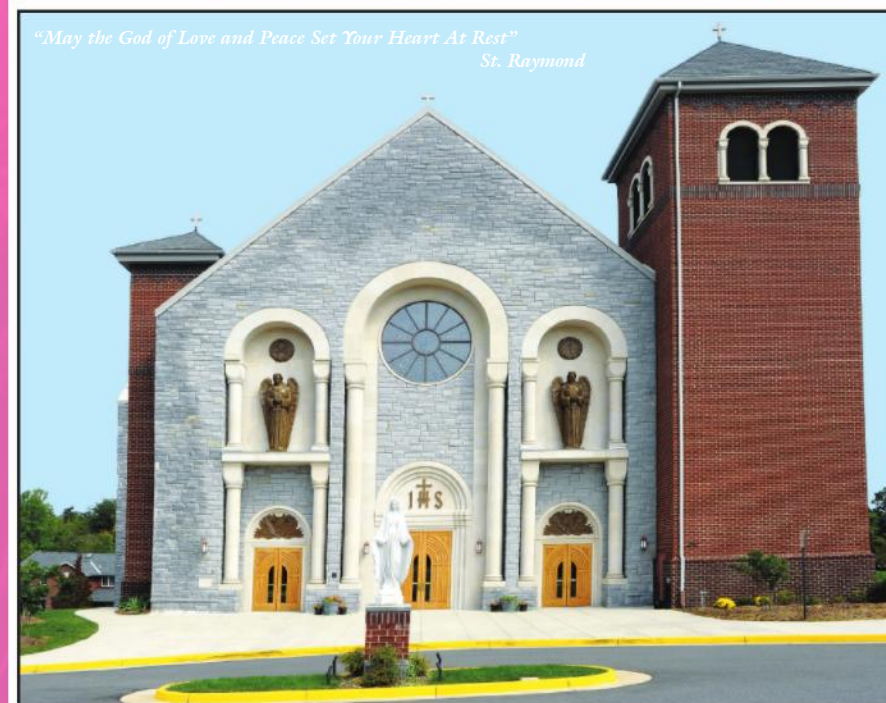




# ANGELUS

©Diocesan - The Visitation - Philippe De Champaigne, 1643



"May the God of Love and Peace Set Your Heart At Rest"  
St. Raymond

**V.** And the Word  
was made flesh.

**R.** And dwelt among us.

*Hail Mary, full of grace.  
The Lord is with thee.*

## Welcome to St. Raymond of Peñafort Roman Catholic Church

8750 Pohick Road  
Springfield, VA 22153

### WEEKEND MASSES:

Saturday Vigil: 5:00 pm  
Sunday: 7:00 am, 9:00 am,  
11:00 am and 1:00 pm

### WEEKDAY MASSES:

Monday through Friday:  
8:30 am  
Saturday: 9:00 am

### EXTRAORDINARY FORM MASS (LATIN)

1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Fridays 7:00 pm

Rev. John C. De Celles, Pastor  
Rev. Edward R. Horkan, In Residence  
Elisabeth Turco, Director of Liturgical Music  
Jeanne Sause, Director of Youth Apostolate  
Mary Salmon, Director of Religious Education  
Vince Drouillard, Religious Education Secretary  
Joe Marquart, Plant Manager  
Kirsti Tyson, Office Manager  
Mary Butler, Secretary  
Virginia Osella, Parish Secretary

### PARISH OFFICE:

Telephone Numbers:  
Rector: 703-440-0535  
Rel. Education: 703-440-0537  
Fax: 703-440-0538

### Office Hours

Monday-Friday 9:30 am - 4:30 pm

### E-Mail

Church: [Office@straymonds.org](mailto:Office@straymonds.org)  
Rel. Ed.: [ReligiousEducation@straymonds.org](mailto:ReligiousEducation@straymonds.org)  
Choirs: [Music@straymonds.org](mailto:Music@straymonds.org)

### Website

[www.straymonds.org](http://www.straymonds.org)

**TUITION ASSISTANCE:** Please inquire with our office about the availability of partial scholarships for the children of active St. Raymond parishioners attending local Catholic grade schools and high schools.

### Angelus Academy

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

Angelus Academy is a fully-accredited pre-K through 8th grade Catholic School affiliated with the Diocese of Arlington. Although it has no official connection with St. Raymond's, the parish has a longstanding close relationship with Angelus Academy. Many of our parish children already happily attend school there.

