



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
Michael Thompson, Plant Manager
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

Mary Salmon. After over 8 years of directing the Religious Education of our children, Mary Salmon will be retiring. I have mixed feelings about this. Mary has been my good friend for almost 25 years and she has very successfully implemented my ideas to restructure our CCD program, to emphasize study, academics and piety. I can't thank her enough for this—and neither can the 100s of kids, and their parents, who have gone through the program. On the other hand, it has been tough job and has earned her retirement; she has worked extremely hard, spending countless hours making ours the very best program in the Diocese.

Mary, you're the best! Thank you, and God bless you for your great service to Him, the parish, the children and their families, and to me. I'm sure the whole parish joins me in this, and in praying for a happy and blessed retirement.

New Director of Religious Education. So we need to find a new DRE, preferably **someone from our parish**. Under the direction of the Pastor, the Director of Religious Education is responsible for guiding, developing, implementing, supporting, and evaluating k-12 faith formation programs for the parish.

All applicants must be baptized and confirmed, as well as a devout practicing Catholic, able to participate in the full sacramental life of the Church.

Education/Experience. A Bachelor's degree in Theology or Religious Education or equivalent experience is preferred, and a Master's Degree in Theology, Master Catechist or Advanced Catechist Certification is a plus. At least three years' catechetical or teaching experience, as well as prior experience managing people are preferred.

Responsibilities. The DRE develops and coordinates the sacramental preparation programs for Baptism, Reconciliation, First Holy Communion, and Confirmation; coordinates activities related to the High School Religious Education program with Youth Apostolate Director; organizes programs of formation for catechists for diocesan certification; implements and oversees program registration and related processes; and organizes/assigns classes.

Knowledge and Skills. The DRE should have hands-on understanding of catechesis and evangelization with the ability to articulate and teach the Catholic Faith. An ability to articulate ideas clearly, concisely, professionally, and respectfully both orally and in writing is also important.

Other qualities. Some evening and weekend work is required.

Professor Janet Smith. We had a great turnout for Dr. Smith's presentation (over 200), and everyone enjoyed themselves and learned a lot. Thanks to Dr. Smith for visiting us. Please keep her in your prayers as she continues her important work for Holy Mother Church. And thanks to **Liz Hildebrand**, whose long-term efforts made this possible, and whose hard work made it very successful.

March for Life. This past Friday, January 19, many of our parishioners joined hundreds of thousands of other pro-life Americans gathering from all over the country to march in the 49th annual "March for Life" on the Mall in Washington. Since the Supreme Court decision in the case *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*, overturning *Roe v. Wade*, the abortion issue has largely returned to the states to decide. But this has provided a whole new set of challenges to the Pro-Life movement. As Jesus taught us, "I am sending you out like sheep into the midst of wolves; so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves." Thank you for continuing to defend the culture of life.

Asian Fusion Dinner. Please join us on **Saturday January 27, 2024**, at 6:30pm in the Parish Hall for our first ever Asian Fusion Dinner. **I've been wanting to do this for years and am delighted it's finally happened.** I hope the whole parish will come and enjoy good Catholic fellowship and a taste of the delicious foods of so many of our parishioners' cultures. See the inserts, posters and websites for details about the menu. For more information and to purchase tickets, visit www.straymonds.org/asian-fusion-dinner. Thanks to the Knights of Columbus for coordinating this. Proceeds will support the Parish Our Lady of Ransom Scholarship Fund.

Solemnity of St. Raymond of Peñafort. Wasn't it beautiful to celebrate our patronal feast together at last Sunday's Masses? And thanks to the Knights of Columbus for organizing the breakfast afterwards.

Last week my whole column addressed the concerns people have about *Fiducia Supplicans*. Unfortunately, there was no space to talk about the Feast Day. So...

Brief Biography. For those of you who don't know much about St. Raymond, I invite you to read the 32-page biography we published a few years ago, available in the parish office.

Raymond was born of a noble family, near Barcelona, in 1175. At the age of 20 he was ordained and became professor of canon law. In 1210 he left to complete his doctorates in civil and canon law at the University of Bologna.

On August 1, 1218, Raymond received a heavenly vision in which the Blessed Mother ("Our Lady of Ransom") instructed him to help St. Peter Nolasco found the Order of Mercedarians, which would be devoted to the ransom of Christians taken captive by the Moors (Spanish Muslims). Raymond did not, however, join that order but rather entered the Order of Preachers ("Dominicans") in Barcelona in 1222.

