



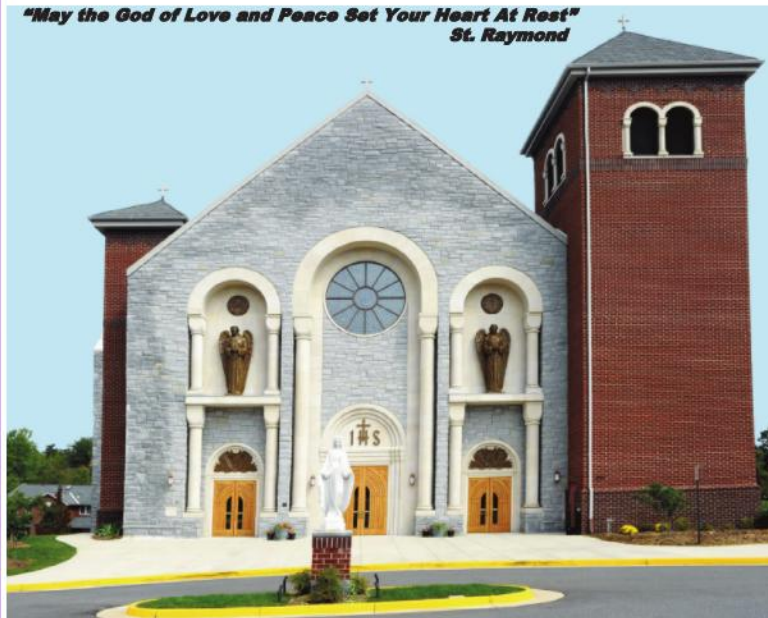
V. Behold
the handmaid
of the Lord.

R. Be it done
unto me according
to Thy word.

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

©Diocesan - The Annunciation - Luca Giordano, 1672

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



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 - Friday:
6:30 am & 8:30 am
Wednesday: 7:00 pm (Sept - May)
Saturday: 9:00 am

Website: www.straymonds.org

Rev. John C. De Celles, Pastor
Rev. Joseph D. Bergida, Parochial Vicar
Rev. Edward R. Horkan, In Residence
Elisabeth Turco, Director of Liturgical Music
Jeanne Sause, Director of Youth Apostolate
Mary Salmon, Director of Religious Education
Mary Hansen, Religious Education Secretary
Maerose Naduvilekunnel, Business Manager
Virginia Osella, Parish Secretary
Dominique Murray, Office Assistant
Mary Butler, Secretary

PARISH OFFICE:

Telephone Numbers:

Rectory: 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
Rel. Ed.: ReligiousEducation@straymonds.org
Choirs: Music@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

8:15 - 8:45 a.m.

Saturday Afternoon

3:30 - 5:00 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.

ANGELUS

Pastor's Corner

Lessons and Carols. Tonight (Sunday, December 10) at 7:00pm, we keep our Advent tradition of having “Lessons and Carols,” a program of beautiful Advent music and Scripture readings, Taking prophetic readings from the Old Testament and pre-nativity readings from the Gospels, our parish lectors lay out God’s amazing plan for the birth of His Divine Son. The choir then adds to the atmosphere of joyful expectation by leading us in popular Advent songs and a few more complicated choral pieces, reminding us of the angels singing over Bethlehem. This “tradition” is rather new, especially to Catholics, originally introduced by the Anglican Church at Cambridge’s King’s College in 1918, but it has recently become very popular in Catholic circles. I first experienced it over 35 years ago as a layman at a Catholic parish of Anglican converts in San Antonio. I’m happy to say it’s become a beloved Advent tradition at St. Raymond, with a crowd usually at about 300. Please join us, and stay for a light reception afterwards!

Advent Series with Holy Hour. Please join us this Friday December 15, from 7pm to 8pm, for our Advent Holy Hour of Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. We’ll begin with Exposition, then Fr. Bergida will give a short talk (the annual “Advent Series”), followed by praying the Rosary and then Benediction. This year Father’s topic is “*The Mystery of the Church in the Incarnation and Nativity*.” Please join us for the final two Friday Holy Hours during Advent.

