appealed for an immediate cease-fire and a resumption of negotiations between Israel and Palestine.

"I continue to follow the conflict in Israel and Palestine with much concern and sorrow," he said. "I renew my call for an immediate humanitarian cease-fire: there is so much suffering there."

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

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Gifts to the 2023 Diocesan Annual Appeal are needed to help support life-changing ministries across the Diocese of Scranton, including Hispanic ministry programs.

From helping to support seminarians and retired priests, to supporting Catholic education and Communication efforts, to helping Catholic Social

Services serve thousands of our neighbors - the work supported by the Annual Appeal is more than any one parish can do on its own!

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