



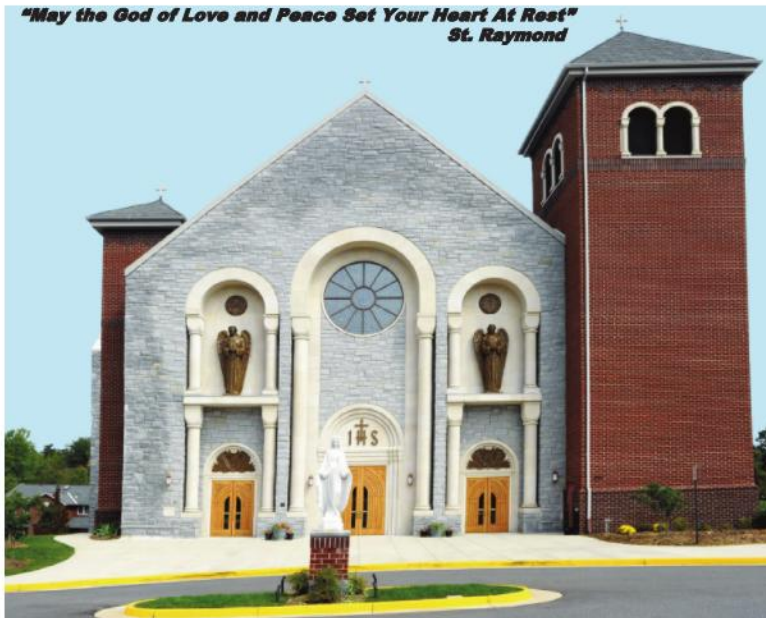
THE HOLY FAMILY OF *Jesus, Mary & Joseph*



*The child
grew and
became strong,
filled with
wisdom; and
the favor
of God
was upon him.*

Luke 2:40

"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.

Pastor's Corner

Holy Family Sunday. Here is what the great Pope St. John Paul II had to say about this feast (Homily, December 31, 1978 (Excerpt):

"The deepest human problems are connected with the family. It constitutes the primary, fundamental and irreplaceable community for man....The Church wishes to bear a particular witness to that too during the Octave of Christmas, by means of the feast of the Holy Family. She wishes to recall that the fundamental values, which cannot be violated without incalculable harm of a moral nature, are bound up with the family... It is necessary to defend these fundamental values tenaciously and firmly, because their violation does incalculable harm to society and, in the last analysis, to man...."

"What are these values? ... [T]rying to express ourself concisely, let us say that here it is a question of two fundamental values which fall strictly into the context of what we call "conjugal love". The first of them is the value of the person which is expressed in absolute mutual faithfulness until death: the faithfulness of the husband to his wife and of the wife to her husband. The consequence of this affirmation of the value of the person, which is expressed in the mutual relationship between husband and wife, must also be respect for the personal value of the new life, that is, of the child, from the first moment of his conception.

"The Church can never dispense herself from the obligation of guarding these two fundamental values, connected with the vocation of the family..."

New Year's. Tomorrow, January 1, 2024, is of course, New Year's Day and the *Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God*. Together with the priests and the staff of St. Raymond's, I wish you a Happy, blessed and holy New Year.

Normally, *Mary, Mother of God* is a Holy Day of Obligation. But since it falls on a Monday **this year, it is not a Holy Day of Obligation, and you don't have to go to Mass.** I would still recommend you do so, to honor Our Mother and to begin the year on the right foot. Maybe I'll see some of you at **Midnight Mass tonight:** we keep things very simple at this Mass, but it's the perfect way to bring in the New Year. We will also have Masses at 5pm tonight/Sunday (Vigil), and tomorrow/Monday at 9am, 11am and 1pm (no 7am Mass).

Merry Christmas! The celebration of the Birth of God the Son, Jesus Christ, is too great an event to celebrate on only one day, so Christmas continues well past December 25th. First, we have the "Octave of Christmas," eight days of celebrating, ending tomorrow, as if it were still the Lord's birthday. Beyond that we have "the twelve days of Christmas" running from Christmas day until January 6, which in most of the world is the *Solemnity of the Epiphany*. In the U.S., however, the liturgical celebration of *Epiphany* is always moved to "the Sunday occurring between 2 January and 8 January." Then, normally we continue to celebrate "Season of Christmas" for an extra week, until the following Sunday which is usually the *Solemnity of the Baptism of the Lord*. This year, however, just as we had the shortest Advent possible, we also have the shortest Season of Christmas possible, with the *Baptism of the Lord* falling on Monday, January 8. Even so, we are still celebrating Christmas, so "Merry Christmas."

Volunteer Dinner. This coming Saturday, January 6, is our annual dinner in appreciation for all those who volunteer their time to support the activities of the parish. If that should include you, and you haven't RSVP'd yet, please contact the parish office.

