

Pastor's Corner

[Note: The bulletin printing company has set our submission deadlines for the next few weeks on Monday instead of the usual Wednesday.]

Advent and Confession. Advent is a time to prepare for Christmas, not simply by buying presents or decorating the house, but by “preparing the way of the Lord” into our hearts and lives. We begin by reflecting on the words St. Mark uses in today’s Gospel to summarize the entire message of St. John the Baptist: “John the Baptist appeared in the desert proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.” Of course, this repentance begins with the Sacrament of Baptism, which is both the sign of personal repentance and the conferral of the Divine grace of forgiveness of sins. But after Baptism we eventually finding ourselves willfully committing sins, even terrible sins we deeply regret, and we develop sinful habits, “vices,” we can’t seem to get rid of. What do we do then to prepare the way of the Lord? How do we repent and receive forgiveness of our sins since we can be baptized only once?

St. John’s Advent admonition to “repent” reminds us that we are not doomed to wallow or drown in our sin, but that as Baptized Christians we can and must make it a staple of our life to constantly “repent.” We must be open and eager to receive “the forgiveness of sins” that comes through the Sacrament of Penance, which many of the early Church Fathers compared to “a second Baptism.” In this sacrament, our sins are once again washed away, so our souls are as pure as the soul of a newly baptized baby, and we have a new chance to start again to live the life Christ created us for and introduced us to in Baptism.

But there’s a problem: while we have repented and sin is forgiven, all the sinful habits (vices) we’ve built up, all our memories of past sins, and all our weaknesses developed over years of living in the world, all these remain. And they can become like valleys and mountains that seem so hard to get over, or like crooked and rough roads that cause us to stumble and fall in sin. Which is another reason we need the Sacrament of Penance, as it not only forgives sins but also gives us the grace to level all obstacles, and to straighten the crookedness and smooth over the roughness our hearts, so that the sacrament becomes a fulfillment of the Advent prophecy and promise: “Every valley shall be filled and every mountain and hill shall be made low. The winding roads shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth.”

We will be hearing Confessions (the Sacrament of Penance) **every Monday through Saturday** during Lent. In addition to the regular Confession times, a priest will be in the confessional every Monday, through Friday evening from 6pm to 7pm (he may stay longer, but only if his schedule permits). This week we will have only one priest hearing confessions, but **next week there will be at least 2 confessors** (if all goes as planned).

Please take advantage of this sacrament to prepare the way of the Lord into your heart and life. But **please do not wait for the last minute—why not come this week?**

Immaculate Conception. This Tuesday, December 8, is the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception. This is normally a Holy Day of obligation, but this year the Bishop has dispensed your obligation. Even so, as your pastor, **I strongly encourage you to come to Mass** on this great feast day, which celebrates the conception of Mary, free from original sin, in her mother’s womb. This great feast is an ideal Advent lesson, teaching us about Mary’s perfect preparation to receive Christ into her life. In

addition to the regularly scheduled 8:30am daily Mass we will also offer a 7pm Vigil on Monday, and a noon and 7pm Mass on Tuesday.

Giving Tree. Don’t forget to stop by the “Giving Tree” in the narthex today, and help to make Christmas a little merrier for some folks who are having a rough time this year—families of our parish and Our Lady of the Blue Ridge parish in Madison.

New Plant/Facilities Manager. I am very pleased to announce that **Joe Marquart** has agreed to become our new Plant Manager. Among other things, Joe is a St. Raymond parishioner and a retired Army Colonel, with extensive experience in facilities management and some particular experience that will come in handy during this time of COVID. He’s also a very friendly guy, and I think we will all enjoy working with him. Please keep Joe in your prayers as he begins this difficult and important job for us.

I’d also like to add a special word of thanks to Mary Butler for stepping in as interim manager. What a huge help she is to all of us.

Huge Win for Religious Freedom. On November 25 – The Supreme Court temporarily blocked rules in New York that severely restricted gatherings at houses of worship in areas hit hardest by COVID-19. The Court’s new conservative majority ruled 5-4 that Gov. Andrew Cuomo’s limits on churches, synagogues, etc., violates the First Amendment’s freedom of religion.

