



The Catholic Light

DIOCESE OF SCRANTON

Weekly E-Newsletter

December 25, 2025

Merry Christmas!

Bishop Bambera's Reflection for Christmas



"And suddenly there was a multitude of the heavenly host with the angel, praising God and saying: "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."

This hymn of the angels at the Lord's Nativity echoes this theme of the wonderful mystery of the Incarnation: peace. Peace is not only the non-warring condition between nations, or mutual harmony between peoples, but it signifies the reality that in the birth of Jesus, heaven is wedded to earth, God dwells with the human race, and that God became human so that human beings might become divine.

I encourage you to reflect upon this great mystery of our faith throughout the Christmas season. May the overflowing love of God, dwelling among us in the birth of our Savior, remain in your hearts today and throughout the coming year.

May God bless you and your loved ones as you celebrate this joyful season! Merry Christmas!

[Click Here to Share Bishop Bambera's Christmas Reflection from the Diocese of Scranton YouTube Channel](#)

Bishop proclaims message of hope and compassion at Christmas Vigil Mass



A capacity crowd of roughly 800 faithful gathered at the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton on Tuesday, Dec. 24, for the 4 p.m. Pontifical Vigil Mass of Christmas, celebrated by the Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton.

The joyful liturgy marked the beginning of Christmas celebrations at the Mother Church of the Diocese and was broadcast live on CTV: Catholic Television of the Diocese of Scranton and livestream on Diocesan digital social media platforms.

In his homily, Bishop Bambera reflected on the humility and hope found in the birth of Christ, sharing a personal story of witnessing kindness between two impoverished men on a cold winter day. He reminded the faithful that Christmas proclaims a God who draws near to the poor, the broken, and the forgotten, offering consolation and new life.

"In Jesus' birth, we no longer have reason to be afraid," Bishop Bambera said in his homily, emphasizing that God's love is revealed in simple acts of compassion and shared generously with others.

[Click Here for a Photo Album from the Vigil Mass of Christmas from the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton](#)

To turn away others is to turn away God, pope says on Christmas Eve



If people refuse to make room for others – like the poor, children and the stranger – then they also refuse to make room for God, Pope Leo XIV said as he celebrated the birth of Jesus.

“Where there is room for the human person, there is room for God,” the pope said in his homily Dec. 24 as he celebrated the nighttime liturgy in St. Peter’s Basilica.

“While a distorted economy leads us to treat human beings as mere merchandise, God becomes like us, revealing the infinite dignity of every person,” he said. “While humanity seeks to

become ‘god’ in order to dominate others, God chooses to become man in order to free us from every form of slavery.”

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

Diocesan parishes welcoming faithful for Christmas Masses today



Saint Joseph Mareello Parish, Pittston



Saint Ann Basilica Parish, West Scranton



Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, Montoursville



Our Lady of Hope Parish, Wilkes-Barre

Parishes throughout the Diocese of Scranton are welcoming the faithful to celebrate Christmas today.

Parish decorating committees, liturgy teams, and hospitality ministries have spent many hours preparing for this special day.

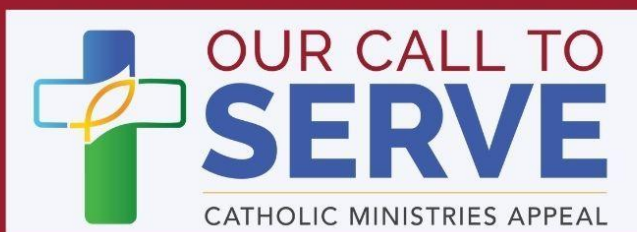
Above are some parish photos that have been shared publicly for the celebration of Christmas this year.

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

**Support vital ministries this
Christmas with a gift to the Catholic
Ministries Appeal**



THIS CHRISTMAS, GIVE THE GIFT OF HOPE



As we celebrate the birth of Christ, we are reminded of God's greatest gift to us. Through the Catholic Ministries Appeal, your generosity brings hope, mercy, and help to those in need throughout our Diocese.

Please consider making a gift this Christmas season at
AnnualAppeal.org

As we celebrate the joy of Christmas, we are reminded that God entered our world through the gift of His Son - an act of love that calls each of us to share that same love with others.

This holy season invites us to look beyond ourselves and respond generously to the needs of our brothers and sisters throughout the Diocese of Scranton.

The Catholic Ministries Appeal makes that response possible.

Through your support, vital ministries are sustained - serving the poor and vulnerable, forming future priests and deacons, strengthening parish life, supporting Catholic education, and bringing hope to those who are struggling. These ministries touch lives every day and extend the mission of the Church far beyond the walls of any one parish.

As you reflect on the blessings you have received this Christmas, we kindly ask you to consider making a gift to the Catholic Ministries Appeal.

Your generosity, offered in the spirit of the season, helps ensure that the light of Christ continues to shine through the compassionate work of our Diocese all year long.

Thank you for being a part of this shared mission of faith, hope, and love.

