



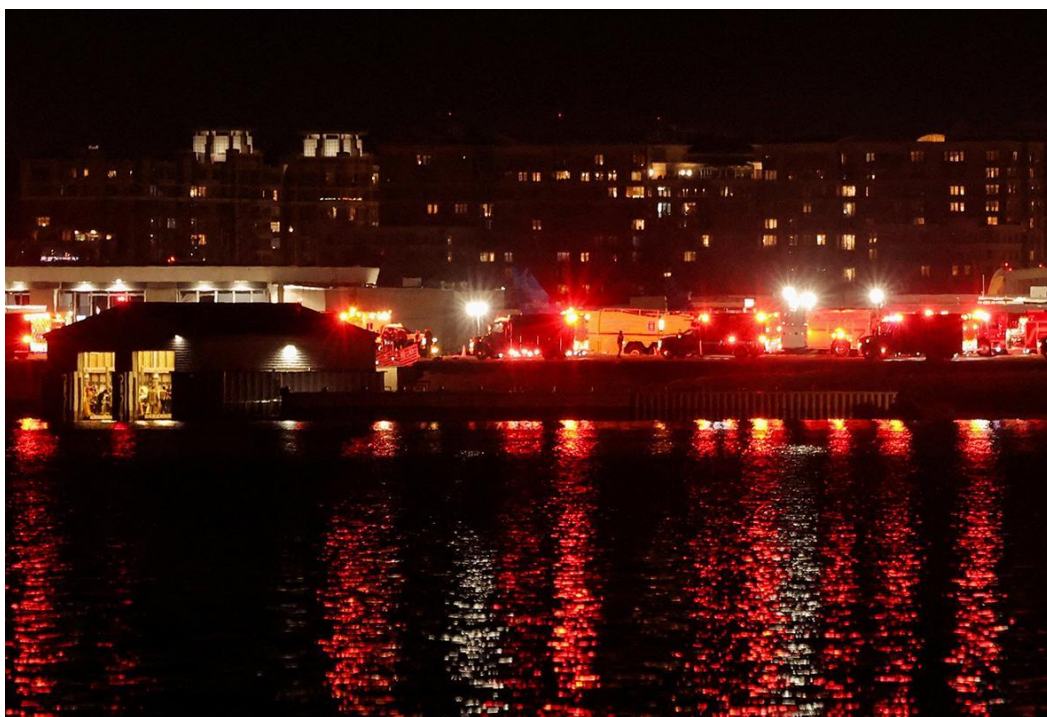
The Catholic Light

DIOCESE OF SCRANTON

Weekly E-Newsletter

January 30, 2025

Bishops call for prayer after deadly DC air collision claims dozens of lives



U.S. Catholic bishops – joined by Pope Francis – are calling for prayer after a deadly aviation crash in the nation’s capital claimed dozens of lives.

“Catholics throughout the Archdiocese of Washington today join men and women of good will here and around the world in praying for those who perished in last night’s heartbreaking accident,” Cardinal Wilton D.

Gregory, the retired archbishop and current apostolic administrator of the archdiocese, said in a Jan. 30 statement.

The Jan. 29 midair collision between a regional jet operated by American Airlines and a U.S. military helicopter took place over the Potomac River at approximately 9 p.m.

All on both aircraft are presumed dead.

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Catholic Schools Week 2025 kicks off with inaugural 'Living the STREAM' event to showcase student innovation



Catholic Schools Week 2025 is now underway in the Diocese of Scranton through Saturday, Feb. 3.

The annual celebration provides an opportunity to honor the contributions of Catholic schools across the country, highlight their role in shaping students' academic, spiritual, and moral development, and express gratitude for the educators, students, and families who are part of these vital communities.

The week is celebrated in the Diocese of Scranton's 15 elementary schools and 4 high schools with a variety of events and activities, including Masses, open houses, service projects, and community outreach programs.

“We are excited to celebrate Catholic Schools Week because it is always an opportunity to honor the incredible work of our schools, teachers, administrators, and families,” Kristen Donohue, Diocesan Secretary of Catholic Education/Superintendent of Schools, explained. “Our mission is to provide a Catholic education that is spiritually sound, academically excellent, and prepares our students to be faith-filled leaders and life-long learners dedicated to serving the church and society.”

