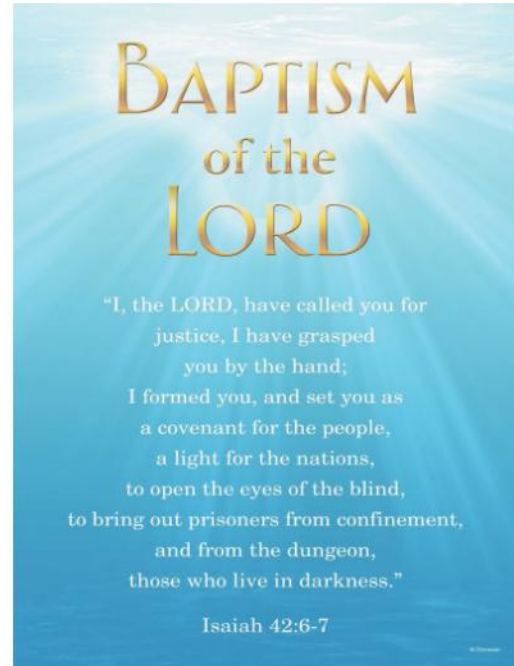


St. Raphael Catholic Church



EPIPHANY



1513 Dunster Road Rockville, Maryland 20854

January 7, 2024

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. Christian Huebner, Parochial Vicar, 301-762-2143, ext. 150
Email: 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
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
Luisa Duarte, Spanish Coordinator, 240-864-2565
Eileen Kutchak, Dir. of Parish Programming, ext. 110
Pietro Lojacono, 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 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 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.

TODAY



SUNDAY, JANUARY 7

after the 8:30, 10, 11:30 AM and 1PM Masses

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, call (443) 400-7017, or email us at: 3015@HelpOurMarriage.org

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.

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 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.

**This weekend's Second Collection is for the
Archdiocese of Military Services**

Bulletin notices are due in writing ON THURSDAY, THE WEEK BEFORE THE published date. Notices may be emailed to: esalatto@straphaels.org . This bulletin was transmitted December 27.

Mass Schedule and Intentions for the Week

Monday, January 8

6:30AM Michael Williams (d)
9:00AM Robert Stovall (d)

Tuesday, January 9

6:30AM Andrew & Nina Mark (d)
9:00AM Helen Sisto (d)

Wednesday, January 10

6:30AM Jeremy Arnold Family
9:00AM Jonathan Arnold & Family

Thursday, January 11

6:30AM Dana Reitarowski (d)
9:00AM Helen & Edward Janus (d)

Friday, January 12

6:30AM Jimmy Brennan (d)
9:00AM Robert Stovall (d)

Saturday, January 13

9:00AM M/M C. K. Park (d)
5:00PM Fr. Christian Marilyn Katz (d)

Sunday, January 14

7:00AM	Fr. Mike	Members of the Parish
8:30AM	Fr. Tom	J.W. Park & Julie Park (d)
10:00AM	Fr. Tom	John Callahan (d)
11:30AM	Fr. Mike	James Brown (d)
1:00PM	Fr. Christian	Marcelo Aquino (d)
6:00PM	Fr. Christian	Lucas Estevez (d)

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 and click the link to YouTube Channel.

Baptism: December 23
[Olivia Claire Palmer-Trout](#)

Please pray for the soul of
Marilyn Renick



**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.**

Prayer Corner

January 7, 2024

The texts of the Mass are a kind of treasury of prayers which we can contemplate upon and pray in personal devotion as well. Today's great feast of the Epiphany is an outstanding instance of this.

The Prayer over the Offerings is said by the priest after the altar has been prepared with the bread and wine and the sacred vessels, just as the Eucharistic Liturgy is about to begin in earnest. On the day of Epiphany, the priest prays this:

*Look with favor, Lord, we pray,
on these gifts of your Church,
in which are offered now not gold or frankincense or myrrh,
but he who by the is proclaimed,
sacrificed and received, Jesus Christ.
Who lives and reigns forever and ever. Amen.*



This prayer makes clear that what we are about to undertake in the Eucharistic liturgy at the altar is in direct contact with what the magi did centuries before. If we have eyes to see, the prayer professes that what we now undertake is a greater kind of worship than what they did, when they could lay offerings directly before Jesus and Mary in Bethlehem, physically handing their gifts to them. Instead, we mystically handle Jesus Christ himself.

