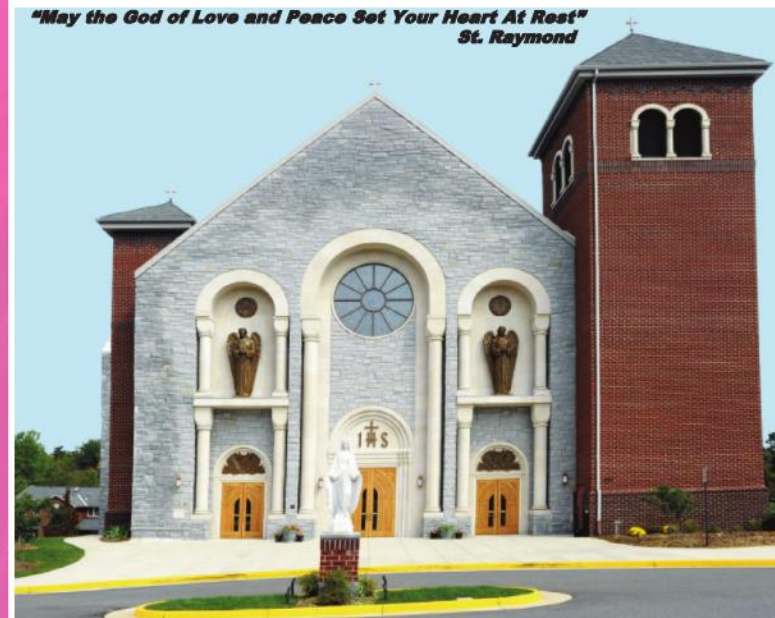




# ANGELUS

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

Website: [www.straymonds.org](http://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](mailto:Office@straymonds.org)  
Rel. Ed.: [ReligiousEducation@straymonds.org](mailto:ReligiousEducation@straymonds.org)  
Choirs: [Music@straymonds.org](mailto: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.

## Pastor's Corner

**It's Almost Christmas!** The big day is almost here as this year we observe the shortest Advent possible, 3 weeks and 1 day.

Today is called **Gaudete Sunday** or "Rejoice Sunday." It takes its name from the "Introit" of the Mass (the "entrance antiphon" we say if we don't sing during the entrance procession), taken from Philippians 4: "*Gaudete in Domino semper: iterum dico, gaudete. Dominus enim prope est.*" "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice. Indeed, the Lord is near."

Today Holy Mother Church calls us to remember the true cause of our Joy in this season: the coming of Our Lord Jesus Christ into the world 2000 years ago to save us from sin and evil, and invite us to share in his life of love, beginning in this world and perfected in the next.

It's natural to ask, how do we "rejoice always," when we so often have real reasons to be sad? Of course, there are times when we're going to experience sadness and even terrible sorrow. But in Christ we find something more than smiles and laughter. We find a deep abiding joy, knowing that the Eternal Creator and Redeemer of all things loves us and will never abandon us to evil. So that even when weighed down by grief and trials, we find hope and the grace to remain steadfast in our faith and love. This is "indeed" cause to rejoice.

Usually, Gaudete Sunday is about 2 weeks before Christmas, but this year Christmas is just 8 days away. I know there's an awful lot going on in the next few days: last minute shopping, travelling, etc. But rather than allowing all the busyness to distract you, try to make real time to prepare yourself for this celebration. Avoid all sin. Try to show charity, patience and compassion to your neighbor, especially your family members, at every moment—be helpful, not harmful, to family peace. And love God above everything and with everything. Take time to pray, go to confession and weekday Mass. And throughout your day, wherever you are, take small moments to place yourself in the company and care of Mary and Joseph. Imagine them travelling on the rocky roads of Galilee and Judea, from Nazareth down to Bethlehem, exposed to the elements, walking all that way or, perhaps, aided by a donkey. Perhaps today, just 8 days before the birth, they were just setting out on their journey. Imagine how every day they were a little closer, but a little wearier and colder. Think of their struggle, but also their joy. For they were not traveling alone: "God their Savior" was with them in Mary's womb. Travel with them these next few days in prayer. Stop from time to time at work, and wonder, "where are you now, Mary and Joseph, and Baby Jesus?" Come to church for a quiet visit, and say to them, "perhaps you are stopping to rest now—let me rest with you." Accompany them on their journey—and do not get too distracted by the craziness of the "holiday season."