Justice Gorsuch wrote: “So, at least according to the Governor, it may be unsafe to go to church, but it is always fine to pick up another bottle of wine, shop for a new bike, or spend the afternoon exploring your distal points and meridians. **Who knew public health would so perfectly align with secular convenience?....**It is time—past time—to make plain that, while the pandemic poses many grave challenges, there is no world in which the Constitution tolerates ...executive edicts that reopen liquor stores and bike shops but shutter churches, synagogues, and mosques....Indeed, the Governor is remarkably frank about this: In his judgment laundry and liquor, travel and tools, are all “essential” while traditional religious exercises are not. **That is exactly the kind of discrimination the First Amendment forbids.**”

Thanks again to God and President Trump for giving us this conservative court!

Joe Biden and Holy Communion. Last week the Archbishop of Washington, cardinal-designate Archbishop Gregory, (longtime friend and current successor to former cardinal Ted McCarrick) announced that he would not refrain from giving former Vice-President Joe Biden Holy Communion, in spite of Biden’s long history of embracing and promoting abortion. Of course this position is completely contrary to Scripture and the clear requirements of Canon Law. Which begs the question, if AB Gregory can disobey canon law (not to mention Catholic Doctrine), can his priests and people ignore his rules, policies and commands as their bishop? His authority is not greater than Canon Law, so.... To be clear, I encourage everyone to obey Canon Law and the legitimate directives of their Bishop. Not to do so is often a **mortal sin**, especially when it involves the reception of the Holy Communion. So if Joe Biden comes to me for Communion I will obey Canon Law, and Catholic Doctrine, and deny him Communion, because I don’t want either of us to go to hell.

Oremus pro invicem. Fr. De Celles

MASS INTENTIONS**Monday, Dec. 7th**

8:30 am RE Catechists & their families

Vigil Mass

7:00 pm Kathryn Quan

Tuesday, Dec. 8th**Immaculate Conception**8:30 am Chris Bogdan
Noon Arthur Burrows +
7:00 pm Parishioners**Wednesday, Dec. 9th**

8:30 am Elise Tougas +

Thursday, Dec. 10th

8:30 am Joan Kimble +

Friday, Dec. 11th

8:30 am Agripina Lopez +

Masses to be said PrivatelyDec. 7 Joyce Ann O'Connor +
Dec. 8 Robin Maas
Dec. 9 Rodolfo Karaan +
Dec. 9 Therese Nguyen
Dec. 10 Judy Kelley
Dec. 11 Jean Anezin +
Dec. 13 Philip Hansen**Saturday, Dec. 12th**

9:00 am Joe Perricone +

Vigil Mass5:00 pm **Fr. De Celles**
Mike Krosnick +**Sunday, Dec. 13th**7:00 am **Fr. Rippy**
RE Students & their families9:00 am **Fr. De Celles**
Parishioners11:00 am **Fr. De Celles**
Jeff Aitken +1:00 pm **Fr. Daly**
Barry Warren +

Please pray for our parishioners serving in Combat Zones and their families. If you have a relative serving in harm's way and would like to have his/her name included in our prayer list, please contact the parish office. **Also, please be sure to let us know when they return home.**

Anthony Nsekela

Brandon Skiba

Please pray for the sick of our parishGlenn Bliss
Tom Dietz
Michael O'Neill
Cindy Laird
Patricia Lewis
Barbara McGinn
Mai Pham
Joan Opiela
Donald Zacherl
Leonora Ramos
Jason Saenz
Phyllis ZitnikMary K. Randazzo
Patricia Del Buono
Michael
Malachowski
Juanita Boarman
Angela Colom
John Florio
Debra Henkel
Daniel Moore
Maria DaughertyLauren Hornsby
Gaudencio Dizon
Antoinette Baptist
Donald Hale
Margaret O'Neill
Ada Prabhavat
Julia Oaks
Christine Gloninger
Ina Davis
Ron Osella
Kathryn Quan

Immaculate Conception is Tuesday, Dec. 8th.
(Holy Day, but the Obligation has been dispensed)

Vigil Mass: Dec 7: 7:00 pm.

Dec. 8: 8:30 am, Noon & 7:00 pm.

Confessions will be from 6:00 pm to 6:45 pm

Parish Offices will be Closed.

