



The Catholic Light

DIOCESE OF SCRANTON

Weekly E-Newsletter

January 1, 2026

Happy New Year!



*Solemnity of Mary, the
Holy Mother of God*

CTV Mass Broadcasts
Jan

4:00 a.m.
Pope Leo presides at Mass in St. Peter's Basilica

12:10 p.m.
Live Mass from the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton

5:00 p.m.
Rebroadcast of Mass from Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton

6:30 p.m.
Opening Mass from SEEK 2026 Columbus, OH

God's plan of salvation is greater than 'weaponized' plots underway, pope says



The tenacious hope of people of faith, believing in a better tomorrow, keeps God's plan of salvation alive in the world, Pope Leo XIV said.

They keep hope alive even though today, just like in the past, there are other kinds of plans unfolding, he said during an evening prayer service in St. Peter's Basilica Dec. 31.

They include plans "aimed at conquering markets, territories and zones of influence. Weaponized strategies, cloaked in hypocritical speeches, ideological proclamations and false religious motives," he said.

The pope, accompanied by dozens of cardinals and bishops, and thousands of visitors in the basilica, prayed vespers and then sang the “Te Deum” (“We praise you, O God”) in thanksgiving for the blessings of the past year.

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January 1 is the World Day of Peace

The “confrontational” tone dominating both global and national politics is “deepening instability and unpredictability day by day,” Pope Leo XIV wrote in his message for World Peace Day.

Diocese of Scranton concludes Jubilee Year of Hope at Cathedral Closing Mass



Hundreds of people in the Diocese of Scranton marked the conclusion of the 2025 Jubilee Year of Hope with a Closing Mass, held on Dec. 28, 2025, at the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton.

The Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, served as principal celebrant and homilist for the 12:15 p.m. Mass, which was held on the Feast of the Holy Family.

The Diocese of Scranton joined dioceses around the world in giving thanks for a year of grace rooted in the Church's ancient Jubilee Year tradition on Dec. 28.

In his homily, Bishop Bambera reflected on Pope Francis' call to hope amid a world marked by uncertainty, suffering, and loss, noting how the Holy Father's words took on deeper meaning following his death earlier this year.

Echoing the Jubilee theme "Pilgrims of Hope," the Bishop emphasized that Christian hope is not mere sentiment, but a promise grounded in the Resurrection and the gift of eternal life.

Drawing on the Feast of the Holy Family, Bishop Bambera acknowledged both the blessings and challenges present in family life, pointing to Jesus, Mary, and Joseph as a model of trust in God and self-sacrificial love amid hardship, displacement, and fear.

He encouraged the faithful to embrace the virtues outlined by Saint Paul - compassion, humility, patience, forgiveness, and love - as a way of strengthening families, parishes, and the wider world.

As the Jubilee Year came to a close, Bishop Bambera reminded the faithful that while a Holy Year may end, the mission of the Church does not. He concluded by invoking Pope Francis' prayer that the power of hope continue to fill the hearts of believers as they await the Lord with confidence, carrying the promise of the Jubilee forward into daily life.

[Click Here to Read Bishop Bambera's Homily for the Closing Mass of the Jubilee Year of Hope](#)

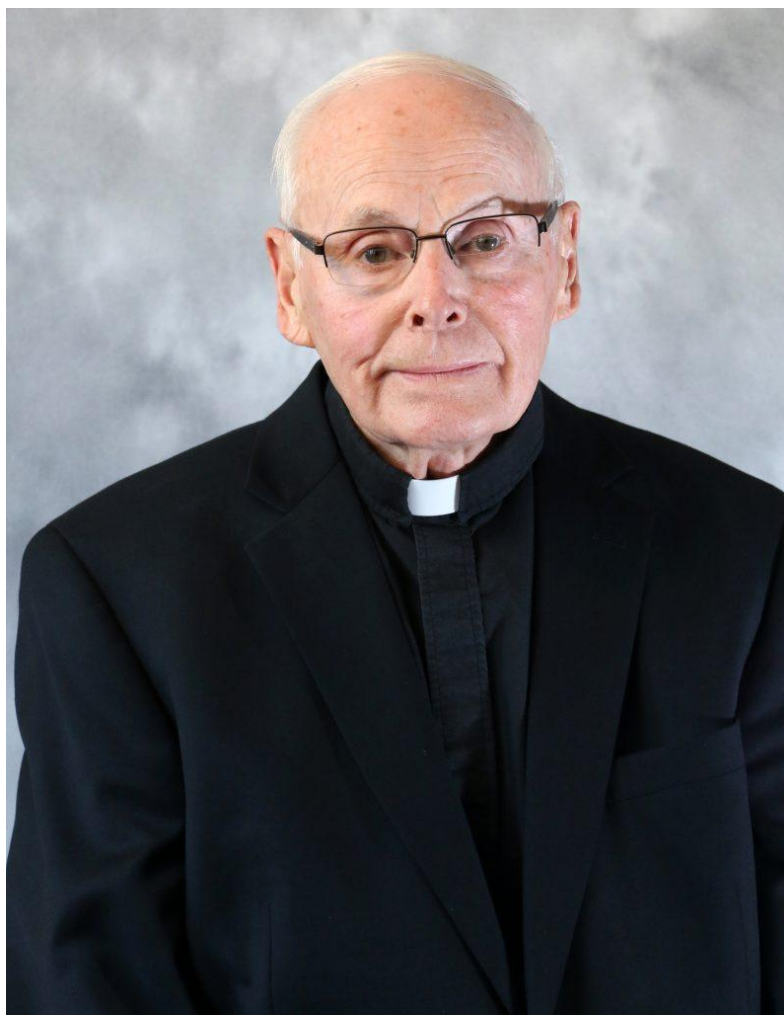
[Click Here to View a Photo Album from the Closing Mass of the 2025 Jubilee Year of Hope](#)



**U.S. Bishops underscore
virtue of hope as 2025 Jubilee
Year closes in dioceses**

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**Reverend John Francis Turi
(1929-2025)**



A Pontifical Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated for Rev. John Francis Turi, Pastor Emeritus of Saint Joseph Church, Matamoras, on Saturday, Jan. 3, 2026, at Saint Patrick Church in West Scranton.

The Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, will be the principal celebrant of the 10:00 a.m. funeral Mass.

Father Turi, died on Sunday, Dec. 28, 2025, at the Hospice of the Sacred Heart Inpatient Unit having faithfully served the Diocese of Scranton for seventy years.

[Click Here to Read the Obituary of Rev. John Francis Turi](#)

As Holy Doors close, cardinals emphasize God's arms are always open



The path to conversion, the door to God's mercy and the call to live in Christian hope all continue beyond the Jubilee Year, said the three cardinals who closed the Holy Doors at three major basilicas in Rome.

On the feast of the Epiphany, Jan. 6, Pope Leo will solemnly close the Holy Door of St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican, formally concluding the Holy Year 2025, which Pope Francis opened on Christmas Eve 2024. But diocesan and other local celebrations of the Jubilee concluded Dec. 28.

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Vatican says close to 3 million people saw Pope Leo at the Vatican in 2025



Close to 3 million pilgrims and visitors attended audiences, liturgies or meetings at the Vatican with Pope Leo XIV from the time of his election in May through December, according to the Prefecture of the Papal Household.

The prefecture, which handles the free tickets to audiences and Masses, as well as arranges the pope's daily schedule of meetings, published statistics for the year Dec. 30.

The numbers did not include events outside the Vatican — for instance, it did not count the Mass with more than 1 million people the pope celebrated Aug. 3 at Tor Vergata on the outskirts of Rome to conclude the Jubilee of Youth, nor did the tabulations include the crowds who came to see him in Turkey and Lebanon during his first foreign trip as pope Nov. 27-Dec. 2.

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2025 brought new pope, new president, and immigration as key issue



In a year that brought both a new U.S. president and a new pope, the issue of immigration emerged as a flashpoint between them and as a key issue for the U.S. church.

President Donald Trump was sworn in for a second, nonconsecutive term in the White House Jan. 20, becoming the nation's 47th president four years after he left office as its 45th. In his second inaugural address, Trump said he would begin "the process of returning millions and millions of criminal aliens back to the places from which they came."

Immigration and Customs Enforcement arrests have increased since then. However, as the Trump administration seeks to meet a goal of 3,000 such arrests per day, many of the individuals impacted have never been charged with a crime, arrest data shows.

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From Nigeria to Belarus, 2025 marks a grim year for religious freedom



As 2025 draws to a close, the plight of persecuted Christians around the world remains dire – and in many places, deeply forgotten. The year has exposed how fragile religious freedom is, even as the faithful strive to survive with courage, hope and community.

Nowhere was the crisis of Christian persecution more visible than in Nigeria, where militant Islamist groups and extremist herding militias continue to ravage Christian villages, abduct clergy and laity, and destroy homes and churches.

In the latest sign of Christian tragedy in the country, Father Emmanuel Ezema was abducted late on Dec. 2 from his residence in St. Peter's Catholic Church in Rumi, in Kaduna State, the Diocese of Zaria said on Dec. 3, according to Reuters.

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**2025 spans life spectrum, from
abortion and family programs to
immigration and death penalty**



Life issues are perennially critical to the robust public witness of the Catholic Church, but 2025 nonetheless proved a particularly eventful year across a wide spectrum of related concerns.

The year opened with the annual National Prayer Vigil for Life, where worshippers praised and thanked God “for the gift of human life in all its forms and at every stage” and ended with a new coalition of more than 50 organizations pledging to end the death penalty in the United States once and for all.

Remarks by Pope Leo XIV in an impromptu Sept. 30 Castel Gandolfo press scrum demonstrated the expanse – and continuity – of the life issues of concern to the church.

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Missionary on the move: Where Pope Leo XIV might travel next in 2026



As Pope Leo XIV wrapped up his first apostolic visit to Turkey and Lebanon, he gave a hint on his flight back to Rome as to which other countries he might visit in 2026.

Speaking to journalists aboard the papal flight Dec. 2, the pope was asked by Argentine journalist Elisabetta Pique about his travel plans for the coming year.

“As for trips, nothing is certain yet. I hope to make a trip to Africa. That would possibly be the next trip,” he said. “Personally, I hope to go to Algeria to visit the places from the life of St. Augustine, but also to continue the dialogue, building bridges between the Christian world and the Muslim world.”

He also said that he was “working on some other countries,” including several in Latin America.

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**As Feast of the Epiphany
approaches, donate to the Catholic
Ministries Appeal**

***“They offered
him gifts of
gold,
frankincense,
and myrrh”***

Matthew 2:11



As the Magi followed the star to encounter Christ, we are called to share His light with others. Through the Catholic Ministries Appeal, you support parish and social service programs, seminarians and Catholic school students.

Make a gift today at AnnualAppeal.org

As we celebrate the Feast of the Epiphany this coming weekend, we are reminded of the Magi who brought their gifts to Christ, offering what they had in faith and love.

Today, we are invited to do the same by sharing our gifts through the Catholic Ministries Appeal, helping to reveal Christ's light through ministries that serve the poor, educate the young, and support those in need across the Diocese of Scranton.

[Click Here to Donate to the Catholic Ministries Appeal](#)

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