

# Six educators honored with Saint John Paul II Award

SCRANTON — Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, served as principal celebrant and homilist for the annual Diocesan Teachers Institute Mass on Monday, Sept. 27, 2021, at the Cathedral of Saint Peter.

During the Eucharistic liturgy, which is traditionally held at the beginning of each academic year to celebrate Catholic education in the Diocese of Scranton, six educators in the Diocesan School System were honored for their commitment to being faith-filled examples to young people.

Each of the honorees received special recognition by being bestowed the Saint John Paul II Award for 25 or more years of dedicated service to Catholic education in the Diocese.

The award recipients included: Robert Andrews, Holy Cross High School in Dunmore; Daniel Banicky, Our Lady of Peace School in Clarks Green; Ann Innocenti, La Salle Academy in Jessup; Jennifer Jones, Good Shepherd Academy in Kingston; Mary Elizabeth “Betsy” Kozak, Holy Rosary School in Duryea; and Janice Puhak, Holy Family Academy in Hazleton.

In welcoming the faithful to the afternoon liturgy, Kristen Donohue, Superintendent of Catholic Schools, said, “As we gather for today’s Mass to celebrate the dedication and commitment of the teachers, staff and administration of the Diocese of Scranton, we also reflect on God’s strength and support for the many blessings and good health we have been afforded to do this great work.”

Donohue noted that the Diocesan Teachers Institute being held throughout the day afforded an opportunity for reflection on the untiring efforts within the various roles in the 19 Catholic schools throughout the Diocese.

“This day offers us a unique learning experience which ultimately creates the opportunity for growth,” she said.

As he announced the recipients of the Saint John Paul II Award, Diocesan Secretary of Catholic Education/Chief Executive Officer Jason Morrison lauded all Catholic school educators for creating an environment where students grow and learn.



**Six educators from the Diocese of Scranton Catholic School System received the Saint John Paul II Award recognizing 25 years or more of dedicated service to Catholic Education in the Diocese of Scranton on Sept. 27, 2021. The award recipients joined Bishop Joseph C. Bambera and Catholic School Administrators for a photo after the Diocesan Teachers Institute Mass. Pictured in the front row are, from left: Mary Elizabeth Kozak, Holy Rosary School; Robert Andrews, Holy Cross High School, Bishop Bambera; Ann Innocenti, La Salle Academy; and Daniel Banicky, Our Lady of Peace School. Pictured in the back row, from left: Kristen Donohue, Superintendent of Catholic Schools, and Jason W. S. Morrison, Diocesan Secretary of Catholic Education/Chief Executive Officer. Also receiving the award, but not able to attend the Mass, were Jennifer Jones, Good Shepherd Academy, and Janice Puhak, Holy Family Academy. (Photo/Mike Melisky)**



**Saint Vincent de Paul is depicted in a stained glass window at the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton. Bishop Joseph C. Bambera referred to the artwork during his homily for the Diocesan Teachers Institute Mass on Sept. 27. The bishop said Saint Vincent de Paul’s ministry is very similar to the work that Catholic school teachers and administrators do on a daily basis.**

“Most especially, they are witnesses to the faith, serving as sharers in the mission of Jesus Christ by leading young people to know, love and serve God,” he said.

Those Catholic school teachers who were on hand to receive their award from Bishop Bambera all concurred they feel blessed and honored to have been called to the “education vocation.”

“It truly is a ‘calling,’” Andrews said about his role as a geometry teacher at Holy Cross High School. “I never feel like it’s a job. I really love what I do and look forward to every day.”

Innocenti, who teaches third grade at La Salle Academy, said she is living a “wonderful vocation.”

“I loving being with the children,” she remarked, quickly adding that is of utmost importance to always bear in mind that God is “our Master Teacher. He is always with us.”

As a seventh and eighth grade instructor of science and social studies at Our Lady of Peace School, Banicky remarked, “I totally enjoy teaching.”

“There’s a new adventure

every day,” he said. “No two days are alike.”

Her fellow educators and award-recipients echoed Kozak’s comments when she offered, “It’s

a blessing to be able to do what we do.”