Solemnity of St. Raymond. Our patron saint's feast is normally celebrated on January 7, but this year that falls not only on a Sunday but on the same day as Epiphany Sunday, so our saint's feast is liturgically suppressed on the 7th. So... with the permission of Bishop Burbidge, **I am transferring the liturgical observation of St. Raymond's to the following Sunday, January 14th.** So two Sundays from now all the Sunday Masses (including the Vigil) will celebrate Solemnity of St. Raymond. In conjunction with this celebration, the Knights of Columbus will be sponsoring a **free pancake breakfast after the 7am, 9am, and 11am Sunday morning Masses.** All are welcome!

Year End Donations. Every year at this time we get inundated with requests for donations. Unfortunately, many so-called "charities" are not doing work consistent with God's will, and others may have good intentions, but are inefficient or ineffective in using their resources. So, we don't have to give to every group who asks for help, and I recommend you give mainly to those groups you have confidence in.

The groups I give to and would recommend for your consideration include: the Little Sisters of the Poor, Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Arlington, House of Mercy, Project Rachel, Gabriel Project, Mary's Shelter (Fredericksburg), the Poor Clares, Angelus Academy and St. Dominic Monastery in Linden, VA.

And of course my favorite charities are St. Raymond's parish and the Our Lady of Ransom Scholarship Fund...

We Have a Facilities Manager! For months now we've been looking for a new Facilities/Plant Manager, and now we've found one as Mike Thompson, a long-time parishioner, joins our staff. I'm so happy he's come on board and look forward to working with him. I thank God for His providence. Please keep him in your prayers as he begins his work for you.

I also want to thank Anthony Hansen, who has been filling in as a part-time/temporary Facilities Manager. He did an excellent job at great personal sacrifice. I can't say how much I appreciate his excellent work.

And I also thank Mary Butler, who continues to be the All-Star utility player on our staff, for working with Anthony to keep things going.

Priestly Blessings. I know many of you are upset about the new Vatican document, *Fiducia Supplicans*, about priests giving blessings to same-sex couples. I plan to go into it in more detail later, but very briefly now....

First of all, the document is **extremely problematic** as its studied ambiguity has predictably led the media and "LGBTQ+" crowd to interpret it as the next step in changing Catholic teaching on marriage. The document is already the cause of terrible scandal among the faithful and the unfaithful alike. That this was not foreseen by its authors is hard to imagine.

But most importantly, the logic, teaching and conclusions of the document are so radically flawed that FS **contradicts itself**, leaving the faithful confused. And we are never bound by confusion. As **Cardinal Gerhard Muller** points out in his commentary (an absolutely superb analysis of the document), "[C]an a faithful Catholic accept the teaching of FS? ...[A]s long as Pope Francis continues to affirm that homosexual unions are always contrary to God's law, he is implicitly affirming that such blessings cannot be given. The teaching of FS is therefore self-contradictory and thus requires further clarification...."

Oremus pro invicem, Fr. De Celles

MASS INTENTIONS

Monday, January 1st
Sol. of Mary, Mother of God

9:00 am **Fr. Bergida**
 Bernadette D'Agostino +
 11:00 am **Fr. Rippy**
 Jacob Berger
 1:00 pm **Fr. De Celles**
 Dennis Klitzke +

Tuesday, January 2nd

8:30 am James Blue +

Wednesday, January 3rd

6:30 am Teofilo and
 Filomenada Tulayba +
 8:30 am Kirsti Tyson & Staff
 7:00 pm Jose Tapia

Thursday, January 4th

6:30 am Donna & Rick Rhoads +
 8:30 am Reparation for sins
 against the Heart of Mary

Friday, January 5th

6:30 am Roderick Hinerman +
 8:30 am In Thanksgiving

Saturday, January 6th

9:00 am George Elliott, III +

Vigil Mass

5:00 pm **Fr. De Celles**
 Donald Fogg +

Sunday, January 7th

7:00 am **Fr. Rippy**
 Corazon Garcia +
 9:00 am **Fr. Bergida**
 Parishioners
 11:00 am **Fr. De Celles**
 RE Catechists
 1:00 pm **Fr. Horkan**
 Family of Jesus Prayer
 Group

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

Please pray for the sick of our parish

Glenn Bliss	John Florio	Tom Swengros
Tom Dietz	Debra Henkel	Donald Trayer
Michael O'Neill	Gaudencio Dizon	Ellen Trayer
Cindy Laird	Paul Haynes	Virginia
Patricia Lewis	Dwayne Taylor	Cummings
Mai Pham	Ted Tolpa	Arlene Pietraszko
Jason Saenz	Nena Brennan	Jean Seiberling
Phyllis Zitnik	Serrin Foster	Erik Maramba
Patricia Del Buono	Margaret O'Neill	Judy Ann Opiela
		Barbara Sherry

