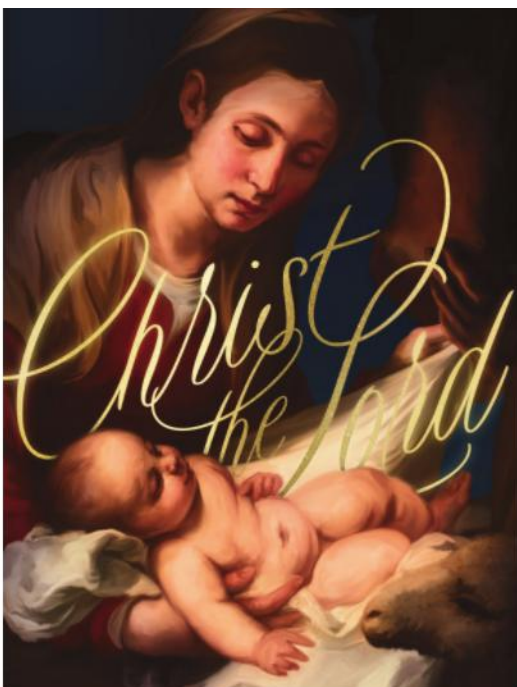


# St. Raphael Catholic Church



LET US  
ADORE HIM  
*Christ the Lord*

**1513 Dunster Road Rockville, Maryland 20854**

**December 24, 2023**

**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](http://www.straphaels.org)**

**Rev. Michael Salah, Pastor, ext. 112**  
**Rev. Christian Huebner, Parochial Vicar, 301-762-2143, ext. 150**  
**Email: [huebnerc@adw.org](mailto:huebnerc@adw.org)**  
**Rev. Thomas Morrow, Retired, ext. 128**

**Deacon Jose Carbonell, ext. 187**  
**Deacon Richard Meyer, 202-365-0913**  
**Deacon Jim O'Brien, [obrien3@verizon.net](mailto:obrien3@verizon.net)**  
**Deacon Frank Salatto, ext. 149**

**Mary J. Beaudoin, Dir. Of Religious Education, ext. 124**  
**Teri Dwyer, Principal, ext. 121**  
**Julie Cress, School Admissions, ext. 158 or [jcress@straphaels.org](mailto:jcress@straphaels.org)**  
**Luisa Duarte, Spanish Coordinator, 240-864-2565**  
**Eileen Kutchak, Dir. of Parish Programming, ext. 110**  
**Pietro Lojano, Assistant for Religious Education, ext. 123**  
**Annalee McHugh, Youth Minister, 240-864-2519**  
**Vince Natali, Dir. Of Music Ministries, 240-864-2532**  
**Krys Psurek, 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 Ministry List** can be found on our website,

**St. Vincent de Paul/St. Raphael Conference**  
**Intake Number: 240-447-7027**

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

**Abuse isn't love.** Help is available 24/7 on the National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-SAFE (7233)

**Weekend Masses:** Saturday: 5:00 PM  
Sunday: 7:00, 8:30, 10:00, (children), 11:30AM,  
1:00PM (español), 6:00PM (youth)

**Weekday Masses:** Monday thru Friday: 6:30 and 9:00AM  
Saturday: 9:00 AeM

**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 Eileen Kutchak, 240-864-2510, 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 to St. Raphael  
Catholic Church**

We invite you to check our website  
[www.straphaels.org](http://www.straphaels.org)

**To all of our wonderful Parishioners,  
from the Clergy and Staff at St. Raphael.**

We wish you a Merry and Blessed Christmas, and  
thank you for all you do to support us through the year.

Father Mike, Father, Christian, Father Tom, Father Jean-  
Marie, Dcn Frank, Dcn Jose, Dcn, Richard and Dcn Jim  
and Staff

Dear Parishioners,

I have had a lot of questions, and I hope this clears up any  
confusion.

**December 23, 24, 25**

Please remember to attend **TWO** Masses this weekend to  
fulfill the Sunday and Holy Day obligation.

