

Diocesan schools prepare to celebrate Catholic Schools Week 2021

SCRANTON – For the last 47 years, Catholic schools across the country have participated in Catholic Schools Week and this year will be no exception.

Traditionally held the last week of January, this year's celebration will take place from Jan. 31 – Feb. 6, 2021. Each of the Diocese of Scranton's 19 Catholic Schools are busy preparing numerous activities in which students can participate.

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, principals and staff members are adjusting some popular annual activities to make sure safety remains paramount.

"While faced with unprecedented challenges, our Catholic schools have been at the forefront of providing an excellent, in-person, education. We have been nimble and innovative and never forgotten why we are called to this work – to serve children and families," Jason Morrison, Diocesan Secretary of Catholic Education/Chief Executive Officer, said. "Because of our health and safety protocols, Catholic Schools Week will look different. However, our schools will use new technologies and platforms to bring to life the Catholic School difference."

Each year, the National Catholic Education Association (NCEA) chooses a theme to highlight an aspect of Catholic schools. This year's theme, "Catholic Schools: Faith. Excellence. Service." calls attention to the purpose of Catholic schools – to form disciples, to grow the whole person and encourage students to be witnesses to Catholic social teaching.

"Catholic Schools Week sets aside time to reflect on the truly remarkable and amazing schools we have and, in a fun way, celebrate them," Superintendent of Schools Kristen Donohue added. "Although the pandemic requires some changes to the activities planned for the week to be conducted virtually, we will in a genuine and creative way, share our gratitude for our schools while also sharing good health."

In addition to holding fun events for students, numerous Diocesan schools are planning events that will show their students' kindness and generosity to others. A central aspect of Catholic education is learning the importance of service to others.

Some of the activities currently being planned include Saint Mary of Mount Carmel School in Dunmore holding a collection for the Saint Francis of Assisi Kitchen, while All Saints Academy in Scranton will collect canned food items.

Catholic school students at Saint Agnes School in Towanda and Epiphany School in Sayre will make Valentine's Day cards for residents of personal care and nursing homes.

Many other Diocesan schools are planning similar events.

"Our school's motto this year is 'See the face of God in all you meet; be kind, loving, compassionate, and respectful,' so for every one fun activity we have scheduled, we are also doing one service project," Kelly Wilhelm, principal of Saint Agnes School in Towanda, said. "Our Pre-Kindergarten teacher has done projects for a personal care home that is located very close to the school and they have always been so appreciative. When we talked about projects that the whole school could do, we decided that

valentines would be perfect. The children will make at least one during their class time and for those that finish faster, maybe one or two more, so we know that every resident will receive a special gift from a Saint Agnes student. Each valentine will be as unique as the student who make it."

Catholic schools offer academic excellence and a faith-filled education for students nationwide. National test scores, high school graduation rates, college attendance and other data show that Catholic

schools frequently outperform schools in both the public and private sectors.

National statistics show that 99-percent of Catholic school students graduate from high school. The percentage of high school graduates who attend a four-year college is 85-percent, compared to 44-percent of public school students.

Catholic schools also save taxpayers money. Based on the average public school per pupil cost of \$12,756, Catholic schools provide \$22 billion in savings each year for the nation.

a dozen reasons to choose Catholic Schools

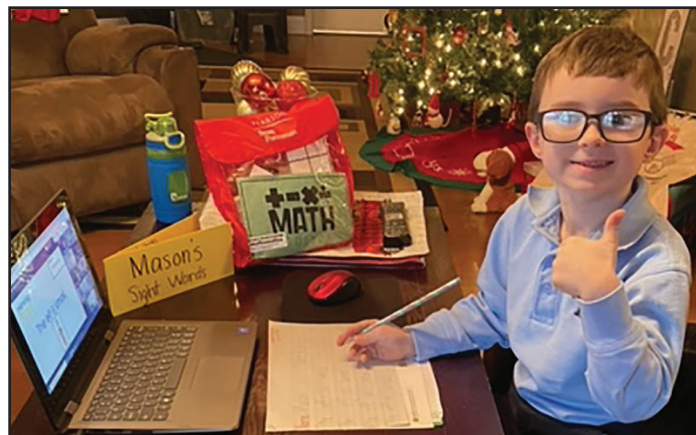


Diocese of Scranton
CATHOLIC
 SCHOOL SYSTEM
 FAITH • ACADEMICS • SERVICE

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.



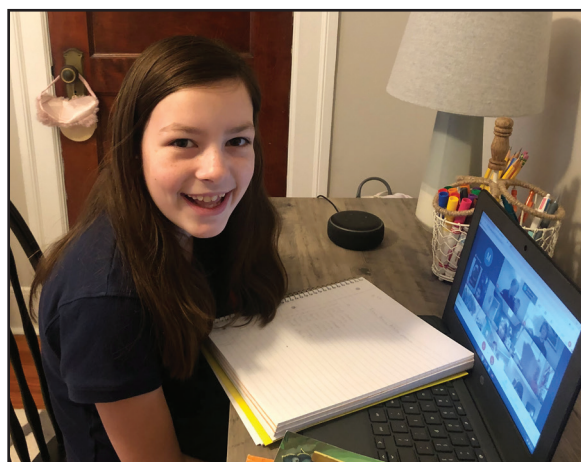
Miss Kaitlin Chmielewski, a first grade teacher at **Saint Nicholas/Saint Mary School in Wilkes-Barre**, works with her students during a distance learning session.



