



The Catholic Light

DIOCESE OF SCRANTON

Weekly E-Newsletter

December 26, 2024

Merry Christmas!

Jesus' birth brings 'meaning, purpose and peace,' Bishop Bambera says during Christmas Masses



Hundreds of people filled the pews of the Cathedral of Saint Peter on Christmas Eve to celebrate the Nativity of Our Lord.

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

celebration of Christmas at the Cathedral. The Bishop also celebrated Midnight Mass at the Cathedral just a few hours later.

"In the birth of Jesus, we're given all the gifts that we need to find the blessings of life that truly matter: meaning, purpose and peace," Bishop Bambera said during his homily.

After entering the Cathedral with dimmed lighting, the Bishop blessed the large creche at the right side of the sanctuary. After the full lights illuminated the Cathedral, the Bishop explained that God's light continues to shine, despite the brokenness of our world.

"God's light does indeed shine far more brightly than we might realize," Bishop Bambera added. "We experience the warmth of his love when we're humble enough to admit our need for a Savior and, in turn, generous enough to follow the pattern of Jesus' life in the love and service of our sisters and brothers."

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

Bishop Bambera to hold opening Mass for 'Jubilee Year of Hope' locally this Sunday

JUBILEE YEAR OF HOPE



Opening Mass

Feast of the Holy Family
Sunday, December 29, 2024
12:15 p.m.

Join Bishop Joseph C. Bambera and
the faithful of the Diocese of
Scranton as we begin the Jubilee
Year with a solemn Mass at the
Cathedral of Saint Peter



Jubilee Years have been proclaimed by the Holy Father every 25 years since the 13th century and are significant years of grace for the Universal Church.

On Dec. 29, 2024, a special Mass will be held locally by Bishop Joseph C. Bambera, to mark the opening of the 2025 Jubilee Year of Hope.

The Mass, which will take place at 12:15 p.m. at the Cathedral of Saint Peter, 315 Wyoming Avenue, Scranton, will serve as the official “local launch” of a year-long period of spiritual reflection, renewal and pilgrimage.

The theme of the Holy Year is “Pilgrims of Hope.” The papal bull that introduced the coming Jubilee Year is titled, ‘Spes Non Confundit,’ or “Hope does not disappoint,” drawn from Romans 5:5.

A Jubilee Year, also known as a “holy year,” is a special year in the life of the church currently celebrated every 25 years. The most recent ordinary

jubilee was in 2000, with Pope Francis calling for an Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy in 2015-2016. Jubilee Years have been held on regular intervals in the Catholic church since 1300, but they trace their roots to the Jewish tradition of marking a jubilee year every 50 years.

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

Don't lose hope, Pope Francis says as he opens Holy Door at Rome prison



Wearing red vestments for the feast of St. Stephen, the first Christian martyr, Pope Francis knocked on the door of the church in Rome's Rebibbia prison complex and walked over its threshold.

After reciting a formal prayer before opening the prison's Holy Door Dec. 26, the pope took the microphone back to explain that he had inaugurated the Holy Year 2025 by opening the Holy Door of St. Peter's Basilica.

“I wanted the second Holy Door to be the one here, at a prison,” he said. “I wanted all of us, inside or out, to have an opportunity to throw open the doors of our hearts and understand that hope does not disappoint.”

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Pope opens Holy Door at St. Peter's Basilica, launching 'Jubilee Year of Hope'



In the quiet of Christmas Eve, Pope Francis opened the Holy Door of St. Peter's Basilica, launching what he called a “Jubilee of Hope.” As the doors opened, the bells of the basilica began to peal.

After the reading of a brief passage from the Gospel of John in which Jesus describes himself as “the door,” Pope Francis briefly left the atrium of the basilica, creating some confusion. But when the cardinals in the front row sat down, the others did likewise.

Three minutes later, the pope returned. He was pushed in his wheelchair up the ramp to the Holy Door. In silence, he raised himself from the chair to knock five times, and aides inside slowly opened the door, which had been framed in a garland of green pine branches, decorated with red roses and gold pinecones.

Opening the Holy Door of St. Peter's Basilica has been a fixture of the Catholic Church's celebration of jubilee years since the Holy Year 1450, the Vatican said.

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

Pope at Christmas: Jesus' birth brings hope for world of justice, peace



Celebrating Christmas Mass after opening the Holy Year 2025, Pope Francis said the birth of Jesus fills Christians with hope and the courage to work for peace and justice.