This is worth taking to prayer. The Mass is full of such treasures, passing before our eyes and ears each time we worship. Our times of personal devotion give us more time to behold Christ through these prayers, and be drawn up into his love by them.

Anima Christi

Soul of Christ, sanctify me.

Body of Christ, save me.

Blood of Christ, embolden me.

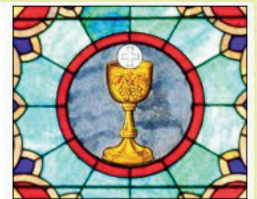
Water from the side of Christ, wash me. Passion of Christ, strengthen me.

O good Jesus, hear me. Within your wounds hide me.

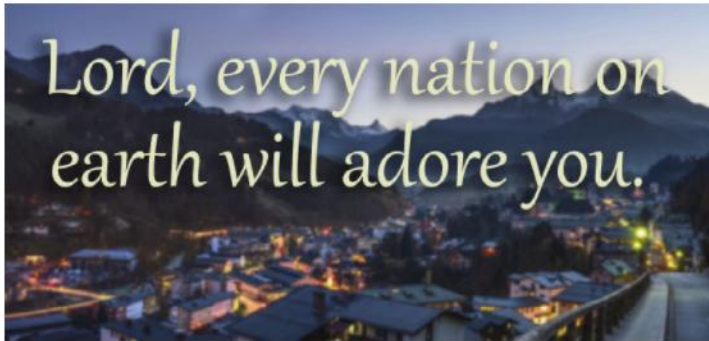
Never permit me to be parted from you. From the evil Enemy defend me.

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>



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 lasagna dinner, complimentary wine and beer, DJ, and more. (Usual age range 21-50s)

Send \$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.

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.

High School Youth

Theology of the Body Series – 1/16 – 4/19

All high school teens are invited for a Going Deeper series on St. John Paul II's Theology of the Body. This 12 week program will meet each Tuesday evening, 7:30-8:45pm and explore the meaning of the body, chastity, sexuality, dating, marriage and more. Please contact Annie McHugh at amchugh@straphaels.org to sign up! Cost is \$15.00.

A Person's A Person – 1/7

Join us for the 1st of a 3 part series on Pro-Life issues as we examine what personhood is and why it should be granted to pre-born human! All high school teens are invited from 7-9pm in the Youth Center for games, food and faith.

It's Science – 1/14

In our 2nd night on abortion, we'll look more deeply at the pre-born human and embryology to demonstrate how the moment of conception is the most rational and scientifically endorsed time to grant life rights! We'll also look at some of the tough cases such as rape/health of the mother that are tough to articulate a pro-life message. 7-9pm in the Youth Center!

March for Life – 1/19

Join St. Raphael's YG in standing up for the rights of the unborn at the National March for Life! We'll be attending a youth rally/mass beforehand, followed by the National March on the mall. Email Mike McHugh at mmchugh@straphaels.org for more details.

For more information on programs, or to be added to a youth ministry listserve, please contact Mike McHugh at mmchugh@straphaels.org

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.

The **Legion of Mary** will pray the Rosary (bilingual, English and Spanish) every Thursday at 6:30PM, before the Knights of Columbus who will pray the Divine Mercy Chaplet at 7:00PM. Blessing and Reposition of the Blessed Sacrament will follow.

THE POPE'S INTENTION FOR JANUARY 2024

FOR THE GIFT OF DIVERSITY IN THE CHURCH

We pray that the Holy Spirit may help us to recognize the gift of different charisms within the Christian community and to discover the richness of different traditions and rituals in the Catholic Church.

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.

Holy Mass followed by Healing Prayers



February 6, 7:00 PM

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

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

Scripture Readings for the Week of January 7, 2024

Sunday The 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 Baptism of the Lord
Is 42:1-4, 6-7 or Is 55:1-11 or Acts 10:34-38 or 1 Jn 5:1-9;
Ps 29:1-2, 3-4, 3, 9-10 or Is 12:2-3, 4bcd, 5-6 Mk 1:7-11