Other Advent Events this Week. Don’t forget to visit our website to find out how you can help with this year’s “**Giving Tree**” 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. The last day to turn in gifts is next Sunday, December 17, but the sooner the better for our hardworking staff and volunteers.

And **don’t Forget: go to confession** during Advent—we have **confessions every single day of Advent**.

Letters to Santa, or Jesus? It is a happy custom for children to write letters to Santa. But maybe it would be better if Catholics followed an older Christian custom: writing letters to the Baby Jesus. For example, the letter written to Jesus by a 7-year-old little boy in 1934:

“Dear Christ child! You will soon float down to earth. You want to bring joy to the children. You want to give me joy too. I wish for the Volks-Schott, a green chasuble and a Heart of Jesus. I always want to be good. Greetings from Joseph Ratzinger.”

A “Volks-Schott” is a book with the prayers of the Mass in Latin and German. Interesting note: little Joseph seems to have been “playing Mass”—like a lot of future priests do!

Christmas Creche. One of the most important and powerful images of the Advent Season is the Christmas Crèche or “Manger Scene.” At St. Raymond’s we follow the custom of a gradual display of the scene to draw us into the progression toward Christmas, ultimately completing the scene at Christmas Midnight Mass by processing with and placing the figure of the Baby Jesus in his manger. Does your **home have a Creche** set up during Advent? Do you have a Christmas Tree? The Manger is much more important than that.

For some background, I highly recommend the discussion of the Creche in Pope Benedict XVI’s book “The

Infancy Narratives,” where he gives an incredibly beautiful and scholarly explanation of the Creche scenes we are so familiar with.

For a less scholarly but interesting historical discussion, consider what Pope Francis wrote about the Creche in his 2019 Apostolic Letter, *Admirabile Signum*:

“...[L]et us go back to the origins of the Christmas crèche so familiar to us. We need to imagine ourselves in the little Italian town of Greccio, near Rieti. Saint Francis stopped there...[in] 1223. Francis had earlier visited the Holy Land, and the caves in Greccio reminded him of the countryside of Bethlehem....Fifteen days before Christmas, Francis asked a local man named John to help him realize his desire ‘to bring to life the memory of that babe born in Bethlehem, to see as much as possible with my own bodily eyes the discomfort of his infant needs, how he lay in a manger, and how, with an ox and an ass standing by, he was laid upon a bed of hay’. At this, his faithful friend went immediately to prepare all that the Saint had asked. On 25 December, friars came to Greccio from various parts, together with people from the farmsteads in the area, who brought flowers and torches to light up that holy night. When Francis arrived, he found a manger full of hay, an ox and a donkey. All those present experienced a new and indescribable joy in the presence of the Christmas scene. ...At Greccio there were no statues; the nativity scene was enacted and experienced by all who were present...Thomas of Celano, the first biographer of Saint Francis, notes that this simple and moving scene was accompanied by the gift of a marvelous vision: one of those present saw the Baby Jesus himself lying in the manger...”

...Setting up the Christmas crèche in our homes helps us to relive the history of what took place in Bethlehem...It touches our hearts and makes us enter into salvation history as contemporaries of an event that is living and real in a broad gamut of historical and cultural contexts....”

Speaking of Mangers. Did you know we have the actual manger of the Baby Jesus? It (or the wood that remains of it) is in Rome, at the Basilica of St. Mary Major, in a beautiful golden reliquary under the main altar. (For centuries it was kept in the “Chapel of the Nativity” to the right of its current location, so if you go to Rome don’t be confused by this).

It was sent to Rome in 635 AD by the Patriarch of Jerusalem, St. Sophronius, who asked Pope Theodore I to take custody of it, as he feared it would be captured or destroyed by the Muslim army that had besieged Jerusalem. It has remained there ever since.

