



The Catholic Light

DIOCESE OF SCRANTON

Weekly E-Newsletter

December 15, 2022

Bishop Bambera's Reflection for the Fourth Week of Advent



**Longing for Christ to come? Participate in the
'O Antiphon' tradition this year**



It is easy to get caught up in the “external” at Christmas – making and buying gifts, writing Christmas cards and decorating – but if you are looking to be reminded what the season is all about then turn to the “O Antiphons.”

The “O Antiphons” are seven prayers that are recited on the days immediately before Christmas, beginning Dec. 17. The prayers – scriptural texts just a few lines long, begin with “O” and include the desire for Christ to come.

He is addressed by a different title on each of the seven days; O Wisdom, O Lord, O Root of Jesse, O Key of David, O Rising Dawn, O King of Nations, O Emmanuel.

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Parishes spreading Christmas joy to nursing home residents and the homebound



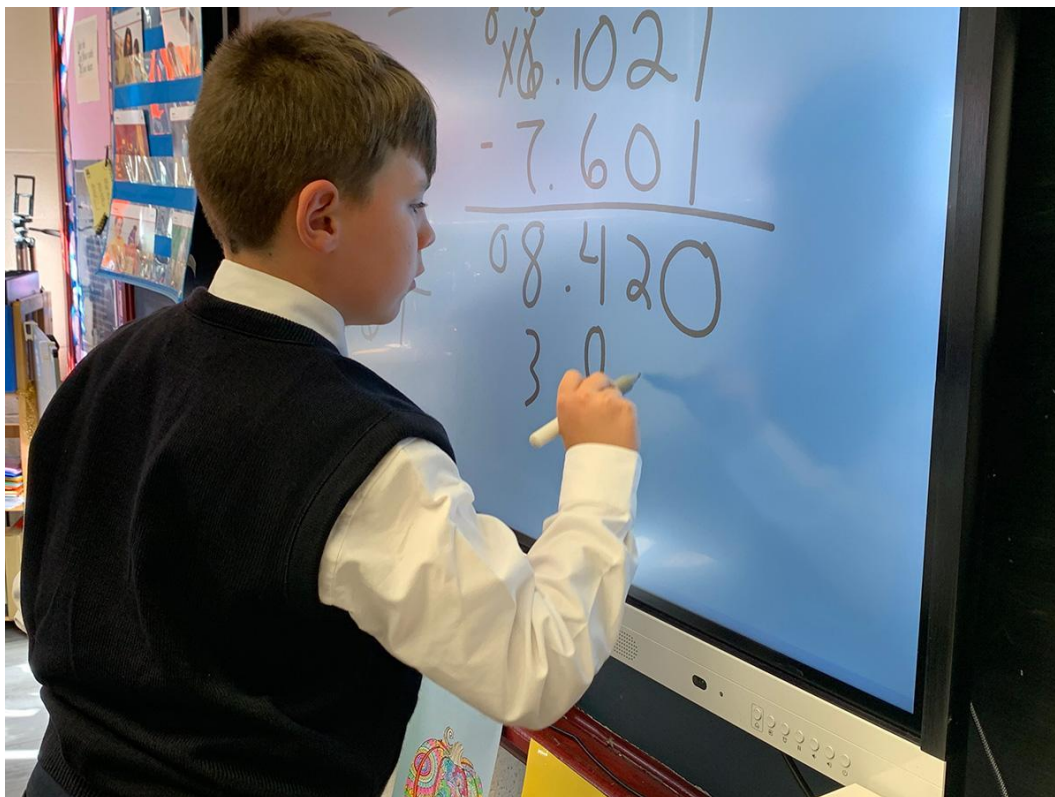
Faith formation students at Saint Eulalia Parish in Roaring Brook Township have been busy making Christmas cards for the residents of nearby Saint Mary's Villa in Elmhurst. In this photo, fifth grade students were showing off their creativity

Mary, Mother of God Parish in North Scranton filled 65 bags with personal care items, puzzles and candy to be delivered to homebound parishioners. Each bag was also adorned with ornaments made by faith formation students.

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No Learning Loss Here

Assessment data shows steady growth for Catholic School students during pandemic



Nearly three years after all K-12 schools in Pennsylvania were forced to close because of the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been significant attention on the impact of that decision. Dozens of national studies have concluded the closure of schools in Pennsylvania and many other states had a negative effect on student learning.