Upcoming Events at St. Raymond Church

Dec. 31- Jan. 2 No CCD or Youth Groups
Jan. 2 One Mass at 8:30 am
Jan. 2 Bible Study
Jan. 3 Adoration 9am - 7pm
Jan. 3 Legion of Mary
Jan. 5 First Friday Nocturnal Adoration
Jan. 6 Annual Volunteer Dinner
Jan. 14 Pancake Breakfast after 7am, 9am, & 11am
Masses (for St. Raymond's feast day)

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

First Friday Nocturnal Adoration Jan. 5. On the first Friday of the month, we extend our regular hours of Friday adoration to continue through the evening until Saturday at 9am. There are also **Confessions from 3-4 pm and 6-7 pm on Jan. 5.** Our regularly scheduled adorers will cover the daytime hours (9am – 3pm), and **we will need extra volunteers** to cover from 3pm on Friday through 9am on Saturday. **Please visit our website to sign up!** Two adorers are required per hour so that Our Lord will not be left alone, but you can come at any time.

Fairfax Memorial Pre-Planning Seminar, January 8. Family Service Counselor, Terry Cassell will educate and inform families of the benefits of pre-planning for final arrangements. Father De Celles will speak about the theological aspect of the Funeral Mass and Christian Burial. Please join us for this informative talk after the 8:30 am Mass on Monday, January 8 in the Parish Hall with light refreshments. No RSVP required.

January Book Club: The parish Book Club next meets on Friday, January 12, at 10:00 AM in the St Raymond Library to discuss "Theology and Sanity," by Frank Sheed. The schedule for the year is posted on the parish website at <https://straymonds.org/ministries-and-groups/book-club/>. New members are welcome. If you have any questions, please contact Jim Mault at bookclub@straymonds.org.

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)

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 January!**

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.

Visit <https://forms.gle/gb9uCwYwKpTMnfoZ7> or email office@straymonds.org. We hope you can join us!

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. Our Knights will be cooking up a pancake breakfast for parishioners! **Please join us after the 7am, 9am, or 11am Masses for FREE breakfast and fellowship in honor of our patron saint.**

Watch for our Constant Contact Updates! If you are not receiving emails from the parish, please contact the parish office at **703-440-0535** or office@straymonds.org to verify your email address.



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!

Upcoming Events:

1/4 Officer Meeting (7 PM – Library)
1/8 Membership Meeting – (7PM Rosary; 7:30PM mtg)
14 KofC Pancake Breakfast for St. Raymond's Feast Day

PROJECT MANGER Thank You. A tremendous **THANK YOU** goes out to everyone in the parish for all your prayers and generous donations that supported **PROJECT MANGER** this year. In the one weekend in October (14/15) and via envelope donations throughout the month of November, the Parish, **YOU** raised **\$17,124.33!** That is an increase of over 38% compared with last year as each year your donations continue to grow. That money will go directly for the purchase of approximately 98 new cribs and mattresses for the many local area (e.g., Springfield, Annandale, Fairfax) families in need of cribs for their new babies. In the past 13 years St Raymond Parish has collected over **\$193,000!** So **THANK YOU**, again for your continued support of **PROJECT MANGER** AND **A Women's Choice** in Fairfax and for the support for all those new babies who will be sleeping in brand new cribs in the very near future. God Bless you and your families and praise God for his goodness.

THE SAMARITAN GROUP WANTS TO HELP YOU! Did you know that our parish has a group of volunteers just waiting to provide a ride, bring a meal, or help in some other way during your time of need? If you are experiencing a time of illness, recovery, or other difficulty, let our Samaritans bless you. If we can help or if you want to join the Samaritan volunteer roster, contact the parish office.

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



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 on February 21 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.

When discussing abortion, have you ever heard anyone proclaim, "Who are you to impose your moral code on others?!" Consider that on critical moral issues societies impose morality every day. You may like to run red lights and ignore stop signs, but the law imposes restrictions stating that thou shalt stop at stop signs and red lights because the safety of others is at stake. Civilized societies protect the innocent and vulnerable, therefore thou shalt not assault women, children or anyone else or you will go to jail. Human beings in the womb are 100% innocent and 100% vulnerable. Abortion stops a beating heart. Are we a civilized society? **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>**



Merry Christmas!

12/31 No CCD or Youth Group

Enjoy Christmas, New Year's & the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God with your family! We look forward to seeing you in the new year! Youth Group will resume next Sunday, January 7th

6:30am Mass & Breakfast Fridays, January 5, 12 and 26th!