### SACRAMENT OF PENANCE (Reconciliation/Confession)

#### Wednesday Evening

6:15-6:55 p.m. (during Exposition)

#### Saturday Morning

8:00 - 8:45 a.m.

#### Saturday Afternoon

3:00 - 4:45 p.m.

### EXPOSITION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

Wednesday from 9:00 am to 7:00 pm  
Friday from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm

**MARRIAGE:** Couples wishing to marry must contact a parish priest at least 6 months prior to the desired wedding date. Couples who are living together will be expected to live separately at least during the 3 months prior to the wedding.

**RCIA:** The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults is the process by which adults (and children who have reached the age of reason) are instructed in the Doctrine of the Church and are prepared to receive the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Eucharist. If you or someone you know, would like to inquire about becoming a Catholic, please call the Parish Office.

**BAPTISM:** Parents are requested to make arrangements with the Parish Office ONE MONTH in advance. Parents must participate in a one-session pre-Baptismal program and are encouraged to do so before the birth of their child. You must be REGISTERED in the Parish 3 MONTHS prior to the Baptism.

**BULLETIN DEADLINE:** Please submit announcements in writing 10 days prior to publication.

## Pastor's Corner

**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.

**CATHOLIC TRADITIONS.** This time of year is filled with all sorts of traditions. Unfortunately, many of us have lost sight of the Catholic origins of many of the traditions that dominate the secular celebration of Christmas and Advent.

**Consider the Christmas tree.** There are many different efforts to explain the origins of the Christmas tree, including many that try to separate it completely from Christianity. For example, some say that since many different ancient non-Christian cultures used evergreens as a sign of life or health that therefore evergreen “Christmas” trees are not “Christian,” or that Christians “stole” the symbol from the pagans. But there is no conflict or “stealing” here. Since Christianity converted many ancient pagan cultures, it was natural for those new Christians to keep the symbols that had meaningfully expressed their long-held spiritual desires that were ultimately answered only in Christianity. So, if an evergreen tree expressed a pagan culture’s desires for eternal life, it was natural for them to carry that symbol into Christianity, which is fine with the Church.

The specific Christianization and “Christmas-ization” of the evergreen tree can be traced to at least the early 8<sup>th</sup> century in Germany. It seems one Christmas Eve the great missionary St. Boniface and his companions came upon a group of pagans gathered around their sacred tree, the “Oak of Geismar” (“Donar’s Oak”) to worship their god, Thor, and to sacrifice a little child to please him. Horrified by what he had found, Boniface struck the Oak, which the people believed to be indestructible, and suddenly a great wind came and blew the tree over, tearing it out of the ground by its roots and into four pieces. When the tree fell it revealed a small evergreen tree that had grown behind it. St. Boniface then told the people: “This little tree, a young child of the forest, shall be your holy tree tonight. It is the wood of peace, for your houses are built of the fir. It is the sign of an endless life, for its leaves are ever green. See how it points upward to heaven. Let this be called the tree of the Christ-child; gather about it, not in the wild wood, but in your own homes; there it will shelter no deeds of blood, but loving gifts and rites of kindness.” The people then took the tree to the great hall of their village and decorated it with candles, as Boniface told the story of the Baby Jesus. The whole village, including the pagan priest, was converted that Christmas Eve. (For a beautiful retelling of this tale see *The First Christmas Tree*, by Henry van Dyke).

This seems to be the oldest story of the Christmas tree and stands as the inspiration for later developments in its use. It was popularized later in the middle ages through the German “Paradise Play” depicting the creation of man, with the evergreen decorated with apples to symbolize both Eden’s Tree of Life (evergreen) and Tree of Knowledge of Good and

Evil (apples). When the play was performed in churches, the *Paradeisbaum* (Paradise Tree) was surrounded by candles. Eventually the *Paradeisbaum* made its way into homes and the rest is history.