They were also in total agreement with the Holy Rosary School fifth grade teacher’s strong

belief that each Diocesan Catholic school and its students form a unique, close-knit community. “We are really like an extended family,” she noted.

## OPEN HOUSE

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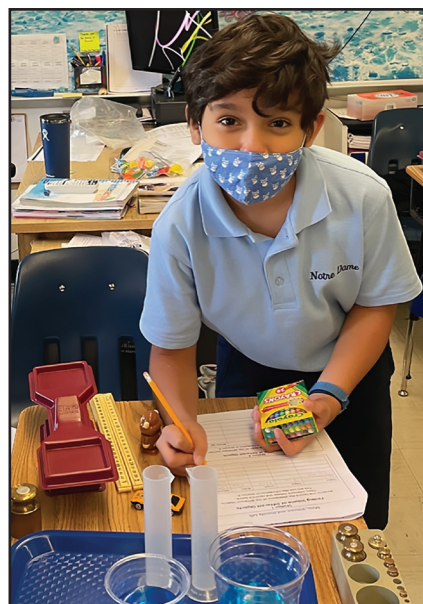
# Diocese of Scranton

# 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.*



Oscar Navas-Mendoza, a fifth grade student at **Notre Dame Elementary School in East Stroudsburg**, works on a mass and volume experiment in science class.



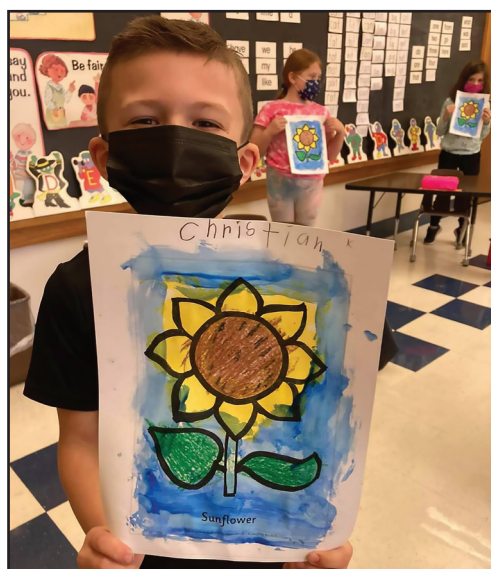
Emma Bride, a fourth grader at **Saint Agnes School in Towanda**, watches as Rev. Edward Michelini, pastor of Saints Peter & Paul Parish, blesses her cow Abby during the school's annual Blessing of the Animals Ceremony.



Tom and Judy Lambert enjoy spending time with their grandchildren, Carmin and Natalie, at the annual Grandparents Day Liturgy, hosted by **Holy Rosary School in Duryea**.



Maddie Szura and Leah Skudalski, students at **Good Shepherd Academy in Kingston**, present Luke Malonis, program manager, Saint Hedwig's Veterans Village in Kingston, with a donation to continue its work. The funds were raised during the school's annual "Back to School Bash."



Students at **Holy Family Academy in Hazleton** are "budding" artists and love showing off their beautiful sunflower paintings.



*Let's Get Poppin'* is the theme for **Saint Jude School in Mountain Top's** annual Race for Education fundraiser. As more money is donated, the students add popcorn to their counter so they can see how close they are to their \$15,000 goal.



The Living Rosary was led by the eighth-grade class at **Wyoming Area Catholic School in Exeter** on Oct. 7, the Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary.

Students at **Saint Nicholas/Saint Mary School in Wilkes-Barre** brought their favorite furry friends to school on Oct. 4, the Feast of Saint Francis, so they could receive a special blessing.



It was Spirit Week at **Notre Dame Jr./Sr. High School in East Stroudsburg** as they prepared for the Oct. 9 Homecoming 2021 celebration. Each day had its own theme including, "Wear Your Favorite Jersey," "Matching Accessories," and "Decades Day."





Second grade students at **Our Lady of Peace School in Clarks Green** examine plant parts using microscopes to help them collect data.



The Class Olympics, a tradition of Homecoming/Spirit Week activities at **Holy Cross High School in Dunmore**, was held on a beautiful fall day. Students competed against one another in robust games and enjoyed a BBQ/picnic-style lunch.