[Click Here to Make a Safe and Secure Online Gift to the Catholic Ministries Appeal Right Now!](#)

**Gaza's Christians long to rebuild life
after 2 years of war**



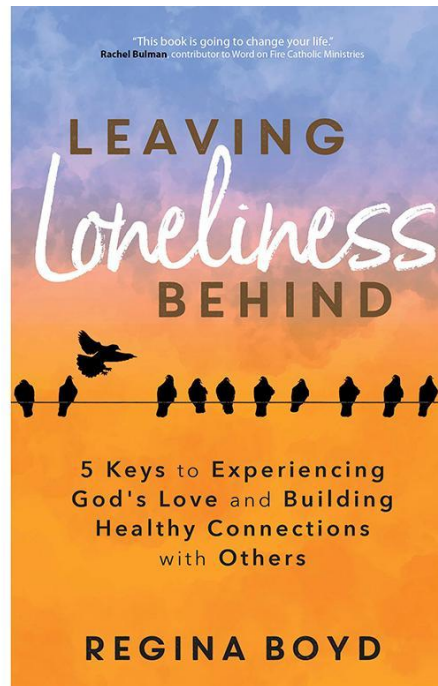
People have a deep desire to return to their lives despite the dire and complex situation in Gaza following two years of war, Cardinal Pierbattista Pizzaballa, Latin patriarch of Jerusalem, said at an annual Christmas press conference on Dec. 22.

Straying from tradition, the patriarch did not read from a prepared statement but said he would rather “have a dialogue” with the journalists. Cardinal Pizzaballa had just returned from a weekend Christmas visit to the Holy Family Parish compound in Gaza together with the general vicar of the Archdiocese of Jerusalem, Auxiliary Bishop William Shomali, where they celebrated Mass with the parishioners Dec. 21.

The patriarch and his small delegation also toured the neighboring area including tents of displaced families along the seafront, the Al-Ahli (Baptist) Hospital, a medical clinic affiliated with the Union of Churches, the Caritas Gaza Office, a Catholic Relief Services aid distribution point and Al-Azhar University. They also visited St. Porphyrios Greek Orthodox Church, meeting with the parish priest as a sign of Christian unity.

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

Experts offer strategies for connection during Christmas amid U.S. ‘epidemic’ of loneliness



The holidays are here, and the Savior comes – but for many, it will still be a blue Christmas, and possibly new year, too.

Why? They'll be lonely.

In 2023, former U.S. Surgeon General Vivek Murthy declared loneliness in America an epidemic – and issued an 82-page report warning of its dangers to “individual and population health, community safety, resilience and prosperity.”

The report – “Our Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation” – advised readers loneliness is “far more than just a bad feeling”;

indeed, it warned “the mortality impact of being socially disconnected is similar to that caused by smoking up to 15 cigarettes a day.”

Failure to address loneliness, Murthy added, will come at a price: “We will continue to splinter and divide until we can no longer stand as a community or a country.”

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

Born in hardship, sung in hope: the quiet, powerful origins of ‘Silent Night’



With Christmas here and “Silent Night” filling churches and homes across the world, it is worth remembering how unlikely its beginning truly was.

The world's most famous Christmas carol – “Stille Nacht” in German – was not born in a peaceful, picture-book setting. There was no postcard village, no soft snowfall, no glowing atmosphere.

Instead, it emerged from a small Austrian town marked by war, hunger and deep uncertainty.

Oberndorf, a community north of Salzburg, had endured almost two decades of upheaval from the Napoleonic Wars. The eruption of Mount Tambora – an active stratovolcano in Indonesia – in 1815 caused massive climate disruption and famine in Europe.

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

**Thousands of families provided
Christmas meals thanks to local
agencies**



Thousands of area families will have a Christmas dinner on the table this year because of the generosity of local community agencies.

Friends of the Poor and Catherine McAuley Center held the annual Family-to-Family Christmas Food Giveaway on Monday, Dec. 22, 2025, at the Scranton Cultural Center in Scranton.

A total of 4,000 food baskets were given out - filled with ham, potatoes, apples, green beans and more.

"We know with the holidays there are added expenses, and people are trying to do the best they can to give their families a little bit of Christmas cheer," Linda Robeson said. "If we can help families have a wonderful holiday by providing them their dinner - which will take some of the pressure off - we want to do that."

[Click Here to Watch a Short Video from CTV: Catholic Television
Regarding the Family-to-Family Food Distribution](#)

Faithful invited to close Jubilee Year with Bishop on Dec. 28



**JUBILEE
YEAR OF
HOPE**

Closing Mass

**Sunday, December 28, 2025
12:15 p.m.**

Cathedral of Saint Peter, Scranton

Join Bishop Joseph C. Bambera and
the faithful of the Diocese of
Scranton as we close the Jubilee
Year on the Feast of the Holy Family.

The faithful of the Diocese of Scranton are invited to gather in thanksgiving and prayer as the Jubilee Year of Hope concludes with a Closing Mass on Sunday, Dec. 28, 2025, at 12:15 p.m. at the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton.

The Closing Mass will mark the final diocesan celebration of the Jubilee Year of Hope, observed throughout 2025 by the Universal Church.

All are welcome to attend, with a special invitation extended to those who participated in Jubilee events during the year, including the Diocesan Pilgrimage to Rome in late August and September, the Diocesan Pilgrimage to the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C., on Oct. 1, 2025, and the many special Jubilee Masses and prayer opportunities held across the Diocese.

The Jubilee Year has been a time for Catholics to deepen their faith, encounter Christ more personally, and renew their commitment to live as “Pilgrims of Hope” in a world in need of healing and peace.

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

Follow us on Social Media...



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

www.dioceseofscranton.org