Looking for a Good Christmas Movie? There’s a lot of hype about the new movie “Journey to Bethlehem,” a Hollywood musical spectacular supposedly about the Nativity. While it gets a lot of good reviews from the secular media, and from the secularized “Christian” media, it is NOT a Christian movie as it is only very loosely based on the Scripture and Christian tradition and is written to appeal to secular sensitivities and values. Hollywood knows there’s a demand for Christian movies, but since they don’t get Christianity, they haven’t a clue how to make an actual Christian movie. So, DO NOT WASTE YOUR MONEY OR YOUR BRAIN on this. If you want more details, look for a review in a solid Catholic publication or website, such as Brad Miner’s review, “Unkindest Cuts: a review of ‘Journey to Bethlehem,’” on *The Catholic Thing*.

Oremus pro invicem. Fr. De Celles

MASS INTENTIONS

Monday, December 11th

6:30 am Jean Anezin +
 8:30 am Joseph Perricone +

Tuesday, December 12th

6:30 am Paul Mai Ly +
 8:30 am Ashley Akers

Wednesday, December 13th

6:30 am Family of Fr. Daly
 8:30 am Robert Ferguson +
 7:00 pm Celebrant's Intention

Thursday, December 14th

6:30 am Drs. Stephen &
 Jennifer Christensen
 8:30 am Family of Don Bain

Friday, December 15th

6:30 am David C. Barton +
 8:30 am Nelly Drouillard

Saturday, December 16th

9:00 am Joey Wheeler +

Vigil Mass

5:00 pm **Fr. De Celles**
 Virginia McReynolds +

Sunday, December 17th

7:00 am **Fr. Horkan**
 Shue Wong +
 9:00 am **Fr. De Celles**
 Parishioners
 11:00 am **Fr. Rippy**
 Pope Francis
 1:00 pm **Fr. Bergida**
 Joey Wheeler +

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

www.straymonds.org

Monday - Friday Daily Mass at 8:30 am
 Saturday at 9:00 am
 Sunday Mass at 9:00 am & 11:00 am
 (See the website for Holy Days)

Additional Confession Times for Advent! Confession is available Mon-Fri, from 6-7pm, in addition to regular Confession times. Visit our website for the complete Advent schedule.

Daily Family Rosary leaders needed! St. Raymond's has a Daily Family Rosary in the church: Mon-Fri at 6:30pm and Saturday and Sunday after the 9am Mass. **Please visit our website to sign up to lead during December!**

The Gift Shop will be open after Masses Dec. 9/10. Stop by our table after Masses! We carry Advent items, crucifixes, bibles, rosaries, jewelry and more. Credit cards, checks, and cash are welcomed. We are also available by appointment. Submit your request at giftshop@StRaymonds.org or call 703-440-0535.

Inclement Weather Policy

In the event of Weather or Emergency closings, St. Raymond's Parish NO LONGER follows 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.

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.

Neil McNulty

Ryan Higgins

Please pray for the sick of our parish

Glenn Bliss

Tom Dietz

Michael O'Neill

Cindy Laird

Patricia Lewis

Mai Pham

Jason Saenz

Phyllis Zitnik

Patricia Del Buono

John Florio

Debra Henkel

Gaudencio Dizon

Paul Haynes

Dwayne Taylor

Ted Tolpa

Nena Brennan

Serrin Foster

Margaret O'Neill

Tom Swengros

Donald Trayer

Ellen Trayer

Virginia

Cummings

Arlene Pietraszko

Jean Seiberling

Upcoming Events at St. Raymond Church

Dec. 10 KofC Christmas Tree Sales until 12/14
Dec. 10 Lessons and Carols 7pm
Dec. 11 Family of Jesus Prayer Group at 3pm
Dec. 12 Adult Bible Study
Dec. 13 Adoration 9am - 7pm
Dec. 13 Legion of Mary
Dec. 15 Adoration 9am - 8pm
Dec. 15 Holy Hour with Talk by Fr. Bergida, 7pm
Dec. 16 Rorate Mass, 6:30am
Dec. 16 KofC Pints with Aquinas, 7pm
Dec. 17 All Giving Tree Gifts due!

Christmas Mass Schedule

Sunday, December 24, Christmas Eve:

4:00 pm, 6:00 pm, 8:00 pm,
 Midnight (12 am) (Carols/Christmas Music at 11:30 pm)

Monday, December 25, Christmas Day:

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

Advent Series continues this week! Please join us for the final two Fridays during Advent: Father Bergida will lead a special Holy Hour at **7 pm on December 15, and 22** with a talk on the topic, "The Mystery of the Church in the Incarnation and Nativity," which will discuss the relationship of the Church to Mary and her Son.