**Santa Claus.** Another tradition of the secular celebration of this season is Santa Claus, if its correct to call a real man a “tradition.” Once again, we often forget the Catholic origins of Santa Claus, who is none other than Saint Nicholas (“Santa Claus” derived from the Dutch for “St. Nicholas”). Again, many will argue about non-Christian or pagan predecessors, but it is clear that our Santa is St. Nicklaus. One reason the two seem to be disconnected in America is because of the English Protestant and Puritan origins of our nation—after the “Reformation” the English downplayed the reference to *Saint Nicholas* as sounding too Catholic (in England Santa is still called “Father Christmas”).

But Catholics remember the wonderful stories about St. Nicholas, who was bishop of Myra (in modern Turkey) in the early 300s. The story of how he rescued three sisters from being sold into slavery by dropping three bags of gold through their window at night. And how he raised three little boys from the dead after they had been murdered. Not to mention the many stories of his other amazing miracles—he is called *Thaumaturgus*, or *Wonderworker*. And we should not forget that after being tortured for his faith in the last Roman persecution, he attended the Council of Nicaea where he boldly defended the divinity of Christ, and Mary’s status as “Mother of God” against the arch-heretic Arias. Add all this to his reputation for giving treats to the children he met in the streets, and you see the same man who is now the beloved and saintly giver of gifts on Christmas.

Now, so that no one misunderstands me, especially little children, what I am saying is that Santa Claus is real, and is also known as St. Nicholas. Catholics know him as a saint who now has *eternal life*. And it seems that God has sent him back to us to be the great gift-giver of Christmas. This doesn’t mean that other stories that we read or see on TV about Santa Claus are not true or bad—I think they’re interesting and sometimes amusing, and even touching. It just means that WE know the REAL story, the rest of the story.

**DON’T FORGET.** Go to **confession** during Advent—we have confessions **every single day of Advent**, except Christmas Eve: Monday through Friday from 6 to 7pm, Saturdays 8 to 8:45am and 3 to 5pm, and Sundays (only during Advent) 8 to 9am.

Also, don’t forget to join us this Thursday December 16, from 7pm to 8pm, for the last of our **Advent Holy Hours** with Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. The Holy Hour will include a short talk (by me), followed by the Rosary, silent prayer and then Benediction. This year our topic is “*Faith, Hope and Love at Christmas*” and this Thursday I will talk about Love, or Charity.

I also encourage you to **attend daily Mass**, as well as Wednesday and Friday Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.

And don’t forget, **gifts for the “Giving Tree” are due in today.** Please remember to 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.

**Oremus pro invicem. Fr. De Celles**



**MASS INTENTIONS****Monday, Dec. 13th**

6:30 am Rev. Jerome Daly  
8:30 am Bill Bihner +

**Tuesday, Dec. 14th**

6:30 am Rev. Jerome Daly  
8:30 am Drs. Stephen &  
Jennifer Christensen

**Wednesday, Dec. 15th**

6:30 am Rev. Jerome Daly  
8:30 am Nelly Drouillard

**Thursday, Dec. 16th**

6:30 am Rev. Jerome Daly  
8:30 am Virginia McReynolds

**Friday, Dec. 17th**

6:30 am Rev. Jerome Daly  
8:30 am Pope Francis  
7:00 pm EFM (Latin Mass)

**Private Mass**

Dec. 17 Shue Wong +

**Saturday, Dec. 18th**

9:00 am Katie Schweitzer

**Vigil Mass**

5:00 pm Fr. Rippy  
Barbara Lucas

**Sunday, Dec. 19th**

7:00 am Fr. Horkan  
Frances Spataro +  
9:00 am Fr. De Celles  
Parishioners  
11:00 am Fr. Rippy  
Virginia Osella  
1:00 pm Fr. C. Vaccaro  
Bernie Crum +

**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.**

**Colleen McFadden**

**Please pray for the sick of our parish**

Glenn Bliss	Juanita Boarman	Christopher Quan
Tom Dietz	Michael	Ted Tolpa
Michael O'Neill	Malachowski	Nena Brennan
Cindy Laird	John Florio	Serrin Foster
Patricia Lewis	Debra Henkel	Fr. Jerry Daly
Barbara McGinn	Daniel Moore	Tom Swengros
Mai Pham	Lauren Hornsby	Ellie Garcia
Joan Opiela	Gaudencio Dizon	Kelly Wallace
Leonora Ramos	Antoinette Baptist	Rigby
Jason Saenz	Paul Haynes	Rea Garcia
Phyllis Zitnik	Dwayne Taylor	Sophie Garcia
Patricia Del Buono	Bernadette	Grace Ramos
	D'Agostino	Mervyn Carter

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

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

Monday - Friday Daily Mass at 8:30 am

Saturday at 9:00 am

Sunday Mass at 9:00 am & 11:00 am

**Additional Confession Times for Advent!** We have confessions times every day during Advent: on Sunday from 8:00 am – 9:00 am; Monday—Friday from 6:00 pm – 7:00 pm; Saturday 8:15 am – 8:45 am & 3:00 pm – 5:00 pm.

