

PRINCIPAL'S NOTES

Diocese of Wilmington—Catholic Schools Office

November 17, 2023

Pause and Ponder

Happy Thanksgiving!

Thanksgiving remains a favorite holiday. It provides a celebration in which the only requirements of the day are people and food. No decorations, no presents, no other entrapments to distract us are necessary. We celebrate one another and recall the blessings we have generously received on this holiday.

In our faith life, Eucharist is the Greek word for thanksgiving. At each Eucharist, we celebrate the abundant goodness of God with the people in our faith community. We encounter the Lord in Word and Sacrament and we are sent forth to bring the Christ to those whom we encounter.

This year the Church has provided us with an additional blessing following Thanksgiving. The final week of the liturgical year, beginning Sunday, November 26, has been designated in the Diocese of Wilmington as Eucharistic Adoration Week. We shall have the opportunity in our parishes to spend time with the Lord in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament throughout the week.

What great gifts the next two weeks offer us – time to be with the Lord, time to be with our loved ones, time to give thanks for our blessings, time to relax and renew ourselves, and time to plan our spiritual resolutions for the new liturgical year. (Advent begins on Sunday, December 3.) Let's make these upcoming Thanksgiving/Eucharistic days count!

Calendar Dates

<i>Sunday, Nov 19</i>	<i>Thirty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time</i>
<i>Tuesday, Nov 21</i>	<i>Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary</i> <i>T1 ends (Elementary)</i> <i>Thanksgiving Holiday begins at the close of the school day</i>
<i>Wednesday, Nov 22</i>	<i>School Holiday</i>
<i>Thursday, Nov 23</i>	<i>Thanksgiving Day</i> <i>Diocesan Holiday</i>
<i>Friday, Nov 24</i>	<i>Diocesan Holiday</i>
<i>Sunday, Nov 26</i>	<i>Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe</i> <i>Eucharistic Adoration Week begins</i>
<i>Monday, Nov 27</i>	<i>Renaissance Star Assessment Week 1</i> <i>CSO Staff Meeting, 9:00 am</i>
<i>Wednesday, Nov 29</i>	<i>T1 Grades due (Elementary)</i> <i>Bishop's Visit, Immaculate Heart of Mary School, 10:00 am</i>
<i>Thursday, Nov 30</i>	<i>St. Andrew, Apostle</i> <i>Bishop's Visit, St. Mary Magdalen School, 10:00 am</i>
<i>Sunday, Dec 3</i>	<i>First Sunday of Advent</i>

Let Us Pray...

- + for those who are hungry, homeless, or alone on Thanksgiving
- + for the December intention of Pope Francis – For persons with disabilities: We pray that people living with disabilities may be at the center of attention in society, and that institutions may offer inclusive programs which value their active participation.
- + for Bishop Emeritus Malooly, celebrating a patronal day on Sunday, December 3 – St. Francis Xavier
- + for Ashley Torelli, Assistant Principal at Christ the Teacher Catholic School, and Michael Ockimey, teacher at St. Elizabeth Elementary School, who will be married next week
- + for the repose of the soul of Gus Sargent, eighth grade student at Saint Edmond's Academy, and Casey Nelson, sister of Christi Messick, art teacher at Saints Peter & Paul Elementary School

Catholic Identity – Advent

With two weeks remaining before the start of Advent (December 3), schools are encouraged to review the school-wide plan for this season which begins the new liturgical year.

- **Theme:** Is there a unified theme that will be present throughout the classrooms and school?
- **Image:** Is there a single image (photo, artwork, etc.) that will be visible in the classrooms and throughout the school connected to the Advent theme?
- **Advent Wreath:** Will this traditional symbol be prominent in the school lobby or other site where people gather? Perhaps the Jesse Tree may be appropriate for older students?
- **Prayer:** Will the school community pray together daily or weekly utilizing the Advent wreath and/or the Jesse Tree?
- **Worship:** Will the school community celebrate special Advent days in some way (Saint Nicholas, Immaculate Conception, Our Lady of Guadalupe, Saint Lucy)?
- **Service:** Will a particular service activity be planned to expand students' understanding and action during the Advent season?

