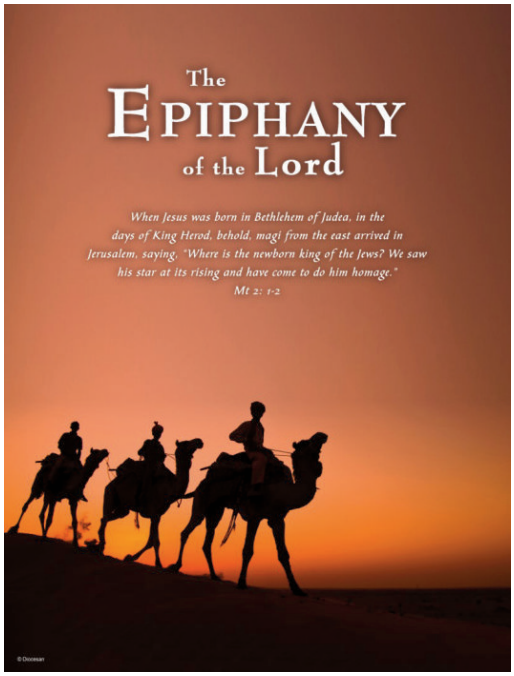
St. Raphael Catholic Church

January 2, 2022



1513 Dunster Road Rockville, Maryland 20854

Please mail correspondence to the Parish Office
1592 Kimblewick Road, Rockville, MD 20854

Parish Phone **301-762-2143**
Parish Fax **301-762-0719**
Website **www.straphaels.org**

Rev. Michael Salah, Pastor, ext. 112
Rev. William Wadsworth, Parochial Vicar, ext. 150
Rev. Thomas Morrow, Retired, ext. 128

Deacon Jose Carbonell, ext. 187
Deacon Richard Meyer, 202-365-0913
Deacon Frank Salatto, ext. 149

Mary J. Beaudoin, Dir. Of Religious Education, ext. 124
Gerri Stoner, St. Raphael School Secretary, ext. 122
Teri Dwyer, Principal, Baptism Coordinator, ext. 121
Eileen Kutchak, Dir. of Parish Programming, ext. 110
Luisa Duarte, Spanish Coordinator, 240-864-2565
Pietro Lojacono, Assistant for Religious Education, ext. 123
Annalee McHugh, Youth Minister, 240-864-2519
Vince Natali, Dir. Of Music Ministries, 240-864-2532
Linda Poindexter, RCIA Coordinator, 240-864-2542
Elaine Salatto, Publications, Welcoming, 240-864-2513

New Parishioners: A warm welcome to St. Raphael's Catholic Church. Blue registration cards are available on the wall rack in the main entrance of the church or you may register online at: https://straphaels.org/parish-registration-form
The Parish Wide Ministry Resource List can be found on our website on the Welcome tab or under Ministries, Social Responsibility, and Documents.

For Life Affirming Resources:
https://adw.org/about-us/resources/pregnant-need-help/
Healing after abortion? Project Rachel 301-853-4565

Weekend Masses:	Saturday: 5:00 PM Sunday: 7:00, 8:30, 10:00, 11:30AM, 1:00PM (español), 6:00PM (youth)
Weekday Masses:	Monday thru Friday: 6:30 and 9:00AM Saturday: 9:00 AM
Penance:	Tuesday: 7:00 - 7:30 PM and Saturday: 3:45 - 4:30 PM
Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament:	Tuesday: 6:45 PM Thursday: 9:30 AM
Benediction:	Tuesday, following novena 7:45 PM Thursday, 7:15PM
Miraculous Medal Novena:	Tuesday, 7:30PM
Divine Mercy Chaplet:	Tuesday, following Novena Thursday, 7:00PM

Sacrament of Baptism: Parish Registration and a Baptism class is required. Please contact Teri Dwyer to register and plan to attend the class while awaiting the birth or adoption of your child.

Sacrament of Matrimony: In accord with the regulations of the Archdiocese of Washington, couples must contact a priest and begin preparation at least six months prior to the wedding. Parish registration and active participation for the minimum of three months is required before preparation may begin. Living together before marriage is sinful and harmful to the future marriage. Couples who are living together will be asked to live separately during the preparation time.

