



# GoodNewsNotes

DIOCESE OF SCRANTON OFFICE FOR PARISH LIFE

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## Uncharted Waters of Blended Learning

Over twenty parishes in our diocese are preparing to use the new platform, Faith Alive! powered by Edmodo with communication and collaboration tools built for religious education and focused on faith formation outcomes, and about twenty-five more parishes are still studying and considering it. On this platform, your entire religious education community learns together—in person, online or anywhere in-between. The benefits of using hybrid learning as a parish:

- **This platform provides a flexible classroom space that lets DREs/teachers/catechists and their families connect—no matter where they are.** Classroom features give parishes a versatile space to conduct engaging lessons—complete with rigorous discussions, robust assessment and assignment tools, fun class challenges, and to create family faith formation experiences.
- **Your faith formation resources are just a few clicks away in your private resource library.** Reduce the time it takes your parish DREs/catechists/teachers to create lessons by providing them access to all of our religious education resources, all in one place.
- **Quickly build interactive weekly lessons.** Our customizable lesson builder lets your DREs assemble warm-ups, activities, small groups, faith experiences—anything you can think of—into a weekly/daily playlist for

*(Continued on page 2)*



**Day of Prayer  
and Gratitude  
for Priests  
Evening Prayer**  
September 14 at 4:00PM  
Cathedral of St. Peter

**Catechetical Sunday**  
Sunday, September 20



(Continued from page 1)

students to work through at their pace.

- Use Small Groups to deliver instruction and content, whether your class meets in person, online, or both. We support synchronous and asynchronous learning to fully meet the needs of learning regardless of where it occurs.
- Deliver live instruction online. Gives your DRES/ catechists/teachers a powerful video lesson and whiteboard tool that's perfect for remote learning.
- Fuel ministerial development. Power training with Diocese of Scranton for Ministerial Development, where your DRES, teachers, and faith formation resources combine to improve learning outcomes.
- Assessments to make sure we are meeting the Faith Formation needs of our students and families. Use this site to measure progress of all students/ families. You will have access to whether the family is engaged. Dashboards allow teachers/DRES to monitor progress in real time, and students can easily ask questions and get feedback.

**For more information, please contact Jacki Douglas at [jdouglas@dioceseofscranton.org](mailto:jdouglas@dioceseofscranton.org) or 570-207-2213 x1100.**

## Compassionate Understanding and Spiritual Support

For compassionate understanding and spiritual support through some of life's most difficult challenges, the Office for Parish Life is happy to offer much-needed resources available instantly, online. These videos range from faith formation to biblical teachings to a full selection of grief and social issues from Paraclete Press.

Parishes can benefit from Instant Access to the Complete Video Streaming Library — a collection of more than 50 full-length videos. Each parish can share access with staff members, small group leaders, pastoral care coordinators, teachers, and church members who serve in a variety of ministries!

Find immediate, trusted support on a wide range of topics including:

- Grief and Bereavement
- Social Issues
- Faith Formation for Adults
- Faith Formation for Children

Paraclete's award-winning line of videos have earned praise from experts in these fields. For more information, please contact the Office for Parish Life at 570-207-2213 or email [jdouglas@dioceseofscranton.org](mailto:jdouglas@dioceseofscranton.org). To access the Paraclete Video Streaming Library, visit [paracletevideostreaming.com](http://paracletevideostreaming.com).

## Bishop's Youth Awards



As you are all aware, over the past few months we have made every effort to ensure the safety and well-being of the faithful in the Diocese of Scranton. With this in mind, some adjustments have been made in the preparation for and celebration of the Bishop's Youth Awards. In September, each parish/school will receive an email requesting the nominations for the awards.

Once we have received the nominations, we will process the forms and mail the awards back to the parish/school. Each parish/school will be responsible for presenting the awards to their nominees. The Office for Parish Life will also recognize the nominees with their names appearing on the Office for Parish Life webpage of the Diocese of Scranton website, *The Catholic Light*, and our Facebook page. Please watch your email for the nominations forms in late September.

To learn more, please contact Jacki Douglas, Director of Word and Lifelong Faith Formation, at the Office for Parish Life at 570-207-2213, ext. 1100 or by email at [jdouglas@dioceseofscranton.org](mailto:jdouglas@dioceseofscranton.org).

## Remote Networking Meetings

**Save the Dates!** We are excited to continue our Remote Webex Network Meetings for DRES, catechists and youth ministers. These meetings will keep with the focus that we began at the onset of the pandemic. We will center on Lifelong Faith Formation through Catechesis, youth ministry and parish life whether virtually or in person. Members of the Office for Parish Life team will be on hand leading our discussions and keeping all parishes well-informed of upcoming events.

