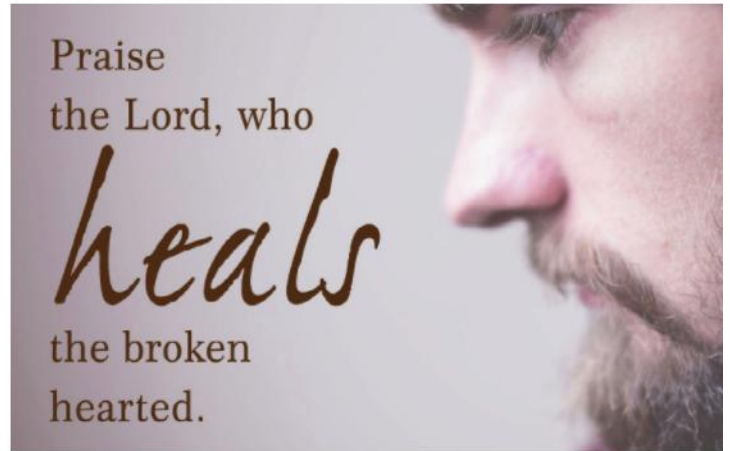
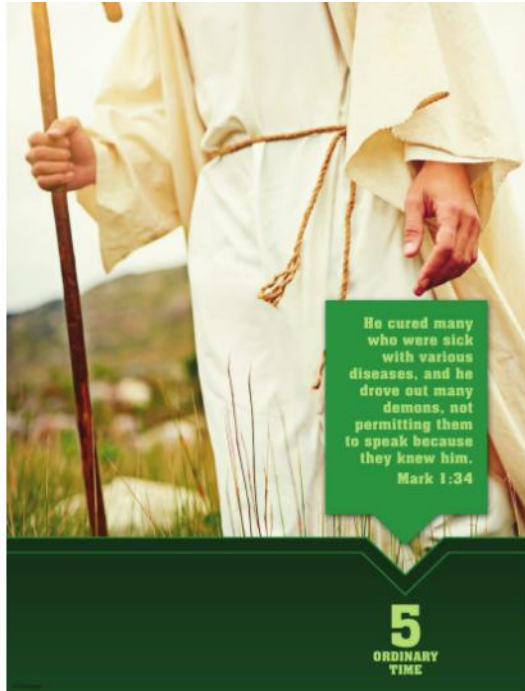


St. Raphael Catholic Church



1513 Dunster Road Rockville, Maryland 20854

February 4, 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, amchugh@straphaels.org
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.

United in Purpose: The 2024 Annual Catholic Services Appeal. This weekend we have been asked prayerfully to consider making a gift to the *2024 Annual Catholic Services Appeal*. Please complete or take a commitment form at Mass this weekend, or make your gift at give.adw.org. Visit appeal.adw.org to learn more about how the Annual Appeal benefits our parish and serves people in need throughout the archdiocese. It is our goal that every parish family will participate this year. All gifts will be credited towards our parish goal. Thank you in advance for your generous response to the *2024 Annual Catholic Services Appeal*!

Blessing of Throats

Sunday Masses, Saturday and Sunday, February 3-4.

Coffee and Donuts SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 4
after the 8:30, 10, 11:30 AM and 1PM Masses

**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.

2023 Contribution Statements

If you are in need of a 2023 contribution statement, please call or email Eileen Kutchak, 240-864-2510, ekutchak@straphaels.org with your last name and envelope number.

Those contributing through Faith Direct will receive an additional statement from Faith Direct. The Archdiocese Annual Appeal statements are sent to donors by the Archdiocese of Washington.

Ash Wednesday Collection is for the Church in the Developing World (Church in Latin America, Church in Central and Eastern Europe, Church in Africa. We thank you for your generosity.

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 January 30.

Mass Schedule and Intentions for the Week Fifth Week in Ordinary Time

Monday, February 5

6:30AM Patrick Walsh (d)
9:00AM John Piper (d)

Tuesday, February 6

6:30AM Richard Hacker (d)
9:00AM Edward Janus (d)

Wednesday, February 7

6:30AM Linda Hacker (d)
9:00AM Miguel Guerra

Thursday, February 8

6:30AM Merle Sober (d)
9:00AM Beth Stoycos (d)

Friday, February 9

6:30AM Joan Price (d)
9:00AM Jim Verme (d)

Saturday, February 10

9:00AM Karen Martin (d)
5:00PM Fr. Tom Amy Sherman (d)