**December 30, 31, January 1**

Although we added Masses, The Solemnity of Mary is not  
a Holy Day of Obligation this year.  
You may attend **ONE** Mass on this weekend.

Merry Christmas! Happy New Year!  
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.

**New Scammers, New Ideas. Be Alert.**

Father Mike will never send you an email asking for gifts,  
cards, or money. Please be alert to the senders email  
address and delete them.

**Marriage**

Do you feel alone? Are you frustrated or angry with  
each other? Do you argue, or have you just stopped  
talking to each other? Retrouvaille (retro-vi) has  
helped tens of thousands of couples. For confidential  
information or to register for the upcoming program  
beginning with a **weekend on January 26th**, please  
visit: [www.HelpOurMarriage.org](http://www.HelpOurMarriage.org), call (443) 400-  
7017, or email us at: [3015@HelpOurMarriage.org](mailto:3015@HelpOurMarriage.org)

**Mass Schedule and Intentions for the Week**

**Monday, December 25**  
**The Nativity of the Lord (Christmas)**

8:30AM Costa & Beaty Families (d)  
10:00AM Members of the Parish  
11:30AM Christiane Durocher (d)  
1:00PM Sp Vicki Johnson

**Tuesday, December 26**

6:30AM Linda Hacker (d)  
9:00AM Deacon Richard Mattocks (d)

**Wednesday, December 27**

6:30AM Vincent Corrado (d)  
9:00AM James Yang (d)

**Thursday, December 28**

6:30AM Mary Theresa Tortora (d)  
9:00AM James Yang (d)

**Friday, December 29**

6:30AM Edith Thomas (d)  
9:00AM James Yang (d)

**Saturday, December 30**

9:00AM Keith Gilmore (d)  
5:00PM Fr. Mike Thomas Dougherty (d)

**Sunday, December 31**  
**The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph**

7:00AM Fr. Tom Kristin O'Keefe (d)  
8:30AM Fr. Mike Phillip Chen (d)  
10:00AM Fr. Christian Ruth Czecha (d)  
11:30AM Fr. Tom Robert Stovall (d)  
1:00PM Fr. Christian Juan Aguirre (d)

**Sunday, December 31**  
**Solemnity of Mary, Holy Mother of God**

6:00PM Fr. Mike Members of the Parish  
Vigil Mass

The priest schedule is subject to change.

**Live-streamed Masses:**

There will be daily live-streamed Masses,  
Sunday English and Spanish Masses.  
Go to website: [www.straphaels.org](http://www.straphaels.org) and click the link to  
YouTube Channel.

**Have you signed up for Flocknote?** Sign up  
today for an easy way to keep up with the 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 signup for  
FLOCKNOTE from the St. Raphael's homepage  
[www.straphaels.org](http://www.straphaels.org)

Bulletin notices may be emailed to: [esalatto@straphaels.org](mailto:esalatto@straphaels.org) .  
This bulletin was transmitted December 12.

# LOVE

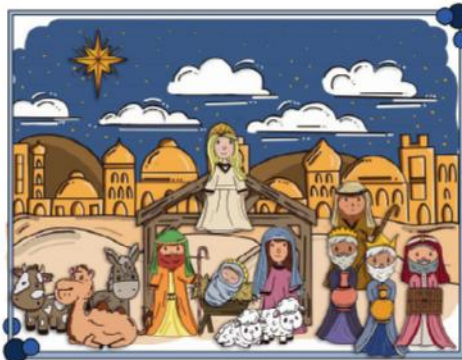
## Prayer Corner

December 24, 2023

### *A Christmas Prayer*

God our Father,  
as we approach your Beloved Son,  
Our Lord Jesus Christ,  
at his birth in Bethlehem,  
grant us the gift of adoring him  
with pure love  
and innocent wonder.