Catholic Identity – Advent (continued)

- **Environment:** Will the school community celebrate Advent and not Christmas until the final week in school following Gaudete Sunday (December 17)?

If we expect students to understand and appreciate Advent at all grade levels, then through our message, community, worship, and service, the tone of Advent must ring clear in our Catholic schools.

Renaissance Star

When we return from the Thanksgiving break, we begin Cycle 2 of Renaissance Star. The results of this testing will be able to inform us of growth thus far this school year. Please take the time to administer Renaissance Star accurately and with integrity. Use the data to spark conversation among faculty about necessary next steps to help our students learn and grow.

All parish and diocesan elementary and high schools should administer Cycle 2 of Renaissance Star within the three-week window that is provided – November 27 through December 15.

Information about accommodations, extended time, etc. may be found under Renaissance Guidelines on the CSO Intranet>Educational Resources. In addition, the Focus Skills for Literacy and Math are found there. Literacy focus skills are designated by grade level from Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 12; Math focus skills are listed for Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 8, Algebra I and II, and Geometry. These skills should be reviewed by teachers to be sure they are teaching what is essential at each grade level. They align with the Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts and Mathematics used by our schools. Teachers of subjects other than ELA and Math should also review the Focus Skills since literacy skills cross all disciplines and math skills may be integrated into some disciplines.

Promote Language Learning and Student Output with Sorted Sentence Frames

The Alliance for Catholic Education (ACE) at the University of Notre Dame offers a monthly two-minute video designed for English Language Learners (ELL). However, these videos are applicable to all learners. Check out the value of sentence frames as an instructional tool across disciplines.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mJVp5ETFha8>

Keep the Main Thing, the Main Thing

As we enter December with Advent activities, Christmas concerts, service programs, Nativity plays, Christmas celebrations, etc., please remind our teachers and staff that while spiritual, academic, and social learning occurs through all of these events, keeping a focus on the business of school is important. Maintaining an appropriate learning environment provides the right decorum, providing instructional objectives (even for some of the holiday activities) keeps the focus on learning, instruction every day for each class period is the focus of teaching, and assessing students regularly keeps students and parents informed of progress. Let's encourage December to be a meaningful and enjoyable time of growth for students and staff.

BrightArrow Test

This past Wednesday a BrightArrow test using email, text, and voice was conducted for school administrators. If you did not receive the messages, please contact Dr. De Angelo. If your text message was cut short, it may indicate that you have not opted into BrightArrow. See the flyer for opt-in information.

[Opt In Flyer](#)

Delaware Stem Educator Awards

The Delaware STEM Council and the Delaware Foundation for Science and Mathematics Education (DFSME) co-hosted the the Delaware STEM Educator Awards ceremony on November 9th, 2023. Throughout the evening, seven awards with accompanying cash prizes were presented to individuals and teams of educators, from across the elementary through high school levels, for their exemplary accomplishments in STEM education. We congratulate our colleagues at Padua Academy who received two of the seven awards.

Padua Academy

Raymond Helie, Sarah Smith, Kelly Townsend
Community Educator High School

Padua Academy

Jon Manon STEAM Team Education Award
Science & Mathematics Depts. Interdisciplinary Team Lead by Lisa Kowalski

Congratulations!

Dan Pin, Director of the Office for Catholic Youth, Young Adult, and Family Ministry, was recently honored by the Newman Center at West Chester University as a Distinguished Alumnus! We congratulate him on his recognition.

THE NEXT EDITION OF *PRINCIPAL'S NOTES* WILL BE SENT ON FRIDAY, DECEMBER 1.

WHEN WE HAVE TO REPLY TO ANYONE WHO HAS
INSULTED US, WE SHOULD BE CAREFUL TO DO IT ALWAYS
WITH MEEKNESS. A SOFT ANSWER EXTINGUISHES THE
FIRE OF WRATH.

ST. ALPHONSUS LIGUORI

