

12 Notre Dame senior organizes funeral service for local veteran who died alone



Students from Notre Dame High School serve as pallbearers at the funeral service for Edwin Hughes, which was held Nov. 19 at Saint Matthew's Church. (Photo/Dan Gallagher)

EAST STROUDSBURG – No one should die alone.

That is why dozens of Notre Dame High School students traveled to Saint Matthew's Church on Tuesday, Nov. 19, to celebrate a funeral Mass for Edwin Carl Hughes, 68, of Stroudsburg.

Hughes passed away from pneumonia at Lehigh Valley Hospital-Pocono on October 17, but his body went unclaimed.

Notre Dame senior Heidi Martens wanted to honor Hughes and organized the funeral service for him.

"I felt that nobody should die alone. I feel like, as a Catholic, we have to mourn. The Corporal Works of Mercy is bury the dead respectfully so nobody should have to die alone," Martens said.

As her senior service project, Martens created the Saint Joseph Arimathea Ministry at Notre Dame High School. The ministry will provide volunteer pallbearers, readers and altar servers along with choir services to small families, indigent people or those who die alone.

Through her work, Martens learned as much as she could about Edwin Hughes.

"Edwin was in the Air Force for about two years and then he resided in Tennessee and was in the National Guard for about seven years and then he came back to live in Stroudsburg. There wasn't a lot on him. I only had his papers from the Air Force to make the obituary," Martens said.

Martens got some help from her classmates

at Notre Dame to put together the funeral service.

"My grandfather was in the service, World War II and my father's great uncle also died in France during World War II and just imagining this man as my uncle in France and honoring him with this service was just a right cause and the right thing to do," fellow Notre Dame senior Patrick Carney said.

After hearing about Martens' effort, the Monroe County Honor Guard attended the service to properly honor Hughes for his service. Fellow students served as readers, altar servers and choir members.

Father Jerry W. Shantillo celebrated the funeral Mass and was touched by the students' compassion.

"They're getting what our mission is all about," Father Shantillo said following the Mass. "I think it reinforces our teaching that we believe that every human being is born and they're created in the likeness and image of God and they have a great dignity because of that."

Father Shantillo said he was pleased to see the efforts of Martens and her classmates.

"I saw the future of the Church. I see our young people who are really in love with the Church and their faith. Sometimes, maybe, some of their peers aren't as interested in the faith but what I think I saw was that when they realize that they're all together in this and they make up the body of Christ and they're all on fire about their faith, it just gives us a lot of hope for our future," Father Shantillo added.

Pontifical Mass of Thanksgiving held at Cathedral



Bishop Joseph C. Bambera welcomes the faithful to the Pontifical Mass of Thanksgiving which was held at the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton on Nov. 17, 2019.

SCRANTON -- Bishop Joseph C. Bambera held a Pontifical Mass of Thanksgiving on Sunday, November 17, 2019 at the Cathedral of Saint Peter.

As we welcomed the faithful, Bishop Bambera thanked all those who support the Church in varying ways.

"During this season, we especially give thanks for all who have so generously supported the work and the mission of our church and we pray during this Eucharist for all of their intentions, for your intentions, that the Lord will look kindly upon us as we seek to build His Church," Bishop Bambera said.

Reflecting on the readings for the 33rd Sunday of the Church year, the bishop asked several questions of those gathered. He asked, "How are we living out the Gospel message? How do we embrace Jesus' invitation to walk in his footsteps?"

Bishop Bambera preached about how each one of us has a relationship with the Lord. While many of us may have a deep connection with Him, the bishop pointed out that many others struggle and Bishop Bambera says God doesn't mind that struggle but wants us to understand His love for us.

The bishop ended his homily by asking the crowd if they are willing to trust in the mercy of God.

"Jesus seems to remind us in the scriptures during these latter days of the Church year that the mission of living the Gospel is our mission, in season and out of season, whenever the opportunity to live the Gospel arises," Bishop Bambera said. "Jesus doesn't expect the world from us to be his followers, to be authentic disciples. He expects us to love generously, he expects us to forgive graciously and often and he expects us, if we are really building His kingdom, to work for peace!"



Bishop Bambera visits Holy Rosary School

Bishop Joseph C. Bambera, center, and Father John V. Polednak, not pictured, visited students at Holy Rosary School in Duryea on Monday, November 4, 2019.