Mason, a student at **Holy Rosary School in Duryea**, shows off his school work space while participating in distance learning.



Mr. Bedford is virtually teaching Theology to an eighth grade class at **Our Lady of Peace School in Clarks Green**.



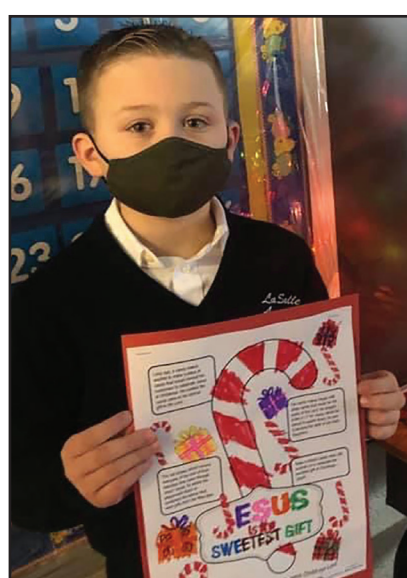
Fifth grader Keira Lalli prepares for a distance learning class from **Saint Mary of Mount Carmel in Dunmore**.



A distance learning session at **Wyoming Area Catholic School in Exeter**.



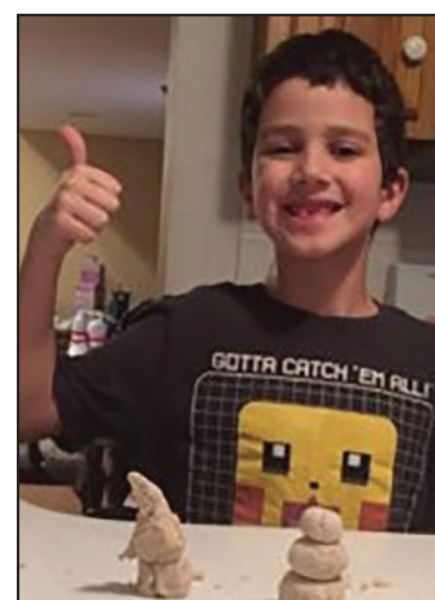
While celebrating the feast of the Epiphany, first grade students from **All Saints Academy in Scranton** learned how the wise men followed the star to find the Baby Jesus.



Students at **La Salle Academy in Jessup** learned the lesson of the Candy Cane just before their Christmas break.



Shannon Logue, a third grade student at **Saint John Neumann Elementary in Williamsport**, shows off the "Merry Memo" she received from a member of the Saint John Neumann High School Spirit Club.



Students at **Holy Family Academy in Hazleton** got creative while working on a clay project as part of a library class.



A drawing by Grace Aposhian, a student at **Saint Clare/Saint Paul School in Scranton**, was selected to be on a billboard as part of the Lackawanna/Susquehanna Office of Drug and Alcohol Holiday Poster Contest.



Mrs. Riley's fifth grade class at **Epiphany School in Sayre** was called to the "Epiphany Hospital" to reassemble their patients in this Body Systems STREAM project.



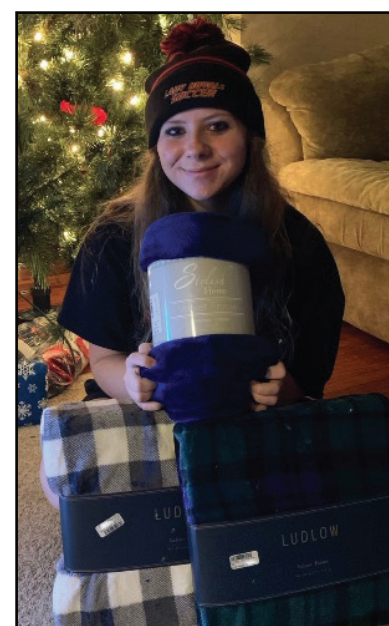
The National Honor Society at **Holy Cross High School in Dunmore** held a special Mass and induction ceremony for its members in December.



Mrs. Durham's first grade class at **Notre Dame Elementary School in East Stroudsburg** learns to measure the amount of water in snow.



The Pre-K4 class at **Good Shepherd Academy in Kingston** recently stopped at the school's Grotto of Our Blessed Mother to pray for a healthy and safe 2021.



The Girls Soccer Team at **Holy Redeemer High School in Wilkes-Barre** joined Operation Spreading Holiday Cheer in providing greeting cards and cozy blankets for veterans in a long-term facility.



As part of the Epiphany celebration, students at **Saint Agnes School in Towanda** were delighted to see doorways marked with 20 + C + M + B + 21, which is a traditional blessing asking Jesus to bless all who enter.



Landon Arriaga and Lucas Bower, eighth graders at **Saint John Neumann Jr./Sr. High School in Williamsport**, pose in their Ugly Christmas sweaters.



Coaches Ann Papciak and Eileen Barney from **Saint Jude School in Mountain Top** congratulate their Forensic Finalist students Rhea Mascarenhas (2nd Place Junior Varsity) and Michael Grandzol (1st Place Varsity).