What does it mean to be an active Catholic? Frequently, those seeking to celebrate Marriage, have children baptized, or serve as sponsors for Confirmation or Baptism request a letter stating they are parishioners and active, practicing Catholics. To receive such a letter, one must be registered in the parish, attend Mass regularly, and be committed to a stewardship of time, talent, and treasure. We encourage all parishioners to become active in one of the parish organizations. In a community as large as St. Raphael, one means of verifying participation is through the regular use of parish offertory envelopes. If you choose not to participate in the support of the parish, or are unable to contribute at this time, please at least note your prayerful support on your envelope and place it in the weekly offertory. We will then be aware of your continued participation, and you will not be noted as "inactive" on our parish roster.

welcome

Sign up today for Flocknote

An easy way to keep up with updates and changes at St. Raphael Catholic Church:

Flocknote is a tool for St. Raphael to communicate important information quickly parish-wide to our "Flock".

You can sign up for Flocknote from the St. Raphael's Home page www.straphaels.org

Faith Direct

Your generous online donations now will help sustain our ministries that reflect God's love.

We prayerfully request that you consider signing up for eGiving from your computer, smartphone or tablet. You can set up a recurring donation or make a one-time gift.

Sign up today by visiting faith.direct/MD34. Thank you for your continued support of our parish family.

God Bless You,

Fr. Mike

Low Gluten Hosts that are approved by the Catholic Church for the Holy Eucharist are offered at the time of Communion. The Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion offering these Hosts will be standing near the statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary at all the Masses.

Recent Tornado and Storms in Kentucky

In light of the recent catastrophic devastation in Kentucky, and in the Diocese of Owensboro, Cardinal Gregory has sent funds from our archdiocese to assist with the recovery.

The Church of Washington has always shown great generosity in response to these tragedies. Donations to assist can be sent through Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Owensboro as follows:

You can give online to help Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Owensboro help those impacted by the recent devastation in our communities. Please visit https://owensborodiocese.org/give/ and select Tornado Relief – Catholic Charities.

Checks may be mailed to: Catholic Charities Tornado Relief, 600 Locust St., Owensboro, KY, 42301

Mass Schedule and Intentions for the Week

Monday, January 3		
6:30AM	Fr. Christopher Wyvill, OSA	
9:00AM	Diana Carolina Fletlor (d)	
Tuesday, January 4		
6:30AM	Sharon Hope (d)	
9:00AM	Janie Davidson (d)	
Wednesday, January 5		
6:30AM	Edward Zech, MD (d)	
9:00AM	The Christo Family (d)	
Thursday, January 6		
6:30AM	M/M Varkey & Annamma Joseph (d)	
9:00AM	Elizabeth Spano (d)	
Friday, January 7		
6:30AM	Dr. Felipe Rodriguez Serrano (d)	
9:00AM	Mary Singleton	
Saturday, January 8		
9:00AM	Abel Gerpe (d)	
5:00PM	Fr. Mike	Jim Hawn (d)
Sunday, January 9		
7:00AM	Fr. Mike	Members of the Parish
8:30AM	Fr. Tom	Joseph Ihsan (d)
10:00AM	Fr. Tom	Bill Baldwin (d)
11:30AM	Fr. Bill	Marc Guinikoukou (d)
1:00PM	Fr. Bill	
6:00PM	Fr. Mike	Gloria Luz Zuluaga

The priest schedule is subject to change.

Live-streamed Masses:
Daily, 6:30AM and Saturday, 9:00AM,
Sunday, 11:30AM, 1:00PM
Go to website:
www.straphaels.org and link to YouTube.

Please pray for the soul of

John Steinacker, grandfather of Megan Heitzmann
Frank Percaciante, brother-in-law of Andrew Price and
Joseph Sousa, father of Victor Sousa

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

Bulletin notices may be emailed to: **esalatto@straphaels.org** . Due to early deadlines, this bulletin was transmitted on December 23.

Vicar's Verbiage

Dear Friends,

It is said that the great Greek thinker Archimedes exclaimed "Eureka!" when he realized the concept of the displacement of water by his body as he sat down in his bathtub. The word has come down to us as a way to express a sudden revelation or when something that was unclear is finally revealed. Another way to say it would be like "when the lightbulb goes on." I've always thought of the Feast of the Epiphany as a "*eureka*" moment for the world.

