



# *The Catholic Light*

DIOCESE OF SCRANTON

**Weekly E-Newsletter**

**February 20, 2025**

## **Pope continues showing 'slight' improvement, Vatican says**



On his sixth full day in Rome's Gemelli hospital, "the Holy Father's clinical condition is improving slightly," the Vatican said.

He continues to be without fever and "his hemodynamic parameters continue to be stable," said an evening bulletin Feb. 20. "Hemodynamic parameters" refer to a series of tests measuring cardiac output and other

indicators of whether a patient's heart health is being impacted by a given therapy.

"He received the Eucharist this morning and afterward dedicated time to work," the bulletin said. Previously, the Vatican said he was reading and working on texts. The suite of rooms reserved for the pope on the 10th floor of the Gemelli hospital includes an office for the pope's secretaries and a chapel.

The morning bulletin Feb. 20 specified that the pope had gotten out of bed to eat breakfast.

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

## Bishop Bambera designates eight Jubilee Year pilgrimage sites in the Diocese of Scranton



### BISHOP BAMBERA DESIGNATES EIGHT JUBILEE YEAR PILGRIMAGE SITES



**1**  
Cathedral of Saint Peter  
315 Wyoming Avenue, Scranton



**2**  
Saint Ann Basilica  
1250 St. Ann Street, Scranton



**3**  
Saint Augustine Church  
295 Church Road, Brackney



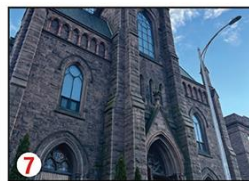
**4**  
Saint Boniface Church  
325 Washington Blvd, Williamsport



**5**  
Saint Gabriel Church  
122 S. Wyoming Street, Hazleton



**6**  
Saint John the Evangelist Church  
150 Terrace Street, Honesdale



**7**  
Saint Nicholas Church  
226 S. Washington St, Wilkes-Barre



**8**  
Saint Matthew Church  
78 Ridgeway St, East Stroudsburg

The Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, has named eight churches in the diocese as pilgrimage sites for the Jubilee Holy Year 2025.

The pilgrimage sites include: Cathedral of Saint Peter, Scranton; Saint Ann Basilica, Scranton; Saint Augustine Church, Brackney; Saint Boniface Church, Williamsport; Saint Gabriel Church, Hazleton; Saint John the Evangelist Church, Honesdale; Saint Nicholas Church, Wilkes-Barre; and Saint Matthew Church, East Stroudsburg.

The designation, aimed at deepening the spiritual experience of Catholics, is part of the broader, global observance of the Jubilee Year, which takes place every 25 years.

The pilgrimage sites will be places where the faithful are urged to visit, pray, and participate in liturgies and events throughout the Jubilee Year. Jubilee Year indulgences are also available for pilgrims who undertake a pious pilgrimage to any designated jubilee site.

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

## Bishop Bambera to hold Holy Hours throughout Diocese during Lent

### LENTEN HOLY HOURS WITH BISHOP BAMBERA BEGINNING AT 7 P.M. EACH NIGHT

Thursday, March 6: St. John the Evangelist Parish, Pittston  
Tuesday, March 18: Annunciation Parish, Hazleton  
Thursday, March 20: St. John the Evangelist Parish, Honesdale  
Monday, March 24: Christ the King Parish (St. Thomas Aquinas Church), Archbald  
Tuesday, March 25: St. Boniface Parish, Williamsport  
Wednesday, March 26: Our Lady of the Snows Parish, Clarks Summit  
Thursday, March 27: Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish, Dickson City  
Monday, March 31: Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish (St. Basil Church), Dushore  
Tuesday, April 1: St. Faustina Kowalska Parish, Nanticoke  
Wednesday, April 2: St. Ann Basilica Parish, Scranton  
Thursday, April 3: Saint Matthew Parish, East Stroudsburg  
Monday, April 7: Saint Nicholas/Saint Mary Parish, Wilkes-Barre

*Pilgrims  
OF  
Hope*

 DIOCESE OF  
SCRANTON



For the third straight year, Bishop Bambera will visit each deanery in the Diocese of Scranton during Lent to hold a special Holy Hour for the faithful.

The dates and locations for the Lenten Holy Hours are listed below:

Pittston Deanery  
Thursday, March 6, 2025  
Saint John the Evangelist Parish, Pittston

Hazleton Deanery  
Tuesday, March 18, 2025  
Annunciation Parish, Hazleton

Honesdale Deanery  
Thursday, March 20, 2025  
Saint John the Evangelist Parish, Honesdale

Carbondale Deanery  
Monday, March 24, 2025  
Christ the King Parish, Archbald

Williamsport Deanery  
Tuesday, March 25, 2025  
Saint Boniface Parish, Williamsport

Clarks Summit Deanery  
Wednesday, March 26, 2025  
Our Lady of the Snows Parish, Clarks Summit

Dunmore Deanery  
Thursday, March 27, 2025  
Visitation of the BVM Parish, Dickson City

Sayre Deanery  
Monday, March 31, 2025  
Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish (Saint Basil Church), Dushore

Kingston Deanery  
Tuesday, April 1, 2025  
St. Faustina Kowalska, Nanticoke

Scranton Deanery  
Wednesday, April 2, 2025  
Saint Ann's Basilica, Scranton

Stroudsburg Deanery  
Thursday, April 3, 2025  
Saint Matthew Parish, Stroudsburg

Wilkes-Barre Deanery  
Monday, April 7, 2025  
Saint Nicholas/Saint Mary Parish, Wilkes-Barre

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Faith groups gather for Prayer Vigil, urging  
compassion for immigrants and refugees





With temperatures barely breaking 20-degrees and gusty winds making it feel much colder, more than 150 people braved the frigid conditions to show support – and pray – for Scranton’s immigrant and refugee communities Monday, Feb. 17, 2025.