Tuesday 1 Sm 1:9-20; 1 Sm 2:1, 4-5, 6-7, 8abcd;
Mk 1:21-28

Wednesday 1 Sm 3:1-10, 19-20; PS 40:2 and 5, 7-8a,
8b-9, 10; Mk 1:29-39

Thursday 1 Sm 4:1-11; Ps 44:10-11, 14-15, 24-25;
Mk 1:40-45

Friday 1 Sm 8:4-7, 10-22a; Ps 89:16-17, 18-19;
Mk 2:1-12

Saturday Memorial of Saint Hilary, Bishop and
Doctor of the Church
1 Sm 9:1-4, 17-19; 10:1; Ps 21:2-3, 4-5, 6-7; Mk 2:13-17

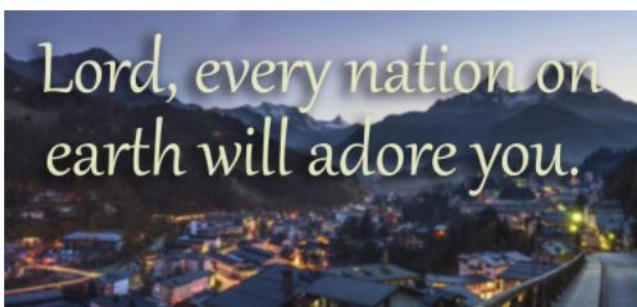
Sunday Second Sunday in Ordinary Time
1 Sm 3:3b-10, 19; Ps 40:2, 4, 7-8, 8-9, 10; 1 Cor 6:13c-15a,
17-20; Jn 1:35-42

For men who are parishioners in The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington and interested in learning more about the diaconate, please attend one of the “come and see” events to be presented by the Office of Diaconate Formation during January-March, 2024.

There may be a total of twelve such events in various parts of the Archdiocese, but at the present time, scheduling of nine has been finalized at:

- Tuesday, January 23, 2024, 7-9 pm: St. John Vianney, Prince Frederick, MD (Calvert County Deanery)
- Wednesday, January 24, 2024, 7-9 pm: St. Nicolas, Laurel, MD (Upper Prince George's County Deanery)
- Thursday, January 25, 2024, 7-9 pm: St. Mary, Piscataway, Clinton, MD (Lower Prince George's County Deanery)
- Sunday, January 28, 2024, after the 12 noon Sunday Spanish Mass: St. Mark the Evangelist, Hyattsville, MD - this will be a bilingual Spanish & English meeting (Middle Prince George's County Deanery)
- Wednesday, January 31, 2024, 7-9 pm: Immaculate Heart of Mary, Lexington Park, MD - this will be a bilingual Spanish & English meeting (St. Mary's County Deanery)
- **Thursday, February 8, 2024, 7-9 pm: Our Lady of the Visitation, Darnestown, MD (Upper Montgomery County West Deanery)**
- Sunday, February 11, 2024, after the 10 am English language Mass: St. Philip the Apostle, Camp Springs, MD (Lower Prince George's County Deanery)
- **Wednesday, February 21, 2024, 7-9 pm: St. Camillus, Silver Spring, MD (Lower Montgomery County Deanery)**
- Tuesday, March 5, 2024, 7-9 pm: St. Aloysius, Leonardtown, MD (St. Mary's County Deanery)

If you wish to attend one of the scheduled sessions, please contact Ms. Diane Biggs in the Diaconate Offices at 301-853-5345 or at biggsd@adw.org. Potential applicants can refer to the Office of Diaconate Formation website at <https://adw.org/vocations/deacons/formation-program/> for details on the selection procedures and current timeline, as well as an inquiry form, or email Deacon Charles Huber, Assistant Director of Formation, at HuberC@adw.org with any questions.



School News

January 7, 2024



A peek behind our classroom doors



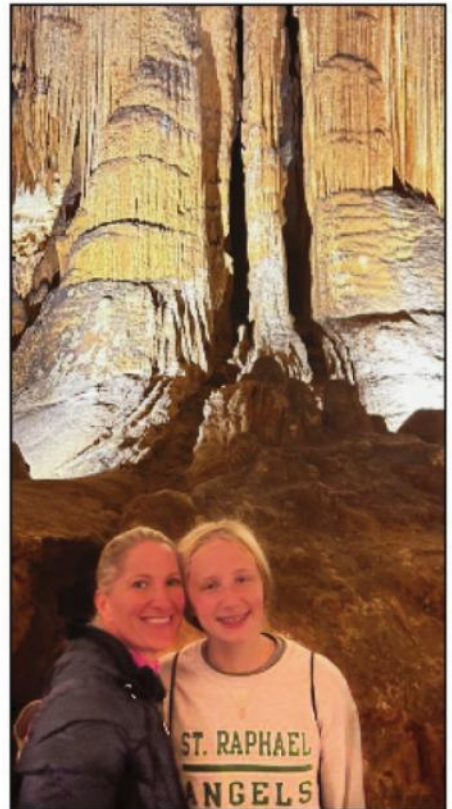
Fourth Grade Field Trip to the Baltimore Museum of Industry