Today's feast commemorates the visit of the wise men to the infant Jesus and for us symbolizes the manifestation or revelation of Jesus to the whole world. The word "*Epiphany*" actually means manifestation. And this feast culminates a period of celebration and rejoicing that continues even after the Octave of Christmas is over.

His birth at Christmas was only seen by a few people, the shepherds came to worship but now these foreign dignitaries arrive to bring him their costly gifts, it's sort of like the *eureka* moment for the world. We start to see the plan of God start to unfold; the Savior reveals himself to the nations.

There are some neat traditions associated with this feast: While in the West (our part of the Church) we emphasize the visit of the Wise Men and their gifts, in the East (mostly Orthodox Christians), this feast is like Christmas, Epiphany and the Baptism of the Lord all wrapped into one gigantic celebration. They have a special blessing of water to be used to bless homes and in other ceremonies and they also have a long tradition of jumping into some water outside in celebration. Of course, a nice plunge in a lake in Russia in January always makes for an invigorating experience!

We also have a tradition of "chalking the doors." Pieces of chalk are blessed and then people can take them and write 20+C+M+B+22 on the lintel. It's not a mathematic equation, Archimedes! The initials stand for the names of the three kings: Caspar, Melchior, Balthasar or perhaps a Latin abbreviation of *Christus Mansionem Benedicat* or "May Christ bless this house." And the numbers are of course for the new year. It's a practice that echoes our Jewish heritage when God commanded the Israelites to mark their door posts with the blood of the paschal lamb to protect them from the destroying angel.

Its also the tradition in some places to exchange gifts this day because the wise men brought their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. If you had problems getting your gifts shipped to you in time for Christmas, here's your chance and you can always say you were intending to give them on Epiphany anyway, just like the three kings!

Fr. Bill

Readings for the Week of January 2, 2022

Sunday	**Epiphany of the Lord** Is 60: 1-6/ Ps 72: 1-2. 7-8. 10-11. 12-13/ Eph 3: 2-3a. 5-6/ Mt 2: 1-12
Monday	**Monday after Epiphany** 1 Jn 3: 22- 4: 6/ Ps 2: 7bc-8. 10-12a/ Mt 4: 12-17. 23-25
Tuesday	**Memorial of Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton, Religious** 1 Jn 4: 7-10/ Ps 72: 1-2. 3-4. 7-8/ Mk 6: 34-44
Wednesday	**Memorial of Saint John Neumann, Bishop** 1 Jn 4: 11-18/ Ps 72: 1-2. 10. 12-13/ Mk 6: 45-52
Thursday	1 Jn 4: 19-5: 4/ Ps 72: 1-2. 14 and 15bc. 17/ Lk 4: 14-22
Friday	1 Jn 5: 5-13/ Ps 147: 12-13. 14-15. 19-20/ Lk 5: 12-16
Saturday	1 Jn 5: 14-21/ Ps 149: 1-2. 3-4. 5 and 6a and 9b/ Jn 3: 22-30
Sunday	**Baptism of the Lord** Is 40: 1-5. 9-11/ Ps 104: 1b-2. 3-4. 24-25. 27-28. 29-30 (1)/ Ti 2: 11-14; 3: 4-7/ Lk 3: 15-16. 21-22

Distractions at Prayer or at Mass

The habitual difficulty in prayer is distraction... To set about hunting down distractions would be to fall into their trap, when all that is necessary is to turn back to our heart: for a distraction reveals to us what we are attached to, and this humble awareness before the Lord should awaken our preferential love for him and lead us resolutely to offer him our heart to be purified. Therein lies the battle, the choice of which master to serve. (Catechism of The Catholic Church, para. 2729)

St. Teresa of Ávila found herself very distracted one day after receiving Holy Communion. She began to envy those living in the desert without any distractions. She heard the voice of the Lord, "You are greatly mistaken, daughter; rather, the temptations of the devil there are stronger; be patient, for as long as you live, a wandering mind cannot be avoided."

Of course, to pray sincerely we must strive hard to overcome distractions, especially at Mass!

One way to do that is to follow the prayers in the Missalette, especially the Eucharistic Prayer.