Let us stay with Mary and with Joseph,  
with the shepherds and the magi,  
with the animals and the angels,  
warmed, pierced, and healed  
by the light of the new creation  
you have begun in him  
and which, by the Holy Spirit,  
you continue in us  
until he comes again. Amen.



### **Anima Christi**

Soul of Christ, sanctify me.  
Body of Christ, save me.  
Blood of Christ, embolden me.  
Water from the side of Christ, wash me. Passion of Christ, strengthen me.  
O good Jesus, hear me. Within your wounds hide me.  
Never permit me to be parted from you. From the evil Enemy defend me.  
At the hour of my death call me and bid me come to you,  
that with your Saints I may praise you for age upon age.  
Amen.



<https://www.usccb.org/prayers/anima-christi>



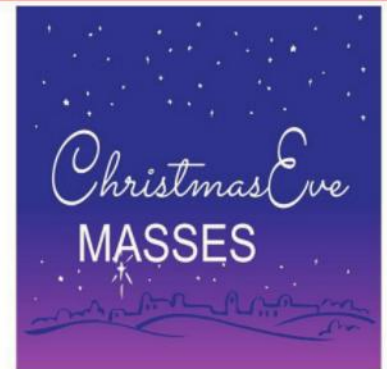
FAMILY  
HOLY  
HOUR

To celebrate the Year of Eucharistic Revival,  
families of all ages are invited to our monthly  
holy hour on Friday, January 5!

6:00-7:00pm: Praise and Worship Eucharistic  
Adoration/Confessions in the church.

7:00-8:00pm: Fellowship in parish courtyard, hot cider,  
cocoa, firepit!

Contact Mike and Annie McHugh for more details at  
[mmchugh@straphaels.org](mailto:mmchugh@straphaels.org) & [amchugh@straphaels.org](mailto:amchugh@straphaels.org)



**Sunday, December 24**

**4:00PM Church**

(Nativity Play)

**4:00PM Trumpet Room**

(Nativity Play)

**6:00PM Church**

**8:00PM Spanish**

**11:00PM (10:15 prelude)**



## FOR SINGLE CATHOLICS

24th Annual Epiphany Party at St. Raphael Church, 1513 Dunster Rd., Rockville, MD 20854; Saturday, January 13; starting at 7:00PM. BLACK TIE OPTIONAL. Includes delicious Ledo's lasagne dinner, complementary wine and beer, DJ, and more. (Usual age range 21-50s) Send \$22 check donation by January 5 to SCS Epiphany Party, St. Raphael, 1590 Kimblewick Rd., Rockville, MD 20854, or \$24 by credit card at <https://www.paypal.com/biz/fund?id=AJLD5F4VY43NE> by January 10 or \$28 cash, card or check at the door.) For more info. text Fr. T. Morrow at 240-426-5589.

This year Bishop Evelio Menjivar-Ayala will celebrate the **Annual Wedding Anniversary Mass** to honor the Vocation of Marriage on Saturday, February 10, 2024, 10:00AM at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. This Annual Mass is a celebration of the living vocation of all couples who provide a Catholic witness to the beauty of the Sacrament of Matrimony. **Couples must register with the parish office by Saturday, January 27, 2024 to attend the Mass** and/or receive a certificate from Cardinal Wilton Gregory in honor of their anniversary year.

Email to: [ekutchak@straphaels.org](mailto:ekutchak@straphaels.org) the following information for a certificate and/or to register to attend Mass.

- Name, as you would like it to appear on the Anniversary Certificate.
- Number of Years of Marriage you are celebrating.

## Ushers Ministry

We need your help! The Usher Ministry is in need of volunteers for all weekend masses. The Ministry of Hospitality is truly a service to the Church and is a great opportunity to serve with very little time commitment required. This is an ideal ministry for families to serve together. Please contact Terry Salsgiver at 301-437-2018 or [tsalsgiver@comcast.net](mailto:tsalsgiver@comcast.net).

