

Pastor's Corner

Sign-Up for Christmas Mass. If you haven't already done so, please sign up (you and your family) for the Christmas Mass you are planning to attend. As I wrote in my previous email to the parish, I'm a little nervous since we usually have huge crowds on Christmas, but with COVID I have no idea what will happen this year. So the requirement to sign-up is my effort to make sure parishioners who want to come have a place in church (considering capacity limit of about 225+/-). Better safe than sorry, especially on this most Holy Day.

Masks at Mass. There are many parishioners concerned/afraid about coming to Sunday Mass because not everyone wears masks. There are many good reasons for not wearing masks, reasons that make it practically impossible for us to actively "enforce" the expectation (not a "mandate") of the Bishop.

However, I want everyone to return to Mass as soon as possible. So, in an effort to help folks who are particularly anxious about COVID to return and relax at Mass, **I've decided to REQUIRE MASKS at all 1pm Sunday Masses.** This will mainly be "enforced" by the "honor system," but please attend this Mass only if you agree to wear a mask for the duration of the Mass, except at Communion. The priests at the Mass will also wear a mask during Communion.

Remember, everyone, the rule here is: **CHARITY.**

GAUDETE SUNDAY. Today is "Gaudete Sunday," or "Rejoice Sunday" (from the first words of the entrance antiphon, "Gaudete in Dómino semper"—"Rejoice in the Lord always"). This reminds us that Advent is a season of "expectant joy" as our anticipation of the great joy of Christmas builds every day as we draw closer to it. This is symbolized in the "rose" colored vestments the priests may wear today, "rose" being a shade of advent violet that is brighter than the normal violets of Advent, as if the brightness of Christmas joy is shining through the subdued preparation of Advent.

I hope we all experience this building joy during Advent, especially with all the "difficulties" surrounding us. First and foremost, we should experience this spiritually, in our prayers and meditation on the mystery of Christmas, and in reception of the sacraments. In this regard, I encourage you to go to Confession this week—we rejoice because Christ was born to save us from our sins, and he pours out this salvation in this holy sacrament—there's nothing like the joy experienced in having our sins forgiven. Remember, we have will have **2 priests hearing confessions every evening this week, Monday through Friday.** For those of **you who are very concerned about COVID,** you should know that we are **not using the standard confessionals** during COVID, but are hearing Confessions in the "Flower Room" and (for the next 2 weeks) in the "Family Room," which have better circulation and allow us to "social distance."

I also encourage you to attend daily Mass, as well as Wednesday and Friday Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. And don't forget the Extraordinary Form Mass this Friday at 7pm.

Advent and Christmas Giving. Still another practical way we experience this progressive joy is through acts of generosity. I'm sure all of you have been showing special charity to those around you, through ordinary acts of kindness revealing the joy of Christ in your hearts. But we also experience this in a special way through gift-giving. We need to be careful, though, to make the Christmas gifts we buy in some way a genuine reflection of our Christian joy. Perhaps we can do this by giving religious gifts, (you might want to visit our Gift Shop off the narthex) or just being careful to give wholesome gifts that are

consistent with Christian values.

This is also a time to make donations to worthy Catholic groups who will receive them with the joy of Christ. A few of the groups that I would recommend, are Divine Mercy Care, Project Rachel, Gabriel Project, House of Mercy, Angelus Academy, and, my personal favorite, St. Dominic Monastery in Linden.

And, as much as I understand it, this year, to date, St. Raymond's offertory collections and other donations are **down from last year by about 19%**. So I would very much appreciate it if as you plan your Christmas and year-end giving to consider making **an extra donation to St. Raymond's**. Thanks to those of you who have already done so. God bless.

Follow the Science. This is an excerpt of a recent article entitled, "A Sensible and Compassionate Anti-COVID Strategy," by Dr. Jay Bhattacharya, M.D. and Ph.D. (economics). He is a Professor of Medicine at Stanford University, and the co-author of the "Great Barrington Declaration," which 50,708 scientists and medical doctors have signed to date.

"Deadliness of the Lockdowns. The widespread lockdowns that have been adopted in response to COVID are unprecedented—lockdowns have never before been tried as a method of disease control. Nor were these lockdowns part of the original plan. The initial rationale for lockdowns was that slowing the spread of the disease would prevent hospitals from being overwhelmed. It became clear before long that this was not a worry: in the U.S. and in most of the world, hospitals were never at risk of being overwhelmed. Yet the lockdowns were kept in place, and this is turning out to have deadly effects.