Students showcased a number of projects that they are working on and showed Bishop Bambera how they are already using BeeBots as part of the new Diocesan STREAM Initiative.

Notice for the Feast of the Immaculate Conception

In this calendar year of 2019, December 8 — normally the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary — falls on the Second Sunday of Advent. Because the Sundays of Advent rank higher on the liturgical calendar, the observance of the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception is transferred to Monday, December 9. The obligation of the faithful to attend Mass remains attached to the day itself (December 8) and does not transfer with the liturgical observance. Therefore, there is no obligation to participate at Mass this year on the Solemnity of Immaculate Conception which will be observed on December 9, 2019.

Monsignor Thomas M. Muldowney
Vicar General of the Diocese

ASPIRE Gala shines spotlight on STREAM Initiative

SCRANTON – Roughly 200 parents, community and business leaders, school administrators and alumni came together last weekend to celebrate Catholic education and raise money for scholarship opportunities.

After months of planning, the Diocesan Catholic School System held its inaugural ASPIRE Gala at the Diocesan Pastoral Center on Saturday, Nov. 16, 2019.

“It was a huge success,” Jason Morrison, Diocesan Secretary of Catholic Education/Chief Executive Officer said. “We accomplished everything we set out to do, including exceeding our goal of raising \$75,000 for new scholarship opportunities and financial assistance opportunities.”

The event was also an opportunity for all 20 Catholic schools in the Diocese to show off how they are embracing the new Diocesan STREAM (Science, Technology, Religion, Engineering, Arts & Math) initiative.



Community members participate in a live auction of several STREAM experience baskets at the inaugural ASPIRE Gala on Nov. 16, 2019.

Each school had a table set-up in the gym where educators were able to highlight their STREAM projects and goals for the year. Many of the schools also had a wish list of particular items that attendees could help fund.

“We’ve talked about STREAM and we’ve tried to bring

it to life but this gave people the opportunity to experience it first-hand. All 20 schools came together for the first time to showcase and highlight what they’re doing,” Morrison said.

In September, the Diocese of Scranton announced a \$1 million investment in

STREAM. The Diocese plans to incorporate STREAM into the curriculum of all schools by May 2022. STREAM allows teachers and administrators to engage in creative, cross-curricular lessons that are student-centered and focused on critical thinking.

“We gather tonight to recognize the great progress our schools have made and look forward to the future with a new vision of our Catholic schools, one in which I am confident our efforts will fulfill our promise of excellence and allow each child to achieve his/her God-given potential,” Bishop Joseph C. Bambera said as he welcomed all of the guests during a brief program.

Bishop Bambera discussed his recent visits to several schools where he has gotten to experience STREAM lessons first-hand.

“The skills they are learning in our schools will serve them

well in whatever they pursue in the future, and just as important, will serve our Church and society well with faith being incorporated across the curriculum,” Bishop Bambera added.

The event included a silent auction and a text-to-donate opportunity. WNEP-TV anchor Julie Sidoni and Eric Deabill, Diocesan Secretary for Communication, served as emcees and helped to raffle off six STREAM experience baskets. The baskets included a behind-the-scenes trip to Good Morning America and even a private tour of the Gertrude Hawk manufacturing plant for up to 30 students.

After the ASPIRE Gala concluded, Morrison said the feedback he received was tremendously positive.

“It created a buzz and an excitement around Catholic education that we all know is there,” Morrison said. “This made it very palpable!”



Diocesan school administrators from various Catholic schools showcase their STREAM activities and goals for the year in the gymnasium of the Diocesan Pastoral Center during the inaugural ASPIRE Gala on Saturday, Nov. 16, 2019. (Photos/Eric Deabill)

Holy Cross High School teacher receives grant from Voya Financial



Mr. Douglas Peters, Regional Vice President, Voya Financial Advisors, Inc., far right, visited Holy Cross High School to present Miss Kimberly Mecir, center, with her award and is shown with Mr. Benjamin Tolerico, principal, Holy Cross High School, far left, and Miss Mecir’s second period students.

DUNMORE -- Miss Kimberly Mecir, an educator at Holy Cross High School, is one of only four teachers in Pennsylvania being recognized with a 2019 Voya Financial Unsung Heroes Grant for Innovative Teaching.

Selected from a group of more than 650 applicants, Mecir will receive \$2,000 to bring one of her educational ideas to life.

