

# The Catholic Light

DIOCESE OF SCRANTON

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## Pope Francis calls for inclusive church while in Portugal for World Youth Day

LISBON, Portugal (CNS) – Pope Francis asked the 1.5 million young people who attended World Youth Day to take “what God has sown into your hearts” back to their home countries and build a joyful church that is open to all.

Young pilgrims, including the 21 from the Diocese of Scranton who made the trip to Portugal, constantly reflected on the pope’s main point during the official welcome ceremony for World Youth Day Aug. 3: in the church there is room for “everyone, everyone, everyone.”

He asked the jubilant crowd of flag-waving young people to repeat the refrain with him in Lisbon’s Eduardo VII Park and shouts of “todos, todos, todos” – “everyone” in Spanish and Portuguese – spread throughout the crowd.

As he did often during the trip, the pope solicited engagement from the crowd, asking them to repeat after him or consider in silence a question he posed.

Yet was during his meeting Aug. 2 with Portuguese bishops, priests, religious and pastoral workers that the pope first issued his “todos” message.

“Please, let us not convert the church into a customs office” where only the “just,” “good,” and “properly married” can enter while leaving everyone else outside, he said. “No. The church is not that,” he said, rather it is a place for “righteous and sinners, good and bad, everyone, everyone, everyone.”

Asked during his inflight news conference Aug. 6 how the church can be for everyone when women and gay people are excluded from some sacraments, Pope Francis said that “the church is open to all, but then there is legislation that regulates life inside the church.”

“This does not mean that (the church) is closed. Each person encounters God by their own way, inside the church, and the church is mother and guides each one by



Pope Francis waves as he arrives to lead the Way of the Cross during World Youth Day at Eduardo VII Park in Lisbon, Portugal, Aug. 4, 2023. (OSV News photo/Bob Roller)

their own path,” he responded.

At 86 years old, Pope Francis showed no sign of slowing down for the 42nd international trip of his pontificate,

which he jokingly told journalists on the flight to Lisbon will “make me young again.”

*Continued on Page 4*

## New year to begin for Diocese of Scranton Catholic Schools



After a renovation project that took several months, Our Lady of Peace Catholic School in Clarks Green has two new classrooms for third grade students to learn in this year.

SCRANTON – Over the next two weeks, the Diocese of Scranton Catholic School System will proudly welcome back thousands of students for the start of the 2023-24 school year.

Kristen Donohue, Diocesan Secretary of Catholic Education and Superintendent of Catholic Schools, said dedicated faculty and staff at all 19 Diocesan Catholic schools are excited about the upcoming year and the opportunity to help each student grow spiritually, academically, emotionally and socially.

“We are going to have a great year,” Donohue emphasized.

The long-time educator admits the “back to school” season comes with a variety of emotions.

“For some families, it is their first opportunity to enter our school system and it’s a very exciting time. For others, it might be their 12th grade year and it will be the last ‘first

day’ that they will have in our school system,” Donohue said. “Regardless of where our students are starting their journey this year, it is a time of excitement.”

Throughout the summer, Catholic schools in the Diocese have fielded many calls from prospective families – and many have already surpassed enrollment numbers from last year.

“Our schools are very attractive to a lot of families for a variety of reasons. We are seeing an uptick in enrollment and are continuing to see interest throughout the month of August with school right around the corner,” Donohue added. “There are still open seats available in many of our schools. However, due to the increases in enrollment, there are classes that have been capped. If anyone is interested, it would be wise to reach out to the school principal right now to inquire.”

*Continued on Page 13*

# Students to return to the classroom across the Diocese of Scranton

*Continued from Page 1*

## WHAT TO EXPECT THIS YEAR

Donohue expects the Diocese of Scranton's Strategic Growth Planning Initiative for Catholic Schools to pick up steam as the new academic year begins.

Launched in April, the process aims to help the Catholic School System define priorities and develop a strong, financially sustainable vision for the future to ensure Catholic schools remain vibrant and viable.

All stakeholders will soon be invited to fill out surveys, allowing them to provide input into the process.

"We will be surveying our current families, faculty and staff, families who are in parish faith formation programs who may not have children attending our schools, and our priests to gain an idea of what we're doing well and what areas we need to strengthen. We also want to hear any ideas or suggestions that any of those groups may have," Donohue stressed.

As students return to the classroom, interactive STREAM lessons – focused on science, technology, religion, engineering, art and math – will continue to be a primary focus of educators.

