



The Catholic Light

DIOCESE OF SCRANTON

Weekly E-Newsletter

January 23, 2025

Hundreds celebrate the Feast of Our Lady of Altagracia in Hazleton



Despite a storm on Jan. 19 that dropped several inches of snow in the Hazleton area, roughly 900 people gathered to celebrate a special Mass in honor of the Feast of Our Lady of Altagracia.

The Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, served as principal celebrant of the Mass, which was held in the gymnasium of Holy Family Academy to accommodate the large crowd.

“We’re a joyful people and it shows,” parishioner Rafael Perez of Annunciation Parish, explained. “This is what brings us together ... It is our faith that makes us one. That is what we celebrate.”

Three parishes that regularly hold Spanish Masses – Annunciation Parish in Hazleton; Queen of Heaven Parish in Hazleton; and Holy Name of Jesus Parish in West Hazleton – work together to plan all aspects of the liturgy.

“This is a great day,” parishioner Eugenio Sosa of Queen of Heaven Parish, said. “It is a great tradition. It is a great celebration around the world, and as you can see in Hazleton, it’s a big celebration.”

Our Lady of Altagracia is the patroness of the Dominican Republic. Under that title, the Blessed Virgin Mary continues to be revered by people of Dominican heritage in the United States.

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Prayer Service to mark Week of Prayer for Christian Unity held at Cathedral of Saint Peter



The Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, served as leader of prayer for an Ecumenical Prayer Service of the Word of God on Wednesday, Jan. 22, 2025, at the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton.

The prayer service was held to mark the annual Week of Prayer for Christian Unity Jan. 18-25, with the theme for 2025 taken from John 11:17-27 - specifically Jesus, having declared he is the resurrection and the life, asking Marth, "Do you believe this?" (Jn 11:26).

Bishop Bambera is currently serving as the chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs.

[Click Here to View a Photo Album from the Prayer Service Held at the Cathedral of Saint Peter Jan. 22](#)

[Click Here to Read More on the Importance of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity from Bishop Bambera](#)

**Mass for Persons with Disabilities to be held
Feb. 9**

Diocese of Scranton 

Mass for Persons With Disabilities

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2025
10:00AM

CATHEDRAL OF ST. PETER
315 WYOMING AVE. SCRANTON, PA 18502
CELEBRANT: BISHOP JOSEPH C. BAMBERA

All are welcome to join us as we honor
the many gifts those with physical, developmental,
or intellectual disabilities bring to the Church and
the community.

**A lite reception will follow Mass in the
Diocesan Pastoral Center.**

**For more info, contact
Shannon Kowalski at
(570)207-2213**

In advance of National Disability Awareness Month in March, the Diocese of Scranton will hold its annual Mass for Persons with Disabilities on Sunday, Feb. 9, 2025, at 10 a.m. at the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton.

All people, including those with special abilities, have gifts to contribute to the life of the Church. The Diocese of Scranton embraces and welcomes the talents of all individuals in building up the Kingdom of God.

The Most Reverend Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, will serve as principal celebrant and homilist at this special Mass.

The Mass is open to everyone. It will be broadcast live on CTV: Catholic Television of the Diocese of Scranton. The Mass will also be livestream on the Diocese of Scranton website, YouTube channel and links will be provided on all Diocesan social media platforms.

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Bishop Bambera to celebrate Mass for the World Day of the Sick Feb. 11



*World Day of
the
Sick Mass*

Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2025
12:10 p.m.
Cathedral of Saint Peter

The Most Reverend Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, will celebrate Mass for the 33rd World Day of the Sick on Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2025, at 12:10 p.m. at the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton.

The commemoration of the World Day of the Sick not only provides an opportunity to devote special attention to those who are ill, but is also a celebration of God's works of mercy, especially through those who work tirelessly in the healthcare field.

The World Day of the Sick Mass at the Cathedral of Saint Peter will feature the Liturgy of the Anointing. Any person who wishes to receive the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick will be invited to approach the bishop/priest with their hands open and palms facing up. The bishop/priest will anoint both the forehead and hands of the sick person.

Last year, Pope Francis reminded all faithful that the sacrament of the anointing of the sick is not just for those who are nearing the end of their life.

“Let us remember that the anointing of the sick is one of the ‘sacraments of healing,’ of ‘restoration,’ that heals the spirit,” the pope said in a video message released in July by the Pope’s Worldwide Prayer Network.

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

Old Forge parish celebrates restoration of gymnasium



The Gym at Prince of Peace Parish in Old Forge was recently remodeled with new electrical capacity, new lighting, signage, emergency lighting, exit signs, and a completely refurbished floor.

A water damage issue was rectified prior to the upgrades.

It is now open for approved youth groups within the community for basketball and other sports-related activities.

Pictured above is the Prince of Peace Finance Council, left to right: Mark Voyack, Alan Coolbaugh, Rich Ciufferi, Rev. August Ricciardi, George

Dunbar, Robert Potosky, and Robert Gillette. Absent from the photo: Sal Luzio. Sr.

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USCCB President calls Trump orders on migration, death penalty 'deeply troubling'



Executive orders signed by President Donald Trump on issues including migration, the environment and the death penalty are “deeply troubling,” Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, said in a Jan. 22 statement, while praising another on gender policy.

Among the first acts of his second term beginning Jan. 20, Trump signed a slew of executive orders. Some implement his hardline policies on immigration, including seeking to change the interpretation of birthright

citizenship under the 14th Amendment, an order that prompted a legal challenge.