View livestreaming of the Holy Mass
at St. Raymond's!

<https://straymonds.org/view-mass-online/>

Monday through Friday Daily Mass at 8:30 am

Saturday at 9:00 am

SUNDAY MASS at 11:00 am

Confessions in the Church

(in the flower room)

Additional Confessions for Advent

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Fridays: 6:00 pm - 7:00 pm

Wednesdays: 6:00 pm to 6:55 pm

Saturday: 8:15 am - 8:45 am, 3:00 pm - 5:00 pm

*Please see the front of the bulletin for our current Mass,
Confession, and Adoration schedules.*

Face masks will be expected at all Masses.

Sign ups are required for 9 am and 11 am Sunday Masses.

Contact the parish office.

Watch for our Constant Contact Updates! If you are not receiving emails from the parish, please contact the parish office at 703-440-0535 or office@straymonds.org to verify your email address.

We have Confessions every Weeknight 6:00 to 7:00 pm During Advent! Please see the Advent & Christmas Schedule.

The Advent & Christmas Schedule is available on our Website or in the Narthex of the Church. Please pick up one to put on your refrigerator or some other convenient place to check.

Rosary Promotion Weekend: This weekend the Legion of Mary is sponsoring the parish's annual rosary promotion. Please stop by their table in the narthex and take home a free rosary.

Annual Giving Trees are up! This is our 20th year that we are helping families provide Christmas for their children. We have 33 families this year with 173 members. We need your help! This year, **due to COVID-19 we have changed our procedures slightly** to allow everyone to participate. The requests for Gift Cards are on the Trees in the Narthex. Actual Gift Items are on a Signup Genius that you may access through our website. Instructions are on our website & next to the Trees in the Narthex. Any questions, please call Kirsti in the parish office (703-440-0535). **All Gifts are due back by Sunday, Dec. 13th.**

Eviction Assistance: (This was submitted by a parishioner) During this time of economic distress and uncertainty, I hope this message finds someone who can benefit from this assistance. Cornerstones has \$670k for eviction assistance they need to use by December 31, 2020. The funds must be used by the end of the year or they will lose the money. If you know anybody facing eviction in Fairfax County, please ask them to call the Fairfax County Help Line at 703-222-0880 asap. Let them know the wait time on the phone will be long, but stay on the line. <https://www.cornerstonesva.org/https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/neighborhood-community-services/coordinated-services-planning>

ADVENT GIFT SHOP SALES: The weekend of Dec. 12/13 **AFTER ALL MASSES** the Gift Shop will have tables in Narthex with seasonal gift items for sale, including boxed Advent candle sets (10" & 12" candles) and brass Advent Wreath rings. You may also pick up mugs with the church crest.

GOSPEL MK 1:1-8

The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God.

As it is written in Isaiah the prophet:

*Behold, I am sending my messenger ahead of you;
he will prepare your way.*

A voice of one crying out in the desert:

*"Prepare the way of the Lord,
make straight his paths."*

John the Baptist appeared in the desert
proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness
of sins.

People of the whole Judean countryside
and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem
were going out to him

and were being baptized by him in the Jordan River
as they acknowledged their sins.

John was clothed in camel's hair,
with a leather belt around his waist.

He fed on locusts and wild honey.

And this is what he proclaimed:

"One mightier than I is coming after me.

I am not worthy to stoop and loosen the thongs of his
sandals.

I have baptized you with water;
he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."



The Knights of Columbus are selling Christmas Trees & Wreaths in the Church's south parking lot this week; sales will continue through Sunday December 13. Please support the Knights who use the contributions to support St. Raymond and various other local charities throughout the year. Time for Sales are: Weekends 9:00 am—8:30 pm, Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday from 6 pm—8 pm—No Sales on Wednesdays. Points of Contact are: Mark Menotti, 401-644-7128; Phil Bettwy, 703-868-9411; and John Crennan, 339-223-0887.

The Knights of Columbus will hold a Document Shredding event on Dec. 12th from 10 am to 1 pm in the church parking lot. Proceeds from the event go to support two wonderful causes: Housing for the intellectually disadvantaged, and Vocations. For more information contact Dave Wilson at 703-966-5327.