**If you are approached by someone in church or parking lot in need of help, please hand them a bulletin. The SVdP intake number is also on bulletin front cover.**



The Society of St. Vincent de Paul  
St. Raphael Catholic Church Conference  
1513 Dunster Road Rockville MD 20854  
240-447-7027 - Intake

If you or someone you come in contact with are in need of financial help for utilities, housing, food, or other needs, please call the phone number above. If no one answers, leave a message, giving your name and phone number, repeating the phone number a second time.

You will receive a call from one of our members within 24 hours. If you don't receive a return call in 24 hours, please call again to make sure the message wasn't missed.

## Luke 2:11- "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord."

At Christmas, this is our time to celebrate the birth of Jesus our Lord and savior. So, amidst the presents, cookie decorating and Christmas parties, remember, Jesus is the reason for the season.

Your eGiving donations allows our ministry to continue to provide gifts to the community and you can easily get started by:

- Visiting [faith.direct/MD34](https://faith.direct/MD34)
- Calling Faith Direct Customer Service at 866-507-8757

Thank you and may God bless your generosity.

Father Mike Salah

## Scripture Readings for the Week of December 24, 2023

### Sunday Fourth Sunday of Advent

2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16; Ps 89:2-3, 4-5, 27, 29; Rom 16:25-27; Lk 1:26-38

### Monday The Nativity of the Lord (Christmas)

*Vigil Mass:* Is 62:1-5; Ps 89:4-5, 16-17, 27, 29; Acts 13:16-17, 22-25; Mt 1:1-25 or Mt 1:18-25

*Mass During the night:* Is 9:1-6; Ps 96:1-2, 2-3, 11-12, 13; Ti 2:11-14; Lk 2:1-14

*Mass at Dawn:* Is 62: 11-12; Ps 97: 1, 6, 11-12; Ti 3: 4-7; Lk 2: 15-20

*Mass during the Day:* Is 52:7-10; Ps 98:1, 2-3, 3-4, 5-6; Heb 1:1-6; Jn 1:1-18 or Jn 1:1-5, 9-14

### Tuesday Feast of Saint Stephen, First Martyr

Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59; Ps 31:3cd-4, 6 & 8ab, 16bc & 17; Mt 10:17-22

### Wednesday Feast of Saint John, Apostle and Evangelist

1 Jn 1:1-4; Ps 97:1-2, 5-6, 11-12; Jn 20:1a & 2-8

### Thursday Feast of Holy Innocents, Martyrs

1 Jn 1:5—2:2; Ps 124:2-3, 4-5, 7cd-8; Mt 2:13-18

### Friday Memorial of Saint Thomas Becket, Bishop and Martyr

1 Jn 2:3-11; Ps 96:1-2a, 2b-3, 5b-6; Lk 2:22-35

### Saturday 1 Jn 2:12-17; Ps 96:7-8a, 8b-9, 10; Lk 2:36-40

### Sunday Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph

Sir 3:2-6, 12-14 or Gn 15:1-6, 21:1-3; Ps 128:1-2, 3, 4-5 or Ps 105:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 8-9; Col 3:12-21 or 3:12-17 or Heb 11:8, 11-12, 17-19; Lk 2:22-40

## THE POPE'S INTENTION FOR DECEMBER

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.

## CONTACTING THE PARISH COUNCIL

The Parish Council serves the St. Raphael community by advising the Pastor on matters of concern to parishioners. If you would like the Council to consider a particular issue, please feel free to send an email message to: [parishcouncil@straphaels.org](mailto:parishcouncil@straphaels.org).





# A PRAYER SERVICE FOR YOUR HOME



## 1. Set up a Sacred Space

- Gather a few religious items from around your house to make a small prayer space. Consider including:
  - A Bible
  - A candle
  - A Crucifix, Cross, or picture of Jesus
  - A rosary or images of Mary and the saints.
  - Holy Water
  - Paper & pencils for writing prayer intentions
  - If you have children, have them draw pictures of Jesus, or a saint and include their drawing.



