



The Catholic Light

DIOCESE OF SCRANTON

Weekly E-Newsletter

January 9, 2025

Palisades fire destroys Catholic church, damages school, in Los Angeles



A church in Pacific Palisades appeared to be destroyed and more than 60 Catholic schools were closed as several major fires in the Los Angeles area burned overnight into Jan.8.

Images shared with Angelus, the news outlet of the LA Archdiocese, showed only the frame of the Corpus Christi Catholic Church structure remaining as of the morning of Wednesday, Jan. 8. There were also unverified reports of damage to Corpus Christi's parish school.

In addition, at least 65 Catholic schools were closed that morning as a result of several fires burning in the LA area, including the Eaton Fire near Altadena and the Hurst Fire in the northern San Fernando Valley.

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

Cardinal McElroy chosen to succeed Cardinal Gregory as Washington's shepherd



Cardinal Robert W. McElroy of San Diego has been appointed the next archbishop of the Archdiocese of Washington, following Pope Francis' acceptance of the resignation of Cardinal Wilton D. Gregory, the first African American cardinal, the Vatican announced Jan. 6.

The see city is home to the White House, Congress, Supreme Court and a multitude of embassies, nonprofits, think tanks and lobbying groups seeking to sway the levers of American power.

Canon law required Cardinal Gregory, 77, to submit his resignation to the pope when the cardinal turned 75, which was Dec. 7, 2022. The Vatican announced the news of Cardinal Gregory's retirement and Cardinal McElroy's appointment two weeks before the second inauguration of President-elect Donald Trump in Washington.

Cardinal McElroy will be installed as Washington's eighth archbishop on March 11 at 2 p.m. at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception.

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St. Peter's Holy Door sees more than half million pilgrims in two weeks



More than half a million pilgrims crossed the threshold of the Holy Door of St. Peter's Basilica in the first two weeks after Pope Francis opened it.

From Dec. 24, when the pope inaugurated the Holy Year, to Jan. 7, the Vatican said, 545,532 people from around the world have made the journey along the lengthy boulevard leading to St. Peter's Square and crossed through the basilica's Holy Door.

"This is a very significant beginning," Archbishop Rino Fisichella, the chief Vatican organizer of the Jubilee Year, said in a statement. "The groups crowding Via della Conciliazione are giving an important testimony, and this is also a sign of the great perception of safety and security that pilgrims experience in the city of Rome and around the four papal basilicas."

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Grow in hope, share it with others, Cardinal says as he opens Holy Door



During the Holy Year 2025, Catholics are called not only to grow in the virtue of hope, but also to share it with others, said U.S. Cardinal James M. Harvey, archpriest of Rome's Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls.

Pope Francis' call to the whole church during the Jubilee Year is "both pressing and challenging. It is a call not to be satisfied just with having hope, but to radiate hope, to be sowers of hope," the cardinal said at Mass Jan. 5 after opening the basilica's Holy Door.

The golden bronze door, installed for the Holy Year 2000, was the last of the Holy Doors at the papal basilicas of Rome to be opened for pilgrims.

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Mary, not technology, is world's hope, Cardinal says at Holy Door opening



Opening the Holy Door of the oldest Marian shrine in the Western world, Cardinal Rolando Makrnickas prayed that the world would entrust itself to Mary, “the door to heaven.”

“Let us offer our prayer to the Father so that, like Mary, we may be pilgrims of hope who bring Christ into the world,” said the cardinal, coadjutor archpriest of the Basilica of St. Mary Major in Rome, before pushing open its bronze door Jan. 1.

As the bells rang out from the summit of Rome’s Esquiline hill, Cardinal Makrnickas became the first pilgrim to cross the door’s threshold during the Holy Year 2025.

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Pope names Consolata Missionary as the first woman dicastery prefect



Pope Francis has appointed Consolata Missionary Sister Simona Brambilla to be the first woman to lead a Vatican dicastery, naming her prefect of the Dicastery for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life.

The 59-year-old Italian sister had served as secretary of the dicastery since October 2023.

The announcement of her appointment Jan. 6 also said Pope Francis named as pro-prefect of the dicastery Spanish Cardinal Ángel Fernández Artime, 64, the former rector general of the Salesians.

The Vatican press office did not reply to requests to explain why the cardinal was given the title pro-prefect or how his role would be different from that of a dicastery secretary.