Father Tom

JANUARY NATIONAL MARCH FOR LIFE ATTENDANCE POLL

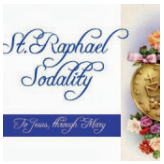
The 2022 National March for Life will take place on Friday, January 21. Attendance at the march is particularly crucial this year because:

1. Relatively few marched in person last year due to the COVID pandemic. The pandemic is now better controlled, and the 2022 march will be mostly in person. Massive march participation will signal that the nation has not forgotten the plight of pre-born Americans at risk for abortion.

2. The Supreme Court is currently deliberating a decision on whether a Mississippi abortion restriction law is constitutional. Massive march attendance would be an indication that most Americans oppose abortion and would welcome a Supreme Court repeal of Roe vs. Wade.

Our parish needs to know how many would be interested in marching. If many are, we could facilitate attendance by renting a bus for transportation to and from downtown at a minimal price.

If you are interested in attending the march, please contact Maria Elena Crespo (mecrespo7@gmail.com) or Deacon Richard Meyer (rsmhome@verizon.net) before this date: Monday, January 10.



First Friday of the New Year—
Coffee and Talk

January 7, 2022

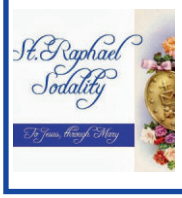
Parish Library following 9AM Mass

Father Bill Wadsworth, our Parochial Vicar, will inspire us with a presentation

From Shadows to the Splendor of Truth: Evangelizing through Beauty in the Modern World.

We look forward to seeing you there.

The **Sodality** is pleased to offer a presentation.



Deacon Richard Meyer
on the Four Marian Dogmas

Wednesday, January 12, 2022 at 7:00 PM
in the Parish Library

Come join us.

- ⇒ You can stay and say the Rosary Monday thru Friday following the 9:00 AM Mass.
- ⇒ On Tuesday evenings at 6:45PM, Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, Confessions at 7PM, 7:30PM, the Miraculous Medal Novena and Chaplet of Divine Mercy followed by Benediction.
- ⇒ First Tuesday of every month, Mass followed by Blessing at 7:00PM, Confessions at 7PM through Mass
- ⇒ Thursdays after 9:00 AM Mass, Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament all day, Chaplet of Divine Mercy at 7PM, 7:15PM Benediction. May and October Rosary at 6:40PM
- ⇒ Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, Fridays 7:00-7:30AM after 6:30AM Mass
- ⇒ First Friday Coffee after the 9:00AM Mass. Watch bulletin advertising for topics.
- ⇒ First Friday of every month, Spanish Holy Hour, 7:00 PM, in church
- ⇒ First Saturday Devotions every month, 9:00AM Mass, meditation and rosary

Winter Bible Study

Oremus: A Guide to Catholic Prayer

Tuesday Mornings 10:30 – 12:00 noon on Zoom **January 11 – March 1, 2022**
Thursday Evenings 7:30 – 9:00 PM on Zoom **January 6 – February 24**

Become aware of God's presence in your life as you practice the simple but profound steps of Catholic prayer.

Following the wisdom of the saints and the Tradition of the Church, you will learn how to express yourself to God in prayer and how to make prayer an integral part of your daily life.

For further information and to sign up, contact Dorothy Welsh at dwwelsh5@aol.com.
Order the Study Set (workbook & online video access) at www.ascensionpress.com and it will be sent directly to you.

FOR SINGLE CATHOLICS - 22nd Annual Epiphany Party at St. Raphael Church, 1513 Dunster Rd., Rockville, MD 20854; Saturday, January 8, starting at 7:00 PM. Includes delicious Ledo's lasagna dinner, salsa dance lessons, complementary wine and beer, DJ, and more. Send $21 check donation by December 28 to SCS Epiphany Party, St. Raphael, 1590 Kimblewick Rd., Rockville, MD 20854, Or $23 by credit card at https://www.paypal.com/biz/fund?id=AJLD5F4VY43NE; ($27 cash, card or check at the door.) For more info. call 240-426-5589.

RCIA
(Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults)

Do you want to learn more about the Catholic Church? Or even about becoming a Catholic? "No Strings Attached!"