We would love to have every parish represented. We invite each of you to join us every Wednesday at 11:00A.M. For more information on how to stay connected, please contact Jacki Douglas, Director of Word and Lifelong Faith Formation, at the Office for Parish Life at the Office for Parish Life at 570-207-2213, ext. 1100 or by email at [jdouglas@dioceseofscranton.org](mailto:jdouglas@dioceseofscranton.org).

## Virtual Learning Community for Faith Formation

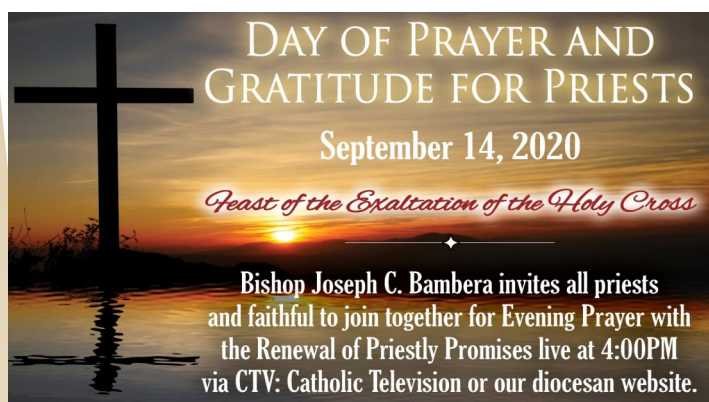


Members of the faithful across the Diocese of Scranton are invited to consider taking a course through the University of Dayton's Virtual Learning Community for Faith Formation! The final VLCFF Cycle 7 registration closes October 14. Cycle dates are October 18-November 21, 2020. [Click here](#) for more information or to register.



"I CALL us to be servant leaders who WORSHIP our God and celebrate the Sacraments in union with the universal Church."

# WORSHIP



## Confirmations with Bishop Bambera

Parishes that were originally scheduled to have the Sacrament of Confirmation with Bishop Bambera in the Spring of 2021 are advised to begin preparations with the scheduled date in mind. Should the current health crisis persist into next year, the plan for Confirmations will be reevaluated.

## National Association of Pastoral Musicians 2020 Convention

Did you not attend the NPM 2020 Virtual Convention but now have second thoughts after hearing the experiences of other attendees? NPM is pleased to announce that the Virtual Convention registration is now reopen. You'll get access to the Virtual Convention until September 15, hundreds of hours of educational content, and exclusive freebies and resources from our exhibitors in our Exhibit Hall. Visit [NPM.org](http://NPM.org) or email [npmreg@npm.org](mailto:npmreg@npm.org) for more information.

## The Essentials of Catholic Liturgy

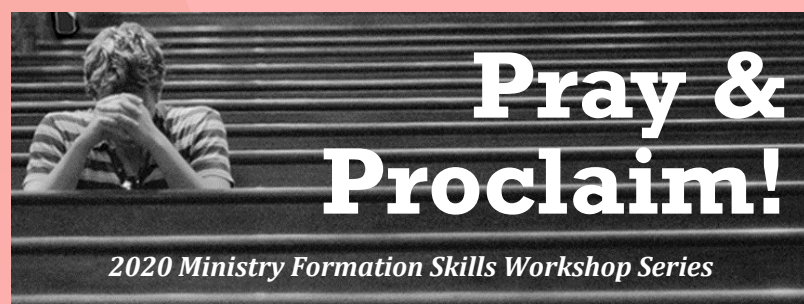
Liturgy Training Publications, in partnership with the National Association of Pastoral Musicians (NPM), is presenting **The Essentials of Catholic Liturgy**, a series of training courses offered in three tracks, designed to assist participants in need of various levels of instruction.

Beginning Monday, September 14, **Track 1: The Basics of Liturgy** will provide an introduction to the liturgy of the Roman Catholic Church. Participants join interactive conversations, read texts, watch videos, and connect with fellow ministers across the country – all of which will strengthen their ministries and inspire their efforts to create vibrant liturgies that help the faithful “become thoroughly imbued with the spirit and power of the liturgy.” (*Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, 14)

### Track 1: The Basics of Liturgy is for:

- **Music Directors:** Gain a deeper understanding of the liturgical year, allowing you to plan your parish and choir's repertoire with confidence.
- **Cantors and musicians:** Sing, play, and lead music in your parish with greater context, helping provide formation to the assembly's song.
- **Liturgy and Ministry Coordinators:** Understand the role of each ministry in parish and liturgical life, and how strong liturgical ministries assist in liturgy.
- **All who want a greater understanding of liturgy—** parish staff, liturgy committee members, sacristans, and all parishioners.

