

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.



Sixth grade students in Mrs. Brown's science class at **Saint Agnes School in Towanda** worked with their third grade buddies to dissect owl pellets and identify bone structures that were found.



Students at **Epiphany School in Sayre** celebrated the Feast of Saint Francis with the Blessing of Animals with Father Dan Toomey, pastor of Epiphany Parish, and raised more than \$600 for Saint Francis Kitchen.



Congratulations to the 2025-26 student council elected officers at **Our Lady of Peace School in Clarks Green**.



Sixth grade students at **Saint Mary of Mount Carmel School in Dunmore** welcomed their parents to their classroom on Back to School Night with self-portraits.



As part of their Homecoming & Spirit Week celebrations, the community at **Holy Cross High School in Dunmore** was "seeing double" on Twin Day.



It's an early morning start for members of the Jr. Spartan Running Club at **Notre Dame Elementary School in East Stroudsburg**.



On the Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary, eighth grade students at **Wyoming Area Catholic School in Exeter** led fellow students in prayer while holding a balloon representation of a rosary.



Pre-Kindergarten students at **Saint Clare/Saint Paul School in Scranton** prepare for fall with pictures they created showing how trees will look in the coming weeks.



Students and faculty at **Notre Dame Jr./Sr. High School in East Stroudsburg** wear their favorite jerseys during their NFL vs. NBA Dress Down Day, one of their Spirit Week activities.



Holy Redeemer High School in Wilkes-Barre



Holy Rosary School in Duryea



**Saint John Neumann
Elementary School in Williamsport**



Saint John Neumann Jr./Sr. High School in Williamsport

The Most Reverend Joseph C. Bambera celebrated Masses at four of our schools just after his return from Rome, where there was much excitement about the canonization of Saint Carlo Acutis, our first millennial saint. He explained to students that Carlo Acutis was an ordinary teenager who was tech savvy, loved to play video games, adored his dog, and played soccer and basketball. But he stood out in a very positive way in his love for Jesus and his dedication to reading & living the Gospel messages. The Bishop reminded students that by promoting peace, harmony, respect, and love to all people, they can become saints themselves.



Third graders at **Holy Family Academy in Hazleton** are learning the engineering process. Working in teams, they created bridges using straws, paper, and tape, trying to build one that would hold the most coins.



The Pre-Kindergarten students at **Good Shepherd Academy in Kingston** recently had their stuffed animals blessed by Monsignor David Tressler, pastor of Saint Ignatius/Holy Family Parishes.



It was Fall Festival time at **Saint Nicholas/Saint Mary School in Wilkes-Barre**. This faculty-hosted event featured s'more making, crafts, face painting, scavenger hunts, bounce houses, and a cornhole tournament. Here are this season's cornhole champs: seventh graders Myles and Lucas, with sixth graders Connor and Mark.



At the start of Fire Prevention Week, members of the Scranton Fire Department visited with students at **All Saints Academy in Scranton** to demonstrate the equipment they use to keep children and adults safe during an emergency.



On a beautiful autumn day, members of the Viking Council at **La Salle Academy in Jessup** pose in front of the school. Similar to a student council, Viking Council brings students together to encourage one another to display good behavior and progress beyond expectations.



Fourth grade students Bradley Farrell and Jacob Dinko are all smiles as they enjoy the Back to School Bash at **Saint Jude School in Mountain Top**.

Educators called to be ‘signs of hope, grace and love’ at Diocesan Teachers’ Institute

WILKES-BARRE – Catholic school educators from across the Diocese of Scranton came together on Monday, Sept. 29, 2025, for the annual Diocesan Teachers’ Institute.

The purpose of the day is two-fold – to both spiritually ground and professionally nourish the educators who serve 4,500 students in our 19 Catholic schools.

Held on the Feasts of Saints Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael, the day began with a Mass celebrated by the Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, at Holy Redeemer High School.

In his homily, Bishop Bambera reminded the educators that just as the archangels are messengers of God’s healing and love, they too are called to be instruments of God’s grace.

“Our primary focus – as educators, administrators, clergy and as Christians – must be centered less upon on our own needs and plans and far more upon the lives that God entrusts to us in the work that



Bishop Joseph C. Bambera thanks Catholic educators for their work at the conclusion of the Diocesan Teachers’ Institute Mass.

we’ve been given to do,” the Bishop said.

Echoing the Diocesan Catholic School System’s mission to educate the whole child spiritually and academically, Bishop Bambera reminded the educators that their work is sacred and transformative.

