



# **The Catholic Light**

DIOCESE OF SCRANTON

**Weekly E-Newsletter**

**March 13, 2025**

**Today marks Pope Francis' papal anniversary: For 12 years he's said, '*Don't forget to pray for me*'**

Pope Francis's  
**12th**  
Anniversary of His  
Election to the Papacy



CNS Photo/Paul Haring

As Pope Francis prepared to spend the 12th anniversary of his election at Rome's Gemelli hospital, people at the Vatican and around the world were responding to his most frequent personal request.

“From the beginning of his pontificate, we have heard Pope Francis ask us to not forget to pray for him, and that is what we are doing,” said Cardinal José Tolentino de Mendonça, prefect of the Dicastery for Culture and Education, as he led thousands of people praying the rosary for the pope March 10 in St. Peter’s Square.

“It is not only Christians who are doing so, but the faithful of other religions and even many nonbelievers also are joining their hearts around Pope Francis,” the cardinal said.

Pope Francis has made requesting prayers a hallmark of his papacy and a standard way to end a letter or speech.

When the 76-year-old Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio of Buenos Aires, Argentina, was elected to succeed Pope Benedict XVI March 13, 2013, and came out onto the balcony of St. Peter’s Basilica, his words stunned the crowd:

“Before the bishop blesses his people, I ask you to pray to the Lord that he will bless me – the prayer of the people asking a blessing for their bishop. Let us make, in silence, this prayer: your prayer over me,” he said, and bowed to receive the blessing.

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

**Pope's chest X-ray confirms his improvement, doctors say**



Pope Francis' condition continues to be stable and a chest X-ray "confirmed the improvements recorded in the previous days," his doctors said, but without saying his double pneumonia had cleared up completely.

The 88-year-pope is still using high-flow oxygen through a nasal tube during the day and "noninvasive mechanical ventilation" with a mask overnight, said the medical bulletin published March 12 by the Vatican press office.

In their bulletin of March 10, the pope's doctors had said that the pope's continued stability and incremental improvements in his breathing and blood tests had led them to lift their "guarded" prognosis, although they insisted he continued to need hospitalization. The bulletin March 12 continued to speak of the "complexity" of the pope's illness.

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



**With 215 catechumens and candidates, Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion was joyous day**



With 215 catechumens and candidates taking their next step into entering the Catholic Church on March 9, 2025, the Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion had the Cathedral of Saint Peter almost filled to capacity.

The Rite of Election brings catechumens one step closer to receiving the sacraments of baptism, first Communion and confirmation during the Easter Vigil.

The Call to Continuing Conversion allows candidates pursuing first Communion and/or confirmation to also move one step closer to full communion with the Church.

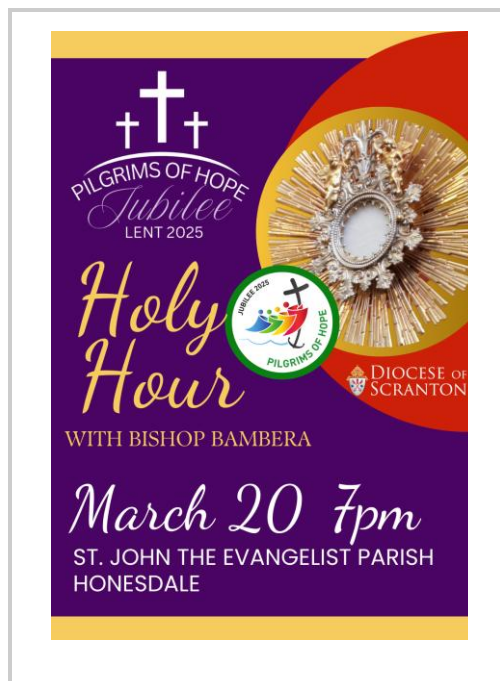
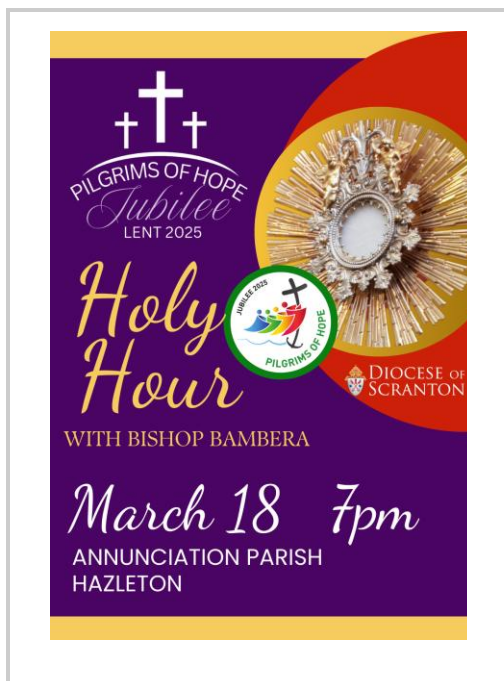
The Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, celebrated the Rite of Election and delivered a homily. Rite of Election formally began after Bishop

Bambera spoke. Each catechumen was called by name and later signed the Book of Elect for their parish.