Faith leaders from the Catholic Church, Temple Hesed, and the Islamic Center of Scranton were among those offering prayers on Courthouse Square for the continued dignity and respect for all people.

“In recent weeks, our community has been overshadowed by anxiety and fear, yet tonight we come together to re-affirm our commitment to compassion,” Alexandra Marroquin said in welcoming the crowd to the event. “Let us stand united, drawing strength from one another and the values we hold dear.”

The crowd sang the hymn, “All Are Welcome,” after an opening prayer and listening to excerpts of a statement from Bishop Mark J. Seitz of El Paso, chairman of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Committee on Migration.

The vigil was sponsored by several community organizations, including the Scranton Area Multifaith Ministerium; Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary; Catholic Social Services of the Diocese of Scranton; Saint Teresa of Calcutta Parish; Saint Ann's Passionist Monastery; Temple Hesed; Islamic Center of Scranton; Marywood University; and The University of Scranton.

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

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**Basilicas, churches and shrines across  
United States are Jubilee 2025  
pilgrimage sites**



Catholics across the world are embarking on pilgrimages to commemorate the Jubilee Year of Hope.

Many will travel to Rome to visit the four major basilicas and pass through their Holy Doors so as to gain a plenary indulgence.

For those that are unable to travel to Rome, however, they are still able to participate by traveling to one of the numerous Jubilee Year pilgrimage sites across the country.

In the United States, bishops could designate churches, cathedrals, shrines, monasteries, or other religious locations as “jubilee pilgrimage sites.”



According to a Vatican decree on Jubilee Year indulgences, any person can gain a jubilee indulgence if they undertake a “pious pilgrimage” to any designated site and participate in Mass, adoration or receive the sacrament of penance there.

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

## Pope calls artists to be 'custodians of the Beatitudes' during Jubilee



Artists and cultural figures must be “custodians of the beatitudes,” embracing their vocation to create beauty, reveal truth and inspire hope in a troubled world, Pope Francis wrote to people participating in the Jubilee for Artists and the World of Culture.

“Art is not a luxury, but a necessity of the spirit. It is not an escape, but a responsibility, an invitation to action, a call, a cry,” said the homily Pope Francis prepared for the Jubilee Mass Feb. 16 in St. Peter’s Basilica.

Cardinal José Tolentino de Mendonça, prefect of the Dicastery for Culture and Education, celebrated the Mass with artists from more than 100 countries and read the pope's homily during the liturgy.

“To instruct in beauty is to instruct in hope, and hope is never separated from the drama of existence – it crosses the daily struggle, the fatigue of living, the challenges of our time,” the homily said.

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

## **African church organizations 'devastated' amid USAID shutdown, call for dialogue on program cuts**



As the United States paused foreign assistance to countries across the world, confusion, panic and desperation has gripped many organizations that benefit from the funds, including church-based groups.



Be it clinics for antiretroviral treatment, rural community water projects or even remote or city slum schools feeding programs, Catholic organizations were direct or indirect beneficiaries of the support delivered through the U.S. Agency for International Development.

“It is devastating on all levels, from the church to the community,” Gabriel Njiru, director of Caritas in the Diocese of Garissa in Kenya, told OSV News. “The stop order came without any notice and we could not continue the work with the communities.”

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

## **Bishops defend Catholic Charities work with migrants, refugees as obedience to Jesus**



The numbers alone are impressive: 16 million people and 28 million meals served; services supporting strong families for 500,000 clients; basic needs and emergency financial services for 2.8 million people; behavioral

health and wellness services for 526,000 individuals; 2.8 million nights of emergency shelter; emergency housing services for 295,000 without lodging; 52 disasters responded to in the U.S. and its territories.

These figures represent the work of Catholic Charities USA and its 168 diocesan affiliate agencies, work that has come under scrutiny by Vice President JD Vance, himself a Catholic, and some in the media.

In a Jan. 26 interview on CBS's "Face the Nation," Vance questioned the motives of the U.S. bishops' criticism of the new Trump administration's hardline immigration policies — including allowing raids on churches and schools — asking whether it had more to do with losing federal resettlement funding and "their bottom line."

Fox News Channel's Laura Ingraham, also a Catholic, said in a Jan. 29 broadcast, "I mean, no one wants to criticize Catholic Charities, but you can't be facilitating illegal immigration."

Such claims have ignited a vigorous rebuttal from U.S. Catholic bishops in defense of the church's charitable agencies.

"Certain news outlets continue to make claims that Catholic Charities participates in illegal immigration and human trafficking, earning large profits while doing so," Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades of Fort Wayne-South Bend, Indiana, said in a Feb. 3 message to the faithful. "As your Bishop and Chairman of the Board of Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, I can assure you these are false claims levied against our Catholic Charities agency."

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

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**Support the Catholic Ministries Appeal!**





Donate now at  
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call (570) 207-2250 or  
click this QR code



## **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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