



The Catholic Light

DIOCESE OF SCRANTON

Weekly E-Newsletter

December 11, 2025

Catholic Social Services helps make Christmas brighter for hundreds of children



The basement hall at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church transformed into Santa's workshop on Tuesday, Dec. 9, 2025, as

Catholic Social Services of the Diocese of Scranton provided early holiday cheer for many families in the greater Carbondale area.

Catholic Social Services welcomed families from across Lackawanna County's Upper Valley for its annual Gifts for Kids distribution, offering toys, winter clothing, books, games, and stocking stuffers to the families of 284 pre-registered children.

Parents were able to shop for two brand-new, unwrapped gifts for each child – and for many, the chance to choose something personal made all the difference.

“It’s joyful,” said CSS caseworker Christina Hoffman, who spent the day walking with parents as they selected gifts. “We’re making it a positive event. It is all about gift giving and being here to help one another throughout the holiday season.”

[Click Here to Watch a Short Video from CTV: Catholic Television from the 2025 Gifts for Kids Toy Distribution in Carbondale](#)

Bishop Bambera to celebrate Our Lady of Guadalupe Feast in Wilkes-Barre and East Stroudsburg

Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe

Parroquia San Nicolas y Santa Maria

226 S. Washington St. Wilkes-Barre, PA 18701

11 de Diciembre:
-Misa y velacion 6:00 -9:00 PM en la
cafeteria de la escuela

12 de Diciembre
Mananitas 5:00 AM
-Procesion: 4:00 -6:00 PM

Inicia en: 91 North Sherman St. Wilkes—Barre, PA

-Misa solemne con el Obispo de Scranton 6:00 PM
-Recepcion 7:00 PM en el Gimnasio de la escuela



Ministerio Hispano
DIOCESIS DE SCRANTON



On Friday, Dec. 12, the Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, will celebrate the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe with Hispanic Catholics in Wilkes-Barre.

The public celebration at Saint Nicholas-Saint Mary Parish will begin at 5:00 a.m. with Mananitas. There will also be a procession throughout the streets of Wilkes-Barre beginning at 4:00 p.m.

The Mass with Bishop Bambera will take place at Saint Nicholas Church at 6:00 p.m., and will be followed by a reception in the gymnasium of Saint Nicholas-Saint Mary School.

According to tradition, in 1531 the Virgin Mary appeared to an Indigenous convert, St. Juan Diego Cuauhtlatoatzin, leaving her

image on his cloak after he gathered Castilian roses as a sign for the bishop.

All are welcome to attend.

On Sunday, Dec. 14, the Bishop will celebrate Our Lady of Guadalupe with the Hispanic community in the Poconos at Saint Matthew Parish in East Stroudsburg at 2:00 p.m.



Photos: Our Lady of Guadalupe Celebration in Scranton

On Sunday, Dec. 7, the faithful of Scranton came together at the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton to celebrate the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

Bishop Bambera celebrated Mass at the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton, followed by a reception at the Diocesan Pastoral Center.

For a photo album from *The Catholic Light*, click on the link below.



[Click Here to View the Photo Album](#)

Guadalupe pilgrims flood Mexico City as U.S. parishes join hemisphere-wide celebration



As Dec. 12 approaches, millions of pilgrims are converging on the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe, one of the most visited Marian shrines in the world. The feast honoring the Virgin of Guadalupe — celebrated across the Americas and in the Philippines — is again drawing crowds far beyond Mexico's borders.

Authorities in Mexico City expect between 10 and 12 million pilgrims in the days surrounding the feast, with families, parish groups, dancers and torch runners arriving from across the country. Roads near the basilica have been closed, security forces deployed, and the familiar rituals — roses, mariachis and the midnight singing of *Las Mañanitas* (the traditional Mexican birthday song sung as a “serenade to the Virgin”) — once again signal the beginning of the hemisphere's most visible Marian celebration.

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

Peckville parish to hold 'Blue Christmas' Mass next Thursday

“Blue Christmas” Mass

**Thursday, December 18
7:00 PM
at Sacred Heart of Jesus Church**

We invite all those who may be struggling with grief, loss, illness, or the pressures of the holiday season to this special Mass.

This will be a time dedicated to prayer and reflection for anyone seeking peace, healing, and hope.