Are you a Catholic who has been "away" or seeking Confirmation?

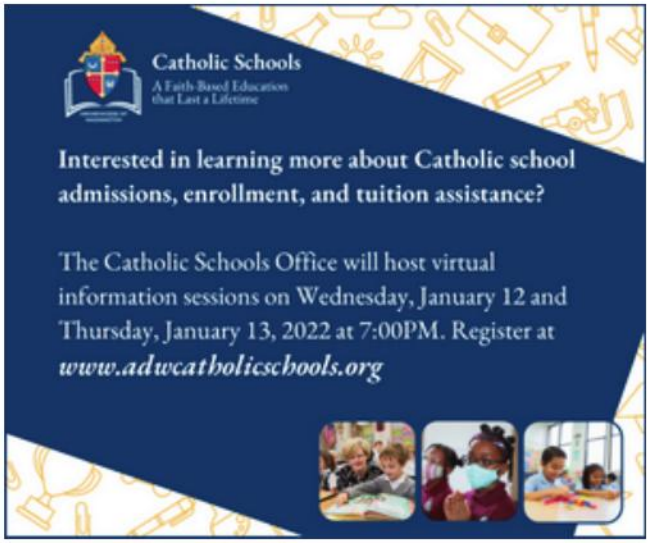
We want to help you and will work out a way to do that!

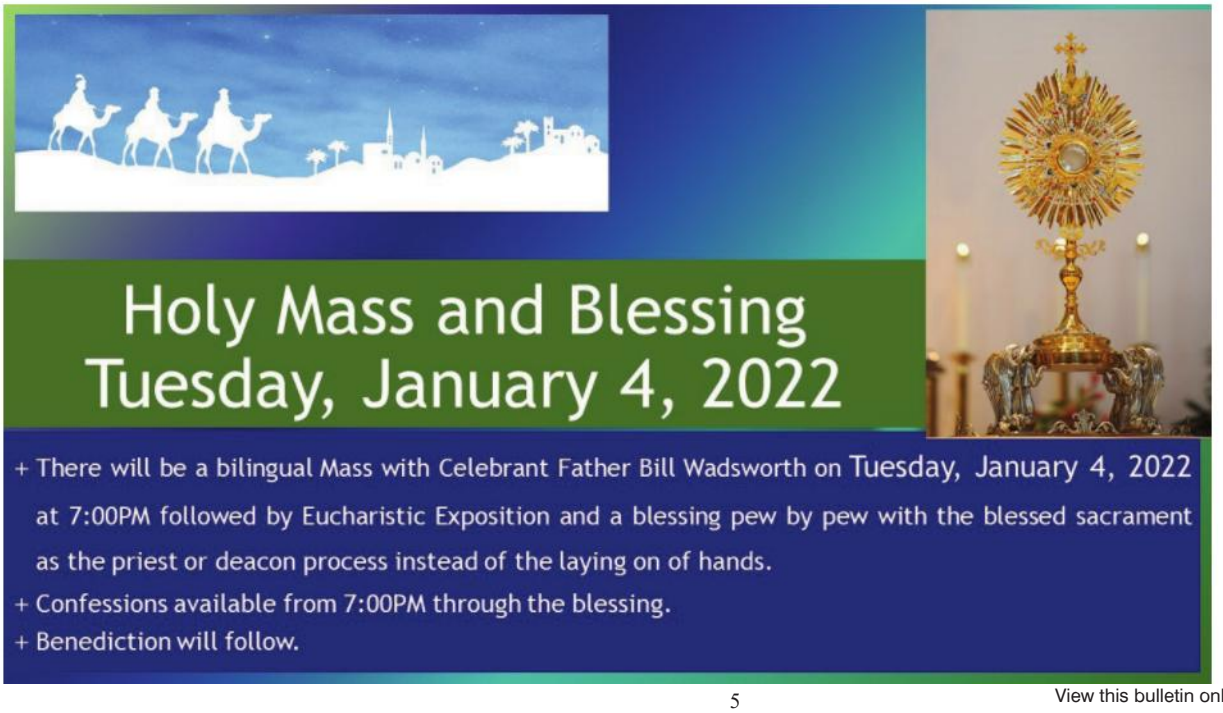
We will meet on a Sunday morning schedule in the Youth Center from 9:45-11:15AM. Please join us on this journey. We will be back on Sunday, January 9.