Sunday, February 11

7:00AM	Fr. Tom	Ralph & Charlotte DeBlois (d)
8:30AM	Fr. Mike	Discavage Family
10:00AM	Fr. Christian	Nelle Lucas
11:30AM	Fr. Tom	James Brown (d)
1:00PM	Fr. Christian	Members of the Parish
6:00PM	Fr. Mike	Jerome & Dolores Leifeld (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: January 27
Gemma Clare Silverstrim

Please pray for the soul of

Claire L. Berbert
Edgardo De Jesus, father of Edgar De Jesus
Daniel Tan



**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.**



ST. RAPHAEL CATHOLIC CHURCH

1513 Dunster Rd., Rockville, MD 20854 Tel: 301-762-2143 Fax: 301-762-0719 www.straphaels.org

January 23, 2024

Dear St. Raphael School Community,

As you know it is rare that I write, so I trust you realize that I have news to share. After 34 years at St Raphael, Teri Dwyer has indicated that she will retire at the end of the school year. Teri started as Director of the Nursery school in 1990, opened our elementary school in 2006, worked with the design and construction of the new school building to completion in 2011, secured our Blue ribbon in 2019 and weathered the COVID storm. Teri has been recognized within the Archdiocese of Washington as Principal of the Year as well as nationally by the NCEA with the Lead, Learn, Proclaim Award for leadership and innovation. Teri leaves her mark on our family, and I know you share my gratitude for her leadership.

With the help of the Catholic Schools Office, we will form a search committee to fill Teri's void. Our goal will be to continue the good work in our school. We count on our dedicated teachers, our committed parents, and our fabulous students to ensure that our St Raphael Catholic Identity, excellence in education, and Mission driven program will thrive under new leadership.

Thank you for your support as we embark on this new challenge! I will keep you posted on our progress and count on your prayers as we begin our search.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Fr. Michael Salah".

Fr. Michael Salah
Pastor

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>

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.

Spring Retreat – Mar. 1-3

Join us for a weekend away at Skycroft Conference Center on Spring Retreat! All high school teens are encouraged to step back from the chaos and crazy of their lives and come away for prayer, fellowship & a chance to refresh their relationship with God. Retreat is a mix of sports, talks, discussion, prayer and much more! Cost is \$165.00, please contact Mike McHugh 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

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 2024 "come and see" events to be presented by the Office of the Permanent Diaconate Formation

Montgomery County

Thursday, February 8, 2024, 7-9 pm:

Our Lady of the Visitation, Darnestown, MD

Wednesday, February 21, 2024, 7-9 pm:

St. Camillus, Silver Spring, MD

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.

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.

Vocations Prayer Cards Coming Soon!

Here's something simple you and your family can do for Lent. Next weekend, you will see a vocations prayer card display in the church vestibule. Each card has information about a seminarian of The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington. Choose a card (or more than one) and pray for that seminarian each day during Lent. Who knows—you could be praying for a future pastor of our parish!

Scripture Readings for the Week of February 4, 2024

Sunday Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Jb 7:1-4, 6-7; Ps 147: 1-2, 3-4, 5-6; 1 Cor 9:16-19, 22-23; Mk 1:29-39

Monday Memorial of Saint Agatha, Virgin and Martyr

1 Kgs 8:1-7, 9-13; Ps 132:6-7, 8-10; Mk 6:53-56

Tuesday Memorial of Saint Paul Miki and Companions, Martyrs

1 Kgs 8:22-23, 27-30; Ps 84:3, 4, 5 and 10, 11; Mk 7:1-13

Wednesday

1 Kgs 10:1-10; Ps 37:5-6, 30-31, 39-40; Mk 7:14-23

Thursday Memorial of Saint Jerome Emiliani, Priest, and Saint Josephine Bakhita, Virgin

1 Kgs 11:4-13; Ps 106:3-4, 35-36, 37 and 40; Mk 7:24-30

Friday

1 Kgs 11:29-32; 12:19; Ps 81:10-11ab, 12-13, 14-15; Mk 7:31-37

Saturday Memorial of Saint Scholastica, Virgin

1 Kgs 12:26-32; 13:33-34; Ps 106:6-7ab, 19-20, 21-22; Mk 8:1-10

Sunday Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Lv 13:1-2; 44-46; Ps 32:1-2, 5, 11; 1 Cor 10:31—11:1; Mk 1:40-45

Rockville Catholic Summer Program

The Rockville Catholic Summer Program is the area's best option for summer camp in terms of both quality of programming and affordability! Registration for the 2024 season of RCSP opens in February! Visit our webpage, www.rockvillecatholicsummer.com for more information on how to sign up! New families are encouraged to fill out our new family form to get on the email list. Contact Mike McHugh at rockvillecatholicsummer@gmail.com with any questions.