The Knights of Columbus will be offering "Keep Christ in Christmas" Christmas cards in the Narthex after Sunday Masses. You can also request an order form with a list of cards and place your order by calling/texting John Crennan at 339-223-0887. All proceeds go to local charities.

SAINT RAYMOND'S RESPECTS LIFE

*Learn the TRUTH. Live the TRUTH.
Spread the TRUTH... in LOVE*

Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you."
Jeremiah 1:5



You are invited to **join Bishop Burbidge in a Novena to Our Lady of Guadalupe**, offered for the intentions of couples struggling with infertility, miscarriage and early infant death. The novena will be prayed from Dec. 4 to Dec. 12. A concluding Mass will be offered by

Father Jamie Workman, Vicar General of the Diocese **St. Luke Cath. Church in McLean, at 9:00 am on Saturday Dec. 12.**

For more information, please visit
www.arlingtondiocese.org/novena

This weekend is our MaRiH Pregnancy Care Center Support Weekend!! In the spirit of St. Nicholas could you donate diapers or a new or gently used baby item (up to 2T) for those in need? Gifts may be left at the donation box in the narthex. God bless you!

Mark your calendar! The 48th Annual March for Life is scheduled for Friday January 29th. Stay tuned for details.

Save the date! The 3RD annual Virginia March for Life will take place on Wednesday, April 7th in Richmond. Stay tuned for details.

Tepeyac Pro Life OB/GYN: Transforming Hearts Through Healthcare. tepeyacobgyn.com 703-273-9440. Thank you for your referrals and your support.

Natural Family Planning. A gift to your marriage. For more info visit: cdi.org

Special thanks to those who have been making such beautiful blankets!! Our Wrapped In Love program is up and stitching. Pray for the mothers and babies who will be wrapped in love by your efforts as you create baby blankets for distribution at Pregnancy Care Centers or for use by sidewalk counselors – wherever we find a need. God bless you for your efforts. Blankets may be delivered to the parish office or MaRiH collection box in the narthex.

Has the sorrow of miscarriage or still birth touched your life? Or perhaps you know someone in this situation? **A Mom's Peace**, a lay Apostolate for Mothers of Miscarried and Stillborn Souls offers discreet support to families with bereavement, burial and remembrance assistance. For more information visit amomspeace.org

To those who have suffered an abortion: Project Rachel can help someone who is carrying the grief and sorrow of a past abortion. (888)456-HOPE. Confidentiality always respected.
www.helpafterabortion.org

Give a Gift for Life! Gabriel Project helps pregnant moms welcome their babies. Please consider donating at www.arlingtondiocese.org/giftforlife. For more info, contact them at 1-866-444-3553 or GabrielProject@arlingtondiocese.org

St. Raymond's Youth Apostolate

New 25-PERSON LIMIT for Sunday Youth Apostolate

As long as VA has the 25-person limit for social gatherings, for both the Jr. High and High School Youth Groups on Sundays, **we are requiring folks to RSVP, via a sign up genius that will be emailed weekly.** If you are not on the email list or do not receive the email and would like to attend, please email Jeanne.

Junior High (7-8th Grade) Youth Group: Sip & Paint! 5-6:30pm Sunday, December 6th (Parish Hall)

Come eat pizza, make new friends and have fun all while keeping Jesus at the center of it all! All 7-8th graders are welcome! You do not have to be a parishioner, or even Catholic for that matter, in order to attend. There is no charge. Make sure forms (below) are on file before coming & RSVP online.

HS Youth Group: Sip & Paint!

8-9pm Sunday, December 6th (Parish Hall)

Every Sunday night all students grades 9-12 are invited to join us for faith, fun & fellowship! Meet in the parish hall. Make sure forms (below) are on file before coming & RSVP online.

High School Girls' Group

7-8:30pm Monday, December 7th (Parish Hall)

Led by an outstanding trio of young adult women, recent college graduates, who are super pumped for this opportunity to witness to and grow in holiness alongside our young women. Join us as we cultivate and witness authentic community, friendships, and space to share our faith, learn and encourage one another in ways to practically apply the faith to our daily lives. If you have questions or find yourself disagreeing with some teaching of the Church, this group is for you! If you are gung ho about your faith, this group is for you! If you are looking for authentic friendships, a place to search, a place to grow in understanding, a place to practice defending the faith, a place to laugh, to cry, to be authentically you, to have fun...and so much more...come! You are welcome here! Make sure forms (below) are on file before coming.