*"Those who dare to talk about the tremendous economic harms that have followed from the lockdowns are accused of heartlessness. ...So I'm ...going to talk about the deadly effects on health, beginning with the fact that the U.N. has estimated that **130 million additional people will starve this year as a result of the economic damage resulting from the lockdowns**...."*

"Another result of the lockdowns is that people stopped bringing their children in for immunizations against diseases like diphtheria, pertussis (whooping cough), and polio, because they had been led to fear COVID more than they feared these more deadly diseases. This wasn't only true in the U.S. Eighty million children worldwide are now at risk of these diseases. We had made substantial progress in slowing them down, but now they are going to come back.

*"Large numbers of Americans, even though they had cancer and needed chemotherapy, didn't come in for treatment because they were more afraid of COVID than cancer. Others have skipped recommended cancer screenings. **We're going to see a rise in cancer and cancer death rates as a consequence.** Indeed, this is already starting to show up in the data. We're also going to see a **higher number of deaths from diabetes due to people missing their diabetic monitoring.***

*"Mental health problems are in a way the most shocking thing. In June of this year, a **CDC survey found that one in four young adults between 18 and 24 had seriously considered suicide.** Human beings are not, after all, designed to live alone. We're meant to be in company with one another. It is unsurprising that the lockdowns have had the psychological effects that they've had, especially among young adults and children, who have been denied much-needed socialization.*

"In effect, what we've been doing is requiring young people to bear the burden of controlling a disease from which they face little to no risk. This is entirely backward from the right approach."

Oremus pro invicem. Fr. De Celles

MASS INTENTIONS

Monday, Dec. 14th 8:30 am Dr. Stephen Christensen	Saturday, Dec. 19th 9:00 am Guillermo Castillo+
Tuesday, Dec. 15th 8:30 am Nelly Drouillard	
Wednesday, Dec. 16th 8:30 am Jean & Edward Coran+	
Thursday, Dec. 17th 8:30 am Pope Francis	Vigil Mass 5:00 pm Fr. Rippy Mart & Arlene Harper
Friday, Dec. 18th 8:30 am Katie Schweitzer 7:00 pm EFM (Latin Mass)	
Masses to be said Privately Dec. 14 Joyce Ann O'Connor + Dec. 15 Patricia Quigley + Dec. 16 Dr. Raymond Chase + Dec. 16 Kathryn Quan Dec. 17 Paul & Marie Sundberg+ Dec. 18 Cecilia Phan + Dec. 20 Ricardo Castillo, Sr. +	Sunday, Dec. 20th 7:00 am Fr. De Celles Don & Louis Sundberg + 9:00 am Fr. Rippy Parishioners 11:00 am Fr. De Celles Joyce Ann O'Connor + 1:00 pm Fr. Daly Gail Brown +

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 Christine Gloninger Ina Davis
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Extraordinary Form/Traditional Latin Mass at St. Raymond Church This Friday, Dec. 18th. St. Raymond's offers the Mass according to the Roman Missal of 1962, also known as the "extraordinary form of the Roman Rite" (EFM), at 7:00 pm on the 1st and 3rd Fridays of every month. For more information on this form of Mass, visit: <http://www.sanctamissa.org>.

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 are expected at all Masses unless you are exempt.

The 1:00 pm Sunday Mass is "Masks Mandatory".

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.

Sign ups for attending Christmas Eve & Christmas Day Masses are open.

Because of our current limited seating capacity **ALL Masses for Christmas REQUIRE you to Sign up to Attend!** Please visit our website (straymonds.org) to reserve your seat(s) today—Some of the Masses are almost at capacity already. If you need assistance, please contact the parish office.

Giving Tree Gifts are Due TODAY! If you forgot to bring your gift with you, please drop it by the parish office no later than tomorrow (Monday, Dec. 14th). **We also need volunteers to help deliver the gifts to Our Lady of the Blue Ridge in Madison on Thursday, Dec. 17.** Please let us know if you can help with loading and/or driving the Gifts to Madison, VA.

ADVENT GIFT SHOP SALES: This weekend (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.

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>

"The One who calls you is faithful." Will you be faithful to His call? Listen; God may be inviting you to be a priest, deacon or consecrated religious. Contact Fr. Michael Isenberg, michael.isenberg@arlingtondiocese.org or (703) 841-2514.

