



The Catholic Light

DIOCESE OF SCRANTON

Weekly E-Newsletter

December 7, 2023

Bishop Bambera's Reflection for the Second Week of Advent



“Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice. Indeed the Lord is near.”

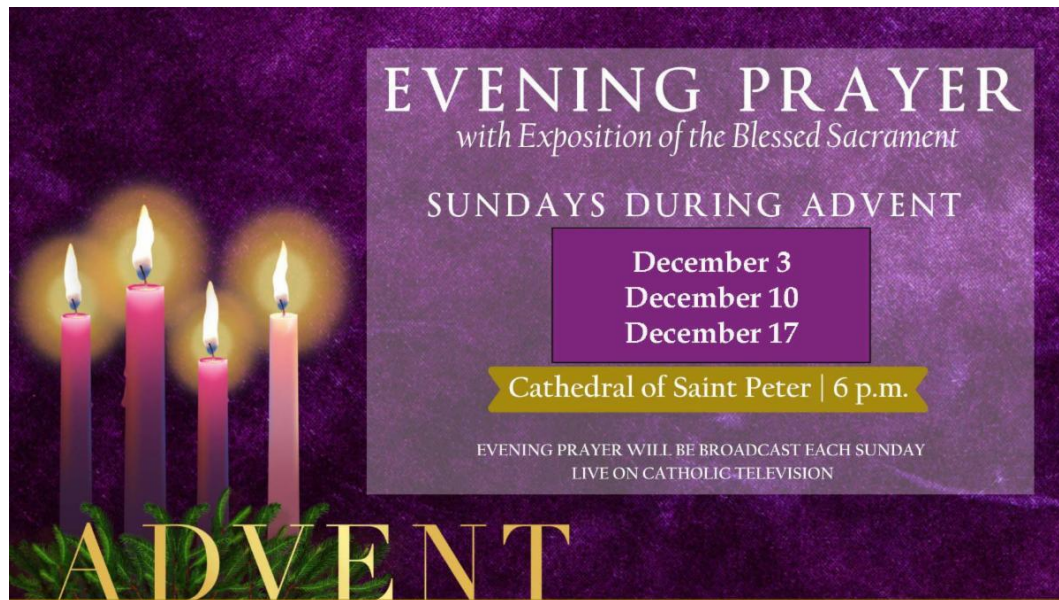
These words of scripture highlight the intensity of Advent from the second to the third Sundays. The figure of John the Baptist in the gospels is the one who reminds us that the Lord is near.

Prophet, precursor, baptizer, herald, martyr, witness, and friend of Christ, are all descriptions of John's mission in relation to Jesus.

Bishop Bambera reflects on the service of John the Baptist in his reflection for the Second Week of Advent, which is available above and on the Diocese of Scranton YouTube Channel.

[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.



Pittston parishes hold Living Nativity to emphasize 'Christ' in 'Christmas'



In an effort to emphasize that Christmas should center around the birth of Christ, the parishes of Saint John the Evangelist and Saint Joseph Mareello in Pittston hosted a living nativity this year.

The event, complete with live animals, narration, and actors from the two parishes' religious education programs, took place on Dec. 3 in conjunction with the linked parish's annual tree lighting ceremony.

Confirmation students acted out the different parts of the living nativity and WBRE-TV reporter Gianna Galli participated as the narrator.

"We really wanted to celebrate the joy and birth of Christ in a special way as a parish family," Tommy Flynn, Director of Youth & Family Ministry, said. "I think they will remember that Christmas isn't all about the presents under the tree and Santa Claus, but they'll remember the real reason that Christ is why we celebrate Christmas and the birth of Him is why we're here."

[Click Here to Watch a Video from CTV: Catholic Television of the Diocese of Scranton Highlighting the Living Nativity](#)

Yes, Christmas Eve is a Sunday, but there's no 'double dipping' for Catholics



“Pick 1,” directs a guide printed in the parish bulletin of St. Joseph Church in York, Pennsylvania. The command in the graphic is listed twice, over two columns: The first lists Mass times for the fourth Sunday of Advent, the second lists Christmas Mass times.

The takeaway: No single Mass fulfills both a Catholic’s Sunday obligation and the Christmas obligation. Because they are different liturgical days – even if they overlap on the calendar – they require attendance at different Masses.

