



The Catholic Light

DIOCESE OF SCRANTON

Weekly E-Newsletter

December 28, 2023

**Happy New Year from
The Catholic Light staff**



Prayer for the New Year

*Remember us, O God;
from age to age be our comforter.
You have given us the wonder of time,
blessings in days and nights, seasons and years.
Bless your children at the turning of the year
and fill the months ahead with the bright hope
that is ours in the coming of Christ.
You are our God, living and reigning, forever and ever.
Amen.*

Pope's Christmas Message: Say 'Yes' to the Prince of Peace, 'No' to war



Celebrating the birth of Jesus, the prince of peace, should mean making a commitment to opposing all war, to cherishing human life, feeding the hungry and speaking up for those who have no voice, Pope Francis said.

“To say ‘yes’ to the Prince of Peace, then, means saying ‘no’ to war — and doing so with courage — saying no to every war, to the very mindset of

war, an aimless voyage, a defeat without victors, an inexcusable folly,” the pope said Dec. 25 as he read his Christmas message and offered his blessing “urbi et orbi” (to the city and the world).

As he stood on the central balcony of St. Peter’s Basilica with an estimated 70,000 people gathered in St. Peter’s Square, the pope began his message speaking of Bethlehem where celebrations of Jesus’ birth are muted this year because of the Israeli-Hamas conflict.

But he also used his message to preach the hope of Christmas, which he said was found in God, who loved humanity so much that he sent his son to be born in a manger.

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

In an unsettled world, we have 'opportunity to embrace the good news of Christmas,' Bishop Bambera says



Hundreds of people filled the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton on Christmas Eve to celebrate the Vigil Mass for the Nativity of our Lord.

The Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, served as principal celebrant and homilist for the 4 p.m. Mass.

During his homily, Bishop Bambera acknowledged conflicts taking place in many parts of the world, including in the Holy Land and Ukraine.

"May the message of this day so permeate our hearts that peace will one day finally become a reality for all people," Bishop Bambera said.

The bishop also said that many people, unfortunately, look for God in the wrong place and self-righteously point fingers at others who are different than themselves.

"And then we wonder why our world is unsettled, our hearts uneasy, our families broken, and why countless numbers of souls are suffering in Israel, Ukraine, far too many places in our world, and in our own land," Bishop Bambera continued.

Instead, the bishop said the "miracle of this day is that despite living in a world that's been turned upside down, we are once again blessed with the opportunity to embrace the good news of Christmas - good news that proclaims God's love and mercy to everyone who is humble and wise enough to know where to look to find it and how to keep it alive each day."

[Click Here to Read Bishop Bambera's 2023 Christmas Homily](#)

[Click Here to View a Photo Album from the Christmas Eve Mass](#)

**'Jesus, You Take Over,' Papal Envoy cried
out in Bethlehem amid wartime Christmas
celebrations**



Christmas in Bethlehem was celebratory but not as festive as usual this year, given the outbreak of war in the Holy Land two-and-a-half months ago.

Visiting for Christmas, the papal envoy, Cardinal Konrad Krajewski, prefect of Vatican Dicastery for the Service of Charity, assisted the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem in the wartime celebration amid the “helplessness” of not being able to ease suffering Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. Cardinal Krajewski is in the Holy Land as part of a “journey of closeness” with Christians in the region.

[Read the Full Story from Our Sunday Visitor](#)

**Desperation of war, tragic loss of life marks
'sad' 2023 on the global stage**



From Ukraine to Nigeria, and from Nicaragua to the Holy Land, 2023 was full of tragic situations that deeply affected the church and faithful. OSV News revisited four places clinging to hope that the new year will bring an improvement in the lives of people living in societies torn by conflict and persecution.

“As we go into the New Year, millions of people across the world are experiencing deprivation, loss and disruption to their lives, due to circumstances beyond their control,” said Caroline Brennan, emergency communications director of Catholic Relief Services, the international aid agency of the Catholic Church in the U.S.

“A moment of crisis can change the trajectory of people’s lives, and have ripple effects that last years, especially for those who are exposed to extreme, life-threatening danger and hunger,” she said in a statement. “We have to mobilize our collective efforts in aid, advocacy, funding and prevention to help people not only survive but have the means for recovery and resilience.”

[Read the Full Story from Our Sunday Visitor](#)

With mixed 2023 results, pro-life activists prepare for a new round of ballot measures



The pro-life movement had a mixed record of success in its first full calendar year without *Roe v. Wade* in place, losing an Ohio ballot measure but also seeing the passage of new legislation limiting the procedure in some states and new streams of support for pregnancy resource centers.

The Ohio results were not an outlier, as they followed losses for the pro-life movement in the wake of last year's Supreme Court's *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health* decision, which overturned the 1973 *Roe* decision and related precedent establishing abortion as a constitutional right. In 2022, voters in California, Kentucky, Michigan, Montana, Vermont and Kansas either rejected new limitations on abortion or expanded legal protections for it.

Following Ohio, abortion advocates are seeking to hold comparable votes in 2024 in states including Arizona and Florida.

[Read the Full Story from Our Sunday Visitor](#)

National Eucharistic Revival gave rise to creative parish, diocesan efforts in 2023



Armed with art supplies, Sister Alicia Torres recently invited young adults attending a Catholic conference near Milwaukee to create a self-portrait on paper, drawn inside a circle. The circle, she explained, represented the Eucharist.

Through the Eucharist, each person better understands himself or herself as made in the image and likeness of God, she told them.

[Read the Full Story from Our Sunday Visitor](#)

As migration increased in 2023, so did pressures on the church's ministry



Unauthorized border crossings increased in 2023, fueled in part by shifts in U.S. policy and global migration trends. The year saw increasingly heated anti-immigrant rhetoric and actions that also put Catholic Charities agencies – and the church’s religious freedom to minister to migrants – in the crosshairs.

In fiscal year 2023 (Oct. 1, 2022-Sept. 30, 2023), U.S. Customs and Border Protection saw almost 2.48 million encounters at the nation’s southwest land border, up from close to 2.38 million in the previous fiscal year. (As defined by the agency, encounter statistics represent the number of interactions between CBP and migrants, not the number of individuals.)

J. Kevin Appleby, senior fellow for policy at the Center for Migration Studies of New York and the former director of migration policy for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, told OSV News that “with a record number of migrants arriving at the border, not to mention a record number of displaced globally, persons fleeing violence and poverty may face increasingly punitive immigration policies in 2024 and beyond.”

[Read the Full Story from Our Sunday Visitor](#)

EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION

Sponsored by the Diocesan Offices for Parish Life and Vocations



Thursday,
January 4th

7:00 PM

St. Maria Goretti Church
42 Redwood Drive - Laflin

**SPEAKER, RECONCILIATION,
AND SOCIAL.**

LIVE MUSIC BY JOEL KANKIEWICZ



Consider a Year End Gift to the Diocesan Annual Appeal



May you know many blessings in the New Year!

Scan to donate or visit annualappeal.org



Please consider a year end gift to the Diocesan Annual Appeal

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!

Please prayerfully consider a gift today and click on the link below or call (570) 207-2250.

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Diocese of Scranton
300 Wyoming Avenue,
Scranton, PA 18503-1279
(570) 207-2238
www.dioceseofscranton.org