## 2. Begin with the Sign of the Cross

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

R: Amen.



## 3. Read and Reflect on the Scripture Readings of the Day



You can find the daily readings at [usccb.org/bible/readings](http://usccb.org/bible/readings).

**Begin each reading:** A reading from...

**End each reading:** The Word of the Lord, R: *Thanks be to God.*

**End the Gospel reading:** The Gospel of the Lord, R: *Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ.*

Watch a Gospel reflection or use these questions to reflect on one of the readings

- Daily reflection: [usccb.org/bible/reflections](http://usccb.org/bible/reflections)
- Sunday Reflection: [youtube.com/washarchdiocese](http://youtube.com/washarchdiocese)

### For Adults:

- What words, images, or ideas stood out for you in the reading?
- How do those words, images, or ideas relate to your life right now?
- What is God saying to you? What is He asking you to do?

### For Children:

- What's happening in this Bible story? What are the people thinking or feeling in this story?
- How do you see God working in this Bible story?
- What did you learn from this Bible story?

## Prayer Moves Us to Action

As we draw closer to the Lord in prayer, He helps us to see the needs of our brothers and sisters. Who do you see in need?

- Write a thank you note to workers in hospitals, nursing homes, grocery stores, etc. Thank them for working hard to insure health and safety for all of us.
- Send snail mail! Make cards for elderly neighbors or the homebound to brighten someone's day.
- Buy non-perishable food items and drop them off at your local parish or food pantry.



## 4. Share Prayer Intentions



Consider reading aloud these prayer intentions; then go around and invite everyone present to share a prayer intention.

**Leader:** Lord, we turn to you with all our hopes and fears, our joys and our sorrows. Hear our prayers, fill our hearts with hope, and grant us your peace.

**Leader:** For all people of faith, that we may find closeness to God and His Church, even in times of isolation. We pray to the Lord. R: *Lord hear our prayer.*

**Leader:** For local and world leaders, may God guide them in making decisions for the common good. We pray to the Lord. R: *Lord hear our prayer.*

**Leader:** For the sick, the vulnerable, the fearful, and the lonely, may God bring them healing, comfort, and peace. We pray to the Lord. R: *Lord hear our prayer.*

**Leader:** For what else shall we pray? (Allow each person to share a prayer intention, responding after each prayer with: We pray to the Lord. R: *Lord hear our prayer.*)

## 5. Pray the Lord's Prayer



Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; Thy Kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.

## 6. Pray an Act of Spiritual Communion

**An Act of Spiritual Communion by St. Alphonsus Liguori:** My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament. I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as if You were already there and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen.



## 7. Closing Prayer



Close with the following prayer of thanksgiving - even in difficult times, we can foster a heart of gratitude!

Lord, we thank you for this time of prayer and for our community of faith who, even in this time of isolation, are drawn together in our continued worship of You. We entrust all our prayers, work, joys, and sufferings to You, Lord Jesus, and ask you to fill our hearts with hope and love. For what do we give thanks?

After everyone has a chance to share, end with:

**Leader:** Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good  
R: *His mercy endures forever.*

**Leader:** May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life. In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. R: Amen.



# School News

DECEMBER 24, 2023



A peek behind our classroom doors



## Advent Wreath Making



In preparation for Advent, school families enjoyed a Sunday afternoon making wreaths, decorating cupcakes and making the season bright.



Merry  
CHRISTMAS

[www.straphaelschoolmd.org](http://www.straphaelschoolmd.org) | [www.srnsmd.org](http://www.srnsmd.org) |    @SRSrockville



## Sponsor-A-Student

Yes! I would like to help educate a new or current student at St. Raphael School / Nursery School who would not be able to attend otherwise.