**Come alone or with a friend
and experience God’s comforting presence.**

This Mass is coordinated through the Mental Health Ministries of the Parishes of Sacred Heart of Jesus (Peckville), and the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Dickson City), and the NEPA Chapter of the Association of Catholic Mental Health Ministers.



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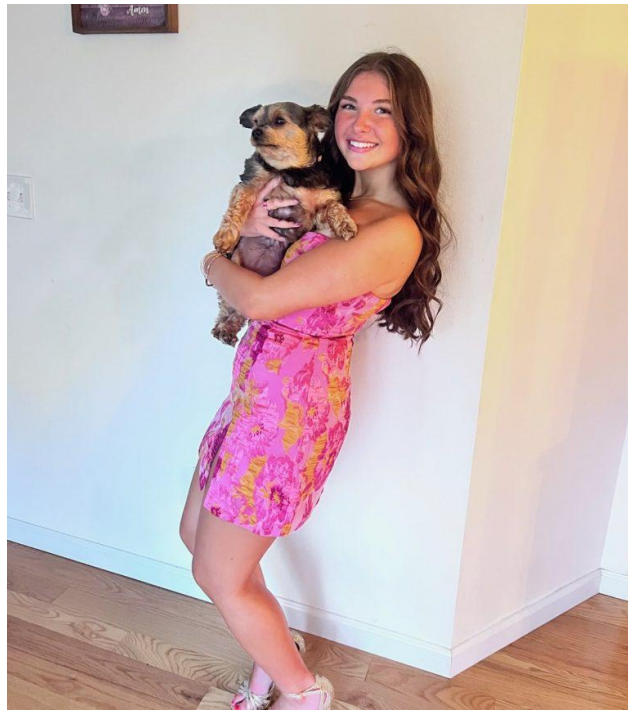
Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish in Peckville will be holding a 'Blue Christmas' Mass on Thursday, Dec. 18, 2025, at 7:00 p.m.

This will be a time dedicated to prayer and reflection for anyone seeking peace, healing, and hope.

Come alone or with a friend and experience God's comforting presence. A reception with light refreshments will follow the Mass. No registration is necessary and there is no fee for this event. Contact the Sacred Heart office with questions: 570-383-3244.

This Mass is coordinated through the Mental Health Ministries of the Parishes of Sacred Heart of Jesus (Peckville), and the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Dickson City), and the NEPA Chapter of the Association of Catholic Mental Health Ministers.

'Voice of John' announces winner of Christmas Card contest



And the winner is...

The VOICE of JOHN Ministry is pleased to announce the winner of the 2025 Christmas Card Contest who submitted the winning verse after her mom showed her the article in *The Catholic Light* inviting area students to participate in the Christmas Card Contest.

Isabella Novajosky, an 11th grade student from Lakeland Jr/Sr High School and a member of Queen of the Apostles Parish in Avoca, defines herself as prolife. She is a member of the National Honor Society, FCCLA (family, career, community, leaders of America), Future Business Leaders of America, and Students Against Dangerous Decisions.

Her mom, Mary Novajosky, read about the contest and encouraged Isabella to write a verse appropriate for the art depicted on the card. Competing against students throughout the Scranton and Allentown diocese, Isabella chose a beautiful bible verse befitting the artistry of Linda Ross, from Saint Matthew Parish in East Stroudsburg.

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

Live authentically with prayer, letting go of the unnecessary, Pope Leo XIV says



The secret to living an authentic life is praying to understand what is truly beneficial according to God’s plan and letting go of the superfluous, Pope Leo XIV said.

In fact, death “can be a great teacher of life. To know that it exists, and above all to reflect on it, teaches us to choose what we really want to make of our existence,” the pope said Dec. 10 at his weekly general audience in St. Peter’s Square.

“Praying, in order to understand what is beneficial in view of the kingdom of heaven, and letting go of the superfluous that instead

binds us to ephemeral things, is the secret to living authentically, in the awareness that our passage on earth prepares us for eternity,” he said.

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

Report: U.S. religious affiliation holds steady, but no evidence of revival; Christianity declining



Religious affiliation in the U.S. is “holding steady,” with recent steep declines leveling off — but there’s no evidence a religious revival is underway, and Christianity continues to lose more members than it gains, according to a new report from the Pew Research Center.