GOSPEL JN 1:6-8,19-28

A man named John was sent from God.
He came for testimony, to testify to the light,
so that all might believe through him.
He was not the light,
but came to testify to the light.
And this is the testimony of John.
When the Jews from Jerusalem sent priests
and Levites to him
to ask him, "Who are you?"
He admitted and did not deny it,
but admitted, "I am not the Christ."
So they asked him,
"What are you then? Are you Elijah?"
And he said, "I am not."
"Are you the Prophet?"
He answered, "No."
So they said to him,
"Who are you, so we can give an answer to those who sent
us?
What do you have to say for yourself?"
He said:
"I am *the voice of one crying out in the desert,*
'make straight the way of the Lord,'
as Isaiah the prophet said."
Some Pharisees were also sent.
They asked him,
"Why then do you baptize
if you are not the Christ or Elijah or the Prophet?"
John answered them,
"I baptize with water;
but there is one among you whom you do not recognize,
the one who is coming after me,
whose sandal strap I am not worthy to untie."
This happened in Bethany across the Jordan,
where John was baptizing.



The Knights of Columbus are selling Christmas Trees & Wreaths in the Church's south parking lot this week; sales end today (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: Saturday & Sunday 9:00 am—8:30 pm. 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 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.
Before you were born,
I set you apart."*

Jeremiah 1:5-6



Thank you for your continued support of the MaRiH Pregnancy Care Center. Your generosity - accompanied by your prayers - is so very much appreciated. **Our next support weekend will be on January 9-10.** 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 is scheduled to 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: cli.org

Special thanks to those who have been making such beautiful blankets!! Our **Wrappèd In Lovè** 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.

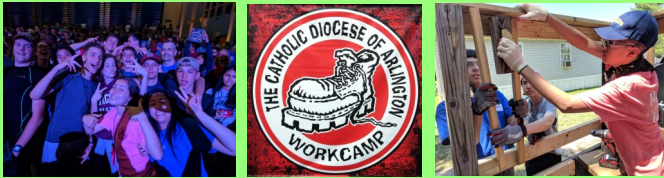
To those who have suffered an abortion: Project Rachel can help someone who is carrying the grief and sorrow of a past abortion. (888)456-HOPE. Confidentiality always respected. www.helpafterabortion.org.

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

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 signuugenius 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.



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! **Due to the pandemic, this year will likely look different from previous years. Come to this meeting to find out more!** Diocesan WorkCamp Coordinator, Ed Gloninger, will be there to explain and answer questions. Hope to see you there! Make sure forms (below) are signed and on file before coming. You may also bring them with you if that is easier.

Junior High (7-8th Grade) Youth Group 5-6:30pm Sunday, December 13th (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.** This is the last meeting until January.

HS Youth Group 8-9pm Sunday, December 13th (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.** This is the last meeting until January.

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 will be CCD classes this week: 12/13, 12/14, 12/15

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.

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.

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, Jan. 8th in the Maurer Room at 10:00 am. There is limited space but virtual attendance is possible. The book for discussion is: *Takedown: From Communists to Progressives, How the Left Has Sabotaged Family and Marriage* by Paul Kengor (256 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

Last week's column had the first part of Archbishop Salvatore J. Cordileone's "The Battle to Free the Mass" (<https://www.firstthings.com/web-exclusives/2020/11/the-battle-to-free-the-mass>).

While the public witness, the media push, the thousands of petition signers, and hundreds of callers along with a letter from the U.S. Department of Justice slightly opened the doors of the churches to up to 100 worshippers, the "war for souls" has just begun.

The human person is more than just flesh and bones. Each human person is made in the image and likeness of God — soul and body. We are human because of our soul; just as a plant soul defines a plant, and an animal soul defines an animal. Our soul gives our body life; at conception our soul enters our body; at death it leaves the body.

Just as we need to feed the body; we also need to feed our souls. Archbishop Cordileone ends his essay with this insight: "The Mass in the Catholic Church stands or falls on the supernatural claims of our founder Jesus Christ: 'Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day.' Making the Real Presence of Christ at the Mass real in the hearts and minds of all Catholics is the way forward." It is also the way to feed both our bodies and souls —something essential for all Catholics. "Free the Mass!"

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.

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.

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.straymonds.formed.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

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.

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.sfraymonds.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.

SUNDAY, NOV. 29TH COLLECTION

Sunday Offertory	\$14,261.00
Family Assistance	\$ 577.00
Maintenance Fund	\$ 810.00
Thanksgiving Day	\$ 679.00

LAST WEEK'S COLLECTION

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

This 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.