

Diocese of Scranton *News Briefing*



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POPE FRANCIS BEGINS NEW YEAR WITH PRAYERS FOR PEACE AND APOLOGY



**Pope Francis greets the crowd as he leads the Angelus from the window of his studio overlooking Saint Peter's Square at the Vatican Jan. 1, 2020.
(CNS photo/Paul Haring)**

VATICAN CITY (Catholic News Service) -- Pope Francis began the New Year with an apology for losing his patience the night before with a woman who grabbed his hand and yanked him closer to her while he was greeting people in St. Peter's Square.

To get away, the pope had slapped her hand and gave her a very serious scowl. A video of the incident went viral on Twitter.

Reciting the midday Angelus prayer Jan. 1, Pope Francis was talking about how God's offer of salvation in Jesus is "not magic, but patient, that is, it involves the patience of love, which takes on inequity and destroys its power."

Then, briefly departing from his prepared text, the pope said that "love makes us patient. We often lose our patience; me, too, and I apologize for my bad example last night."

Returning to his text, Pope Francis said that in gazing upon the Nativity scene with the eyes of faith, "we see the world renewed, freed from the dominion of evil and placed under the regal lordship of Christ, the baby lying in the manger."

The church marks Jan. 1 as both the feast of Mary, Mother of God, and World Peace Day, he said, urging Catholics to pray for peace and to recognize their responsibility to work for peace.

For the 2020 celebration of World Peace Day, he said, the focus was on peace as a "journey of hope, a journey which proceeds through dialogue, reconciliation and ecological conversion."

"Jesus is the blessing of those oppressed by the yoke of slavery, both moral and material," he said. "He frees with love."

To those who are enslaved by vice and addiction, the pope said, Jesus bears the message that "the Father loves you, he will not abandon you, with unshakable patience he awaits your return."

Jesus opens the doors of fraternity, welcome and love to those who are victims of injustice or exploitation; pours "the oil of consolation" on the sick and the discouraged; and opens windows of light for prisoners who feel they have no future, he said.

"Dear brothers and sisters," he told the people in the square, "let's get down from the pedestals of our pride and ask for the blessing of the holy Mother of God. She will show us Jesus. Let's let ourselves be blessed, let's open our hearts to goodness and that way the year that is beginning will be a journey of hope and peace, not through words, but through daily gestures of dialogue, reconciliation and care for creation."

If you would like to read Pope Francis' full message for the 53rd World Day of Peace, visit:

<https://www.dioceseofscranton.org/pope-francis-message-for-53rd-world-day-of-peace/>

ECUMENICAL PRAYER SERVICE TO CELEBRATE ANNUAL WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY



Members of the Diocese of Scranton, together with members of various Christian congregations and members of the Christian Communities Gathering of Northeastern Pennsylvania, will come together for an Ecumenical Celebration of the Word of God on Wednesday, January, 22 at 12:10 p.m. in the Cathedral of Saint Peter.

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, began in 1908, and is celebrated each year throughout the world.

The "Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms of Ecumenism" encourages ecumenical participation: "The ecumenical movement is a grace of God, given by the Father in answer to the prayer of Jesus (35) and the supplication of the Church inspired by the Holy Spirit. (36) While it is carried out within the general mission of the Church to unite humanity in Christ, its own specific field is the restoration of unity among Christians. (37) Those who are baptized in the name of Christ are, by that very fact, called to commit themselves to the search for unity. (38) Baptismal communion tends towards full ecclesial communion. "To live our Baptism is to be caught up in Christ's mission of making all things one."

The theme for the 2020 observance is "They Showed Us Unusual Kindness" (cf. Acts 28:2). The theme and text for each year's observance of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity are chosen and prepared by representatives of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and representatives of the World Council of Churches.

Everyone is welcome to participate in the Ecumenical prayer service for Christian Unity. If you cannot attend the Cathedral service, please participate in local ecumenical celebrations.

**WORK UNDERWAY TO BRING RETROUVAILLE BACK TO
THE DIOCESE OF SCRANTON**



The Diocesan Office for Parish Life is looking to bring Retrouvaille back to the Diocese of Scranton in 2020!

Retrouvaille is a peer ministry of volunteer couples that can help you learn the tools of healthy communication, build intimacy and heal, just as they have done in their own marriages. Retrouvaille is Christian-based, and Catholic in origin, but welcomes couples of all faiths as well as non-religious couples. If your marriage is in distress, even if you are currently separated or divorced, Retrouvaille can help get your relationship back on track.

A Retrouvaille Weekend has been scheduled for May 29-31, to be held at St. Gabriel's Retreat Center in Clarks Summit.

If you or any other Retrouvaille couple you know would like to assist with the nuts and bolts of restarting the ministry, help is needed.

To learn more about attending the weekend in May, or to learn more about helping to bring this weekend to life, please contact: Phil & Sue Milazzo, philmilazzo@outlook.com, (631) 338-5413 or Jen Housel, jhousel@dioceseofscranton.org, (570) 207-2213 x 1104.

SOCIAL JUSTICE GRANT RECEPTION PLANNED



Last year, the Diocese of Scranton provided more than 40 Social Justice Trust Fund Grants to parishes across northeast and north-central Pennsylvania.