Contact Linda Poindexter, 240-864-2542
lpoindexter@straphaels.org

Other Events

Guadalupe Radio Network hosts its first Topgolf "Fun-Raiser" Feb. 23, 2022, at Topgolf National Harbor, Oxon Hill, Md., with a $25,000 hole-in-one prize, other prizes, and raffles – for fun, for parish bragging rights to the "Guadalupe Radio Network Cup," and to keep Catholic radio broadcasting the good, true, and beautiful. Pastors, parochial vicars, religious sisters, seminarians, and families are encouraged to play for fun, to share a meal and libations, OR to do all that but compete in a tournament that pits parish vs. parish, or against other teams of six, in friendly competition. Prizes include golf clubs, and more, including a raffle for a 2-night, $1,000 stay at a National Harbor hotel. All funds support GRN's station WMET 1160 AM, a long-time supporter of archdiocesan parishes and evangelization through Catholic radio. For registration or sponsorship information, visit GRNonline.com, and click on Events. Or, email WMET@GRNonline.com.





School News

A peek behind our classroom doors

JAN 3, 2022

St. Raphael School Christmas Tradition

St. Raphael School's celebration of the birth of Jesus and the Christmas season wouldn't be complete without our annual Christmas pageant. After a year of hiatus due to COVID, our families were able to assemble in the church to view a reenactment of the nativity and hear students play instrumental pieces and sing Christmas songs. A joyous way to end 2021!

www.straphaelschoolmd.org | www.srnsmd.org | @SRSrockville

OPEN HOUSE
Jan. 10 9:30 A.M.
SRNS
ST. RAPHAEL NURSERY SCHOOL
www.straphaelschoolmd.org | www.srnsmd.org | @SRSrockville

The Epiphany of the Lord

CNS Photo

"As we begin the New Year, may we discover anew that faith demands worship. If we can fall on our knees before Jesus, we will overcome the temptation to set off on our own path." `(Pope Francis, Jan. 6, 2020)

On this Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord, we remember that God came to earth for everyone, every nation, every people.

January is Poverty Awareness Month!

Poverty does not strike all demographics equally. For example, in 2018, 10.6% of men, and 12.9% of women lived in Poverty USA. Along the same lines, the poverty rate for married couples in 2018 was only 4.7% - but the poverty rate for single-parent families with no wife present was 12.7%, and for single-parent families with no husband present was 24.9%.

In 2018, the poverty rate for people living with a disability was 25.7%. That's nearly 4 million people living with a disability—in poverty.

Visit *PovertyUSA* for education on economic justice, resources for prayer, and key conduits for action.

Catholic Current

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BULLETIN

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Religious Education
Mary Beaudoin, 202-294-7697

A Family Prayer for the New Year

God, thank you for a new year.
May everyone in our family be willing to begin anew with a clean slate.
We know that you are always ready to forgive us.
Help us to be willing to forgive ourselves and to forgive one another.
As we begin a new year, remind us of our truest values and our deepest desires.
Help us to live in the goodness that comes from doing what you want us to do.
Help us to put aside anxiety about the future and the past, so that we might live in peace with you now, one day at a time.
(© Loyola Press; used with permission; all rights reserved)

Christmastime at Home

Find inspiration, lessons, and stories for celebrating Christmastime at Loyola Press Catholic Resources: https://www.loyolapress.com/catholic-resources/liturgical-year/christmas/

Home Blessing on Epiphany

The feast of Epiphany is the traditional time for blessing your home. Find the "Blessing of the Home and Household on Epiphany" at https://www.usccb.org/prayers/blessing-home-and-household-epiphany.Then, ask other family members to pray this special Christmastime blessing with your loved ones and on your home.

St. Raphael Religious Education (SRRE)

SRRE offers ongoing faith formation for all children and teens, as well as preparation for sacraments. Each year of faith formation is designed to deepen relationships with Jesus and his Church through focus on what we believe, why we celebrate the sacraments, how we pray, and how we live.

If you have questions about religious education or sacrament preparation for your child, please contact Mary Beaudoin, Director of Religious Education.