THE POPE'S INTENTION FOR FEBRUARY 2024 FOR THE TERMINALLY ILL

We pray that those with a terminal illness, and their families, receive the necessary physical and spiritual care and accompaniment.

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.

For men in The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington

Men's Discernment Retreat

February 9–11, 2024

Washington Retreat House and Saint John Paul II Seminary



Pray and reflect on God's call, and hear the stories of priests and seminarians.

THE OFFICE OF PRIEST VOCATIONS invites men (ages 18 to 40s) who are interested in learning more about seminary and the priesthood, to attend the **2024 Men's Discernment Retreat**. The Retreat will take place from February 9 to February 11 at the Washington Retreat House and Saint John Paul II Seminary. This is an opportunity to pray and reflect on God's call, meet priests and seminarians, and hear their stories.

Please register by February 2, 2024, at <https://dcpriest.org/event/2024-mens-discernment-retreat/>



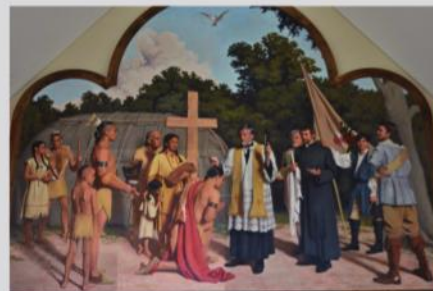
For additional information, contact
Fr. Mark Ivany, Director of Priest Vocations
202-636-9020 vocations@adw.org

For young men in high school in The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington
Quo Vadis Excursion in Prince George's County

Sunday, February 25, 2024 9:30 a.m.–2:00 p.m.

Want to learn more about the priesthood?

Register now for our excursion to Piscataway Park in Accokeek. The day starts with Mass at historic Saint Mary's of Piscataway, followed by a hike and lunch. Optional bus transportation is available.



Baptism of Piscataway Taux/Chief, Kittamaquond, on 7-15-1640, by Fr. White, S.J. Painting by Henry Wingate.

Join us for Mass, hiking, talks, lunch, and more!



There is no charge to attend this event, but you must register by Thursday, February 22, at <https://dcpriest.org/event/february-2024-quo-vadis-excursion/>



For additional information, contact
Fr. Mark Ivany, Director of Priest Vocations
202-636-9020 vocations@adw.org

For students in The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington
Vocations Mass for Students in 6th Grade

Thursday, March 21, 2024 10:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.

Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception
4000 Michigan Avenue, NE, Washington, D.C.



Sixth-grade students are encouraged to attend the 28th Annual Vocations Mass on March 21. Seminarians, priests, and religious brothers and sisters will be present after Mass to meet with students and answer their questions. For more information, please contact the Office of Priest Vocations at vocations@adw.org. Or, call 202-636-9020.

Please register your school now at <https://dcpriest.org/event/2024-vocations-mass-for-students-in-6th-grade/>

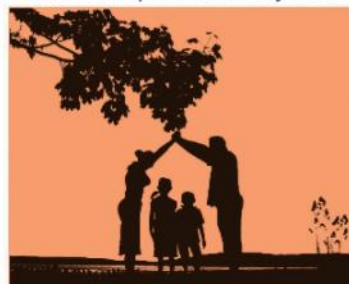


For additional information, contact
Fr. Mark Ivany, Director of Priest Vocations
202-636-9020 vocations@adw.org

"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.



School News

FEBRUARY 4, 2024



A peek behind our classroom doors



Scales and Tails

Scales and Tails, brought to SRNS from Cunningham State Park, gave our students an opportunity to learn about snakes and turtles. They even got to touch them!



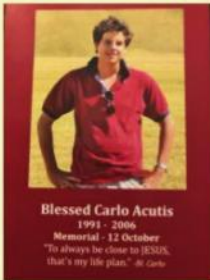
www.straphaelschoolmd.org | www.srnsmd.org |    @SRSRockville





St. Raphael Parish Mini Mission

Come to our parish Mini Mission on the Eucharist and experience an outstanding exhibit of 158 Eucharistic Miracles in 22 countries collected by Blessed Carlos Acutis, who said *"The Eucharist is My Highway to Heaven."* Each miracle is described on a color panel with photos and descriptions going back to the 3rd century and up to recent years. As we support the National Eucharistic Revival, this exhibit reminds us that Our Lord is truly present in the Eucharist and will inspire hearts to adore Him.