### 1 year of SRS tuition:

- ☐ One lump sum of \$10,300
- ☐ Four quarterly installments of \$2,575 each
- ☐ 12 monthly installments of \$859 each

— or —

I will contribute the following amt: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

My contact information:

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

I would like

- ☐ the school to decide who benefits from my gift
- ☐ my gift to benefit the following student or family: \_\_\_\_\_

■ St. Raphael is 501(c)(3) nonprofit; your donation should qualify as a charitable deduction. Tax-deductible gifts may not be made to benefit family members. Consult details of your gift with your tax adviser.

■ If paying by check, make payable to "St. Raphael School" with "Sponsor-A-Student" in the memo line, and remit, along with this completed form, to St. Raphael School, Attn: Teri Dwyer, 1513 Dunster Road, Rockville, MD 20854

■ If paying by credit card, visit the school website at [www.straphaelschoolmd.org](http://www.straphaelschoolmd.org) and click "Support Us."

■ For questions, contact Principal Teri Dwyer at [tdwyer@straphaels.org](mailto:tdwyer@straphaels.org) or at 301-762-2143.

## This Holiday Season, Give The Gift Of A Catholic Education Sponsor-A-Student

We at St. Raphael School are forever grateful to the many members of our community who were so generous during the construction of the parish Educational Building. At that time, we also heard from



those who said they wanted their donation to directly benefit a child, so we introduced Sponsor-A-Student, a program that has assisted several children since its inception in 2011. Many parish families want their child to be in a Christ-centered classroom, but the unfortunate reality is that some simply cannot afford it. Sponsor-A-Student allows friends of St. Raphael to open the doors of our remarkable school for those who wouldn't be able to attend on their own. Won't you consider giving a helping hand to a

child right here in your own parish? Your gift of any amount will be eternally appreciated!

## You can make a difference in the life of a parish child

[www.straphaelschoolmd.org](http://www.straphaelschoolmd.org) | [www.srnsmd.org](http://www.srnsmd.org) | [f](#) [t](#) [i](#) @SRSrockville



## **The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph**

### **Mass Schedule for Sunday, December 31**

**Saturday, 5PM, Sunday, 7:00, 8:30, 10:00, 11:30AM, 1:00PM Spanish**

**Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God, January 1,  
is not a holy day of obligation this year.**

**We will have a Vigil Mass—  
Sunday, December 31, 6:00PM  
and  
January 1 Masses  
9:00AM  
1:00PM Spanish**

**Holy Mass  
followed by  
Healing Prayers**



**January 2, 7:00 PM**

**Confessions will continue  
during Mass and Healing  
Prayers.**

**The Novena prayers are  
not recited on Mass and  
Healing Prayer Tuesdays.**

The Respect for Life committee invites you to sign up to commit to pray three Memorares each day. <https://memorares4maryland.org/index.php>

Blessed Mother Mary, child of the Father, mother of the Son, spouse of the Holy Spirit, intercede for us to protect the lives of Maryland's babies and the souls of her children.

***St. Raphael Church Married  
Couples – One Day Retreat***

***Saving Our Families***

***Saturday, February 10, 2024***

***The whole family's invited.***

***For Info: call 240-464-8285***

***Email: [joe@simplexstruc.com](mailto:joe@simplexstruc.com)***

### **Looking Ahead to January Events**

**An Introduction to the Theology of the  
Body: Discovering the Master Plan for  
Your Life**

January 11—February 29, 2024  
(8 sessions on Thursday Evenings  
7:30-8:30 PM on Zoom)

If you are interested, contact  
[tsalsgiver@comcast.net](mailto:tsalsgiver@comcast.net) or  
call/text 301-437-2018



## Religious Education

Mary Beaudoin, 202-294-7697



### Religious Education Classes

St. Raphael Religious Education (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.

Find the SRRE webpage at <https://www.straphaels.org/religious-education>

**The SRRE Office coordinates sacrament preparation for all children ages 7-18.** This includes Baptism, Confirmation, Reconciliation, and Eucharist. For more information on our faith formation and sacrament preparation programs, please contact Mary Beaudoin.

