

Pastor's Corner

(Due to Bulletin deadlines, I'm writing this on Nov. 19.)

Season of Advent. Today we begin the season of Advent, in preparation for Christmas. Every year most people forget that the Advent season is primarily about *preparing* for Christmas, and instead spend these weeks prematurely *celebrating* Christmas, and doing so from a largely secularized perspective. And then when the actual 3 week Christmas Season *begins on Christmas Day*, they put all the Christmas things away and go on with life!

This premature celebration isn't necessarily a bad thing, if we see it as part of the strong influence of Christianity on our culture. Many Catholics see people around them start celebrating Christmas, and it's such a wonderful feast that they (Catholics) get all caught up in it.

I think that will be something that may happen in a powerful way this year, as Americans, especially Catholics, need the healing joy of Christmas more than ever. So take this as a divine gift, received a little early.

But take care. First of all, much of this early celebration is driven not by a Christian culture, but by commercial interests taking advantage of that culture. Sadly, much of this is nothing more than retailers playing on our emotional attachment to Christmas in order to increase sales. Increasing sales is not a bad thing, especially in the current economic environment, but the reduction of Advent to a period of rampant commercialism/materialism and emotionalism *is a terrible thing*. All but forgotten is the spiritual/faith preparation to celebrate the wonder of the birth of the Baby Jesus, our Creator come to redeem us from our sins.

Don't let this happen to you this Advent. Let the premature "cultural" celebrations remind you to spend time *preparing* for the celebration of *the Day that changed the world forever*. Here are some suggestions:

-- Catholics always prepare for Holy Days by doing penance. I know you're already sacrificing a lot due to COVID. But maybe you could take some of the difficulties you're experiencing and offer them up as penance, transforming them into acts of loving acceptance of God's permissive will.

-- Add extra prayers to your daily routine. The Rosary is an excellent addition to our prayers, especially meditating on the Joyful Mysteries, or at least praying one decade every day, meditating on one of the Joyful Mysteries.

-- Reading Scripture is an excellent way to renew your faith in Christ. Perhaps challenge yourself to read one of the Gospels beginning to end in Advent. Or perhaps read short passages daily from the Christmas-related texts: Matthew 1-2, Luke 1-2, John 1:1-17.

-- Of course, charitable giving is a great way to prepare for the gift of the Baby Jesus. A lot of folks are struggling financially this year, so think about giving to those folks directly, or to charities that help them. The parish Giving Tree is one very good way to do this, as are some of the special collections, especially Catholic Charities of Arlington Diocese.

-- Receiving the sacraments is one of the most important things you can do in Advent. Consider coming to Mass (or watching the livestream) and Adoration during the week. As always, we will have confessions every weekday evening during Advent. Being a priest down, I've had to scramble, but I've been able to find priests for this—so please don't let my efforts go to waste!

-- Most importantly, live the life that Christ came to give

us; make every day about loving God with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength, and your neighbor as yourself. Follow the 10 Commandments. Be kind, patient, generous, and forgiving. Love one another as Jesus, who out of love for us stripped Himself of the glory of heaven to be born in a cold manger, loves us.

Sad to say, COVID, and the "one priest parish" situation has taken a bite out of our usual Advent activities. We will not be able to do Lessons and Carols. Nor will I be able to give my traditional **Advent Series**. I'm sorry.

Thanksgiving. I hope you all had a wonderful Thanksgiving Day and weekend, and gave worthy thanks to God for all His gifts to you and our nation. In light of that, I thought I might share the following with you.

President George Washington, October 3, 1789.

Whereas it is the duty of all Nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to obey his will, to be grateful for his benefits, and humbly to implore his protection and favor, and whereas both Houses of Congress have by their joint Committee requested me "to recommend to the People of the United States a day of public thanksgiving and prayer to be observed by acknowledging with grateful hearts the many signal favors of Almighty God especially by affording them an opportunity peaceably to establish a form of government for their safety and happiness. Now therefore I do recommend and assign Thursday the 26th day of November next to be devoted by the People of these States to the service of that great and glorious Being, who is the beneficent Author of all the good that was, that is, or that will be. That we may then all unite in rendering unto him our sincere and humble thanks, for his kind care and protection of the People of this Country previous to their becoming a Nation, for the signal and manifold mercies, and the favorable interpositions of his providence, which we experienced in the course and conclusion of the late war, for the great degree of tranquility, union, and plenty, which we have since enjoyed, for the peaceable and rational manner, in which we have been enabled to establish constitutions of government for our safety and happiness, and particularly the national One now lately instituted, for the civil and religious liberty with which we are blessed; and the means we have of acquiring and diffusing useful knowledge; and in general for all the great and various favors which he hath been pleased to confer upon us. And also that we may then unite in most humbly offering our prayers and supplications to the great Lord and Ruler of Nations and beseech him to pardon our national and other transgressions, to enable us all, whether in public or private stations, to perform our several and relative duties properly and punctually, to render our national government a blessing to all the people, by constantly being a Government of wise, just, and constitutional laws, discreetly and faithfully executed and obeyed, to protect and guide all Sovereigns and Nations (especially such as have shown kindness unto us) and to bless them with good government, peace, and concord. To promote the knowledge and practice of true religion and virtue, and the increase of science among them and Us, and generally to grant unto all Mankind such a degree of temporal prosperity as he alone knows to be best. Given under my hand at the City of New York the third day of October in the year of our Lord 1789. — George Washington