**Confession.** If you haven't been to confession this Advent, please go this week—there's nothing like the joy experienced in having our sins forgiven, and no better way to prepare for Christmas. Remember, we have will have at least 2 priests, and sometimes 3, hearing confessions every evening this week, Monday through Friday. We will also have our regular confessions next Saturday, December 23, but we will not have confessions next Sunday, December 24.

**Next Sunday is Christmas Eve: What is your Mass Obligation?** Because Christmas falls on Monday this year, the celebration of it obviously begins on the evening before, on Sunday, with Christmas Eve. This will cause some confusion for many of us. For example, do you have to go to Mass on both Sunday and Christmas Day (Monday)? Can you go to *one* Mass on Sunday evening to count for *both* your regular Sunday and Christmas Day Mass obligation? So let me try to clarify some things.

First of all, we all know that Catholics must go to Mass on Sunday. But remember, Christmas is a Holy Day of Obligation, so you must go to Mass on Christmas too. That means you have to go to TWO Masses, one for Sunday and one for Christmas.

Now, the general rule for Sundays and Holy Days is that you can fulfill your Mass obligation by going to Mass on either the day or on the evening before. So, to fulfill your obligation for next Sunday you can go to Mass on Saturday evening or on Sunday. And to fulfill your obligation for Christmas you can go to Mass on Monday (Christmas Day) or Sunday evening. But you must go to one Mass for each—two Masses!

Next Sunday morning, December 24, we will have a regular Sunday Mass schedule (7am, 9am, 11am and 1pm). Then in the afternoon/evening we will begin our Christmas celebration with three Vigil Masses for Christmas: 4pm, 6pm and 8pm (and also midnight). **I recommend** you fulfill your Sunday Mass obligation on Saturday night or Sunday morning, and your Christmas Mass obligation on Sunday evening or on Monday. That keeps things simple and clear.

**Lessons and Carols.** Wow! What a beautiful evening we had last Sunday. The readings from Scripture were inspiring, and our amazing choir outdid themselves in singing various choral pieces and leading us in Advent hymns. And a great crowd of over 300 people, each of whom left filled with the joy and hope of the season. Thanks to our choir and organist, and especially to **our inimitable Music Director, Elisabeth Turco.**

**Giving.** At the first Christmas God gave Himself to us by stripping Himself of the glory of heaven, and becoming a baby born into poverty, who would grow into a man who would give up His life us on the Cross. So I encourage you to consider carefully what you will give to those in need this Advent, whether individuals you know or charitable organizations that continue Jesus' work on earth.

When you give to charitable groups, make sure the group is solidly in line with the teaching of Christ's Church so that your money isn't diverted to unworthy uses. A few solid groups you could consider are: the Little Sisters of the Poor, Divine Mercy Care, Project Rachel, Gabriel Project, the Poor Clares, Angelus Academy, and St. Dominic Monastery in Linden, VA. I'd also like to put in a plug for a group of lay people I know who are trying to keep us informed and proclaim the gospel in our neo-pagan world: Catholic Vote (full disclosure: I'm CV's chaplain).

And of course, **St. Raymond's** itself is a charitable organization—**special Christmas donations to the parish are greatly appreciated.** Thanks.

*Oremus pro invicem. Fr. De Celles*



**MASS INTENTIONS**

**Monday, December 18th**

6:30 am Katie Schweitzer  
 8:30 am Bernadette  
 D'Agostino +

**Tuesday, December 19th**

6:30 am Emma Elizabeth Hill +  
 8:30 am Andrew Horvath +

**Wednesday, December 20th**

6:30 am Patrick Ryan +  
 8:30 am Frances Spataro +  
 7:00 pm Celebrant's Intention

**Thursday, December 21st**

6:30 am Ramon Celedon +  
 8:30 am Barbara De Celles +

**Friday, December 22nd**

6:30 am Patrick E. Ryan +  
 8:30 am Emily Thomas

**Saturday, December 23rd**

9:00 am Geoffrey Thomas

**Vigil Mass**

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

**Sunday, December 24th**

7:00 am **Fr. Rippy**  
 Hayden Smith +  
 9:00 am **Fr. De Celles**  
 Parishioners  
 11:00 am **Fr. Horkan**  
 Edson Visaya  
 1:00 pm **Fr. Bergida**  
 Margot Blair

**Christmas Eve Masses**

All Masses are for the  
 Celebrant's Intention  
 4:00 pm **Fr. Horkan**  
 6:00 pm **Fr. Bergida**  
 8:00 pm **Fr. Rippy**  
 Midnight **Fr. De Celles**