Eucharistic Miracle Exhibition Blessed Carlos Acutis

Where:
St. Raphael's All Purpose Room
Located in the School
When: February 24 and 25

Saturday, February 24

- 9am: Bilingual Mass (Mass of Day for Lent)
- 10-10:30am: Father Christian Huebner Talk
Eucharist, Eucharistic Miracles, and Carlo Acutis—Parish Library
- 10:30am-7pm: Eucharistic Miracles Exhibit, video of Carlo Acutis life, and pamphlets available in All Purpose Room

Sunday, February 25th

- 7:30am-8:00pm: Exhibit open in All Purpose Room

St. Raphael Catholic Church, 1513 Dunster Road, Rockville, MD
For more information email: laurebricequesnel@gmail.com or Anne Marie Begley, 301-767-7284.

Blessed Sacrament Bereavement Support Group

The Shrine of the Most Blessed Sacrament at 3630 Quesada Street, NW Washington, DC, 20015-2538, will offer an eight-week bereavement support group series for adults who have experienced the death of a parent, spouse, child, sibling or significant other. The next series will begin **Tuesday February 20, and continue for eight consecutive Tuesdays through April 9, 2024 from 7:00-8:30 PM.**

The meetings are virtual. For more information contact Jim Hoffman at hoffmanjpc@gmail.com or call cell: (202) 577 - 2213.

LENTEN FASTING & ABSTINENCE



Fasting

Ash Wednesday
Good Friday

Ages 18-59

Abstinence

Every Friday
during Lent

Ages 14+

How do we fast?

When fasting, a person is permitted to eat one full meal, as well as two smaller meals that together are not equal to a full meal.

Am I excused from fasting and abstinence?

Those that are excused from fast and abstinence outside the age limits include the **physically or mentally ill** including individuals suffering from chronic illnesses such as diabetes. Also excluded are **pregnant or nursing women**.

For more information on fasting and abstinence, visit uscgb.org.



ASH WEDNESDAY MASSES FEBRUARY 14, 2024



6:30 and
9:00 AM
4:30 and
6:30 PM
8:00 PM Spanish

Tuesday Confession During Lent:

6:30PM beginning February 20

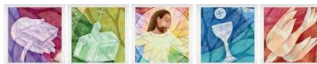
Fridays: Stations of the Cross:

After 9:00AM Mass, Mary's Way
6:30PM English and 7:15PM in Spanish



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:

- Sunday, February 11, classes at 4:30-5:45 PM
- No classes 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 Reconciliation and First Eucharist



Congratulations to all our children who received First Penance/Reconciliation this past week!

This week, families with children preparing for First Eucharist in April and May are beginning the *God's Gift Eucharist* workbook (younger children) or chapter 9 of *God's Gift Reconciliation and Eucharist* and worksheets (older children).

First Eucharist will be celebrated on Saturdays, April 27 and May 4

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.

Saint Projects and Sponsor Certificates for those in Confirmation Year 2 are due in the SRRE office.

Confirmation Interviews begin on February 11.

We are pleased that Bishop Evelio Menjivar will be coming to St. Raphael for Confirmation on Saturday, April 20, at 10:30 AM and 1:00 PM.

Letters to Bishop Menjivar are due in the SRRE office on March 15.

Find Confirmation preparation forms at <https://www.straphaels.org/confirmation-1>

Eucharistic Revival: Reverence and Mission

Our summary of the preparatory Synod listening sessions that took place here in the Archdiocese of Washington confirmed that our people continue to believe in the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament. That was comforting news for me since so many other recent studies indicate that many Catholics do not understand or accept this vitally important teaching.

Nonetheless, like communities everywhere, we also need to focus more on what the Eucharist means for us and what it demands from us. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' National Eucharistic Revival project seeks both to deepen our belief in the Real Presence and to explore what that belief imposes on each Catholic.

Catholic teaching calls us to believe that Christ is truly present – Body, Soul and Divinity – in the Eucharist. It is truth of that Presence that summons us to respond in generous ways through frequent and active participation in the Mass which is the summit and source of the Christian life, along with quiet prayer before the Blessed Sacrament. When we convey our conviction in the truth of the Lord's Eucharistic Presence, we also agree to respond to that Presence in ways that will inevitably take us into the world's neediest places and to respond in charity and justice to those who live on the periphery of society. Simply put, we cannot dine on the Eucharist and yet remain disinterested in those who endure physical, spiritual or emotional hungers.