“Like the angels who engage us along our journey of life, imparting to us healing, meaning and hope through God’s



As part of the Diocesan Teachers’ Institute, educators held breakout sessions to share best practices and gain new insight.

mercy and grace, continue to be signs of hope, grace and love to our children and families,” he added. “We are so grateful and blessed by your dedication.”

Following the Mass, educators were inspired by keynote speaker Sister Mary Persico, IHM, Ed.D., President Emerita, and Director of Special Projects at Marywood University.

Her talk, titled “Catholic School Culture: Neither An Accident Nor an Option,” challenged educators to be intentional about shaping school culture through faith-filled action and storytelling.

“The culture of Catholic Schools in this country is one of the most needed and compelling ideologies in the world today,” Sister Persico said.

She spoke passionately about how today’s students are spiritually hungry – seeking purpose and meaning in a fast-paced world. Teachers, she said, are in a unique position to walk with them in that search.

“They long for the Holy, the sacred, the spiritual,” she added.

After lunch, the afternoon portion of the day featured breakout sessions tailored to grade levels and subject areas. The workshops allowed teachers to collaborate, share best practices, and gain new insights as they returned to their classrooms with renewed focus.

Three Catholic educators honored with Saint John Paul II Award

WILKES-BARRE – With deep gratitude for their decades of faithful service, three long-time educators in the Diocese of Scranton Catholic School System were recognized with the Saint John Paul II Award during the Diocesan Teachers’ Institute Mass on Sept. 29, 2025.

This year’s recipients are Colleen Gatrone and Kimberly Kanuik of Holy Cross High School in Dunmore, and Barbara Greenway of Saint John Neumann Elementary School in Williamsport.

The Saint John Paul II Award is given annually to educators who have dedicated 25 years of service to Catholic education in the Diocese of Scranton. The award honors the legacy of Saint John Paul II, who inspired generations with his unwavering faith, commitment to young people, and deep love for the Church.

For Gatrone, the award is a milestone in a vocation that has spanned far more than the 25 years she has been in the Diocese of Scranton. In total, she has spent a total of 40 years in Catholic education.

“I appreciate the Diocese, I appreciate the students with whom I’ve worked. I’ve taught at a number of schools in our Diocese, and I really do appreciate the



Three Catholic school educators received the Saint John Paul II Award for 25 years of dedicated service during the Diocesan Teachers’ Institute Mass at Holy Redeemer High School Sept. 29, 2025. Present for the award presentation were, from left: Kristen Donohue, Diocesan Secretary for Catholic Education/Superintendent of Catholic Schools; Christopher Tigue, Assistant Superintendent; Kimberly Kanuik, Holy Cross High School; Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton; Barbara Greenway, Saint John Neumann Elementary School; Colleen Gatrone, Holy Cross High School; Charlene Haggerty, Assistant Superintendent. (Photo/Eric Deabill)

support that we get,” Gatrone said.

Prior to her current position at Holy Cross High School, Gatrone also served at Bishop O’Reilly, Bishop Hoban, and Holy Redeemer. She says the secret to her longevity is simple.

“It’s the students, it’s the parents, it’s the families, and it’s the atmosphere,” she

said. “I absolutely love coming in every single day. They make me feel young and it is the important part of my day – coming in and seeing their faces. It is all the motivation I need for the day.”

For Kanuik, who also teaches at Holy Cross, the award is a humbling reminder of how far her journey has come since first

being at Bishop Hannan High School.

“It means a lot. As a child, I always knew I wanted to be a teacher,” Kanuik said. “Being at Holy Cross – I know I’m blessed. My students have been fantastic.”

Kanuik teaches freshman history, AP History, and AP Government, a schedule she has held for the past decade. She proudly pointed out that one of her former students, Father Tom Dzwonczyk, read the Gospel at the Diocesan Teachers’ Institute Mass.

Reflecting on her decision to stay in Catholic schools, Kanuik said, “I have many friends who teach in public schools and their experiences aren’t the same. They’re counting the days to retirement, whereas I’m blessed to go to work every day.”

Greenway’s journey into Catholic education was born out of personal conversion.

“Saint John Paul II is the reason why I’m Catholic,” she explained.

Greenway, who has worked primarily with elementary students and taught art, is currently serving in Saint John Neumann’s Champions After-Care Program. She said she is inspired daily by all her colleagues.

“I respect all of them,” she said. “I may get this honor, but it is for everybody.”