**The Knights of Columbus are selling Christmas Trees & Wreaths** in the Church's south parking lot through TODAY, Sunday, December 12. Our hours are Saturday & Sunday 9:00 am - 8:30 pm. Please support the Knights who use the contributions to support St. Raymond's and other various 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.

**Caroling at the Crèche** – The Knights of Columbus are sponsoring our second annual family event to sing carols to the baby Jesus in the Creche outside the Church on Sunday, December 26<sup>th</sup> at 7pm. We will have song booklets for everyone to follow along. Light refreshments will be served to keep us warm while we sing in celebration to the King of Kings. This is an event for all ages and all voices, and with any luck, we'll have a special visitor for the kids. In case of inclement weather, we will meet in the Parish Hall. Please join us.

**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 on Saturday, Dec. 18th. For more information, call Dave Wilson, 703-966-5327.

**Upcoming Events at St. Raymond Church**

**Dec. 11-12 Youth Apostolate Bake Sale**

**Dec. 15 Legion of Mary**

**Dec. 16 Holy Hour & Talk 7:00 pm**

**Dec. 17 EFM (Latin Mass) 7:00 pm**

**Christmas Mass Schedule**

**(Holy Day of Obligation)**

**Friday, December 24, Christmas Eve:**

**4:00 pm Children's Mass**

**6:00 pm Children's Mass**

**8:00 pm**

**Midnight (12:00 am)**

**(with Carols/Christmas Music at 11:30 pm)**

**Saturday, December 25, Christmas Day:**

**9:00 am, 11:00 am & 1:00 pm**

**(No 7am Mass or Evening Mass)**

**Sunday, December 26th**

**Feast of the Holy Family**

**No Saturday Vigil Mass**

**7:00 am, 9:00 am, 11:00 am & 1:00 pm**

**Solemnity of Mary Schedule**

**(Not a Holy Day of Obligation this year)**

**Saturday, January 1**

**Midnight, 9:00 am, 11:00 am & 1:00 pm**

**(No 7am Mass or Evening Mass)**

**Giving Tree Gifts are Due Back TODAY! If you forgot to bring it with you to Mass, please drop the gifts at the Parish Office on Monday morning.** This year we have 35 families with a total of 210 people. All families are either parish families, referred by a parish family, or given to us by Our Lady of the Blue Ridge in Madison, VA. We will be delivering the Gifts to Our Lady of the Blue Ridge on Thursday Dec. 16th following the 8:30 am Mass. Please call the parish office if you would like to help.



**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

Larry Saenz (703-832-1042) or go to [www.KofC.org/JoinUs](http://www.KofC.org/JoinUs) to become a Knight today!

**St. Martin de Porres Committee** - collects **non-perishable** food on an ongoing basis for the Springfield Resource Center, which serves 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 all donations are welcome (no clothing). For equitable distribution, smaller packaging is requested (i.e. 1 lb bags of rice vs. 5 lb. bags, 1qt. oil vs. 1 gal oil). **This year the need for food is greater than ever. Please be generous.**

**Family of Jesus Prayer Group:** Weekly meetings in the Church have resumed on Mondays at 4:00 pm. If you have any prayer requests, please let us know by emailing Elaine Perricone at [jpebtp@verizon.net](mailto:jpebtp@verizon.net) or by calling the parish office. You may also write down your prayer requests and drop them in the "Prayer Box" on the table in the narthex of the church.

**The House of Mercy (HOM)** is accepting donations of **clothing and small household items that can fit in regular trash bags**. They are also accepting gently used toys and games provided all the parts of the games are included. Halloween and Thanksgiving decorations can be donated from now until December 18 and Christmas decorations can be donated until January 22. All donations may be left at St Raymond's (outside the library door inside the church door nearest to the rectory). POC is Jim Mault ([jmault1@cox.net](mailto:jmault1@cox.net)).