WorkCamp 2021 Interest Meeting 2pm Sunday, December 13th (Parish Hall)

ALL current 9-12th graders (& parents) interested in spending a week of your summer to help our neighbors in need are invited to come learn about WorkCamp! This year will likely look different from previous years, due to the pandemic. Come to this meeting to find out more! Our Diocesan WorkCamp Coordinator, Ed Gloninger, will be there to explain & answer questions. Hope to see you there!

Youth Apostolate Participation 2 REQUIRED Forms
2020-2021 YA Info. Sheet is to be completed annually for every child **prior** participating in any Youth Apostolate function.
Youth Ministry Participant Waiver, a one-time form is to be signed and turned in for every youth **prior** to participating in any St. Raymond's Youth Ministry activity/event on or off site.
Forms can be found online at <http://bit.ly/YAforms> and should be emailed to Jeanne at youth@straymonds.org or turned in to the main office.

Jeanne Sause

Director of the Youth Apostolate (Grades 7-12)
youth@straymonds.org Call/Text: 571-334-9890
<http://bit.ly/youthapostolat>

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Attention Parents of Tuesday CCD students: CHANGE to previous bulletin announcement:

We will NOT HAVE CCD CLASS on 12/8, the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception. Please make plans to attend Mass at 7 p.m. on this beautiful Solemnity.

Parents of students in preparation for First Holy

Communion: the First Holy Communion Registry Form with Certificate of Baptism attached is due in the Religious Education Office **December 16th.**

Parents of students preparing for Confirmation in May 2021:

Service Hours forms and Service Experience forms are due to the Religious Education Office by **January 13th.**

All students in Religious Education Program grades three through twelve

are encouraged to take advantage of the many opportunities for Confession during this penitential Season of Advent, as we prepare for the celebration of Our Savior's birth and in anticipation of His Second Coming. Please check the bulletin or the parish website for Confession times.

For planning purposes: We will not have classes the week of 12/20 and 12/27. We will resume our regular class schedule on Sunday January 3rd.

Midterm Exams will be administered the week of January 10th for Grades 1-8. Please work with your children in learning the material for First Semester presented in the Basic Study Questions booklet for their grade level.

Men's Prayer Group: On the first and third Saturdays of each month a group of men meet in the parish hall to pray and read the scriptures. They are neither theologians, philosophers, nor great scholars. Just some guys, coming together to pray, read, and share a simple breakfast. Everyone is welcome. Please join us at 7:30 am Saturday, Dec. 19th. For more information, call Dave Wilson, 703-966-5327.

Interested in a great, Catholic education for your child's high school years? Saint John Paul the Great Catholic High School invites you to sign your child up for the High School Placement Test, required for all 8th graders applying to a Diocese of Arlington high school. The HSPT will be offered on Saturday, January 9. While your child tests, stay and discover what John Paul has to offer! Visit jpthegreat.org for test registration details and more information.

Catholic Book Club: The next Parish Book Club meeting is on Friday, Dec. 11th in the Maurer Room at 10:00 am. There is limited space but virtual attendance is possible. The book for discussion is: *His Angels at Our Side: Understanding Their Power in Our Souls and in the World* by Fr John Horgan (286 pgs.). Newcomers welcome. If you have any questions or to register, please contact Jim Mault at bookclub@straymonds.org

Luminaries of Holy Mary: Come join us on Jan. 2nd to honor the Blessed Mother's request for making the 5 First Saturdays: Mass at 9am, then meet in the Parish Hall for Rosary, meditation and Gospel reflection. All are welcome.

Church Persecuted

Although we are currently blessed with the ability to regularly attend Mass, confess our sins in the Sacrament of Penance, and have our children participate in person at CCD; other dioceses are not so blessed. Archbishop Salvatore J. Cordileone, in a recent editorial in *First Things* titled, "The Battle to Free the Mass" (<https://www.firstthings.com/web-exclusives/2020/11/the-battle-to-free-the-mass>) chronicles the restrictions on worship placed on religions by the San Francisco City Hall. Several of these instances have been reported in this column, but the Archbishop pulled together the entire story which can be summed up as, "We are Essential! Free the Mass."