This year, in a very special way, the Diocese of Scranton is focusing on the achievements and contributions that Catholic school students can make, while also celebrating their academic and spiritual growth.

On Jan. 27, the Diocese of Scranton launched its inaugural “Living the STREAM” event. Catholic school students in grades 6-8 were invited to put their imagination into action and share a “big idea” that they think would meet a community, national, or global need.

As part of the “Living the STREAM” event, students were invited to work in teams and film a short video describing their project and how it could make for a better world. They were encouraged to include all aspects of STREAM (Science, Technology, Religion, Engineering, Art and Mathematics).

More than 40 videos, featuring nearly 200 Catholic school students, have been submitted – with students researching varying topics including homelessness, pollution, food waste – and offering their thoughts on how to tackle these issues.

[Click Here to Visit the 'Living the STREAM' Website and Watch All the Student Videos](#)

**'Loving, supportive atmosphere' of
Catholic Schools highlighted this week**



Catholic Schools Week is not only a celebration of academic excellence, but also the values that define Catholic education, including faith, service, community and charity.

The 19 Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Scranton hold many special events during this week to recognize the positive impact Catholic schools have on students, families, and communities.

The Catholic Light visited Wyoming Area Catholic School in Exeter at the beginning of this week as the school held its "WACKy Olympics."

Administrators and parents reflected on the importance of this week and the values that a Catholic school education instill in students.

[Click Here to Watch a Video from Wyoming Area Catholic School in Exeter as Students Celebrate Catholic Schools Week 2025](#)

Ninety women attend second annual 'Bold & Beloved Retreat'



Roughly 90 women from across the Diocese of Scranton came together last weekend to participate in the second annual 'Bold and Beloved Women's Retreat' at Holy Transfiguration Retreat Center in Dalton.

The weekend featured fellowship and inspirational talks from six local women with diverse experiences.

"They're coming to talk about their own witness story and hoping that is an inspiration to other women in the diocese," Mary Hallman, Diocesan Secretary for Parish Life, explained.

The retreat is made possible, in part, because of donations to annual Catholic Ministries Appeal.

Hallman stated the weekend was very fulfilling after hearing each presenter being "really vulnerable, being honest, sharing where their struggles have been, but always sharing that one point in their life where there was an intervention of God's love and mercy or an encounter with Jesus Christ that changed their lives and sent them in a different direction."

[Click Here to Watch a Video Highlighting the 'Bold and Beloved Women's Retreat'](#)

Hope amid suffering leads to God, pope says in message for world's sick



While the Holy Year 2025 refrain, “Hope does not disappoint,” can be difficult for those suffering from illness to embrace, Christians are called to recognize God’s closeness even in moments of weakness or despair, Pope Francis said.

Sickness “becomes an occasion for a transformative encounter” when one is open to God, he wrote in his message for the 33rd World Day of the Sick, observed by the church Feb. 11, the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes.

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 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.

In addition, the Vatican will host the Jubilee of the Sick and Health Care Workers April 5-6, an event that will close with a papal Mass celebrated in St. Peter's Square.

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Pope: Giving marginalized people hope is key to peace



Nations should put people affected by poverty, illness, migration and other marginalized groups at the heart of social and economic considerations during the Holy Year 2025, Pope Francis said.

“The poor and the sick, the young and the elderly, the migrants and the displaced, even those deprived of their freedom, must be at the center of our considerations, so that no one is excluded and everyone’s human dignity is respected,” the pope told participants in a conference on peace and dialogue in Havana, Cuba.

The conference, titled “For World Balance,” gathered writers, artists, politicians, academics and religious and social leaders to explore avenues toward promoting global solidarity.

In his message, released by the Vatican Jan. 28, Pope Francis said that the Holy Year must be a time when people can overcome the obstacles that prevent them from looking to the future with hope.

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March for Life puts pro-life vision that welcomes babies, supports families in focus



“Let me say very simply: I want more babies in the United States of America,” Vice President JD Vance told a cheering crowd at the 52nd National March for Life Jan. 24.