Oremus pro invicem. Fr. De Celles

MASS INTENTIONS**Monday, Nov. 30th**

8:30 am Richard Mora Reynoso +

Tuesday, Dec. 1st

8:30 am Joyce Ann O'Connor +

Wednesday, Dec. 2nd

8:30 am Sean McDonough +

Thursday, Dec. 3rd

8:30 am Robert & Beverly Ward

Friday, Dec. 4th

8:30 am Barbara DeWolf

Masses to be said Privately

Nov. 30 Isabel Auclair
 Dec. 1 Jayne Maloy +
 Dec. 2 Helen Balderas +
 Dec. 2 Tom Delaney
 Dec. 3 Catherine Young
 Dec. 4 Youth of the Parish
 Dec. 6 Jean Anezin +

Saturday, Dec. 5th

9:00 am Paul H. Walker +

Vigil Mass5:00 pm Fr. De Celles
James Braden +**Sunday, Dec. 6th**

7:00 am Fr. Rippy
 Michael Perro +
 9:00 am Fr. De Celles
 Parishioners
 11:00 am Fr. De Celles
 Carol Ann McKim
 1:00 pm Fr. Daly
 Catherine Hoopes

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 parish

Glenn Bliss
 Tom Dietz
 Michael O'Neill
 Cindy Laird
 Patricia Lewis
 Barbara McGinn
 Mai Pham
 Joan Opiela
 Donald Zacherl
 Leonora Ramos

Jason Saenz
 Phyllis Zitnik
 Mary K. Randazzo
 Patricia Del Buono
 Michael
 Malachowski
 Juanita Boarman
 Angela Colom
 John Florio
 Debra Henkel

Daniel Moore
 Maria Daugherty
 Lauren Hornsby
 Gaudencio Dizon
 Antoinette Baptist
 Donald Hale
 Margaret O'Neill
 Ada Prabhavat
 Julia Oaks

PRE-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 Advent candles and mugs with the church crest.

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).

St. Raymond 2020-21 Snow Team: Your Parish needs your HELP! St. Raymond's is seeking industrious, able-bodied persons to join the 2020-21 Snow Removal Team.

The Snow Team will work with the Plant Manager to clear and de-ice the sidewalks and paved walkways around the property during ice and snow events. Equipment is provided; sidewalks and aprons must be cleared no less than 30 minutes before the first Mass of the day (and as needed thereafter). Snow Team members must have reliable transportation that enables them to get to the church in bad weather. \$20.00 per hour. For more information or to apply, please contact Mary Butler at the Parish Office, at 703-440-0535 during office hours.

Increased Access to Parish Library. Patrons may access the Parish Library for a private, in-person visit by contacting the parish Office for an appointment. Alternatively, patrons may contact Mary Hansen at straylibrarian@gmail.com for an electronic catalog inquiry and/or check-out request. She will leave your materials with the Parish Office for easy pickup during regular business hours. "You will not find anyone who is truly striving after is spiritual advancement who is not given to spiritual reading." St Athanasius

**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.

**Immaculate Conception is Tuesday, Dec. 8th.
 (Holy Day of Obligation)**

Vigil Mass: Dec 7th, at 7:00 pm.

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

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

Parish Offices will be Closed.

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

GOSPEL MK 13:33-37

Jesus said to His disciples:

"Be watchful! Be alert!

You do not know when the time will come.

It is like a man traveling abroad.

He leaves home and places his servants in charge,

each with his own work,

and orders the gatekeeper to be on the watch.

Watch, therefore;

you do not know when the Lord of the house is coming,

whether in the evening, or at midnight,

or at cockcrow, or in the morning.

May he not come suddenly and find you sleeping.

What I say to you, I say to all: 'Watch!'"

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 ipebtp@verizon.net or by calling the parish office at 703-440-0535.

Wednesday and Friday Adoration at St. Raymond's:

Would you like to spend an hour in silent prayer and reflection with our Lord during weekly exposition of the Blessed Sacrament? We are in immediate need of permanent adorers for Wednesday and Friday Adoration. If you are interested in Wednesdays, please call Leslie Schratz at 703-569-1940 or email to spoiledk9s@verizon.net. If you are interested in Fridays, please call Virginia Osella at 703-440-0535 or email to Virginia.osella@straymonds.org. And we can always use substitute adorers!



St. John Bosco Council #12846 Knights of Columbus:

Are you a man of 17 ½ years of more? Are you a practicing Catholic? Then we invite you to join the Knights! Contact Deputy Grand Knight Stephen Delaney (703-627-8090) or go to www.KofC.org/JoinUs to become a Knight today!