"Our educators are very much looking forward to teaching lessons that promote thought-provoking, hands-on, and collaborative activities," Donohue said.

Educators will also continue to use assessment data to offer differentiated instruction and will focus on social emotional learning initiatives.

"We've partnered with Friendlyzy, which is a religious curriculum-based social emotional learning platform that will really supplement and expand the social emotional learning initiative," Donohue said.

## NEW STREAM LAB AT ST. CLARE/ST. PAUL SCHOOL

Students at Saint Clare/Saint Paul School in Scranton will begin the school year with a new space dedicated specifically for STREAM lessons. The school will open a new STREAM lab on the second floor of its main campus building.

"The STREAM lab will be utilized by teachers and their students on a weekly basis so all students have the opportunity to engage with the new equipment that has been carefully chosen and is relevant to subjects reaching across the entire

curriculum," principal Kara Kennedy Ware said. "Teachers may choose to team teach thematically, and our students will also be able to participate in our new after-school STREAM club. The broader goals for the new STREAM lab are to provide limitless opportunities for teaching, exploring, and learning in a beautiful engaging space, where imagination and innovation are cultivated and encouraged."

The school's STREAM facilitator, Katie Purcell, was instrumental in designing the space so that it would be conducive for student problem solving and collaboration. The new space has areas with names such as Collaboration Corner, Research Row, Workstation Nation and more.

"When designing the lab, I thought of the limitations within the classroom I had when implementing STREAM. I also spoke with faculty members and used the research from my STEM Education program to come up with the most important areas our students need to succeed," Purcell said. "The Collaboration Corner is a space for students to work together to brainstorm ideas and voice their opinions for their projects. They can use what they have learned during their time together when researching in Research Row and share their ideas with one another. The students will then go to Workstation Nation or Creation Carpet to bring their ideas to life. Both stations require the students to use collaboration, communication, creativity, and critical thinking when completing their projects and labs. This also brings the design process to life for the students."

Both Ware and Purcell expect faculty and students will be excited to engage in more hands-on STREAM activities in the new lab space.

"As a teacher myself, I cannot wait to use this with my students. I feel that I have more opportunities now to engage in project-based learning and do different projects that I could not complete in my classroom. That is how I hope the rest of the faculty feels as well," Purcell stated.

"In my opinion, some of the potential benefits for implementing STREAM, and creating a dedicated space are the unprecedented opportunities that are presented for students to sharpen their critical thinking skills, while engaging in a student-centered environment that encourages them to confidently take the lead in their learning," Ware added.

## NEW SCIENCE LABS AT HOLY CROSS HIGH SCHOOL

It has been a busy summer at Holy Cross High School in Dunmore with five rooms, including two science labs, a science classroom, the school's art room and computer lab, all being renovated in some way or receiving new equipment.

"For years we have wanted to upgrade our biology and science labs and the equipment in another science room," principal Ben Tolerico said. "I think it was an opportunity to enhance the school itself."

Tolerico credits his faculty for helping to design the new spaces.

"They did an incredible amount of leg work, going through catalogs to pick out everything they wanted," he said. "It will be really great for the kids to have all of this brand new equipment ... It shows the commitment the school has."

While the renovation work is still being completed, it is expected to be finished by opening day.

Tolerico said the new spaces and equipment will help students planning to pursue a career in science or art with equipment that is comparable to what they will use in college.

"Our school community feels strongly about giving life to the arts," the long-time educator explained. "Not everybody is going to be a doctor, lawyer or teacher, they have other passions. We must show our students in that niche that we support them."

## NEW CLASSROOM SPACE AT OUR LADY OF PEACE SCHOOL

The new school year will bring new classroom space to Our Lady of Peace School in Clarks Green.

Due to enrollment increases and the COVID-19 pandemic, two third grade classes had been learning in the school's gymnasium for the last two years.

In February, construction crews began converting cafeteria space into new classrooms that will be used for the first time Aug. 28.

"The third teachers are very happy to have the brand new space. They were very patient and super professional about using the gym but they are glad to be in the new space," principal Ann D'Arienzo said. "The rest of the school is very happy to have the gym back as well."

In addition to the two new classrooms,

an additional office space was also created and will likely be used as a resource and support room for small groups of students.

With 340 students already enrolled at Our Lady of Peace School this year, D'Arienzo is excited for classes to begin.

"There is a lot of momentum," she explained.