Congratulations to Kathryn Apolinario, Joseph Connolly, Annabella Tayoun and Cole Lipinski, the 2021-22 Student Council Officers at **La Salle Academy in Jessup**.



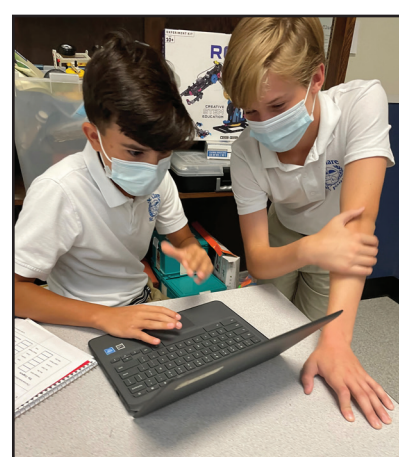
As part of their celebration of the Blessing of the Animals on the Feast of Saint Francis of Assisi, students at **Epiphany School in Sayre** collected \$815.25 in donations for Saint Francis Kitchen in Scranton.



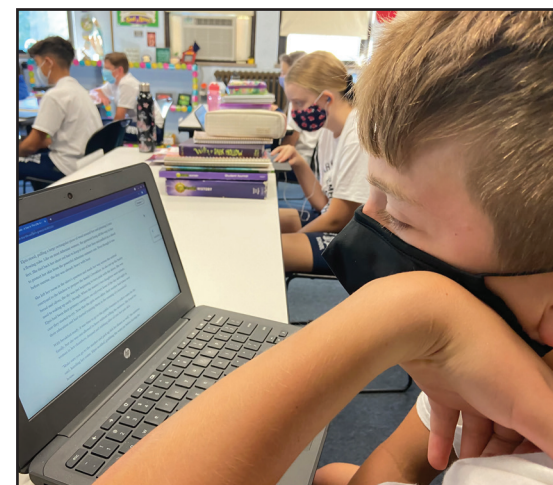
On Oct. 2, the Feast of the Guardian Angels, the first grade class at **All Saints Academy in Scranton** created their own Guardian Angels to watch over and protect them.



Callie Cummings, a kindergarten student at **Saint John Neumann Elementary School in Williamsport**, is learning about counting groups of 4 and 5.



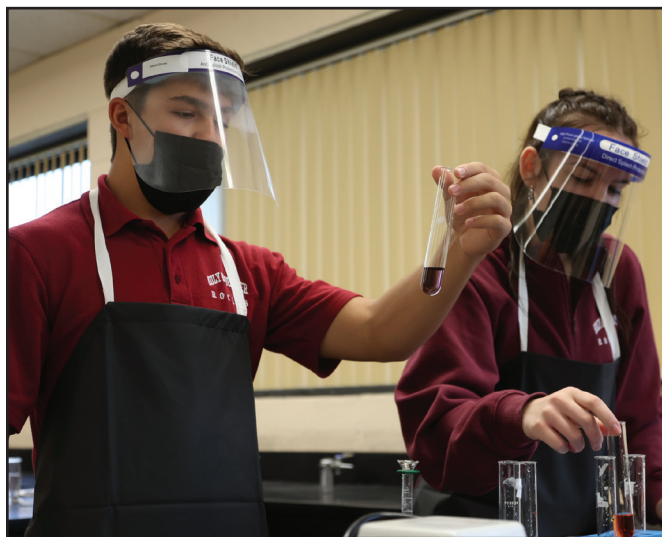
Eighth graders at **Saint Clare/Saint Paul School in Scranton** work collaboratively in science class to answer clues about the human body to solve a mystery.



Students are hard at work using technology to assist in their research at **Saint Mary of Mount Carmel School in Dunmore**.



Kylie Cendoma and Emma Henderson, seniors at **Saint John Neumann High School in Williamsport**, pose with miniature ecosystems they created for their Environmental Science Class. Materials were collected at a local park and students will observe the changes over the next few weeks while learning about matter and energy flow in ecosystems.



AP Chemistry seniors at **Holy Redeemer High School in Wilkes-Barre** perform experiments involving volume and mass.