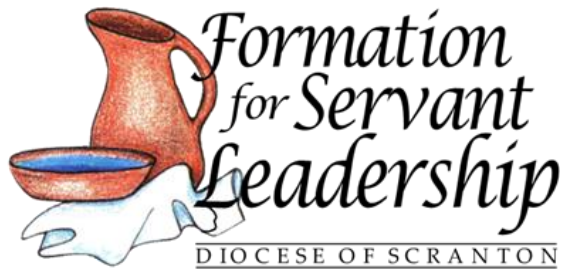
On January 22, the Diocesan Office for Parish Life will be celebrating these grants with a reception celebrating past recipients of Social Justice Grants and offering an opportunity for all to learn more about the program.

The reception will be an opportunity for people to learn more about what is happening in parishes to support social justice and to look forward to better ways of supporting those ministries in the future!

If your parish currently benefits from a Social Justice Trust Fund Grant, or if you are just looking to learn more about the program, you are invited to the Diocesan Pastoral Center in Scranton on January 22, 2020 at 6 p.m. for the reception and presentations.

Please RSVP to Katy Windels (kwindels@dioceseofscranton.org) to confirm your attendance. We are looking forward to seeing you there!

DIOCESAN CERTIFICATE IN LAY MINISTRY ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FOR THE NEW YEAR!



The Office for Parish Life encourages parish leaders to consider application for the Diocesan Certificate in Lay Ministry for January 2020!

The Diocesan Certificate in Lay Ministry is a ministry formation program designed to equip and advance the servant leadership capacities of individuals serving their parish in areas such as:

- Parish Pastoral Councils,
- Directors of Religious Education and Catechists,
- Liturgical Coordinators,
- Parish Staff,
- Volunteer Ministry teams,
- and others!

Through independent online study with the University of Dayton's Virtual Learning Community for Faith Formation (VLCFF), as well as regional skills workshops and opportunities for prayer and reflection, *Diocesan Certificate* candidates enrich their knowledge base, while also learning practical tools for effective parish ministry in their faith communities.

Starting with our New Candidate Orientation Retreat on Saturday, January 25, 2020, the Office for Parish Life anticipates welcoming new candidates into the *Diocesan Certificate in Lay Ministry* program in the New Year.

Prospective candidates are encouraged to contact Kitty Scanlan, Coordinator for Lay Ministry Formation, at (570) 207-2213, ext. 1157, or by email at Kitty-Scanlan@dioceseofscranton.org for application information, materials, and application submissions.

**COMMUNITY BANK CONTRIBUTES TO DIOCESAN
SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION**



Community Bank N.A. recently made a contribution to the Diocese of Scranton Scholarship Foundation in support of need-based tuition assistance for students attending a Diocesan Catholic school. This donation is part of the Pennsylvania Educational Improvement Tax Credit Program operated by the State's Department of Community and Economic Development.

Community Bank presented the Diocesan Scholarship Foundation with a \$50,000 gift through the EITC program and a \$15,000 gift through the Opportunity Scholarship Tax Credit (OSTC) program. Since the tax credit program began, Community Bank (the former First Liberty Bank & Trust) has donated more than \$1 million to Catholic education in the Diocese of Scranton.

"This generous contribution directly impacts students and families in our region by ensuring an excellent education rooted in faith and values remains accessible. We are grateful to Community Bank for their ongoing support," said Jason Morrison, Diocesan Secretary of Catholic Education/Chief Executive Officer.

Shown, from left, are Barbara Maculloch, PA President of Community Bank N.A.; Jason Morrison, Diocesan Secretary of Catholic Education/Chief Executive Officer; Kristen Donohue, Superintendent of Schools; and Richard Kazmerick, VP Commercial Banking Team Leader.

**START THE NEW YEAR OFF BY HELPING SUPPORT THE
DIOCESAN ANNUAL APPEAL**



We're waiting for you!

SERVING *faith*
IN WITH HOPE
AND GRATITUDE

*Please give to the
Diocesan Annual Appeal.
Your gift enables
Diocesan Ministries
to continue to help
those who come to us in need.*

Diocese of Scranton
2019 **DIOCESAN**
ANNUAL APPEAL

Make a donation at www.AnnualAppeal.orgor call 570-207-2250

Have you made a gift to the Diocesan Annual Appeal yet?

Your generous gifts support many important programs and ministries across the 11 county Diocese of Scranton, including:

- Catholic Education
- Catholic Social Services
- Clergy Support and Seminarians
- Catholic Communication and Media
- Office for Parish Life
- Faith Formation Grants
- Social Justice Grants

If you'd like more information about the Diocesan Annual Appeal, visit www.AnnualAppeal.org

Follow the Diocese on Social Media

www.twitter.com/BishopBambera

www.twitter.com/DioceseOfScr

www.facebook.com/DioceseOfScranton

For a listing of all Diocesan and parish events, visit: [Calendar](#)

You are also encouraged to visit the Facebook pages of other Diocesan departments. They are listed on our website at:

<http://www.dioceseofscranton.org/media/social-media/>

Thank you for connecting with us!

Diocese of Scranton, 300 Wyoming Ave, Scranton, PA 18501

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