On Dec. 8, the center released an analysis of data from its annual National Public Opinion Reference Surveys, as well as data from its 2023-2024 U.S. Religious Landscape Study, which polled close to 37,000 randomly sampled adults.

In addition, Pew drew on data from the General Social Survey, conducted by NORC (formerly the National Opinion Research Center) at the University of Chicago; and the American Time Use Survey by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The combined data indicates that “key measures of religiousness” — such as belief, prayer and communal worship — have continued to remain level over the past five years.

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

Three months after fatal shooting, Minneapolis church is restored for worship



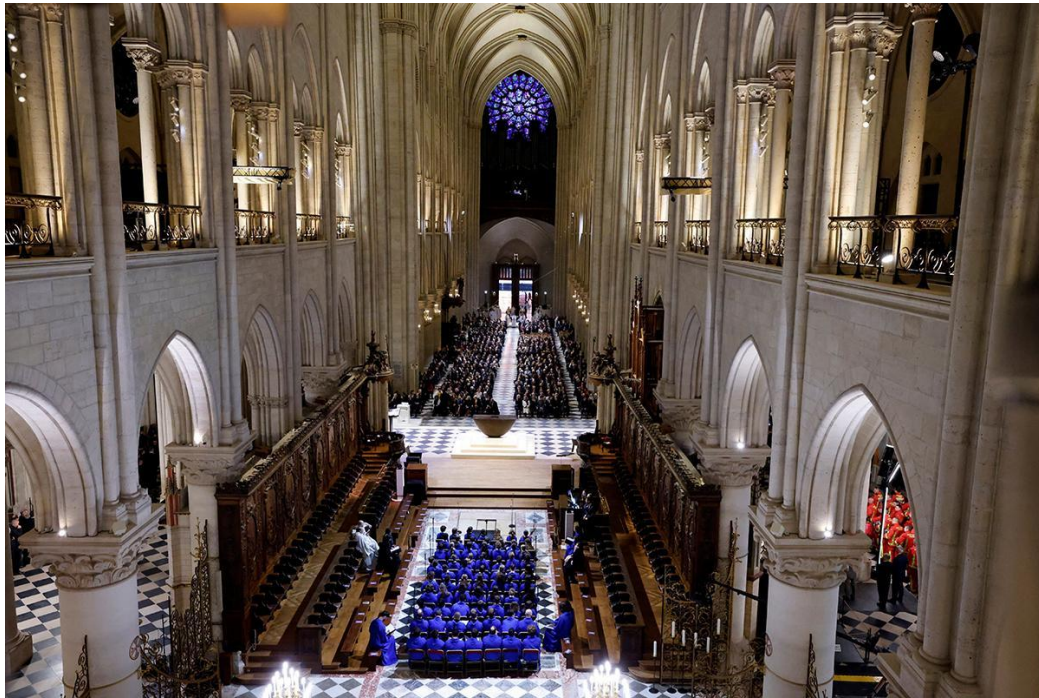
On a cold, wintery day, with the congregation gathered around Archbishop Bernard A. Hebda of St. Paul and Minneapolis and Auxiliary Bishops Kevin T. Kenney and Michael Izen outside the main doors of Annunciation Catholic Church in Minneapolis, the rite of reparation began Dec. 6 that restored the space for worship.

The special Mass was held more than three months after an Aug. 27 shooting during an all-school Mass killed two students — 8-year-old Fletcher Merkel and 10-year-old Harper Moyski — and injured 18 students and three adults. The suspected shooter died of a self-inflicted gunshot wound at the scene, police said.

“My brothers and sisters, the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead proclaims that evil and death do not have the final word; God does,” the archbishop prayed outside the church, with temperatures in the low 20s.

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

More than 11 million have visited Notre Dame since its reopening



Notre Dame de Paris celebrated the first anniversary of its reopening Dec. 7 with a major milestone: more than 11 million people have visited the iconic cathedral in the past 12 months. The cathedral had been closed since April 15, 2019, when a fire destroyed much of the iconic structure. It was reopened Dec. 7, 2024, amid much fanfare. Prior to the fire, an estimated 8 to 9 million people visited the cathedral each year.