**St. Raymond's has Adoration every Wednesday and Friday!** Would you like to spend an hour in silent prayer and reflection with our Lord during exposition of the Blessed Sacrament? We are in need of weekly adorers **especially 12:00 pm, 4:00 pm and 6:00 pm on Wednesdays and at 2:00 pm on Fridays**. We also need volunteers to be on our substitute list. If you are interested in Wednesdays, please call Leslie Schratz at 703-569-1940 or email [spoiledk9s@verizon.net](mailto:spoiledk9s@verizon.net). If you are interested in Fridays, please call Virginia Osella at 703-440-0535 or email [virginia.osella@straymonds.org](mailto:virginia.osella@straymonds.org). **Drop-ins are always welcome!**

### **NEW Inclement Weather Policy**

In the event of Weather or Emergency closings, St. Raymond's Parish will NO LONGER follow Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) decisions.

In the event of Weather or other Emergency situations, notice of cancellations or closings of parish events and/or facilities will be posted to the parish website. If possible/practical the parish will also send out an email to all parishioners notifying them of the closing/cancellations.

There are only TWO exceptions to any closing decisions we make and issue:

- 1) Regularly scheduled Masses and Confession will NEVER be cancelled due to inclement Weather.**
- 2) Meetings of very small groups that receive the pastor's personal permission, in which case members will be notified of the exception personally by their group leader.

**SAINT RAYMOND'S RESPECTS LIFE**  
*Learn the TRUTH. Live the TRUTH. Spread the TRUTH... in LOVE*

*Pray for an end to abortion. 2 Chronicles 7:14*



The MaRiH Center humbly and sincerely **THANKS YOU** for your remarkable outpouring of support. We are overwhelmed at your incredibly generous response to our particular needs. God bless you all for caring for those who have chosen life and are in need of material support. If you would like to know more about the mission of the MaRiH center, please call 703-370-4774, email [marihcenter@gmail.com](mailto:marihcenter@gmail.com) or visit [marih.org](http://marih.org). You'll be glad you did! **Our next support weekend is December 11-12.**



**SAVE THE DATE!** The Annual **March for Life** will take place in Washington DC on Friday, January 21st. Four buses will leave from St. Raymond's. Watch for signups in early January.

**The Power of Prayer. Abortionists trespass against us.** Yet we are called to 'forgive those who trespass against us'. Through the Evangelist Matthew, the Lord also admonishes us to love and pray for those who persecute us. At St. Raymond's we have Mass offered every year for each of the known abortionists in our area. As we each strive to live the Gospel of Life, **please continue to pray for the conversion of abortionists.**

**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.

Please see the parish website for info regarding **COVID-19 Vaccines** and their relation to aborted fetal cell lines. **You must speak up!** Sample letter to pharmaceutical companies urging ethical practices available in the narthex and on the parish website.

**Immediate regret often follows when a woman ingests the 'abortion pill'.** If you know someone in this situation, contact [reverseabortionpill.com](http://reverseabortionpill.com). 24/7 helpline: 855-209-4848 **It may not be too late.**



**Tepeyac OB/GYN**  
Something More Than Medicine™

**We are a pro Life OB/GYN Medical Practice in Fairfax dedicated to you and your individual needs. Transforming**

**Hearts Through Healthcare.** [tepeyacobgyn.com](http://tepeyacobgyn.com) 703-273-9440. Thank you for your referrals and your support.

**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](http://amomspeace.org).



## St. Raymond's Youth Apostolate

\*All are welcome to participate in Youth Apostolate events.  
Make sure forms are signed and on file. <http://bit.ly/YAforms>

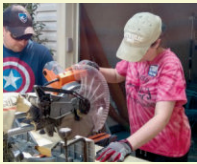
### Youth Group & CCD Sunday 12/12 & 12/19

**SCHEDULE CHANGE! We WILL meet on 12/19. We will NOT meet on 1/2.**

4-5:30pm Junior High Youth Group (light meal served)

5:30-7pm Religious Education/CCD

7-8:30pm High School Youth Group (dinner served)



### WorkCamp Info. Meeting for HS Teens & Parents 2pm Sunday, December 12 (Parish Hall)

The Diocesan week-long overnight High School WorkCamp week of service is back! Mark your calendar for June 18-24! Join 800+ teens from across our diocese helping folks in need within our diocese by building decks, putting in windows, or doing other things to make their homes warmer, safer and drier. This week of service and evening talks, music and activities is a great way to start your summer, make lots of new friends, learn new skills, and grow deeper in your relationship with God. WorkCamp is open to all current 9-12th graders. **If you are interested in joining us for WorkCamp in June, please attend this meeting.** Many adults also needed. Come to the meeting to learn more!