**Monday, December 25th**

**Christmas Day Masses**

All Masses are for the  
 Celebrant's Intention  
 9:00 am **Fr. Bergida**  
 11:00 am **Fr. De Celles**  
 1:00 pm **Fr. Horkan**

**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.

**Ryan Higgins-safely returned home!**

**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
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**Upcoming Events at St. Raymond Church**

<b>Dec. 18</b>	<b>Family of Jesus Prayer Group at 3pm</b>
<b>Dec. 20</b>	<b>Adoration 9am - 7pm</b>
<b>Dec. 20</b>	<b>Legion of Mary</b>
<b>Dec. 22</b>	<b>Adoration 9am - 8pm</b>
<b>Dec. 22</b>	<b>Holy Hour with Talk by Fr. Bergida, 7pm</b>
<b>Dec. 24</b>	<b>No Confessions</b>
<b>Dec. 26</b>	<b>One Mass at 8:30 am, Offices Closed</b>
<b>Jan. 2</b>	<b>One Mass at 8:30 am</b>

**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

**Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God**

**(No obligation this year)**

**Sunday, December 31**

**5 pm Vigil Mass**

**Monday, January 1**

**Midnight (12 am), 9 am, 11 am, & 1 pm**

**Advent Series concludes this week!** Please join us for the final Friday of Advent: Father Bergida will lead a special Holy Hour at **7 pm on December 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. **The Family Rosary will be recited during the Holy Hour instead of at 6:30pm.**

**Giving Trees Gifts Due back TODAY!** If you forgot to bring your gifts with you to Mass, please drop them off at the parish office on Monday morning! Our volunteers are hard at work tracking and sorting gifts to have them ready for families this week. **Please call the parish office with any questions.**

**CAN YOU HELP YOUR FELLOW PARISHIONERS?** Our parish has a group of volunteers just waiting to provide a ride, bring a meal, or help in some other way during parishioners' times of need? **We need more volunteers!** If you can serve our parish community in this way, contact the parish office to be added to the Samaritan volunteer roster. Also, please call if the Samaritan Group can help you!

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

[www.straymonds.org](http://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!** Please come to Confession! Confession is available Mon-Fri, from 6-7pm, in addition to regular Confession times. Visit our website for the complete Advent schedule.

**The Gift Shop is open this weekend!** Looking for Christmas gifts or stocking stuffers? We have fresh new inventory that will appeal to all ages! Please stop by our Narthex table on Dec. 16/17. We are also available by appointment; submit your request at [giftshop@StRaymonds.org](mailto:giftshop@StRaymonds.org) or call the office.

**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!**

**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!

**Save the Date: Parish Celebration of our patron, St. Raymond of Peñafort, January 14.** Because St. Raymond's feast day falls on the celebration of Epiphany this year, we have permission to transfer it to the following Sunday. Stay tuned for more information about how we will celebrate as a parish!



**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!

**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>

**Parking at St. Raymond:** During the Christmas Season, the church parking lot has extra traffic and may fill up. 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. Thank you!

### 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.

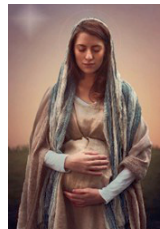
There are only TWO exceptions to any closing decisions we make and issue:

- 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.

## 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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://abortionpillreversal.com).

**Tepeyac Pro Life OB/GYN: Transforming Hearts Through Healthcare.** [tepeyacobgyn.com](http://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](mailto: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](mailto:GabrielProject@arlingtondiocese.org).

**PRO ABORTION ARGUMENT: Can't we agree that it's ok to have an abortion if the fetus isn't old enough to feel pain? WHOA!!!** Are you claiming that it's ok to hurt/kill someone if you anesthetize them first? In this argument aren't you admitting that the fetus gets older over time? Sensory development is only a factor in living beings. Unborn does not mean unalive. **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>**

*"[Silence] is so lacking in this world which is often too noisy, which is not favorable to recollection and listening to the voice of God. In this time of preparation for Christmas, let us cultivate interior recollection so as to receive and keep Jesus in our lives." - Pope Benedict XVI*

### December 17: BOTH YOUTH GROUPS at 4pm!

#### 4-5:30pm High School & Jr. High Youth Group:

**Adoration** Join Fr. Horkan for a special youth holy hour for 7-12th graders! *Parents/families are encouraged to stay for the holy hour as well.* There will be Exposition with time for silent prayer (bring a journal, pen, rosary, and Bible or spiritual reading) and Benediction. Pizza will be served in the hall afterwards.

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

### 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

**NO MEETING Tuesday, December 19:** Correction from last week's bulletin... **Sons of Thunder will NOT meet this week.** See you in the new year!