The dicastery, according to the apostolic constitution on the Roman Curia, is called “to promote, encourage and regulate the practice of the evangelical counsels, how they are lived out in the approved forms of consecrated life and all matters concerning the life and activity of Societies of Apostolic Life throughout the Latin Church.”

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

**God does not reject, forget anyone,
Pope Francis says on Feast of Epiphany**



Just as the star over Bethlehem called to and welcomed everyone to encounter the newborn Jesus, God today calls on the faithful to welcome everyone, creating safe, open spaces to find warmth and shelter, Pope Francis said.

The star is in the sky not to remain distant and inaccessible, he said, “but so that its light may be visible to all, that it may reach every home and overcome every barrier, bringing hope to the most remote and forgotten corners of the planet,” he said.

“It is in the sky so that it can tell everyone, by its generous light, that God does not refuse or forget anyone,” the pope said Jan. 6, celebrating Mass on the feast of the Epiphany in St. Peter’s Basilica.

“God does not reveal himself to exclusive groups or to a privileged few, but offers his companionship and guidance to those who seek him with a sincere heart,” he said in his homily. “God seeks everyone, always.”

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Mass for the Preservation of Peace & Justice to be held Jan. 22



A Mass for the Preservation of Peace and Justice will be celebrated on Wednesday, January 22, at 6:30 p.m. in the lower church of St. Ann's Basilica, 1233 St. Ann St., Scranton, to prayerfully mark the anniversary of the 1973 Supreme Court decision, Roe vs. Wade.

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops have called for all dioceses of the United States to observe "a day of prayer for the full restoration of the legal guarantee of the right to life and of penance for violations to the dignity of the human person committed through acts of abortion."

All area faithful are invited to attend this Mass, which will conclude with a period of Eucharistic Adoration and the Divine Mercy Chaplet.

A light social will follow.

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

High school students invited to participate in ISLI 2025 in March

Diocese of Scranton

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE HIGH SCHOOL RETREAT

March 21st-23rd, 2025

**Holy Transfiguration Retreat Center
Dalton, PA**

REGISTRATION FEE:

First Time Participants - \$200

Trainees (2nd or 3rd time at ISLI) - \$215

includes meals, lodging, retreat materials and a t-shirt



Register today at dioceseofscranton.org

Registration is now open for the "International Student Leadership Institute" (ISLI) high school retreat that will take place in March.

The retreat will begin on Friday, March 21 and run through Sunday, March 23 at Holy Transfiguration Retreat Center in Dalton.

The International Student Leadership Institute is a peer-facilitated faith-based leadership retreat designed by Fr. Thomas Chambers C.S.C. at the University of Notre Dame.

The ISLI retreat is designed to provide the knowledge and skills necessary to excel in both the leadership and membership roles of task oriented groups.

During the retreat, participants take part in small group tasks that allow the student to do the following:

- Make decisions
- Observe the growth of the group
- Examine leadership styles
- Practice leadership behavior
- Brainstorm about group dynamics and leadership
- Learn about positive communication
- Develop self-motivational skills and learn problem solving
- Action planning techniques

[Click Here For More Information or to Register for ISLI 2025](#)

Oblates of Saint Joseph to celebrate Feast of the
Holy Spouses on Jan. 19



The Congregation of the Oblates of St. Joseph will host their annual Feast of the Holy Spouses on Sunday, January 19, at 2:00 p.m. in the Chapel of St. Joseph, Route 315, Laflin.

Principal celebrant & homilist will be Rev. Gustavo Lopez, OSJ of Bakersfield, CA, assisted by Fr. Matthew Spencer, OSJ, USA provincial superior, and other local Oblate clergy.

The Mass fulfills the Sunday obligation. A social will immediately follow the Mass.

This annual feast, approved by the Vatican in 1989 for the Oblate Congregation to celebrate publicly, honors the spousal roles of the Blessed Virgin Mary & St. Joseph, parents of the Child Jesus.

All are welcome to participate.

Support the Catholic Ministries Appeal!



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YOUR GIFTS AT WORK!

Because of your support of the Catholic Ministries Appeal, on Jan. 2, 2025, Catholic Social Services dedicated and opened a new, permanent location for Mother Teresa's Haven, our emergency shelter in Wilkes-Barre.



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