### Sons of Thunder: High School Guys' Group

#### 7-8:30pm Tuesday, December 14 (Maurer Room)

Come join the brotherhood! All 9-12th grade guys who want to learn more about their faith and deepen their relationship with Christ are invited. There will be food! Make sure forms are signed and on file.

### Friday, December 17 & Fridays in January (not 1/21/22)

#### 6:30am High School Fri. Morning Mass & Breakfast Club

All high school teens are invited to join us Friday mornings for Mass followed by breakfast with Fr. Horkan in the parish hall. If you RSVP a week ahead, we can coordinate our volunteers to drive you to school. If not, you are welcome to just show up for Mass and have your parent drive you to school after breakfast!

### 10am-2pm Tuesday, December 21

#### Help Decorate the Church for Christmas!

High school teens and compliant adults are needed to help decorate the church for Christmas. Please signup if you are able to help <https://bit.ly/decorate4Christmas>

**Jeanne Sause**

Director of the Youth Apostolate (Grades 7-12)

[youth@straymonds.org](mailto:youth@straymonds.org) Call/Text: 571-334-9890

<http://bit.ly/youthapostolate>

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

### There **WILL BE** CCD classes **SUNDAY 12/19**

There will be **NO CCD classes** 12/20, 12/21, the week of 12/26 and no classes on 1/2. We will resume the regular class schedule on Monday January 3rd.

### Parents of students in preparation for First Holy

**Communion 2022:** the First Holy Communion Registry Form with Certificate of Baptism attached is **due Dec. 16th.**

### Parents of students preparing for Confirmation in May 2022:

Service Hours forms and Service Experience forms are **due** in the Religious Education Office by **January 13, 2022.**

**Midterm Exams** are scheduled for January 9-11. **Parents of students in grades 1-8 are asked to work with your children in preparing for the test** by studying the First Semester Section of the Basic Study Questions booklet for your child's grade level.

**All students in Religious Education Program grades 3-12 are encouraged to take advantage of the many opportunities for Confession during this penitential Season of Advent.** There are opportunities every day of the week - check the bulletin for the schedule

### St. Raymond 2021-22 Snow Team: Your Parish needs your HELP!

St. Raymond's is seeking industrious, able-bodied persons to join the 2021-22 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 the Parish Office, at 703-440-0535 during office hours.

### Pilgrimage to Vienna, Salzburg & Budapest:

Fr. Bjorn Lundberg, pastor at Sacred Heart of Jesus in Winchester will be the spiritual director for a 10 day pilgrimage to Europe Sept. 19-28, 2022. The cost is \$3999 per person with a deposit of \$450 & final payment due June 19<sup>th</sup>. Includes air fare, hotels, guides, transportation, breakfast & dinner each day. For more information contact John Tagnesi at 1-888-544-4461 or by e-mail at [jtag1964@verizon.net](mailto:jtag1964@verizon.net).

**Parking at St. Raymond:** During the Advent Season, the church parking lot is not large enough to accommodate all parishioners and their guests. Limited street parking is available, but can cause concern for our neighbors. One option available to you involves parking in the commuter lot at Gambrill Road and Fairfax County Parkway, where you can take advantage of carpooling. Please consider this as an option during the Advent & Christmas seasons. The Fairfax County Police will be monitoring the yellow striped "No Parking" zones in the parking lot, and tickets will be issued if violations occur. Please be considerate of our neighbors, and do not park where you block their driveways. Infractions will be ticketed and may possibly mean towing as well.