### SRRE Calendar

Find the SRRE Calendar at our webpage:

<https://www.straphaels.org/religious-education> (scroll down)

Here are a few highlights:

- Christmas Break on December 24-25 and December 31-January 1
- SRRE Classes resume on January 7 and 8
- No classes on January 14-15 or on February 18-19
- Spring Break during Holy Week and Easter Week, March 24-25, and March 31-April 1
- End-of-the-Year Social on May 13

### SRRE Class Aide Needed

We are in need of a **class aide** for a first grade class on Mondays at 4:20-5:50 PM. Serving as a class aide is a great way for parents (and other adults) to be part of the SRRE team while their child is in class, and to gain experience for the ministry of catechesis. By serving as class aides, middle school and high school students can earn service hours and learn about teaching and catechesis. Please contact Mary Beaudoin for details.

### A Family Prayer for Christmas



Loving God, on this Christmas day we are filled with joy. You have given to us the greatest gift, your Son, Jesus, born as a little baby. He is the true light that scatters the darkness of this world. You sent angels to announce Jesus' birth. The shepherds heard the angels' song of praise and they rejoiced in the Good News. Fill our hearts with love and peace to last throughout the coming year, and through your Holy Spirit, gently shape us into a holy family pleasing to you. May the light of faith shine in all we do. We make this prayer through Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

### First Penance and First Eucharist Notes



- This week families with children preparing for First Eucharist in April and May 2024 are completing the first five chapters of *God's Gift Reconciliation* (younger children) or *God's Gift Reconciliation and Eucharist* (older children), and memorizing the Prayer of the Penitent.

- Our First Reconciliation Get-Ready Morning will be held on Saturday, January 20, 9:30-11:30 AM in the Trumpet Room
- First Penance/Reconciliation is scheduled for Wednesday, January 31, at 7:00 PM, and Saturday, February 3, at 10:30 AM.

### Confirmation Year I and Year II Notes

- Confirmation Year 1 students are starting their Confirmation Service Projects. Focusing on the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy, young people complete ten or more hours of service in their parish, neighborhood, and/or broader community. They then write a reflection paper describing how this service is rooted in their baptismal call to follow Jesus. The completed Confirmation Service Project is due September 1, 2024.
- Candidates for Confirmation in May 2024 (Confirmation Year 2) are working on their Saint Project and prayerfully identifying a Confirmation sponsor. The Saint Project and Confirmation Sponsor Certificate are due January 26. (Note that the late Confirmation Service Projects are due on December 15.)
- We are pleased that Bishop Bishop Evelio Menjivar will be coming to St. Raphael for Confirmation on Saturday, April 20, at 10:30 AM and 1:00 PM.
- Find Confirmation preparation forms at <https://www.straphaels.org/confirmation-1>



### Christ Promises to Restore and Renew His People



"Our world is hurting. We all need healing, yet many of us are separated from the very source of our strength. Jesus Christ invites us to return to the source and summit of our faith in the celebration of the Eucharist. The National Eucharistic Revival is a movement to restore understanding and devotion to this great mystery here in the United States by helping us renew our worship of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist." - <https://www.eucharisticrevival.org/>

Pope Francis invites us "to discover anew the sense of wonder and awe at the Lord's great gift of himself and to spend time with him in the celebration of the Holy Mass and in personal prayer and adoration before the Blessed Sacrament."

Children and teens enjoy "making a visit" to the Blessed Sacrament. It can be a welcome refuge of silence and a nudge to contemplative prayer. Find ideas for

Adoration for Children at TeachingCatholicKids.com

<https://www.teachingcatholickids.com/eucharistic-adoration/>

Adoration for Teens and Young Adults:

<https://bustedhalo.com/ministry-resources/a-beginners-guide-to-eucharistic-adoration>

### Acceptance of God's Will

Today we continue Year B in the cycle of Sunday readings with the Fourth Sunday of Advent. Remember to make time to reflect on the [Scripture readings](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/122423.cfm) with your family: <https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/122423.cfm>

Readings: 2 Samuel 7:1-5, 9-11, 16 (the Lord's promises to David); Romans 16:25-27 (doxology); Luke 1:26-38 (the annunciation of the Lord)

Key Passage: Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her. (Luke 1:38)

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

- Adults: How do you open your heart to what God wants for you? How do you follow the pathway that leads to happiness?
- Kids: Is there something hard you need to do this week? What might make it easier?