[Click here](#) for more information or to register.



**Wednesday, October 14  
and  
Wednesday, October 21  
from 6:30PM to 8:00PM**

**Eric Deabill and Kitty Scanlan  
presenters**

**Proclaim!: (October 14)** An introduction to basic public speaking techniques—for ministry within gathered and virtual settings!— and provide opportunity for participants to try out these methods.

**Pray: (October 21)** *Why do we pray? How do we pray? What are some ideas and resources for planning prayer with parish groups, or in Faith Formation?* The ways that ministers cultivate spirituality outside of the Mass not only enriches Sunday worship but can bring the reality of God into our everyday lived experience.

**The workshops are open to all parish ministers.  
For more information contact Kitty Scanlan at 570-207-2213.  
To register, visit [dioceseofscranton.org](http://dioceseofscranton.org).**

# COMMUNITY

"I CALL us to be servant leaders who build COMMUNITY through hospitality, respect, inclusion and holiness."

## September Is Suicide Prevention Month

A prayer from The Catholic Health Association of the United States:

*Divine Creator,  
Bring healing to our broken, desperate world.  
Comfort those who are lonely.  
Give those who are depressed and despairing  
the grace to seek help.  
Inspire all of us to reach out in love and solidarity  
to everyone we meet.  
Build in us a culture of life,  
where we demonstrate in both deed and word  
the truth that every life, no matter its conditions,  
is precious and unrepeatable.  
Lord, speak to every human heart  
and fill it with the conviction:  
I am wanted;  
I have a task in history;  
I am accepted, I am loved;  
it is good that I exist;  
it is good to be a human being.  
Your love crushes all loneliness and isolation.  
May every human heart experience your love,  
and, may each of us be your love for others.  
Amen.*

For Suicide Prevention resources:

- The National Alliance on Mental Illness: <https://www.nami.org/get-involved/awareness-events/suicide-prevention-awareness-month>
- The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, 1-800-273-TALK (8255): <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>

If you're in crisis,  
call the National Suicide  
Prevention Lifeline at

**800-273-TALK (8255)**

or use the Crisis Text Line  
**Text "NAMI" to 741741**

## PreCana Options for the Remainder of 2020, and Looking to 2021

After a spring and early summer pause due to the coronavirus, we have held two in-person PreCana Days of Reflection, one in July 2020, and one in August 2020. It is our hope and intention to continue to offer in-person PreCana Days throughout the remainder of 2020 and into 2021. Many health and safety guidelines have been put into place, and we will continue to follow state and diocesan guidelines moving forward.

The FOCCUS Inventory, facilitated with an engaged couple by a pastor or by a certified marriage sponsor couple, is another option for marriage preparation. FOCCUS can be a stand-alone formation tool or it can be used in addition to a PreCana Day or an online PreCana program.

Online PreCana is another option for sacramental formation. We currently recommend an outside vendor for online PreCana, but are in the process of creating our own online PreCana experience using the new *Faith Alive!* platform, powered by Edmodo. We hope to have our Diocese of Scranton online PreCana Class up and running by the end of 2020.

For more information about these and other PreCana options in the Diocese of Scranton, please contact Jen Housel (570-207-2213 x 1104, [jhousel@dioceseofscranton.org](mailto:jhousel@dioceseofscranton.org)) or visit our [website](#).



## Virtual Offering for 2021

Through the new *Faith Alive!* platform available for faith formation in our diocese, we plan to offer online Strength's workshops in 2021. These workshops aim to increase appreciation and engagement, using insights gained through Gallup's CliftonStrengths Assessment (formerly Strengthsfinder).

Jen Housel recently completed the training required to be a Gallup-Certified Strengths Coach, and she is ready to share Gallup's tools on behalf of diocesan and parish staff, as well as parishioner groups and engaged or married couples.

For more information about Strengths Workshops, please contact Jen Housel: 570-207-2213 x 1104, [jhousel@dioceseofscranton.org](mailto:jhousel@dioceseofscranton.org)

"I CALL us to be servant leaders who engage in SERVICE to our neighbors near and far and who work for justice and stewardship to hasten the Reign of God."

SERVICE

## Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship

*Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship* is the teaching document of the Catholic Bishops of the United States on the political responsibility of Catholics. It provides guidance for all who seek to exercise their rights and duties as citizens. As Catholics, we bring the richness of our faith to the public square. We draw from both faith and reason as we seek to affirm the dignity of the human person and the common good of all.