A newly formed parent-teacher group, named the Falcon Family Alliance, has also been formed to bring student activities back to the gym. The group held its inaugural meeting several weeks ago.

"They will help us with activities and events – during school, after school and fundraising events – things of that nature," D'Arienzo ended by saying.

## "TOO GOOD FOR DRUGS"

Fifth grade students attending a Catholic School in Lackawanna County this coming year will participate in a new program entitled, 'Too Good for Drugs.'

The Diocese of Scranton Catholic School System is partnering with the Lackawanna County District Attorney's Office for the initiative.

"'Too Good for Drugs' is an evidence-based educational program designed to teach children and empower them at a young age to develop self-esteem, help them stand up for themselves and make good choices when it comes to alcohol or drugs," Lackawanna County District Attorney Mark Powell said.

Students at Saint Clare/Saint Paul School, All Saints Academy, Our Lady of Mount Carmel School, La Salle Academy and Our Lady of Peace School will each have ten sessions throughout the course of the year.

"It is a highly success program. It has been implemented in several public schools over the years and we're delighted that we're expanding the program to all schools in Lackawanna County," Powell added. "Education is the key. We, as children, did not have the same issues with social media and the amount of drugs available at a young age."

Donohue said the 'Too Good for Drugs' program is much broader than the DARE Program that many will remember years ago.

"It is much more than just saying no to drugs. They look at the whole picture of how to make decisions and do so confidently," Donohue said. "Students will talk about setting reachable goals, identifying and managing emotions as well as being able to resist the temptation of drugs and saying no."



*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.*



Student volunteers from **Holy Rosary School in Duryea** spent a weekend working at the Nativity of Our Lord Parish Picnic by serving ice cream at the school's sponsored stand.



Mrs. Mathiesen, the second grade teacher at **Notre Dame Elementary School in East Stroudsburg**, spent part of her summer preparing her classroom for the new faces that she will see at the end of August.



The maintenance team from **La Salle Academy in Jessup** stands on their finished summer project, installing new flooring throughout the school. In addition to new floors, students and staff will also see fresh paint and updated furniture in classrooms.



The husband and wife maintenance duo at **Holy Family Academy in Hazleton** has been working diligently to make sure the classrooms and hallways are ready to greet students for the 2023-24 academic year.



Veteran teacher Heidi Tavani from **Saint Agnes School in Towanda** shares "insider" school information with newly hired teacher Deb Philippi as they both prepare to greet students for the 2023-24 school year.



Michael Coval, eighth grade student at **Saint Mary of Mount Carmel School in Dunmore**, volunteers each year at the Solemn Novena to Saint Ann in Scranton. This year he served as usher, altar server, and assisted in the sound room.



Incoming ninth graders to **Holy Cross High School in Dunmore** had a chance to get a "sneak peek" of what some classes will be like in the fall when they attended the school's "Head Start to High School" program this summer.

Mrs. Susan James, Classroom Technology Specialist at **Good Shepherd Academy in Kingston**, is busy preparing the schedule for the 2023-24 quarterly NWEA Testing. These assessments allow teachers the ability to chart an individual path of academic success for their students.







This summer, students from **Our Lady of Peace School in Clarks Green** had the opportunity to attend ASL Camp to learn American Sign Language. Here some attendees pose with the ASL Camp photo frame to commemorate their last day.



Sister Ellen Fischer, principal of **Saint Jude School in Mountain Top**, rides in style in the town parade along with Jessica and Hailey Metrick and Michael Falzone.



Some pre-K, kindergarten and first grade students from **Wyoming Area Catholic School in Exeter** participated in the school's "Ooey Gooley Science Camp." Students made Play-Doh, bubbles, and learned about the life cycle of a frog.



Students and their families from **Epiphany School in Sayre** attended the Sayre Business Association Street Fair to share their love of the school and provide games for kids.



STREAM campers from **Saint John Neumann Elementary School in Williamsport** were hard at work building their own castles out of recycled cardboard boxes as part of the many activities offered this summer.



Mrs. Jessica Zugel, the Latin teacher at **Notre Dame Jr./Sr. High School in East Stroudsburg**, provides instruction this summer to sophomore Alana Jackson who is aspiring to join the school's Latin program in the fall.



It was a lovely day for a "spot of tea" as summer campers at **All Saints Academy in Scranton** spent a week "traveling" the globe, enjoying food and drink and exploring traditions from around the world.