All 7-12th graders: Join us Friday mornings for Mass followed by breakfast with Fr. Horkan & Fr. Bergida in the parish hall. RSVP at <https://bit.ly/FRIDAYRSVP>

March for Life & Life Fest Rally (Grades 7-12)

6am-5pm Friday, January 19th

The Youth Apostolate is going to try a new rally this year prior to the March for Life. The Life Fest Rally www.lifefestrally.com is sponsored by the Sisters of Life and the Knights of Columbus. We will metro to the DC armory at 6am for the Rally and then meet up with the parish to March for Life. Cost for the rally is \$10 plus metro fees. See next week's bulletin for more info. on how to sign up.

WorkCamp Update

St. Raymond's will not be participating in the diocesan WorkCamp this year as there has been a lot of interest in holding our own "WorkCamp" type week at the parish level again. Plans are in the works for a week of service here at the parish, most likely to be June 21-28th. More details to come.

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

* National Right to Life Essay Contests for grades 7-9 & 10-12 with cash prizes. **Essays are due January 21st.** See website for more information. <https://www.nrlc.org/students/essaycontest/>

* Youth Apostles Pro-Life Multimedia Contest for grades 7-9 & 10-12 with amazon gift cards for winners. Choose between working on a poster, essay, meme, and/or spoken word. You may enter more than one category, but may make only one entry per category. **Entries due January 8th.** See website for more information. <https://www.youthapostles.org/prolife>

* Cardinal Newman Society Essay Scholarship Contest for High School Seniors. Compete for a scholarship of \$5,000 with the chance for up to \$20,000! (And one of St. Raymond's own has won this in the past!) **Deadline: February 20th.** See website for more information. <https://bit.ly/catholicCollege>

**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

PRAYERS FOR A HAPPY AND BLESSED NEW YEAR to all our CCD families!!!!

NO CCD classes this week: 12/31, 1/1, 1/2

Full CCD schedule resumes next week - January 7, 8 and 9 with Midterm Exam reviews.

Mark your calendars: There will be **NO CCD**

CLASSES January 14, 15 and 16 in observance of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday.

Midterm exams will be administered January 21, 22 and 23 for grades 1-8.

Parents of Students who are preparing to receive the Sacrament of Penance for the first time on Saturday, February 10th: be sure you have turned in the **First Holy Communion Registry form and Certificate of Birth and Certificate of Baptism to the RE Office - it was due December 14th!!**

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.

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. **We will not meet on Christmas Day.**

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.cdda.net/need-help/medical-andcounseling/counseling/>

After Abortion Care Volunteer Opportunities Please help support the diocesan after abortion care outreach through prayer and awareness. To learn more, please RSVP for a Project Rachel Zoom Call on Thursday, January 11 at 12:30-1 p.m. by emailing Sarah LaPierre, Project Rachel director, at info@helpafterabortion.org.

Church Persecuted

The war with the woke policies of the previous Virginia governor is not over for Peter Viaming, a public school teacher in West Point (VA), but it recently took a turn in the right direction. On December 14, the Virginia Supreme Court unanimously ruled that he could pursue his claim against the West Point school board concerning his 2018 firing for his refusal to use transgender students' preferred pronouns. The Court stated that his rights under the Virginia state constitution's free exercise of religious clause was violated.

Viaming pursued his case because, as his counsel stated, "He couldn't in good conscience speak messages that he doesn't believe to be true, and no school board or government official can punish someone for that reason." Justice D. Arthur Kelsey wrote for the court that, "Compelling an educator's speech or silence on such a divisive issue would cast a pall on orthodoxy over the classroom on a topic that has produced a passionate political and social debate."

The bottom line is that Viaming can continue to pursue his lawsuit against the school district. This should also be a warning for other school districts, such as Fairfax County Public Schools, that have policies requiring students and teachers to use the pronouns preferred by the students even when those pronouns are contrary to their God-given sex. One must follow his/her conscience and a well-formed conscience is aligned with the Truth.

This is one of many reasons why Father De Celles continues to write and talk about the evils embedded in Fairfax County Public Schools and has created his Our Lady of Ransom Scholarship Fund to assist parents in moving their children out of these schools and into Catholic schools or home schooling.

<https://www.reuters.com/legal/government/virginia-top-court-revives-lawsuit-by-teacher-fired-over-pronoun-use-2023-12-14/>

FORMED®

Get In-Formed!

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

Watch *The Woman*. In this film, various religious and young adults speak on Mary and her role in salvation history and in our lives today. It also presents the Church's dogmas related to the Blessed Mother: The Immaculate Conception, Perpetual Virginity, and the Assumption.

Listen to *Mary: The Indispensable Mother of God*. Tim Staples speaks on the Marian dogmas and doctrines and their contribution to our Faith and relationship with her Son.

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



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://www.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.

DEC. 17, 2023 COLLECTION

Sunday Offertory	\$ 14,479.00
Family Assistance	\$ 180.00
Maintenance Fund	\$ 1,025.00
Our Lady of Ransom Catholic School Scholarship Donations	\$ 1,442.00

LAST WEEK'S COLLECTION

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