Religious Education and Sacrament Calendar

January 2-3	SRRE Classes Resume
January 16-17	No SRRE Classes
January 23-24	SRRE Classes Resume
February 20-21	No SRRE Classes
February 27-28	SRRE Classes Resume
February 2 and 12	First Penance
March 19	First Eucharist Family Retreat Morning
April 10-11, 17-18	No SRRE Classes
April 24-25	SRRE Classes Resume
May 7	First Communion Masses, 11:00 AM and 1:00 PM
May 9	last day of SRRE Classes
May 21	Confirmation Masses at 10:30 AM and 1:00 PM

First Penance and First Eucharist

Families with children preparing for First Eucharist in May 2022 are completing the first six chapters of *God's Gift Reconciliation* (younger children), *Reconciliation: Pardon and Peace* (grades 4 and 5), or *God's Gift Reconciliation and Eucharist* (older children). Children are memorizing the Prayer for Penitents. Stop in the SRRE office to pick up a Bag of Sins role play packet to practice how to go to Confession

First Penance/Reconciliation is scheduled for Wednesday, February 2, at 7:00 PM and Saturday, February 12, at 10:00 AM

First Communion Masses are scheduled for May 7, 2022 at 11:00 AM and 1:00 PM with Saturday, April 30, as an alternate date (Mass at 11:00 AM).

Confirmation Year I and Year II

Confirmation Year 1 students are working on their Confirmation Service Project. If you have any questions, please contact the Religious Education office. If you have misplaced your packet, you can find the forms at https://www.straphaels.org/confirmation-1.

Confirmation Year 2 students (candidates to receive Confirmation in May) are completing their Saint Report (due date is January 26) and making sure their Sponsor certificate has been sent to us (also due on January 26). If you have any questions, please contact the Religious Education office. If you have misplaced your packet, you can find the forms at https://www.straphaels.org/confirmation-1.

Confirmation Masses will be celebrated on May 21, 2022 at 10:30 AM and 1:00 PM.

Overcoming Jealousy

Today we continue Year C in the cycle of Sunday readings. Remember to make time to reflect on this Sunday's Scripture readings at home:
https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/010222.cfm

Key Passage: Then Herod sent the [magi] to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage." (Matthew 2:8)

. . . and then have a family sharing time on the questions below

Adult: When have you been jealous or fearful of another person? When are such feelings harmful?

Kids: When have you been jealous because something good happened to another person instead of you? What is the problem with feeling that way?

An Encyclical for All Brothers and Sisters

In his most recent encyclical, *Fratelli Tutti*, Pope Francis invites us to consider how we are called "in the face of present-day attempts to eliminate or ignore others" to respond "with a new vision of fraternity and social friendship that will not remain at the level of words." This week we continue Chapter 4: A Heart Open to the Whole World."

Reciprocal Gifts

134. Indeed, when we open our hearts to those who are different, this enables them, while continuing to be themselves, to develop in new ways. The different cultures that have flourished over the centuries need to be preserved, lest our world be impoverished. At the same time, those cultures should be encouraged to be open to new experiences through their encounter with other realities, for the risk of succumbing to cultural sclerosis is always present. That is why "we need to communicate with each other, to discover the gifts of each person, to promote that which unites us, and to regard our differences as an opportunity to grow in mutual respect. Patience and trust are called for in such dialogue, permitting individuals, families and communities to hand on the values of their own culture and welcome the good that comes from others' experiences."

135. Here I would mention some examples that I have used in the past. Latino culture is "a ferment of values and possibilities that can greatly enrich the United States," for "intense immigration always ends up influencing and transforming the culture of a place… In Argentina, intense immigration from Italy has left a mark on the culture of the society, and the presence of some 200,000 Jews has a great effect on the cultural 'style' of Buenos Aires. Immigrants, if they are helped to integrate, are a blessing, a source of enrichment and new gift that encourages a society to grow."