Any true Eucharistic Revival must increase our faith in Christ's Presence but also underscore the obligations that flow from that reality. Therefore as we plan special events to honor the Lord's gift of the Blessed Sacrament, we must pair those same events with a heightened summons to live charitably and in active response to the needs of those who look to us as witnesses to that truth.

– Cardinal Wilton Gregory, *Catholic Standard*, May 10, 2013

Comfort for the Sorrowful

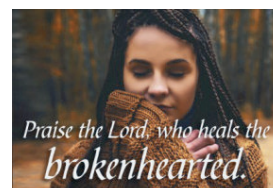
Today we continue Year B in the cycle of Sunday readings with the Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time. Remember to make time to reflect on the [Scripture readings](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/020424.cfm) with your family:

Readings: Job 7:1–4, 6–7 (Job's first reply); 1 Corinthians 9:16–19, 22–23 (Paul's recompense); Mark 1:29–39 (cure of Peter's mother-in-law and other miracles)

Key Passage: That evening, at sundown, they brought to him all who were sick or possessed with demons. And the whole city was gathered around the door. And he cured many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons. (Mark 1:32–34a)

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

- ▶ Adults: When have you felt the sadness of Job? When have you felt the joy of those who witnessed the healing works of Jesus?
- ▶ Kids: What could you do this week to comfort someone who is sad?



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 4 is "People in Poverty, Protagonists of the Church's Journey." Below is an excerpt.

e) Standing with those who are poor requires engaging with them in caring for our common home: the cry of the earth and the cry of those living in poverty are the same cry. The lack of responses to this cry makes the ecological crisis, and climate change in particular, a threat to the survival of humanity. The Apostolic Exhortation *Laudate Deum*, published by Pope Francis to coincide with the opening of the work of the Synod Assembly, emphasizes this. The Church in countries most exposed to the consequences of climate change are keenly aware of the urgent need to change course, and this represents their contribution to the journey of other local churches in various parts of the planet.

f) The Church's commitment must address the causes of poverty and exclusion. This includes actions to protect the rights of those who are excluded, and this may require public denunciation of injustices, whether perpetrated by societal structures or by individuals, corporations or governments. Essential to hearing the voice of those in poverty is listening to their demands and points of view, and utilizing their own words

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

Marriage Moments

February is [Black History Month](#), but not all injustices are black or white. In marriage there's often a lot of gray when trying to figure out who is right in an argument. Before insisting on having your way, try to get in your spouse's skin. Look at the problem through his/her eyes. This works between races too.

Parenting Pointers

Feb. 2 was [Groundhog Day](#). As a family, look for your shadows. Shadows don't have to always be physical. Sometimes it's an undeveloped talent or the opposite of a strength you have. Perhaps you're an extrovert. Try being quieter – or vice-versa.

*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 from section 3: The weakness of

International Politics.

34. Although "our own days seem to be showing signs of a certain regression... each new generation must take up the struggles and attainments of past generations, while setting its sights even higher. This is the path. Goodness, together with love, justice and solidarity, are not achieved once and for all; they have to be realized each day." For there to be

solid and lasting advances, I would insist that, "preference should be given to multilateral agreements between States."

35. It is not helpful to confuse multilateralism with a world authority concentrated in one person or in an elite with excessive power: "When we talk about the possibility of some form of world authority regulated by law, we need not necessarily think of a personal authority." We are speaking above all of "more effective world organizations, equipped with the power to provide for the global common good, the elimination of hunger and poverty and the sure defense of fundamental human rights." The issue is that they must be endowed with real authority, in such a way as to "provide for" the attainment of certain essential goals. In this way, there could come about a multilateralism that is not dependent on changing political conditions or the interests of a certain few, and possesses a stable efficacy.

36. It continues to be regrettable that global crises are being squandered when they could be the occasions to bring about beneficial changes. This is what happened in the 2007-2008 financial crisis and again in the Covid-19 crisis. For "the actual strategies developed worldwide in the wake of [those crises] fostered greater individualism, less integration and increased freedom for the truly powerful, who always find a way to escape unscathed."

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.

<https://www.usccb.org/prayers/pope-francis-prayer-peace>



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