Giving Trees Gifts Due this week! Thank you to everyone who is helping us sponsor 28 families, locally or from Our Lady of the Blue Ridge in Madison, VA. **All gifts are due by December 17, but the earlier the better!** Our volunteers are hard at work tracking and sorting gifts to have them ready by the week before Christmas. Please call the parish office with any questions.

Advent Lessons and Carols TONIGHT. Please join us **Sunday, December 10, 2023 at 7:00 pm** for a program of beautiful Advent music and Scripture readings, called "**Lessons and Carols.**" Weaving together prophetic readings from the Old Testament and pre-nativity readings from the Gospels, the readers lay out God's breathtaking plan for the birth of Our Savior. The choir adds to the atmosphere of joyful expectation by leading us in popular hymns and singing a few special choral pieces. Afterwards, everyone gathers downstairs for some seasonal refreshments and Christian fellowship.



NOW ... MORE THAN EVER ... our communities, our Parish, and our families need strong Catholic men to answer the call to lead with faith, protect our families, serve others, and defend values in a busy, ever-changing and tumultuous world. For over 100 years, the Knights of Columbus have done exactly that, standing up for the Church, serving the least among us, and strengthening our parishes and our families. **Join the St. John Bosco Council of St. Raymond's parish today!** Simply go to <https://www.kofc.org/joinus> and experience the Knights free for one year: Enter the Agent Code "CPEREZ", click "Add" and complete the form. Be sure to enter our council #12846 for local information when you register. Please call our Deputy Grand Knight, Mark Lawton, at (703) 576-7693 if you have any questions or want to learn more about being a Knight! Don't delay ... BECOME A KNIGHT!

Christmas Tree Sales. The Knights of Columbus are selling Christmas Trees and Wreaths in the Church parking lot through Thursday, December 14 (or until sold out). Please support the Knights, who use the contributions to support St Raymond Parish 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.



Thank you for Coat Donations! The Knights of Columbus recently conducted our Coats for Kids Campaign. We donated 116 coats to local Charities (ECHO, Christ House and Lorton Community Action Center). Each organization was overwhelmed and so excited when we delivered the coats. St. Raymond's parishioners really "stepped up" and put smiles on the faces of some very needy kids this winter. The Knights thank all who donated.

PINTS WITH AQUINAS - The Knights of St. John Bosco Council invite the men of the parish to participate in a night of theology and fellowship on Saturday, December 16th from 7pm to 9pm on the patio outside the parish hall. The night includes a discussion of the gospel accounts of the Nativity led by Fr. Horkan, fellowship around the fire pit, and a whiskey tasting (for participants over 21). Food and non-alcoholic drinks will be available for all. There is no cost for this event. Please RSVP by sending an email to jamesbarryryan@aol.com. In the case of inclement weather, we will move into the hall.

"Rorate Mass" Saturday, December 16, 6:30 am. The Rorate Mass is a votive Mass of the Blessed Virgin Mary offered on the Saturdays of Advent. Traditionally the Mass is offered in the dark hour right before sunrise. Physical darkness in the church symbolizes a world darkened by sin and in need of the Savior. The liturgy illuminated (almost) solely by candles, reminds us of the prophets and John the Baptist, who gave witness to the true light coming into the world (see John 1:9). The Holy Sacrifice will be offered similarly to the 9am Sunday Mass. The Eucharistic Prayer will be said aloud in Latin, but without the microphone. The darkness and quieter tone facilitate a greater interior quietness and reflection on the mysteries of the Incarnation and upcoming Nativity. Come find out why this Mass is called *Rorate*. Experience why many since the middle ages have found this way of praying an amazing preparation for Christmas!

ATTENTION all Adult Volunteers! Our *Annual Volunteer Appreciation Dinner* will be on Saturday, January 6th. All adult volunteers and their spouses are invited to join Fr. De Celles, Fr. Bergida, and Fr. Horkan for dinner at 6:30pm. Please RSVP by January 2nd. We hope you can join us!