## Church Persecuted

Today is the traditional feast day of Our Lady of Guadalupe. Her appearance to St. Juan Diego in 1531 sparked a renewal of Catholicism in Mexico, bringing about tens of thousands of conversions. Throughout the years, Mexico has been plagued by floods and disease. In 1723, a plague struck Mexico, lasting for 8 months with 700,000 deaths reported. Our Lady of Guadalupe was declared "Patroness of Mexico City" followed by prayers, and the plague ceased shortly thereafter. In 1979, during his first pilgrimage to Mexico City, Pope Saint John Paul II declared Our Lady of Guadalupe as "Mother of the Americas."

Today, the COVID pandemic has brought a decrease of Catholic church attendance. Pre-COVID, about 41% of Catholics attended church weekly, 41% less than weekly, and 18% never. Since COVID, that number has dropped to 36%, 35%, and 29%, respectively. (Survey commissioned by [www.PillarCatholic.com](http://www.PillarCatholic.com) and conducted among US adults 9/28-10/25/2021.)

For comparison purposes, the attendance at Protestant/Christian churches pre-COVID, was 43% (weekly), 40% (less than weekly), and 17% (never). Post-COVID, those numbers became 29%, 35%, and 26%, respectively.

An analysis of these numbers begs the question of "what factors cause people to remain Catholic?" The survey also determined that two of the most important factors in whether people remain Catholic as adults are whether their parents took them to Mass regularly and if they attended Mass regularly in college.

Let us ask the intercession of Our Lady of Guadalupe to help overturn these trends.

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

**Scholarships to Catholic Schools are still available!**  
Please send requests for these scholarships or additional financial assistance to Fr. De Celles.

## FORMED<sup>®</sup> Get In-Formed!

**Just for Kids! Nicholas: The Boy Who Became Santa** - Nicholas was still a young child when he discovered a very special secret that changed his life forever. It was the gift of giving, by which he brought happiness to many people. Nevertheless, in sharing this gift, Nicholas had to face many dangers. Here is the fascinating story of the boy whose love and care for others make him one of the most popular figures of all times. Today, more than sixteen centuries later, the entire world celebrates the kindness and generosity of the man we call Santa Claus. Based on historical facts and traditions, Nicholas: The Boy Who Became Santa, is the beautifully animated film worth watching all year long.

Watch now at [www.straymonds.formed.org](http://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](mailto:formed@straymonds.org)



## Angelus Academy

*Where the Truth of Catholic teaching takes flesh in the lives of Pre-K - 8th graders and their families.*

What a blessing it is to be learning together!  
Come visit us and see why our students love coming to school.  
Call or email us to arrange a personal tour.  
We are now accepting applications for 2022-23.  
<https://angelusacademy.org/admissions-overview/applying/>.

**Thank you for your continued prayers and support.**

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**The Gift Shop** will be open AFTER 9 & 11 am Masses this weekend and next, Dec. 12 & 19. Need another time? Email [giftshop@straymonds.org](mailto:giftshop@straymonds.org).

**St. Raymond's Young Adult Group.** Are you 21-40 yrs old? (Single or married, with or without kids) Contact [youngadults@straymonds.org](mailto:youngadults@straymonds.org) to be added to our email list and hear about upcoming events!

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

**Legion of Mary:** Do you want to develop a closer relationship with our Mother Mary and her Son, Jesus? The Legion of Mary weekly meeting is held on Wednesday evenings at **6:30 pm** in the Maurer Room. All auxiliary members and anyone interested in joining the Legion of Mary are welcome.

**ATTENTION All Adult Volunteers!** Our *Annual Volunteer Appreciation Dinner* will be Saturday, January 15th. All adult volunteers and their spouses are invited to join Fr. De Celles for dinner. Please RSVP to the parish office at 703-440-0535 by January 8th. Hope you all can join us.

**FAITH DIRECT:** eGiving lets you continue to support St. Raymond's and the ministries you cherish. You can sign up from your computer, smartphone or tablet, and set up a recurring donation or make a one-time gift. Recurring gifts sustain our parish throughout the year. You'll provide us with consistent support, even if you're away on a Sunday, so the programs, services, and ministries that mean so much to our community will never miss a beat. Sign up today by visiting [faith.direct/VA64](http://faith.direct/VA64). Thank you for your continued support of our parish family. God Bless You.

## LAST WEEK'S COLLECTION

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Maintenance Fund	\$ 3,210.00
Our Lady of Ransom Catholic School Scholarship Donations	\$ 1,523.00

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