An analysis of student assessment data from the 19 Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Scranton, however, shows that despite the many challenges and obstacles posed by the pandemic, there has been no significant “learning loss” in the Diocesan School System.

Data released by the Diocesan Office for Catholic Schools shows its students have continued to show overall academic growth in the core subjects of reading and mathematics since the fall of 2019.

Kristen Donohue, Diocesan Secretary for Catholic Education and Superintendent of Catholic Schools, acknowledged teaching students through the pandemic was a challenge, but credits educators and administrators for making sure students received the best education possible.

[Read the Full Story from The Catholic Light](#)

Cathedral hosts large celebration in honor of Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe



It has been nearly five centuries since God sent Mary as his messenger – appearing before Blessed Juan Diego, an Aztec Indian – but the importance of that apparition continues to inspire generations.

On Sunday, Dec. 11, hundreds of people filled the Cathedral of Saint Peter to celebrate the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe. The Cathedral celebration, organized by the parishes of Saint John Neumann and Saint Paul of the Cross in South Scranton, was moved downtown to draw even more people from across the city.

“It was an amazing event. We had a very big crowd come out,” Adriano Torres explained. “If we want to grow this community, it is so important to do events like this.”

The Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, served as principal celebrant for the Mass, which was followed by a festival across the street at the Diocesan Pastoral Center.

[Read the Full Story from The Catholic Light](#)

"This is us spreading God's love to everybody in the community"



More than 1,700 children in the greater-Scranton area will have gifts to open on Christmas morning because of a partnership between Catholic Social Services of the Diocese of Scranton, Friends of the Poor and Catherine McAuley Center.

The three non-profit agencies teamed up on Wednesday, Dec. 7 to distribute presents to 750 needy families at LCBC Church on the Scranton Carbondale Highway.

"I'm in awe. I'm thrilled that we can help that many families," Joe Mahoney, Diocesan Secretary for Catholic Human Services and Chief Executive Officer of Catholic Social Services, said. "It really is a team effort.

The three agencies came together and did this. A lot of hard work went into it and it is worth it."

Beginning at 9 a.m., parents and caregivers were invited to shop for the toys that they will give their children on Christmas morning. From Cocomelon dolls, Paw Patrol gift sets to scooters and bikes, there were thousands of gifts set up in a large auditorium.

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Catholic Social Services helping hundreds more families with gifts in Hazleton and Carbondale



In addition to the large-scale Christmas Gifts for Kids Program that Catholic Social Services helps to organize in the Scranton area, the agency also has two other gift distribution programs in Carbondale and Hazleton.

After registering 250 families in October, the toy giveaway in Hazleton will take place on Dec. 17 this year. Parents and caregivers will once again be able to shop and pick up toys and clothes for their children.

Lee Ann Lywiski, who helps organize the Mountain City's gift program, said the event would not be possible without the support of area churches and generous community members.

[Read the Full Story from The Catholic Light](#)

**Be surprised by God this Advent,
Pope Francis says**



Even the most fervent believers go through moments of doubt and questioning about God, and it is a good thing, Pope Francis said, because it helps one see that God does not fit into the little box people make for him.

Doubt “helps us understand that God is always greater than we imagine him to be. His works are surprising compared to our calculations; his actions are different, always, they exceed our needs and expectations; and therefore, we must never stop seeking him,” the pope told people joining him for the Angelus prayer Dec. 11.

People face a constant “temptation: to make ourselves a God to our measure, a God to use,” the pope said. But “God is something else.”

[Read the Full Story from Catholic News Service](#)

DIocese of SCRANTON
YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY

THEOLOGY ON TAP

A Young Adult Speaker Series for 21-40 year olds

"Catholicism 101"

11/10/20

POSTPONED
DUE TO WEATHER

ENDS.

Kelley McConnell

7 PM | DEC 15TH | \$8 COVER
SABITINI'S BOTTLESHOP - EXETER



Kelley McConnell, PhD is director of data & student assessment at Reach Cyber Charter School. She also is the youth minister at St. Eulalia's in Elmhurst. Kelley is married and has two adorable little boys. In her free time she enjoys reading, boating, and her new puppy - Teddy.

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Diocese of Scranton
300 Wyoming Avenue,
Scranton, PA 18503-1279
(570) 207-2238
www.dioceseofscranton.org