SAINT RAYMOND'S RESPECTS LIFE

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

Our Lady of Guadalupe, Patroness of the Unborn, pray for us!



MaRiH Pregnancy Care Center: We proudly partner with MaRiH as they serve local expectant mothers in need. Knowing each child has an unrevealed holy purpose, MaRiH volunteers strive to see the face of God in the mothers and families they help. **Thank you for generously supporting this work of mercy.** Donations welcome in the narthex collection box near the elevator. marih.org.

The National March for Life - Friday 19 January 2024. Stay tuned for details and parish bus reservations.

Please plan to attend the 2024 Pro-Life Day 21 February in Richmond. In our Post-Roe world, the battle for the sanctity of life in the womb is closer to home. **Voice your prolife support in Virginia!** For more information: vaprolifeday.org.

A Best Choice. The only direct service mobile ultrasound resource center in Northern Virginia. Statistics show that 90% of mothers who see their child on ultrasound and hear a heartbeat bond with their child and continue their pregnancy. Do you know someone who needs an ultrasound? Contact abestchoice.us

Has the sorrow of miscarriage or still birth touched your life? **A Mom's Peace**, offers discreet support to families with bereavement, burial and remembrance assistance. Visit amomspeace.org.

The Abortion Pill now accounts for up to 60% of all abortions. Call the abortion reversal helpline 855-209-4848. **It may not be too late.** abortionpillreversal.com.

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

Help After Abortion: Project Rachel Helpline: (703) 841-2504 (888-456-HOPE) **For Men:** (703) 841-3833 or info@helpafterabortion.org

Give a Gift for Life! No woman should ever feel that she is alone or that abortion is her only choice. **Gabriel Project** helps pregnant moms welcome their babies. For more info, call 866-444-3553 or contact GabrielProject@arlingtondiocese.org.

A woman can do whatever she wants with her own body! Well, that's not entirely true but even if it were, the embryo or fetus within a pregnant woman is in no way 'a part' of the mother's body. Individual parts of the same body (like livers and lungs) share the same genetic code as the rest of the body. The unborn child is a separate living human being complete with his or her own unique genetic code. That's science, not philosophy, religion or opinion. **Thou shalt not kill applies.**

St. Raymond's Youth Apostolate

<https://straymonds.org/ministries-and-groups/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, December 10th

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

5:30-7pm 7-12th Grade CCD

7-8:30pm High School Youth Group: We will be joining the parish for our Advent Lessons & Carols followed by a little reception in the parish hall. **Meet & sign-in in the narthex.**

NEXT WEEK: Youth Group Sunday, December 17th

Next week both Jr. High and High School Youth Group will meet together from 4-5:30pm for an hour of Adoration with a talk by Fr. Bergida, followed by pizza in the parish hall. Bring a bible, pen & journal. **Meet and sign-in in the narthex.**



+



6:30am Mass & Breakfast Friday 12/15

This will be the last Friday Mass & Breakfast until 2024!

All 7-12th graders: Join us Friday mornings for Mass followed by breakfast with Fr. Horkan & Fr. Bergida in the parish hall. If you RSVP at <https://bit.ly/FRIDAYRSVP> by Wed. we can coordinate our volunteers to drive you to school by 8am! We may also be able to pick you up for Mass if you give us enough notice. If not, you can show up for Mass and have your parent drive you to school after breakfast Either way, RSVPs help!

Talitha Koum: High School Girls' Group

5:30-7pm Monday, December 18 (Maurer Room)

Attention all high school girls! "Little Girl, arise!" (Mt. 5:41) and come to Talitha Koum! Deepen your faith, play fun games, and grow in sisterhood! Talitha Koum meets 1st & 3rd Mondays of the month, 5:30-7pm in the Maurer Room.

Sons of Thunder: High School Guys' Group

7-8:30pm Tuesday, December 19 (Maurer Room)

High School Men: Join the brotherhood! Sons of Thunder meets the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of the month, 7-8:30 pm in the Maurer Room with Phil, Nate, and Father Bergida. Come hungry!