He shows how City Hall hunted down offenders by visiting parishes and seeking out violations of their draconian rules. He outlines his attempts to discuss this with Mayor London Breed and his administration which "seemed so deaf to...reasonable arguments." He showed how Catholics could safely attend Mass without fear of spreading the virus. He cited studies to prove his point. After much anguish, "public witness on the city streets... a big media push...[and] thousands of petition signers generating hundreds of calls," along with the U.S. Justice Department sending a letter to the mayor "warning her that the current unconstitutional rules should be revised 'promptly,'" "It worked." The mayor backed down and allowed 100 persons to worship indoors (the max allowed by California). While California rules remain discriminatory, it is a start.

AB Cordileone calls it a "war for souls." Next week, we continue this discussion.

Family of Jesus Prayer Group: Though our weekly meetings are currently canceled - we are still praying! If you have any prayer requests, please let us know by emailing Elaine Perricone at jpebtp@verizon.net or by calling the parish office at 703-440-0535.

St. Martin de Porres Committee - collects food on an ongoing basis for the Springfield Resource Center which services over 250 families in the Springfield area. A collection box is in the Narthex and donations are collected and distributed weekly. Suggested food items are listed, but any non-perishable food donations are welcome. For equitable distribution, smaller packaging is requested (i.e. 1 lb bags of rice vs. 5 lb. bags, 1 qt. oil vs. 1 gal oil). During this crisis the need for food is greater than ever. Please be generous.

FORMED®

Get In-Formed!

Just for Kids! Lukas Storyteller - While in one of his adventures in the Sea of Galilee, Lukas met Jesus and was so impressed and gratified that now together with his old friend Noah, a turtle survivor of Noah's Ark, gather and tell the greatest stories of all times of Jesus and all the Saints that Lukas met through the ages... Discover how these stories full of music and fun changed the lives of the youngest of the reef: Ana, Paul, Agnes and Peter.

Watch now at www.straymondsformed.org

Would you like a quick spiritual boost each day for Advent? Receive an email with a short video and prayer each day by visiting: <https://formed.org/daily>

Questions? Need help? Email us at: formed@straymonds.org



Angelus Academy

Pre K—8th

Offering a liberal arts education in the classical tradition.

We are thrilled to be offering in-person instruction,
5 days a week!

Looking for a gentle introduction to school for your 3-5 year old? Our Little Messengers program (MWF mornings) includes Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (Atrium).

Thank you for your prayers and support. With God, nothing will be impossible!

www.AngelusAcademy.org

7644 Dynatech Ct., Springfield, VA 22153
703-924-3996

FAITH DIRECT: Although public Masses are limited and many parish events have been canceled, **our parish is still in need of your donations. We have operating costs (utility, maintenance, service contracts, supplies and staff payroll and benefits) that must continue.** Now more than ever we have requests for FAMILY ASSISTANCE to support those members of our parish who are in need of help. Please visit our website www.straymonds.org to join online or call directly at 866-507-8757.

Please remember that our parish's expenses continue during this crisis! Your donations may be mailed, dropped off at the parish office, or given online through Faith Direct.

FAITH DIRECT NOVEMBER 2020

Sunday Offertory	\$57,201.42
Family Assistance	\$ 2,044.00
Maintenance Fund	\$ 5,746.00
All Saints	\$ 1,509.00
Retired Religious	\$ 4,529.00
Campaign for Human Dev.	\$ 619.00
Thanksgiving Day (Giving Tree)	\$ 1,380.00

SUNDAY, NOV. 22ND COLLECTION

Sunday Offertory	\$11,329.00
Family Assistance	\$ 1,250.00
Maintenance Fund	\$ 802.00
Campaign for Human Dev.	\$ 680.00

LAST WEEK'S COLLECTION

Due to an early Bulletin Deadline, Last Week's Collection will be in Next week's Bulletin.

Next week's Second Collection is the Catholic Charities Christmas Collection. Please help support Catholic Charities who provides support for those in need within our diocese.