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. 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 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 Catholic Church in McLean, at 9:00 am on Sat. Dec. 12.**

For more information, please visit

www.arlingtondiocese.org/novena

Our next MaRiH Pregnancy care Center Support Weekend is 5/6 December.

In the spirit of St. Nicholas could you donate a new or gently used baby item (or diapers) 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: ccli.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

Governor Northam's newly imposed 25-person limit for social gatherings went into effect on 11/16. As a result, for both the Jr. High and High School Youth Groups on Sundays, **we will henceforth be 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 to sign up. As of right now, the Sunday youth groups are the only ones that seem to be an issue. If the high school boys' group (Sons of Thunder) or girls' group grow to exceed 25 folks, we will address it at that time.

Junior High (7-8th Grade) Youth Group

NO Jr. High Youth Group or CCD on 11/29/20.

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, however, we do need the forms (below) on file before you come.

HS Youth Group

NO High School Youth Group or CCD on 11/29/20.

Every Sunday night all students grades 9-12 are invited to join us for faith, fun & fellowship! Meet in the parish hall. Dress for the weather as we will try to stay outside until it gets too cold to do so. Make sure forms (below) are on file before coming.

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.

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/youthapostolate>

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

There are no CCD classes this evening 11/29. There ARE CCD classes Monday 11/30 and Tuesday 12/1.

For planning purposes: The evening Mass for the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception on 12/8 will begin at 7 p.m., so we are **adjusting our Tuesday 12/8 CCD class schedule - we will meet from 5:45-6:45 p.m.** Please make plans to attend Mass following CCD on this Holy Day of Obligation.

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.**

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.

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, Nov. 21st. 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, December 5 and 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.

Protecting Our Future: Child Protection & Safety: The Office of Child Protection & Safety was created to assist all parishes and schools in creating a safe environment where our children are free from sexual abuse, physical abuse and neglect. The office provides various services including child abuse prevention training for employees, volunteers, children and youth and criminal background history investigations for employees and volunteers who work with children. For more information about services provided by the Office of Child Protection & Safety as well as diocesan policy regarding the prevention of child abuse, please visit our website at www.arlingtondiocese.org.

Courage Support Group for Those Experiencing Same-Sex Attraction. COURAGE is a group that meets regularly to offer fraternal, moral, and spiritual support for those who experience same-sex attraction and desire to live chaste lives according to the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church. Meetings are for men and women and strict confidentiality is maintained. For more information, please contact Courage@arlingtondiocese.org or visit <http://couragec.net/index.htm>.

Church Persecuted

"Follow the Science" has been a convenient term to use when justifying certain positions dealing with nearly anything these days. This is used to justify masks indoors and even outdoors; to limit indoor gatherings as in Churches while allowing unlimited access (of course with appropriate social distancing) for anything from pet stores to big box retail stores. Mr. Biden has stated that he will respect the claims of science when it comes to dealing with COVID-19. That may be true, but if so, then shouldn't he also "follow the science" when it comes to the question of when human life begins? Let us "follow the science" and consult medical textbooks on embryology.

Essentials of Human Embryology (Keith L. Moore) states that, "This fertilized ovum, known as a *zygote*, is a large diploid cell that is the beginning, or *primordium*, of a human being."

Medical Embryology, 3rd edition (Jan Langman) states, "The development of a human being begins with fertilization, a process by which two highly specialized cells, the *spermatozoon* from the male and the oocyte from the female, unite to give rise to a new organism, the *zygote*."

Anyone who "follows the science," would realize that abortion is the killing a living human being. Portions are taken from Hadley Arkes' article,

<https://www.thecatholicthing.org/2020/11/17/counting-votes-ignoring-science/>

Home School Group: for more information visit our website www.homeschool-life.com/va/straymondhsg/. Contact: Katherine Bogacki or Malia Cameron at straymondhsg@gmail.com.

Luminaries of Holy Mary: Come join us on Dec. 5th 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.

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!

From Nothing to Cosmos with Fr. Robert Spitzer – Fr. Robert Spitzer, S.J., Ph.D., dispenses with the contemporary statement, "Science has proven God does not exist," and then goes on to demonstrate God's existence from science, philosophy, medicine, the transcendentals, and metaphysical proofs. Fr. Spitzer is at once, entertaining and overflowing with pertinent information.

Watch now at www.straymonds.formed.org
The best Catholic content in one place - movies, programs, talks, dramas, & ebooks—just one click away!

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

"O LORD, you are our father; we are the clay and you the potter: we are all the work of your hands." Could God's plans for you involve being a priest or sister? Contact Fr. Michael Isenberg, michael.isenberg@arlingtondiocese.org or 703-841-2514.

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.

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

Due to an early Bulletin Deadline, This Month's Faith Direct Collection will be in Next week's Bulletin.

LAST WEEK'S COLLECTION

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