www.straphaelschoolmd.org | www.srnsmd.org |    @SRSRockville



Seventh Grade Visits Luray Caverns



**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 or
call/text 301-437-2018

Join thousands of Catholics across the country in prayer and action during the bishops' pro-life novena, [9 Days for Life](#):

Mark your Calendar for Novena
Tuesday, January 16 - Wednesday, January 24, 2024

For the Novena and other pro-life events go to:
[Annual Pro-https://www.usccb.org/prolife/annual-pro-life-events](https://www.usccb.org/prolife/annual-pro-life-events)

Hebrews: The New and Eternal Covenant

**Tuesday Mornings 10 -12:00 Noon in PARISH LIBRARY
January 16 – March 12, 2024**

**Tuesday Mornings 10:30 – 12:00 Noon on ZOOM
January 16 – March 12, 2024**

The book of Hebrews is like a “Little Catechism” that reveals the rich truths that are foundational to our Catholic Faith.

This 8-session study, with Andrew Swafford and Jeff Cavins, helps us to see the astounding generosity of God in the wonders He has given us in the Church.

For further information and to sign up, contact Dorothy Welsh at dwwelsh5@aol.com.
View & order the Study Set (workbook & digital access \$29.95) at
www.ascensionpress.com and they will be sent directly to you.

“Saving Our Families”

Married Couples One Day Retreat - come with the whole family

Sat., Feb. 10th, 2024
9:00 AM to 4:00 PM

- Marriage as the Holy Cause
- Rekindling Wonder
- Our House Our Rules
- Growing Kids in Chastity

St. Raphael Domestic Church & Men's Fellowship, and the KOC Mater Dei Council # 9774 invite you to come and spend the day with the Lord and reflect on the life of your marriage and family.

The day will include: Mass, conferences, conversation, prayer and more. Children's Program & Care is provided (by the Youth Ministry). A Simple Lunch will be served. The event is free to all attending; however, a donation would be greatly appreciated.

To register, please use the QR code or follow the link: <https://kofc9774.org/married-couples-retreat/>.
Questions: please call Federico Sologuren, 202-438-5071. Whatever the form of response: please give your names, phone number & email, and number & ages of children attending.



January 18, 2024

“Come join thousands of Catholics in prayer for an increased respect for human life during the National Prayer Vigil for Life. The 5:00 p.m. Opening Mass on Thursday, January 18, will be celebrated by Bishop Michael Burbidge, Chairman of the USCCB Committee on Pro-Life Activities. The Vigil will take place at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, DC. For more information, please visit the National Shrine website at <https://www.nationalshrine.org/event/2024-national-prayer-vigil-for-life/>.

Religious Education

Mary Beaudoin, 202-294-7697



A Family Prayer for Christmastime

Loving God, during this Christmastime 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.



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.

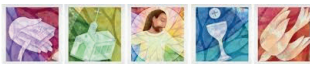
Help us to be willing to forgive ourselves and to forgive one another.

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.

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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:

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

First Penance and First Eucharist Notes

•Families with children preparing for First Eucharist in April and May are completing the the *God's Gift Reconciliation* workbook (younger children) or the first seven chapters of *God's Gift Reconciliation and Eucharist* and worksheets (older children), and memorizing the Prayer of the Penitent (Act of Contrition).

•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 will be celebrated on 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 and/or the 7 Themes of Catholic Social Teaching, 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.

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/>

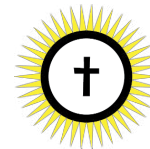
Pope Francis invites us "to discover anew the sense of wonder and awe at the Lord's great gift of himself and to spend time with him in the celebration of the Holy Mass and in personal prayer and adoration before the Blessed Sacrament."