Mecir’s innovative teaching idea, “Mission to Planet X,” focuses on increasing student engagement and achievement in biology through a story-driven experience that challenges students to use creativity, problem-solving and biology knowledge to uncover signs of life on an “alien planet.” After learning scientific method,

biochemistry, 3D design and coding through a series of lessons and labs, students will be tasked with the mission of designing and 3D printing fins for a rocket that will launch a rover to the planet. It is the hope that this project helps students connect to biology content by framing it in a real-life research area of astrobiology as well as learn future-ready skills of 3D design, coding and critical thinking.

Since 1996, the Voya Unsung Heroes program has awarded more than \$5 million to help the nation’s educators turn innovative teaching ideas into reality. Grants are available to K-12 educators nationwide to honor innovative teaching methods and creative educational projects that

have the ability to positively influence children.

“The program continues to be a catalyst for innovative learning. It provides educators with an opportunity to make an impact in their community, inspire their students and be recognized for their creative teaching ideas,” Heather Lavallee, president of Tax-Exempt Markets for Voya’s Retirement business said. “We’re honored to help Kimberly Mecir go above and beyond to prepare our leaders of tomorrow for their own successful futures.”

In addition to the grant Mecir has already won, she will now compete with other finalists for one of the top three prizes – an additional \$5,000, \$10,000 or \$25,000 from Voya Financial.

Diocese of Scranton
CATHOLIC
SCHOOL SYSTEM
FAITH • ACADEMICS • SERVICE

The Diocese of Scranton is committed to educating our students in an environment that is academically excellent and facilitates the development of moral judgment and Christian decision-making. We are proud to share the following successes of our students in the classroom and in their service to others. Each day, our schools are fulfilling their mission of preparing today's youth and young adults to become tomorrow's faith-filled leaders.



Saint John Neumann Elementary School in Williamsport



Epiphany School in Sayre



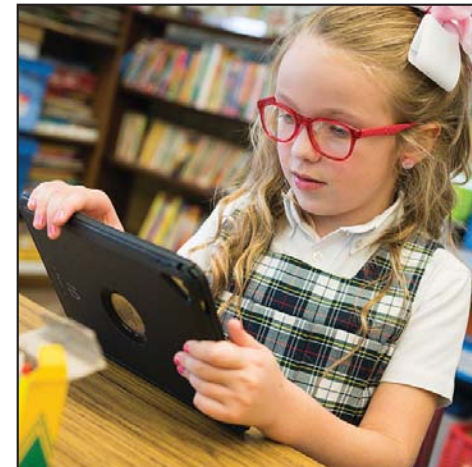
Saint Clare/Saint Paul School in Scranton



Holy Rosary School in Duryea



Saint Agnes School in Towanda



Saint Nicholas/Saint Mary School in Wilkes-Barre



Notre Dame Elementary School in East Stroudsburg



Holy Family Academy in Hazleton



Sophomore Theology classes at **Notre Dame Jr./Sr. High School in East Stroudsburg** create “Thank You” posters for current and former military members just before Veterans Day.



Students at **La Salle Academy in Jessup** collected more than 625 pairs of socks during “Socktober,” which will be donated to the homeless at the Keystone Mission.



Students at **Good Shepherd Academy in Kingston** made “X-Rays” during a STREAM lab experiment. By painting their hand with oil, letting them dry, and hanging them in the sun, students could see their “bones.”



The seventh grade class at **Saint John Neumann Jr./Sr. High School in Williamsport** visited Penn College’s Lumley Aviation Center in Montoursville where they were able to get a close-up glimpse of avionics and the different materials that are used in manufacturing airplane wings.



The Open House at **Holy Redeemer High School in Wilkes-Barre** welcomed hundreds of students and family members to the school. Call (570) 829-2424 to schedule a “Shadow Day” and discover what it’s like to be ROYAL for a day!



Middle school students from **Saint Mary of Mount Carmel in Dunmore** visited Marywood University to view “Watercolor and Wonder: Shrines” by Mary Billingsley, M.F.A.



Our Lady of Peace School in Clarks Green



Juniors and seniors at **Holy Cross High School in Dunmore** recently had the opportunity to speak with more than 25 Catholic colleges and universities during the PACCAO Catholic College Tour. Special thanks to Maggie Farrell and King’s College for assisting with the hosting duties!