Others include withdrawing from the 2015 Paris Agreement on climate and another sought to expand the use of the federal death penalty. Trump also signed an order directing the U.S. government to only recognize two sexes, male and female.

Archbishop Broglio, who heads the U.S. Archdiocese for the Military Services, said many of the topics that the first batch of executive orders concern “are matters on which the Church has much to offer.”

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

Pope to Trump: May U.S. prosper, shun all hatred, discrimination



Pope Francis told U.S. President Donald Trump he hoped that the nation would prosper under his leadership and make no room for hatred, discrimination or exclusion.

The pope offered his “cordial greetings and the assurance of my prayers that Almighty God will grant you wisdom, strength and protection in the exercise of your high duties,” in a message marking Trump’s inauguration as the 47th president of the United States Jan. 20.

“Inspired by your nation’s ideals of being a land of opportunity and welcome for all, it is my hope that under your leadership the American people will prosper and always strive to build a more just society, where there is no room for hatred, discrimination or exclusion,” the pope wrote.

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

U.S. Catholics urged to 'express unity' with Latin American Catholics through collection



By donating to the U.S. bishops' national Collection for the Church in Latin America, U.S. Catholics can support the church's mission in countries affected by poverty, political instability and natural disasters.

Most dioceses will take this offering up in their parishes at Masses the weekend of Jan. 25-26, though some have different dates. The online giving site #iGiveCatholicTogether also accepts funds for the collection.

The collection was founded in 1965 as a way for Catholics in the United States to express their unity and solidarity with Catholics in Central and South America and the islands of the Caribbean.

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U.S. Bishops report flags five top areas of 'critical concern' on religious liberty

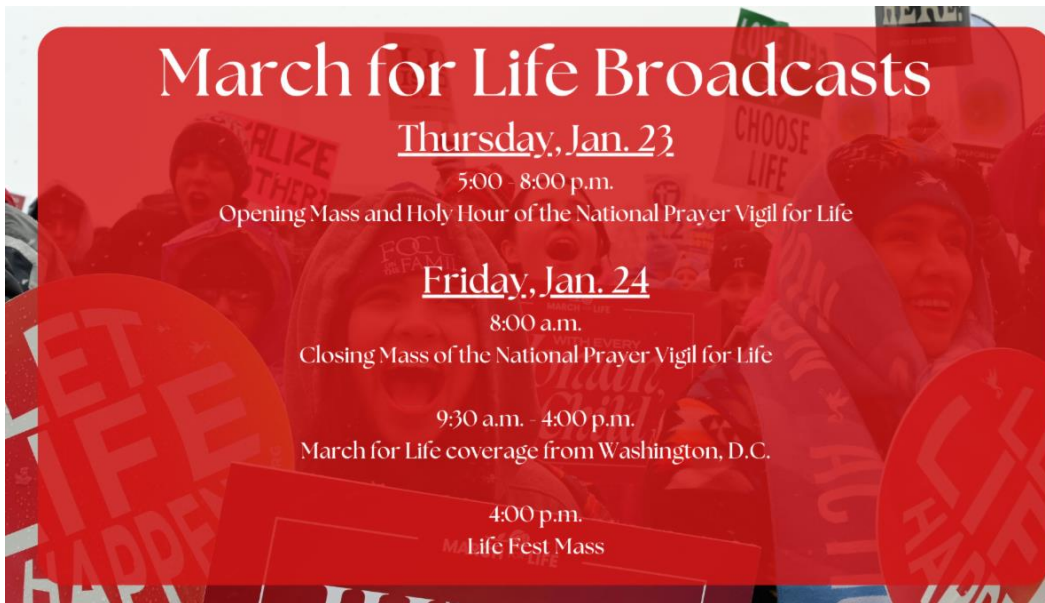


A new annual report by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops identified what it called five areas of critical concern, defined as both threats and opportunities, for religious liberty.

“The State of Religious Liberty in the United States,” published Jan. 16, highlighted the targeting of faith-based immigration services, elevated levels of antisemitic incidents, in vitro fertilization coverage mandates, the “scaling back of gender ideology in law,” and promoting parental choice in education as areas of concern for the conference.

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

Watch EWTN Coverage of the March for Life on Friday



Anyone not attending the 2025 March for Life in Washington, D.C., is invited to participate in EWTN coverage on Catholic Television.

Broadcasts will begin Thursday evening with the Opening Mass and Holy Hour of the National Prayer Vigil for Life beginning at 5:00 p.m. As a result, the normal rebroadcast of the Thursday Daily Mass will not take place at 7:00 p.m.

On Friday, June 24, the Closing Mass of the National Prayer Vigil for Life will be broadcast live from the Basilica of the National Shrine of the

Immaculate Conception at 8:00 a.m. That will be followed by day-long EWTN coverage of the March for Life.

As a result, the Daily Mass from the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton will not be broadcast at its normal times - instead airing at one special time of 5:30 p.m. on Friday. The Mass will still be available via livestream at 12:10 p.m. on the Diocese of Scranton website and YouTube channel.

Catholic Schools Week will take place next week - will you support the mission of Catholic education?



Donate now at
AnnualAppeal.org,
call (570) 207-2250 or
click this QR code



CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK BEGINS

As we celebrate Catholic Schools Week 2025, your generous donations to the Catholic Ministries Appeal help ensure that Catholic education continues to nurture faith, knowledge, and service in our communities.

[Click Here to Answer 'Our Call to Serve' Today!](#)

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