### 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!

### 6:30am Mass & Breakfast Fridays before school resumes 1/5

Enjoy the Christmas break! Challenge: try to get to an extra daily Mass or two to celebrate the Incarnation this Christmas season!

**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.

#### Jeanne Sause

Director of the Youth Apostolate (Grades 7-12)

[youth@straymonds.org](mailto: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!

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

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

There will be NO CCD classes 12/24 - 12/26 and no classes 12/31 - 1/2.

**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.

**We have an opening for an Assistant Catechist for GRADE 10 on SUNDAY evenings from 5:30-7:00 p.m. Please contact the Religious Education Office for more information.**

**Home School Group:** for more information visit our website [www.homeschool-life.com/va/straymondhsg/](http://www.homeschool-life.com/va/straymondhsg/) Or email [straymondhsg@gmail.com](mailto:straymondhsg@gmail.com).

**Mothers' Group:** Do your young children need a bit more excitement? Are you looking for Catholic friendship with fellow mothers? Come to the moms' meet-up on Wednesday mornings! We alternate between meeting at our church and parks. Email Michelle for more information at [mlcastry@gmail.com](mailto:mlcastry@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](mailto:dancertoo2@yahoo.com) or James Kolakoski at 703-455-3009 [bridgeclub402@gmail.com](mailto: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](mailto: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](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.

**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.cceda.net/need-help/medical-andcounseling/counseling/>

"When Joseph awoke he did as the angel of the Lord directed him." Are you prayerfully vigilant about discovering your vocation in Christ? Might He be inviting you to the priesthood or consecrated life? Contact Fr. Michael Isenberg, Vocations Director, at (703) 841-2514 or email: [vocations@arlingtondiocese.org](mailto:vocations@arlingtondiocese.org).



### Church Persecuted

Archbishop Sam Aquila has taken on the question of the legalization of recreational marijuana in a pastoral letter to Catholics in the Denver Archdiocese. He explains that his competency to discuss the topic is based on witnessing firsthand the result of the legalization of cannabis for recreational use in Colorado in 2012. His pastoral letter, dated Nov. 10, is titled, "That They May Have Life" (<https://arch.den.org/that-they-might-have-life/>).

It is worth taking the time to read the letter since this short column cannot give it a complete explanation. AB Aquila writes it because (1) the drug has been disastrous to society, and (2) there has been a very limited Catholic response against using it. He also provides a complete catechesis of why marijuana is wrong, not only for Catholics, but also for society in general.

The moral issues involved are relatively straight forward. "1) Since the human person is of such value, it is wrong to use any substance that is harmful to human life. 2) Anything that diminishes a man's use of reason and will assails his dignity as a human person and is therefore harmful." Countering the argument by some that the drug is not harmful, he cites a 100% "spike in addiction...in less than 20 years." His response to the drug culture is to "Proclaim the Gospel."

(First published by ACI Prensa, Catholic News Agency's Spanish-language news partner. <https://www.aciprensa.com>) December 1, 2023)

# 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/>

*Listen to Advent: Rethinking the Season.* Stay focused on the purpose of Advent as Dr. Tim Gray utilizes Old Testament readings to help us prepare for the coming of our Lord and Savior.

*Read The Blessings of Christmas* via ePub or your Kindle. This book by then Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (now Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI) is a compilation of sermons and writings to provide rich meditations for the Advent and Christmas season.

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](mailto:formed@straymonds.org)

Available for FREE! To set up an account, visit [Formed.org/](https://Formed.org/) signup and select our parish.

Questions? Need help? Email us at: [formed@straymonds.org](mailto:formed@straymonds.org)

**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](mailto:office@straymonds.org) to verify your email address.**



### 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/](https://AngelusAcademy.org/admissions-overview/applying/)

Call or Email Julie Maimone, Director of Admissions, at [Admissions@angelusacademy.org](mailto: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](http://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](https://faith.direct/VA64). Thank you for your continued support of our parish family. God bless you.

### LAST WEEK'S COLLECTION

<b>Sunday Offertory</b>	<b>\$ 17,284.00</b>
<b>Family Assistance</b>	<b>\$ 7,312.00</b>
<b>Maintenance Fund</b>	<b>\$ 2,797.00</b>
<b>Our Lady of Ransom Catholic</b>	
<b>School Scholarship Donations</b>	<b>\$ 2,087.00</b>
<b>Immaculate Conception</b>	<b>\$ 3,793.00</b>
<b>Catholic Charities</b>	<b>\$ 4,418.00</b>

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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