### Synod on Synodality

Over three weeks in October, Catholic clergy and laypeople gathered in Rome for an assembly, which was part of the multiyear Synod on Synodality. Below is an excerpt from the synthesis report from that gathering. The report is entitled *A Synodal Church on Mission* and Part 2 is "Gathered and Sent by the Trinity."

#### Convergences - continued

Conversation in the Spirit is a tool that, even with its limitations, enables authentic listening in order to discern what the Spirit is saying to the Churches. Its practice has elicited joy, awe and gratitude and has been experienced as a path of renewal that transforms individuals, groups, and the Church. The word "conversation" expresses more than mere dialogue: it interweaves thought and feeling, creating a shared vital space. That is why we can say that *conversion* is at play in *conversation*. This is an anthropological reality found in different peoples and cultures, who gather together in solidarity to deal with and decide matters vital to the community. Grace brings this human experience to fruition. Conversing "in the Spirit" means living the experience of sharing in the light of faith and seeking God's will in an authentically evangelical atmosphere within which the Holy Spirit's unmistakable voice can be heard.

Since synodality is ordered to mission, Christian communities are to enter into solidarity with those of other religions, convictions and cultures, thus avoiding, on the one hand, the risk of self-referentiality and self-preservation, and on the other hand the risk of loss of identity. The logic of dialogue, expressed in mutual learning and journeying together must come to characterize evangelical proclamation, service to those experiencing poverty, care for our common home, and theological research.

Link to Synthesis Report: <https://www.synod.va/en/synodal-process/the-universal-phase/documents.html>

#### Marriage Moments

"On the first day of Christmas my true love gave to me, a partridge in a pear tree." What's the silliest, most creative, or most romantic gift your true love has given you? Be a humble human today. That's what Jesus did by becoming human.

#### Parenting Pointers

If your child is old enough to remember past Christmases, talk about favorite customs and perhaps even a snafu that might have happened. Remember and laugh together.

\*Marriage Moments and Parenting Pointers by Susan Vogt, [www.SusanVogt.net](http://www.SusanVogt.net)

#### Laudate Deum

*This year on the feast of Saint Francis of Assisi, Pope Francis released a new apostolic exhortation on the climate crisis. Laudate Deum is addressed to "all people of good will."*

3. This is a global social issue and one intimately related to the dignity of human life. The Bishops of the United States have expressed very well this social meaning of our concern about climate change, which goes beyond a merely ecological approach, because "our care for one another and our care for the earth are intimately bound together. Climate change is one of the principal challenges facing society and the global community. The effects of climate change are borne by the most vulnerable people, whether at home or around the world." In a few words, the Bishops assembled for the Synod for Amazonia said the same thing: "Attacks on nature have consequences for people's lives." And to express bluntly that this is no longer a secondary or ideological question, but a drama that harms us all, the African bishops stated that climate change makes manifest "a tragic and striking example of structural sin."

Find the full *Laudate Deum* document online at the Vatican website.



#### Prayer for Peace

Lord Jesus Christ,

who are called the Prince of Peace,  
who are yourself our peace and  
reconciliation,

who so often said, "Peace to you,"  
grant us peace.

Make all men and women witnesses of  
truth, justice, and brotherly love.

Banish from their hearts whatever might  
endanger peace.

Enlighten our rulers that they may guarantee  
and defend the great gift of peace.

May all peoples of the earth become as  
brothers and sisters.

May longed-for peace blossom forth  
and reign always over us all.

Amen.

- Pope St. John XXIII





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