Everyone living in this country is called to participate in public life and contribute to the common good. In *Rejoice and Be Glad* [*Gaudete et exsultate*], Pope Francis writes:

Your identification with Christ and his will involves a commitment to build with him that kingdom of love, justice and universal peace. . . . You cannot grow in holiness without committing yourself, body and soul, to giving your best to this endeavor.

As Catholics, we are part of a community with profound teachings that help us consider challenges in public life, contribute to greater justice and peace for all people, and evaluate policy positions, party platforms, and candidates' promises and actions in light of the Gospel in order to help build a better world.

A two-part bulletin insert that addresses the challenges of *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship* can be found on the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops at these links: [Part I](#) and [Part II](#). Additional resources, including videos, a family guide, and prayers, in both English and Spanish can be found on the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' website by [clicking here](#).

## Season of Creation 2020: Jubilee Time for the Earth

September 1 marks the **World Day of Care for Creation** and the beginning of the **Season of Creation**. This month, we ask you to think about ways that we, as Catholics, are called to be stewards of the environment.

If we approach nature and the environment without...openness to awe and wonder, if we no longer speak the language of fraternity and beauty in our relationship with the world, our attitude will be that of masters, consumers, ruthless exploiters, unable to set limits on their immediate needs. By contrast, if we feel intimately united with all that exists, then sobriety and care will well up spontaneously. (*Laudato Si*, 11)

Consider using this month as an opportunity to lead a family service project or park clean-up. Or, you might spread the news by publishing tips on helping the environment in your parish's bulletin, or praying for the Care for Creation in your weekly intercessions. [Click here](#) for a Liturgical Guide for the Season of Creation 2020: Jubilee Time for the Earth.

## World Day of Migrants and Refugees—Sunday, September 27, 2020

The theme chosen by the Holy Father for the 106th World Day of Migrants and Refugees is "**Forced like Jesus Christ to flee**" to focus on the pastoral care of internally displaced people (IDPs). In his message for this year's observance Pope Francis writes:

When we talk about migrants and displaced persons, all too often we stop at statistics. But it is not about statistics, it is about real people! If we encounter them, we will get to know more about them. And knowing their stories, we will be able to understand them. We will be able to understand, for example, that the precariousness that we have come to experience as a result of this pandemic is a constant in the lives of displaced people.

**Resources for observing the World Day of Migrants and Refugees in your parish can be found at [this link](#).** Please consider sending your resources for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees to [media@migrants-refugees.va](mailto:media@migrants-refugees.va). We will publish them [here](#). Together we are the difference.



To involve in order to promote

"Lord, teach us to see with your eyes, with that welcoming and merciful gaze with which you see our limitations and our fears. Help us to imitate you in how we regard different ideas, behaviours and points of view. Help us to realize that we are part of the same human family, and to find bold new ways of accepting diversity and working together to build communities, families, parishes and civil society."

Pope Francis

Forced like Jesus Christ to flee

WORLD DAY  
MIGRANTS  
REFUGEES  
27-IX-2020



# OPL Month At A Glance

## September 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 World Day of Care for Creation	2	3	4	5
6	7 Labor Day	8	9 DRE/YM Remote Networking Meeting 11:00AM	10 DRE/YM Webinar with Pflaum 10:00AM	11	12
13	14 Day of Prayer and Gratitude for Priests Evening Prayer 4:00PM Cathedral	15	16 DRE/YM Remote Networking Meeting 11:00AM	17	18	19
20 Catechetical Sunday	21	22	23 DRE/YM Remote Networking Meeting 11:00AM	24	25	26
27 World Day of Migrants and Refugees	28	29	30 DRE/YM Remote Networking Meeting 11:00AM			

### OPL TEAM MEMBERS

Diocesan Secretary for Parish Life: **Catherine Jantsch Butel**

Director for WORD and Lifelong Faith Formation: **Jacki Douglas**

Director for WORSHIP: **David Baloga**

Director for SERVICE and Mission: **Shannon Kowalski**

Coordinator for Pilgrimages: **Fr. Andrew Hvozdovic**

Director for COMMUNITY and Family Development: **Jen Housel**

Coordinator for Ecumenical/Interfaith Relations: **Msgr. Vincent Grimalia**

Coordinator for Lay Ministry Formation: **Kitty Scanlan**

Consultant for Pastoral Council Development: **Ann Marie Cawley**

Events Coordinator, Diocesan Pastoral Center: **Bridget Purcell**

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