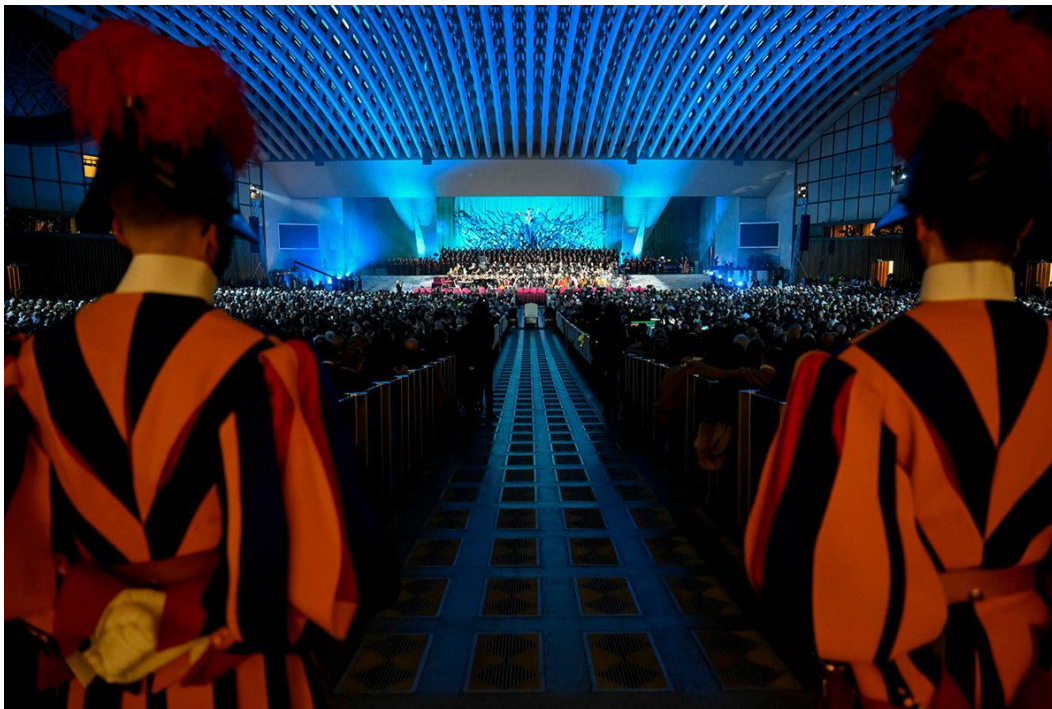
For the cathedral's rector, Msgr. Olivier Ribadeau Dumas, this year has been "extremely rich," while also being "a year of fine-tuning in terms of organization." "We had to relearn how to run the cathedral," he explained. "We had to rebuild what you might

call the ‘family’ of the cathedral, which has grown since the restoration work.”

Today, the cathedral employs eight priests and one deacon, 45 staff members, 310 active volunteers, and more than 50 people responsible for the cathedral’s security operations.

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

Come All Ye Faithful: Christmas carols sing of God's love



Christmas carols in every language and culture are expressions of how music can convey “feelings and emotions, even the deepest movements of the soul,” Pope Leo XIV said after listening, clapping and singing along at the Vatican Christmas concert with the poor.'

“As the melodies touched our hearts, we felt the inestimable value of music: not a luxury for the few, but a divine gift accessible to everyone, rich and poor, learned and simple,” the pope said Dec. 6 as he thanked Canadian singer Michael Bublé, Italian singer Serena Autieri and the choir of the Diocese of Rome.

Pope Leo was seated in the center aisle behind the main guests — about 3,000 people assisted by the papal almoner and Catholic charities in Rome.

“Music is like a bridge that leads us to God,” the pope said. It is like “an imaginary stairway connecting earth and heaven.”

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

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Support the 2025 Catholic Ministries
Appeal!

***Rejoice in
the Lord
always!***

Our joy is not meant
to be kept to
ourselves; it is
meant to overflow
into love and
service



**As we rejoice in the nearness of the Lord, you are invited
to help others experience that same nearness through
your generosity to the Catholic Ministries Appeal.**

Support the 2025 Appeal at AnnualAppeal.org

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Ministries Appeal](https://AnnualAppeal.org)



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