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>



Unexpected Gifts

Today we continue Year B in the cycle of Sunday readings with the Epiphany of the Lord. Remember to make time to reflect on the [Scripture readings](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/010724.cfm) with your family: <https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/010724.cfm>

Readings: Isaiah 60:1-6 (glory of the new Zion); Ephesians 3:2-3, 5-6 (commission to preach God's plan); Matthew 2:1-12 (the visit of the magi)

Key Passage: On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother. (Matthew 2:10)

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

- ▶ Adults: When have you found the presence of Christ in an unexpected place?
- ▶ Kids: Where and in whom will you look for Jesus this week?

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."

Proposals

- j. It is proposed that the Churches should experiment with and adapt conversation in the Spirit, and other forms of discernment in ways they may consider appropriate drawing from diverse spiritual traditions relevant to the needs and cultures of their contexts. Appropriate forms of accompaniment can facilitate this practice, helping to grasp its logic and overcome possible resistance.
- k. Each local Church is encouraged to equip itself with suitable people trained to facilitate and accompany processes of ecclesial discernment.
- l. In order to illuminate ecclesial life, the practice of discernment can usefully be implemented in the pastoral sphere, in a way that is contextually appropriate. This will make it possible to recognise more readily the charisms present in the community, to entrust tasks and ministries wisely. Going beyond the mere planning of activities we will be able to plan pastoral paths in the light of the Spirit.

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

Marriage Moments

For some couples children come readily or even by surprise. Others painfully wait month after month hoping to become a parent. Or maybe you're past the childbearing age. Whatever your situation, pray for those who seek to become parents.

Parenting Pointers

Today is the feast of the Epiphany when the three wise men visited the Holy Family. Think of a wise thing that your child has done or something that he/she has taught you? Affirm this wisdom in your child. Learn from each other.

*Marriage Moments and Parenting Pointers by Susan Vogt, www.SusanVogt.net

Laudate Deum

On October 4, 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." Below is an excerpt.



Rethinking our use of power

24. Not every increase in power represents progress for humanity. We need only think of the "admirable" technologies that were employed to decimate populations, drop atomic bombs and annihilate ethnic groups. There were historical moments where our admiration at progress blinded us to the horror of its consequences. But that risk is always present, because "our immense technological development has not been accompanied by a development in human responsibility, values and conscience... We stand naked and exposed in the face of our ever-increasing power, lacking the wherewithal to control it. We have certain superficial mechanisms, but we cannot claim to have a sound ethics, a culture and spirituality genuinely capable of setting limits and teaching clear-minded self-restraint." It is not strange that so great a power in such hands is capable of destroying life, while the mentality proper to the technocratic paradigm blinds us and does not permit us to see this extremely grave problem of present-day humanity.

25. Contrary to this technocratic paradigm, we say that the world that surrounds us is not an object of exploitation, unbridled use and unlimited ambition. Nor can we claim that nature is a mere "setting" in which we develop our lives and our projects. For "we are part of nature, included in it and thus in constant interaction with it," and thus "we do not look at the world from without but from within."

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



Prayer for Peace

Lord God of peace, hear our prayer!

We have tried so many times and over so many years to resolve our conflicts by our own powers and by the force of our arms. How many moments of hostility and darkness have we experienced; how much blood has been shed; how many lives have been shattered; how many hopes have been buried... But our efforts have been in vain.

Now, Lord, come to our aid! Grant us peace, teach us peace; guide our steps in the way of peace. Open our eyes and our hearts, and give us the courage to say: "Never again war!"; "With war everything is lost". Instill in our hearts the courage to take concrete steps to achieve peace.

Lord, God of Abraham, God of the Prophets, God of Love, you created us and you call us to live as brothers and sisters. Give us the strength daily to be instruments of peace; enable us to see everyone who crosses our path as our brother or sister. Make us sensitive to the plea of our citizens who entreat us to turn our weapons of war into implements of peace, our trepidation into confident trust, and our quarreling into forgiveness.

Keep alive within us the flame of hope, so that with patience and perseverance we may opt for dialogue and reconciliation. In this way may peace triumph at last, and may the words "division", "hatred" and "war" be banished from the heart of every man and woman. Lord, defuse the violence of our tongues and our hands. Renew our hearts and minds, so that the word which always brings us together will be "brother", and our way of life will always be that of: Shalom, Peace, Salaam!

Amen.



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