“I want more happy children in our country, and I want beautiful young men and women who are eager to welcome them into the world and eager to raise them,” he said. “And it is the task of our government to make it easier for young moms and dads to afford to have kids, to bring them into the world, and to welcome them as the blessings that we know they are, here at the March for Life.”

In his first public appearance following Inauguration Day, Vance was the final speaker at the annual march’s two-hour rally preceding attendees’ walk from the Washington Monument grounds to the U.S. Supreme Court Building. Other speakers included Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-S.D., and House Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La. It is the first time both leaders of Congress’s chambers attended a March for Life.

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Vance spars with U.S. bishops over their pushback on Trump's immigration policy



Vice President JD Vance questioned the motives of the U.S. bishops' criticism of President Donald Trump's new immigration policies in a Jan. 26 interview — including raids on churches and schools — asking if they are actually concerned about receiving federal resettlement funding and “their bottom line.”

“I think the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops has, frankly, not been a good partner in commonsense immigration enforcement that the American people voted for, and I hope, again, as a devout Catholic, that they'll do better,” Vance said on CBS's “Face the Nation.”

In a statement Jan. 26 regarding its work with the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program, which did not name Vance, the USCCB said, “Faithful to the teaching of Jesus Christ, the Catholic Church has a long history of serving refugees.”

“In 1980, the bishops of the United States began partnering with the federal government to carry out this service when Congress created the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP),” the statement said. “Every person resettled through USRAP is vetted and approved for the program by the federal government while outside of the United States. In our agreements with the government, the USCCB receives funds to do this work; however, these funds are not sufficient to cover the entire cost of these programs. Nonetheless, this remains a work of mercy and ministry of the Church.”

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Trump bars taxpayer funding for abortion in the U.S. or overseas



President Donald Trump on Jan. 24 used executive authority to block taxpayer funds from paying for elective abortion procedures both in the U.S. and abroad.

Trump reinstated a policy, commonly referred to as the Mexico City Policy, which bars taxpayer funds from going to nongovernmental organizations abroad that perform or promote abortions. He also signed

an executive order to further enforce a ban on federal funding for abortion known as the Hyde Amendment.

The Mexico City Policy, referred to as the “global gag rule” by opponents, was first enacted by former President Ronald Reagan in 1984. Each Republican president since that time has authorized it, and each Democratic president has rescinded the policy. In 2021, the Trump administration expanded the policy’s family-planning scope to cover most federal global health assistance, renaming it the “Protecting Life in Global Health Assistance” policy.

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Catholics will accept a common date for Easter in East, West, pope says



Celebrating the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, Pope Francis reaffirmed the Catholic Church’s willingness to accept a proposal for a common date for celebrating Easter in the West and the East.

Noting that in 2025 the date coincides on the West's Gregorian calendar and the East's Julian calendar, Pope Francis said that "I renew my appeal that this coincidence may serve as an appeal to all Christians to take a decisive step forward toward unity around a common date for Easter."

"The Catholic Church is open to accepting the date that everyone wants: a date of unity," he said Jan. 25 during an ecumenical evening prayer service at Rome's Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls.

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Pope clears way for beatification of Georgia martyrs



Pope Francis has formally recognized that five Franciscan missionaries ministering in what is now the U.S. state of Georgia were killed for their faith.

By signing the decree in the sainthood cause of the Georgia martyrs Jan. 27, the pope cleared the way for their beatification, although a date for the ceremony was not announced immediately.

The Spanish Franciscans Pedro de Corpa, Blas Rodríguez de Cuacos, Miguel de Añón, Antonio de Badajoz and Francisco de Veráscola were killed between Sept. 14 and Sept. 17, 1597, after Father de Corpa told a young Indigenous man, Juanillo, who was heir to a Guale chiefdom, that as a baptized Christian he could not take a second wife.

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Catholic Ministries Appeal reaches 86% of goal - will you help get us over the top?



February is the Month of the Holy Family

As we honor the month of the Holy Family, your generous donations to the Catholic Ministries Appeal help strengthen Parish Life efforts, supporting families and fostering faith-filled communities.



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