136. On an even broader scale, Grand Imam Ahmad Al -Tayyeb and I have observed that "good relations between East and West are indisputably necessary for both. They must not be neglected, so that each can be enriched by the other's culture through fruitful exchange and dialogue. The West can discover in the East remedies for those spiritual and religious maladies that are caused by a prevailing materialism. And the East can find in the West many elements that can help free it from weakness, division, conflict and scientific, technical and cultural decline. It is important to pay attention to religious, cultural and historical differences that are a vital component in shaping the character, culture and civilization of the East. It is likewise important to reinforce the bond of fundamental human rights in order to help ensure a dignified life for all the men and women of East and West, avoiding the politics of double standards."

-Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti* #134, #135, #136

Caring for God's Creation – A Plan That Calls for Solidarity

In his encyclical *Laudato Si'* (Care for Our Common Home), Pope Francis calls us to embrace integral ecology. This concept states that "everything is closely related" and that "today's problems call for a vision capable of taking into account every aspect of the global crisis." The Archdiocese of Washington developed a Laudato Si' Action Plan with easy to advanced ways for us to exercise stewardship over God's creation. The plan names seven markers that help to measure the implementation of *Laudato Si'*. The fifth marker is

5. **Ecological Education**: Ecological education can be integrated into our catechetical programs and liturgical celebrations because our Catholic faith offers a rich array of teachings on the theology of creation, life and human dignity and our role in fostering the common good. We learn from the Book of Genesis that all of creation is good: "God looked at everything he had made, and found it very good" (Gen 1:31). We also hear sung in the Psalms that "The Earth is the Lord's" (Psalm 24). As stewards of God's creation, we are called to care for creation in loving and sustainable ways. Earth is our shared home, and its goods belong to all people and for all to use. The witness of the saints show us holiness is tied to caring for God's creation. St. Francis of Assisi and St. Hildegard of Bingen are known for their devotion to creation and seeing God's sanctity in all of creation. Francis and Hildegard encouraged a contemplative and sacramental view of creation and lived lives imbued with the virtues of temperance and prudence. These virtues are needed today as we work for environmental efforts that preserve God's creation. Pope Francis has joined with other Christian leaders in designating September 1 to October 4 of each year as a Season of Creation. Parishes can celebrate the Season of Creation through preaching, offering prayer services, and other activities that focus on Catholic teaching on care for our common home. The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' guide on Caring for God's Creation has ideas for making connections between the liturgy and care for creation throughout the liturgical year. Care for creation and concern for marginalized communities should be integrated into our proclamation about the life and dignity of all people and into how to celebrate life during October's Respect Life Month. Concern for our planet and respect for vulnerable individuals in marginalized communities are important dimensions of what it means to be pro-life.

Possible actions for individuals, families, parishes and schools:

- Organize local environmental educational trips (i.e. Tour Blue Plains in Washington, D.C., the largest advanced wastewater plant in the world; Chesapeake Bay Foundation Educational Tours.) (easy)
  - Find a nature preserve in the area (i.e. Jug Bay Water Sanctuary) (easy)
  - Find recycling, energy production, and water treatment facilities - many of these places offer and encourage tours and other programs for groups (easy)
- Create or expand parish and school libraries to feature a variety of books that provide guidance and resources for this work and embrace the vision of Laudato Si' (easy)
- Challenge children and youth to come up with local solutions to social and environmental problems and affirm the ideas they put forward (easy)
- Explore the connection between the environment and personal and communal health (moderate)
- Develop Laudato Si' inspired activities and theme days with practical follow-up actions (moderate)
- Examine how to support efforts toward systemic justice for those who are marginalized and offer practical steps toward living a lifestyle modified to care for creation (moderate)
- Incorporate justice and care for our common home into faith formation programs at all levels (moderate)
- Involve parish religious education, youth ministry and parish schools in living out Laudato Si' (moderate to advanced)

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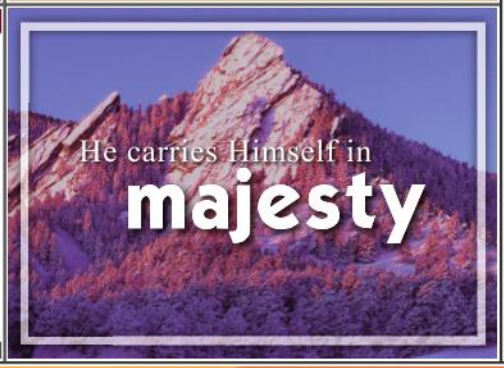

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