Decorate the Church for Christmas

10am-2pm Thursday, December 21st

High School Teens & Compliant Adult Volunteers needed!

Help prepare the Church for Christmas by putting up decorations, garlands, trees, nativity figures, flowers, wreaths and more! Sign up at <https://bit.ly/Decorate4Jesus> College students home on break are also invited to help!

Pie Sale Fundraiser raised a total of \$3,770! Thank you again to all who helped with the baking, the selling and the buying! We hope you all enjoyed your pies, and are so grateful for your support of our parish Youth Apostolate.

Scholarship Contests/Opportunities for youth in grades 7-12.

Details on 2 scholarship opportunities were sent out via email. Email Jeanne for details.

**More info on all of the Youth Apostolate activities above
can be found online at <https://bit.ly/PERMISSIONSLIPS>**

Jeanne Sause

Director of the Youth Apostolate (Grades 7-12)

youth@straymonds.org Call/Text: 571-334-9890

Email Jeanne to be added to the weekly email list for the most updated info on Youth Apostolate news & upcoming events!

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Please note: There WILL be CCD classes 12/17, 12/18 and 12/19

There will NOT be CCD classes 12/24 - 12/26 and no classes 12/31 - 1/2

Parents of students in preparation for First Holy

Communion 2024: the First Holy Communion Registry Form with Certificate of Baptism and Birth Certificate attached is due Dec. 14th.

Parents of students preparing for Confirmation in May

2024: Service Hours forms and Service Experience forms are **due** in the Religious Education Office by **January 11, 2024**.

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 and website for the schedule.

Home School Group: for more information visit our website www.homeschool-life.com/va/straymondhsg/ Or email straymondhsg@gmail.com.

Bridge Club: All levels of players are welcome. We play Bridge cards each week in the Church Hall. Contact Lois Kotlowski at 703-455-6567 dancertoo2@yahoo.com or James Kolakoski at 703-455-3009 bridgeclub402@gmail.com if you are interested in joining us.

Legion of Mary: Do you want to develop a closer relationship with our Mother Mary and her Son and our Savior, Jesus Christ? The Legion of Mary weekly meeting is held on Wednesday evenings at 6:30 pm in the Library. All auxiliary members and anyone interested in joining the Legion of Mary are welcome. Point of Contact: Judy Mayer, jmayer9014@aol.com, or 703-627-7320.

Family of Jesus Prayer Group: Weekly meetings are in the Church on Mondays, **now at 3:00 pm**. If you have any prayer requests, please let us know by emailing Elaine Perricone at 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.

Christ House Meal December 29th - Volunteers needed to provide a hot To-Go meal for those who are food insecure, at our Diocesan Christ House Dining Room in Alexandria. Volunteers are needed to donate food for 72 servings. This month our menu includes: simple beef stroganoff, Caesar salad, Pillsbury biscuits, red velvet cupcakes, fruit, and bottled water. Drop off food items on Thursday evening, Dec. 28 between 5:30-7:30pm. We also need help preparing and distributing the meals at the Catholic Charities Dining Room in Alexandria on Friday, Dec. 29th. Check out the full menu and sign-up for your Corporal Act of Mercy opportunity at the Perfect Potluck link: <https://www.perfectpotluck.com/VJVF3238>

Catholic Charities Family Services can help if you or someone you know is struggling with anxiety, depression, grief, and marital or parenting concerns. We offer transformational outpatient counseling services to individuals, couples, and families of all faiths and backgrounds. Call 703-687-8987, and for more information, visit <https://www.cda.net/need-help/medical-andcounseling/counseling/>

Church Persecuted

As the world becomes ever more aware of global anti-Semitic rhetoric and attacks, our own FBI is under investigation for singling out “Americans who are pro-life, pro-family, and support the biological basis for sex and gender distinction as potential domestic terrorists.” Last month, the House Judiciary Committee and its Select Subcommittee on the Weaponization of the Federal Government released a 30-page document entitled “The FBI’s Breach of Religious Freedom: The Weaponization of Law Enforcement Against Catholic Americans.”