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

Answer Advent call for vigilance with charity, confession, pope suggests



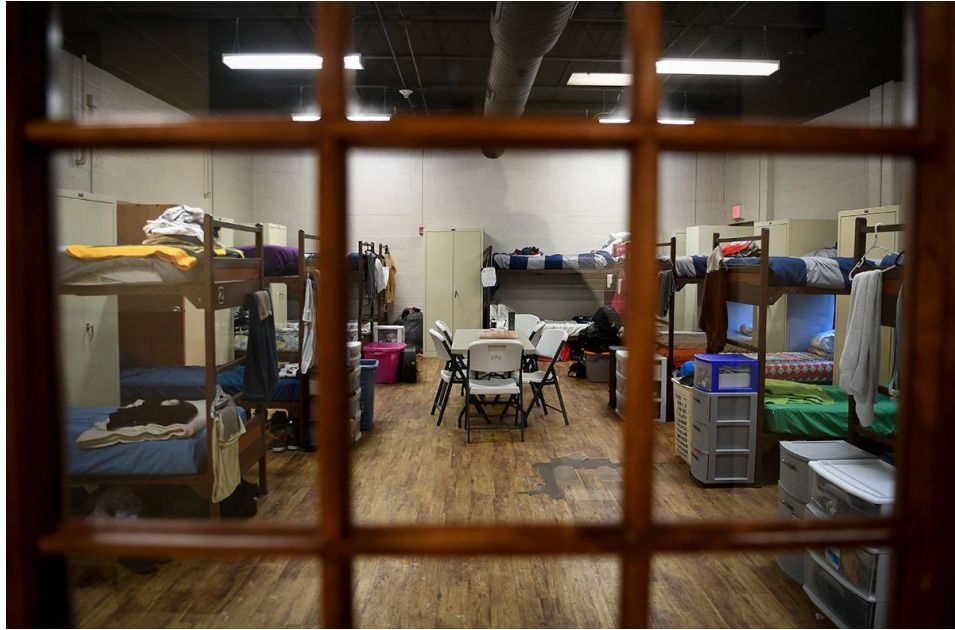
The Advent call for “vigilance” does not mean staying awake and watchful out of fear, but rather out of a longing for the coming of the Lord, Pope Francis wrote.

Sometimes people think of vigilance “as an attitude motivated by fear of impending doom, as if a meteorite were about to plunge from the sky,” he said in the text of his commentary on the Gospel reading for Dec. 3, the first Sunday of Advent.

Pope Francis led the recitation of the Angelus prayer from his residence, the Domus Sanctae Marthae, but explained that his bronchitis, while improving, was still making it difficult to speak so the text of his commentary and of his appeals for peace were read by Msgr. Paolo Braida, an official of the Vatican Secretariat of State.

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

Sacraments, strategy help Catholics stay sober amid holidays, say experts



The Christmas season can be challenging for those in addiction recovery, but sacramental grace and practical strategies can keep those seeking sobriety on track, pastoral experts told OSV News.

“It’s a very, very stressful (time) for many people who struggle with addictions, because there are parties for work, there’s a lot of peer pressure and there’s a lot of family pressure — especially if the family is in denial that the person is struggling or that someone else in the family is in active addiction,” said Edmundite Father Thomas F. X. Hoar, president of St. Edmund’s Retreat, a Catholic retreat community with several recovery ministries located on Enders Island, Connecticut.

Alcohol consumption typically rises during the Christmas holidays, with some surveys indicating that U.S. adults may even double their drinking during the period between Thanksgiving and New Year’s.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, excessive alcohol use — defined as binge drinking (four to five drinks or more per occasion), heavy drinking (eight to 15 or more drinks per week) and alcohol use by pregnant women and those under age 21 — is a leading cause of preventable death in the U.S., claiming some 140,000 individuals annually and slashing an average 26 years of life expectancy per person.

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

Collection for Religious Retirement Fund to take place Dec. 9-10



The Diocese of Scranton will hold the Retirement Fund for Religious collection Dec. 9-10. The parish-based appeal is coordinated by the National Religious Retirement Office (NRRO) in Washington, D.C. Proceeds help religious communities across the country to care for aging members.

Last year, the Diocese of Scranton donated more than \$72,800 to the collection.