In all, 29 parishes from around the Diocese of Scranton had either catechumens or candidates participate in the Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion.

[Click Here to Watch a Short Video from the Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion on March 9, 2025](#)

### Lenten Holy Hours to be held next week in Hazleton and Honesdale



Bishop Bambera will visit the Hazleton and Honesdale deaneries next week to celebrate a Lenten Holy Hour with the faithful.

On Tuesday, March 18, the Bishop will visit Annunciation Parish in Hazleton at 7:00 p.m.

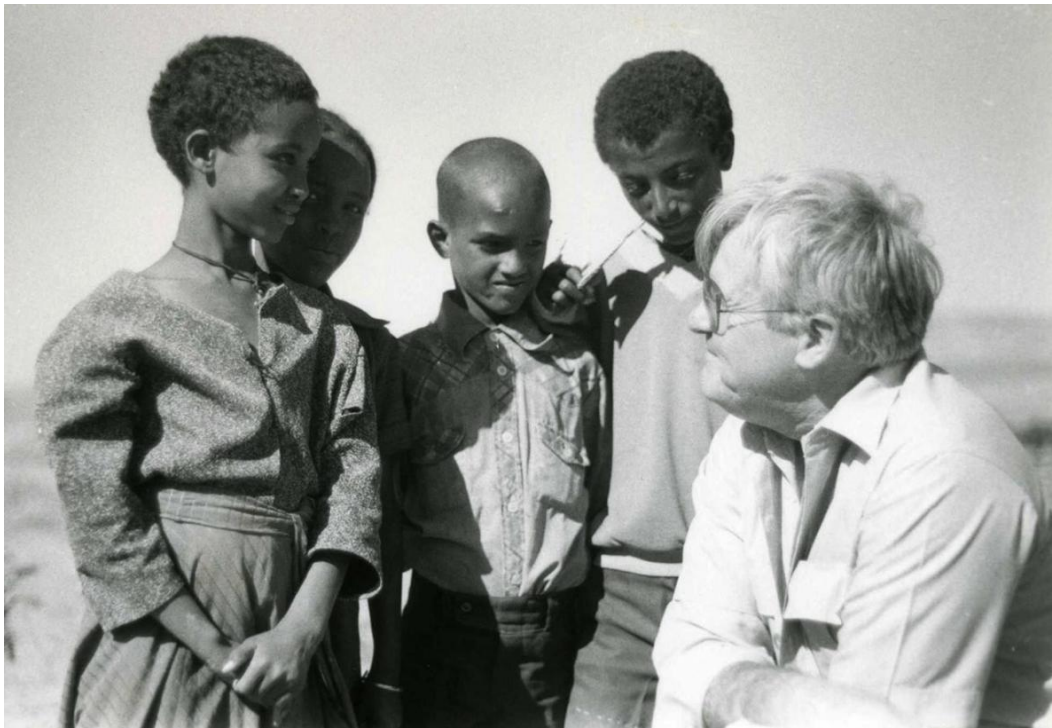
On Thursday, March 20, the Bishop will visit Saint John the Evangelist Parish in Honesdale at 7:00 p.m.

All are invited to attend.

During this year's Holy Hour, Bishop Bambera is not only reflecting on the third and final year of the National Eucharistic Revival that remains underway, but also the 2025 Jubilee Year of Hope that the Church is celebrating.

[Click Here to See all of the Dates and Locations of the 2025 Lenten Holy Hours with Bishop Bambera](#)

**Amid U.S. foreign aid freeze, CRS' Rice Bowl could be in 'its strongest moment,' says founder**



At the start of Catholic Relief Services' 2025 Rice Bowl initiative – an annual Lenten program blending almsgiving and prayer to provide aid to overseas and domestic aid – OSV News spoke with Rice Bowl founder Msgr. Robert Coll, a retired priest of the Diocese of Allentown, Pennsylvania, about the program as it marks its 50th year.

Through Rice Bowl, participants donate Lenten alms, voluntarily eating simple meals and learning about those who benefit from the campaign worldwide. The program, known for its iconic cardboard donation boxes, provides testimonials and recipes from the countries where CRS serves, and fosters prayerful solidarity among participants.

