

## FROM THE BISHOP: REFLECTIONS ON THE FEAST OF THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD

In advance of the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord on Jan. 12, Bishop David M. O'Connell, C.M., shared his thoughts on the meaning of Jesus' Baptism:

*Jesus was baptized by John who had come to "prepare his way" so that Jesus could begin his divine mission to save from their sins those whose humanity he now shared. . . . "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world (John 1:29)," John the Baptist proclaimed. The Father's voice was heard, "This is my beloved Son . . . stepping into the place of sinners (Joseph Ratzinger/ Pope Benedict XVI, Jesus of Nazareth)."*

*The Feast of the Baptism of the Lord is the end of the Church's liturgical season of Christmas but the mysteries of Christ's life, death and resurrection that constitute our own Baptism in the Church continue to unfold.*

**To read Bishop O'Connell's full message, and his writings for Epiphany, New Year and Christmas, go to [TrentonMonitor.com](http://TrentonMonitor.com) and click on BISHOP'S CORNER on the left of the home page.**

## BUSES AVAILABLE FOR MARCH FOR LIFE JAN. 24

Parishes and Knights of Columbus Councils around the Diocese of Trenton are once again sponsoring buses for those looking to attend the 47th annual March for Life in Washington.

The national event, set for Jan. 24, has as its theme this year "Life Empowers: Pro-Life is Pro-Woman," which emphasizes the understanding that protecting the life of an unborn child also protects the child's mother from unnecessary and often lifelong trauma that results from abortion.

**For a list of available buses, visit [dioceseof-trenton.org/march-for-life](http://dioceseof-trenton.org/march-for-life), and for more information about the national march, go to**

## Monitor.com and click on NEWS>DIOCESE.

Locally, the New Jersey Right to Life will hold its annual Rally for Life Jan. 22 at the Statehouse Annex, 145 W. State St., Trenton, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Pro-life leaders, elected officials and clergy are expected to address the Jan. 22 rally. Signs will be provided by NJRTL. For directions, event information and last-minute or weather updates, visit [www.NJRTL.org](http://www.NJRTL.org), or call 732-562-0562.

## N.J. COMPENSATION PROGRAM DEADLINE EXTENDED FOR CHILDHOOD VICTIMS OF CHURCH SEXUAL ABUSE

Camille S. Biros and Kenneth R. Feinberg, administrators of the New Jersey statewide Independent Victim Compensation Program, announced Jan. 2 that the program's deadline has been extended to Jan. 31, 2020, for the registration of new allegations and to Feb. 15, 2020, for the submission of all claims.

The program was implemented and supported by all five Roman Catholic dioceses in the state of New Jersey to provide compensation to eligible victims who were sexually abused as minors by clergy of these dioceses.

"We have had several requests from individuals who have just recently become aware of the program and did not submit their registrations or claim forms before the deadlines," said Camille S. Biros, IVCP co-administrator, adding, "We and the dioceses want to be as inclusive as possible in allowing victims to file with the program." Anyone who missed the original filing deadlines will be contacted about

**ARE YOU, OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW, A SURVIVOR OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE BY A PRIEST OR DEACON IN THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY?**

If so, please contact the **Independent Victim Compensation Program**, created to offer financial settlements to abuse survivors.

The IVCP deadline is extended to January 31, 2020 for registration and February 15, 2020 for the submission of claims.

Apply directly online at: [www.njdiocesesisvcp.com](http://www.njdiocesesisvcp.com)

Newark Camden Metuchen Paterson Trenton

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the extension, Biros said.

The program offers victims an alternative to litigation, providing a speedy and transparent process to resolve their claims with a significantly lower level of proof and corroboration than required in a court of law. **For more information, visit [www.NJdiocese-sivcp.com](http://www.NJdiocese-sivcp.com).**

## ► POPE PRAYS FOR DIALOGUE AS TENSIONS MOUNT BETWEEN U.S., IRAN

VATICAN CITY – Pope Francis led pilgrims in prayers for peace as tensions between the United States and Iran escalated following the assassination of a top Iranian general.

Several days after Ayatollah Ali Hosseini Khamenei, Iran's supreme leader, warned of "harsh retaliation" for the Jan. 3 U.S. drone attack that killed General Qassem Soleimani, the Pope said that "a terrible air of tension is felt in many parts of the world."

"War only brings death and destruction. I call on all parties to keep alive the flame of dialogue and self-control and avoid the shadow of enmity," the Pope said after praying the Angelus prayer with pilgrims gathered in St. Peter's Square Jan. 5.

He then led the pilgrims in a moment of silent prayer so "that the Lord may give us the grace" of peace.

The drone strike, which killed Soleimani and six other people, including an Iraqi militia commander, caused a sharp escalation in already tense relations after President Donald Trump pulled out of the nuclear deal with Iran last year.

**For ongoing coverage of U.S.-Iran relations, go to [TrentonMonitor.com](http://TrentonMonitor.com) and click on NEWS>WORLD & NATION.**

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## ► IN THE JANUARY ISSUE OF THE MONITOR MAGAZINE:

The January cover of The Monitor Magazine captures the memorable moment when Pope Francis greeted Bishop David M. O'Connell, C.M., during the recent "Ad Limina" visit to Rome. In a Q&A interview, Bishop O'Connell reflects on the historic visit he made to the Holy See during Thanksgiving Week with his fellow bishops from New Jersey and Pennsylvania.

Building on the "Ad Limina" reporting, the latest issue's content emphasizes the theme that we are one Church, or "One Family in Faith," from our Holy Father, Pope Francis, and the global Church, through our Bishop, our parishes and our Catholic households. The

Monitor reports on strengthening the mission of parishes working together for a stronger future; Cinnaminson eighth graders feeding the homeless in Philadelphia; the experience of one diocesan staffer who traveled to the U.S.-Mexico border with a team of local volunteers to serve the refugee families detained there, and much more.

Be sure to check out a preview of Catholic Schools Week open houses around the Diocese, as well as specialized Spanish-language content in this latest issue.

The January issue has been sent to all subscribers. If you're not a subscriber, sign up today for home delivery of the new magazine, along with digital delivery of the e-edition and unlimited access of [www.TrentonMonitor.com](http://www.TrentonMonitor.com).

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