“This is our hope: God is Emmanuel, God-with-us,” he said at the Mass Dec. 24 in St. Peter’s Basilica with an overflow crowd. On a windy winter night, thousands of people were sitting in St. Peter’s Square watching the liturgy on video screens.

“The infinitely great has made himself tiny; divine light has shone amid the darkness of our world; the glory of heaven has appeared on earth — how? — as a little child,” the pope said. “If God can visit us, even when our hearts seem like a lowly manger, we can truly say: Hope is not dead; hope is alive, and it embraces our lives forever! Hope does not disappoint.”

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

Pope urges war-torn world to walk through door of peace on Christmas



As millions of pilgrims prepare to cross through the Holy Door of St. Peter’s Basilica, Pope Francis called on individuals, nations and the global

community to take a transformative step toward peace and reconciliation by walking through the “door of salvation” that is Jesus Christ.

“Jesus is the door of peace,” he said from the balcony of St. Peter’s Basilica Dec. 25. “This Christmas, at the beginning of the Jubilee Year, I invite every individual, and all peoples and nations, to find the courage needed to walk through that door, to become pilgrims of hope, to silence the sound of arms and overcome divisions!”

Prior to offering his blessing “urbi et orbi” (to the city and the world), the pope prayed for various countries grappling with conflict and crisis.

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

Bishop Bambera announces clergy appointments



On Monday, Dec. 23, 2024, the Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, announced new clergy appointments that will take effect in early 2025.

To view the latest clergy appointments, click on the link below.

[Click Here to View Bishop Bambera's Clergy Appointments Announced on Dec. 23, 2024](#)

In 2024, state laws of interest to Catholics span abortion to IVF to immigration



State laws of interest to Catholics spanned policy areas from abortion to IVF to immigration in 2024. An expected ruling from the U.S. Supreme Court in 2025 could have an impact on state laws across the country banning certain types of medical or surgical gender reassignment procedures for minors who identify as transgender.

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

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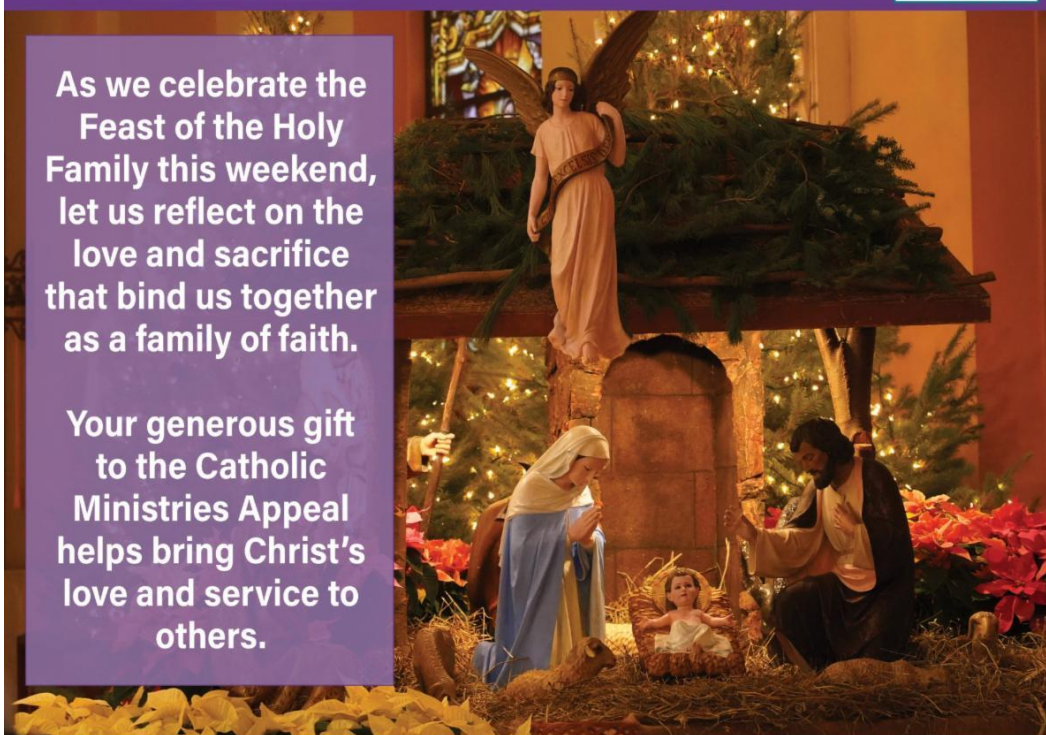


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Diocese of Scranton
300 Wyoming Avenue,
Scranton, PA 18503-1279
(570) 207-2238

www.dioceseofscranton.org