House Judiciary Committee Chairman, Rep. Jim Jordan, and Subcommittee on the Constitution and Limited Government Chairman, Rep. Mike Johnson, “wrote that the Judiciary Committee is continuing to conduct oversight of the Federal Bureau of Investigation’s (FBI) assessment of traditional Catholics as potential domestic terrorists.” Had it not been for a whistleblower, the memorandum originating from the Richmond Field Office “would still be operative in FBI systems, violating the religious liberties of millions of Catholic Americans.”

“The basis for the Richmond memorandum relied on a single investigation in the Richmond Field Office’s area of responsibility in which the subject ‘self-described’ as a ‘radical-traditionalist Catholic’ (RTC),” added the committee and subcommittee. This was not a single instance. Similar letters also surfaced in the Los Angeles, Milwaukee, and Portland FBI field offices.

Last Tuesday, FBI director, Christopher Wray, repeated a previous statement that he was “aghast” at the existence of the Richmond letter, but indicated in testimony in the Senate that there has yet to be any disciplinary action taken against the employees involved.

Interestingly, “However, FBI employees could not define the meaning of an RTC when preparing, editing, or reviewing the memorandum,” the lawmakers emphasized. “Even so, this single investigation became the basis for an FBI-wide memorandum warning about the dangers of ‘radical’ Catholics.”

catholicvote.org: “House Committee Releases Report on FBI’s Targeting of Catholics” and <https://catholicvote.org/new-evidence-anti-catholic-fbi-memo/>

FORMED®

Get In-Formed!

See the Formed bulletin board by the central doors of the vestibule for ADVENT suggestions

For a list of Advent resources on Formed.org: <https://leaders.formed.org/advent-suggestions/>

Watch Augustine Institute Bible Conference: Waiting in Joyful Hope. These five talks by Scripture scholars will draw your mind and heart deeper into the Advent season of preparation.

Watch Guadalupe: The Miracle and the Message. Learn about Our Lady’s appearance to St. Juan Diego (Dec. 9), the successive miracle, and the Our Lady of Guadalupe devotion (Dec. 12).

Has your spiritual life been enriched by Formed.org? **We need VOLUNTEERS** for a committee to promote and spread enthusiasm for this amazing resource to our parishioners. If you’d like to bless our community in this way, contact Vanessa at formed@straymonds.org

Available for FREE! To set up an account, visit **Formed.org/** **signup** and select our parish.

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

View this bulletin online at www.DiscoverMass.com



Angelus Academy

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

There are still spots available for the 2023-24 school year in our Little Messengers faith formation program for preschoolers. Little Messengers enrollment includes Level I Atrium (Catechesis of the Good Shepherd) sessions each week. Apply soon! AngelusAcademy.org/admissions-overview/applying/

Call or Email Julie Maimone, Director of Admissions, at Admissions@angelusacademy.org for more information or to schedule a tour.

Come visit us and see why our students love coming to school. Thank you for your continued prayers and support.

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

Scholarships to Catholic Schools. St. Raymond’s offers **Catholic School tuition assistance for all parish families.** The scholarship is renewable every year and is subject to minimal qualification terms. Additional financial aid is available on a case by case basis. There is also **assistance available for homeschooling families.** Contact the parish office for more information.

St. Martin de Porres Committee - collects 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, 1 qt. oil vs. 1 gal oil).

FAITH DIRECT: eGiving helps you provide regular support to St. Raymond’s, even when you are out of town. You can sign up from your computer, smartphone or tablet and set up a recurring donation or make a one-time gift. Sign up today by visiting faith.direct/VA64. Thank you for your continued support of our parish family. God bless you.

LAST WEEK’S COLLECTION

Sunday Offertory	\$ 15,098.00
Family Assistance	\$ 1,186.00
Maintenance Fund	\$ 1,796.00
Our Lady of Ransom Catholic	
School Scholarship Donations	\$ 1,630.00
Christmas Flowers	\$ 1,734.00

The Second Collection this weekend is for Catholic Charities. You can donate by envelope this weekend or at ccda.net/Christmas.

You can use your Christmas Flower Offering envelopes any time during December, and we will compile all names submitted by 12/22 for our annual bulletin insert.



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