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

**Cathedral of Saint Peter hosts annual Saint Patrick's Parade Day Mass**





The annual Saint Patrick's Parade Day Mass brought a large crowd of people to the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton on March 8, 2025.

The liturgy is traditionally held in conjunction with the city of Scranton's annual Saint Patrick's Day Parade. Following the Mass, the Saint Patrick's Parade took to the streets of the Electric City beginning at 11:45 a.m.

The Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, served as principal celebrant and homilist for the Mass.

"We're gathered as family and friends to celebrate the Eucharist and to give thanks to God for the gift of faith that God gave to Ireland - and to the world - through the blessing of Saint Patrick, through his trust in God's providence and through his willingness to love and serve the people of God entrusted to his care," Bishop Bambera said.

The Mass is available for viewing on the Diocese of Scranton's YouTube Channel.

[Click Here to View a Photo Album from the 2025 Saint Patrick's Parade Day Mass](#)

**Registration Underway for 2025 Wedding Anniversary Mass in June**



# WEDDING ANNIVERSARY MASS

Sunday, June 1st, 2025

2:30pm

Cathedral of St. Peter

315 Wyoming Ave, Scranton PA 18503

To register, please visit [www.dioceseofscranton.org](http://www.dioceseofscranton.org)  
or call the Office for Parish Life at (570) 207-2213

The Most Reverend Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, and the Office for Parish Life wish to invite couples celebrating their 25th or 50th wedding anniversary in 2025 to a Diocesan Wedding Anniversary Mass on Sunday, June 1, 2025.

The event includes a 2:30 p.m. Mass at the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton followed by a light reception.

The registration deadline for this event is May 11, 2025.

To register, please click the link below or contact Bridget Guarnieri at (570) 207-2213 x 1133 or [familylife@dioceseofscranton.org](mailto:familylife@dioceseofscranton.org).

[Click Here to for More Information or to Register for the 2025 Wedding Anniversary Mass](#)

**Cardinal McElroy installed as eighth archbishop of Washington**



Cardinal Robert McElroy was installed March 11 as the eighth archbishop of the Archdiocese of Washington, during a nearly two-hour liturgy in which he encouraged the faithful of his new archdiocese to be “pilgrims of hope in a wounded world.”

“What hope we could bring to our world as the Church of Washington if we could truly help our society to see others more as God sees them — beloved children, sisters and brothers,” Cardinal McElroy said during the Solemn Mass of Installation at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception.

Referencing the Jubilee Year and its theme “Pilgrims of Hope,” Cardinal McElroy called on his new flock to “unswervingly understand our vocation as disciples of hope.”

“It is all too easy for every one of us to let the limits of earthly worries and perspectives erect prisons in our souls that shut us off from the expansive presence of the Resurrection in its fullness,” he said. “We must refuse to be overpowered by these prisons, and instead journey together as a local Church, companions in faith

and in fragility to embrace the same risen Lord that Mary of Magdala encountered in the garden so many centuries ago.”

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

### **Education Department cuts could make impact on Catholic education, experts say**



The U.S. Department of Education said March 11 it planned to cut about 50% of its workforce. Such cuts could also impact Catholic education, experts told OSV News.



Charles Russo, the Joseph Panzer Chair in education and research professor of law at Marianist-run University of Dayton in Ohio, told OSV News, “this is a significant shift that raises questions about the federal role in education.”

“While the department has long been criticized for inefficiency, cutting half its workforce will undoubtedly disrupt programs that provide oversight and funding, particularly for students with disabilities and those in need,” Russo said.

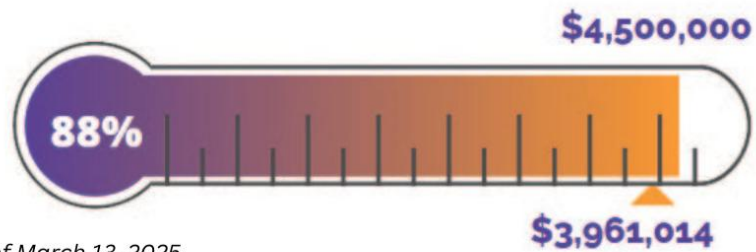
Sister Dale McDonald, vice president of public policy at the National Catholic Educational Association and a sister of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, told OSV News that possible impacts on Catholic education will hinge on the details of the cuts.

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

**Support the Catholic Ministries Appeal!**

# HELP THE CATHOLIC MINISTRIES APPEAL MEET ITS GOAL!!

## 2024-25 Appeal Progress



As of March 13, 2025



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SERVE**  
CATHOLIC MINISTRIES APPEAL

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