"We are privileged to support those who have dedicated their lives to tireless service," NRRO Executive Director John Knutsen said. "We are immensely grateful for the continuing generosity of U.S. Catholic donors to this vital cause."

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

Pope calls world leaders to end divisions to fight climate change



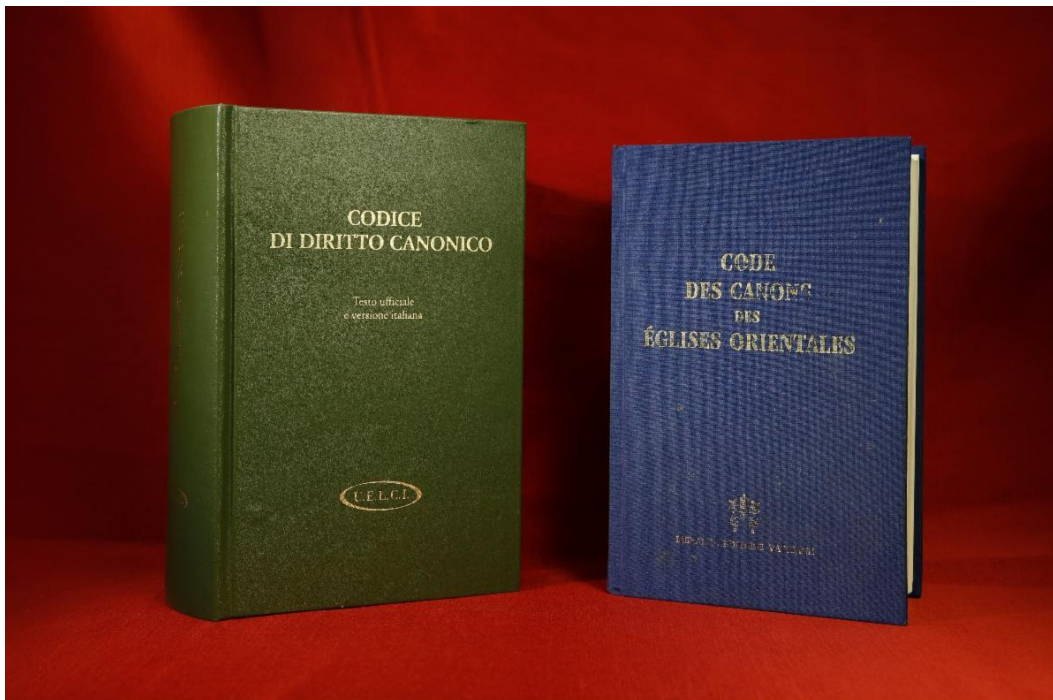
The future of humanity depends on what people choose now, Pope Francis said in his message to global leaders at the World Climate Action Summit of the U.N. Climate Change Conference.

“Are we working for a culture of life or a culture of death?” he asked in his message. “To all of you I make this heartfelt appeal: Let us choose life! Let us choose the future!”

“The purpose of power is to serve. It is useless to cling to an authority that will one day be remembered for its inability to take action when it was urgent and necessary to do so. History will be grateful to you,” the pope wrote.

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

Canon law must be part of Church's mission of mercy, pope says



All the Catholic Church's structures, including tribunals and faculties of canon law, must undergo a "pastoral and missionary conversion" to ensure the church is giving the world "the only thing it needs: the Gospel of the mercy of Jesus," Pope Francis wrote.

"To be pastoral does not mean that the norms should be set aside, and one sets off in whatever direction one wishes, but that in applying the norms one should make certain that the Christian faithful find in them the presence of the merciful Jesus, who does not condemn but exhorts them to sin no more because he gives grace," the pope wrote to an international group of canon law scholars.

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

Holy Spirit inspires creativity, simplicity in evangelization, pope says



Christians must rely more on the Holy Spirit than on their own plans and strategies if they hope to fulfill their mission to share the good news of God's love and of salvation in Christ, Pope Francis said.

The pope began his weekly general audience Dec. 6 explaining to the crowd that he once again asked an aide to read his catechesis "because I'm still struggling — I'm much better, but I struggle if I speak too much."

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

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As we celebrate the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe on Dec. 12, your gift to the **Diocesan Annual Appeal** helps build Hispanic ministry programs in many parishes.

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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