At the request of his Dominican superiors Raymond published the *Summa Casuum*, his masterpiece on cases of conscience for the guidance of confessors. This led to his appointment as confessor and theologian to Pope Gregory IX in 1230, who also directed Raymond to reorganize the various canons (juridical laws) of the Church, which required him to synthesize centuries of Church decrees. Published in 1231, the Pope declared it to be the sole authoritative source for canon law.

In 1238 he was elected Master General of the Dominican Order, the second successor to St. Dominic, but he resigned two years later, claiming that at 63 years old he was too old for the job. He continued his writing, preaching and pastoral work, as well many important responsibilities entrusted to him by various popes, for another 37 years until his death in Barcelona on January 6, 1275, at the age of 100.

Six years before his death, King James of Aragon invited him to come to Majorca with him to preach to the Muslim inhabitants. But when he arrived on the island, he discovered that the King had brought his mistress along. Raymond demanded he send her away, and when the King refused, Raymond went searching for a ship to go back to Spain. When the King forbade any ship to let him board, Raymond simply bowed his head in prayer, made the sign of the cross, and, by the grace of God, sailed 160 miles back to Spain using just his great cape as both a skiff and a sail.

He is the patron saint of lawyers, both canon and civil. And our patron as well! St. Raymond of Peñafort, pray for us!

Oremus pro invicem. Fr. De Celles

MASS INTENTIONS

Monday, January 22nd

6:30 am Tina Visaya
 8:30 am Jan Paul Fruiterman

Tuesday, January 23rd

6:30 am Gary Brandt +
 8:30 am Christopher Williams +

Wednesday, January 24th

6:30 am Bernadette D'Agostino +
 8:30 am Derek & Stephanie Shickel
 7:00 pm Celebrant's Intention

Thursday, January 25th

6:30 am Daniel Noonan
 8:30 am Eugene & Rose Marie Tougas +

Friday, January 26th

6:30 am Christopher Hoy +
 8:30 am Helen Peck +

Saturday, January 27th

9:00 am Don Bills +

Vigil Mass

5:00 pm **Fr. Bergida**
 Sandra Vlcek +

Sunday, January 28th

7:00 am **Fr. De Celles**
 Marvin Hansen +
 9:00 am **Fr. De Celles**
 Parishioners
 11:00 am **Fr. Horkan**
 Juanita Boorman +
 1:00 pm **Fr. Bergida**
 Roberto Sunga +

**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!**

St. Raymond's has Adoration most Wednesdays and Fridays! We are in need of weekly adorers especially at **12:00 pm on Wednesdays** and **1:00 pm on Fridays**. We also need volunteers to be on our substitute list. If you are interested in helping, please call 703-440-0535 or email virginia.osella@straymonds.org. Drop-ins are always welcome!

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.

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 Cummings
Patricia Lewis	Dwayne Taylor	Arlene Pietraszko
Mai Pham	Ted Tolpa	Jean Seiberling
Jason Saenz	Nena Brennan	Fran Zograib
Phyllis Zitnik	Serrin Foster	Helen Zograib
Patricia Del Buono	Margaret O'Neill	

Upcoming Events at St. Raymond Church

Jan. 22	Family of Jesus Prayer Group
Jan. 23	Bible Study
Jan. 24	Adoration 9am - 7pm
Jan. 24	Legion of Mary
Jan. 26	Adoration 9am - 3pm
Jan. 27	KofC Asian Fusion Dinner
Feb. 3	Men's Prayer Group and Luminaries
Feb. 10	First Penance for RE students
Feb. 10	Women's Pre-Lent Retreat
Feb. 14	Ash Wednesday

Women's Retreat on February 10, 2024: The Women's Apostolate to Youth (WAY) will once again host a retreat for the women of the parish on the Saturday before Lent begins, 8:30 am - 1:30 pm. This year's retreat is entitled, "**Soul of Christ, Sanctify Me: Reflections on the *Anima Christi* Prayer.**" The day begins with Mass, and continues with talks by members of WAY, Eucharistic Adoration, Rosary, Confessions, and lunch. **Please visit our website to register by Feb. 5th.** No cost to attend. You may call the parish office with any questions.

Luminaries of Holy Mary: Come join us to honor the Blessed Mother's request for making the 5 First Saturdays: Mass at 9am, then meet in **the Maurer Room** for Rosary, meditation and Gospel reflection. Our **next meeting is on February 3**. All are welcome.

Mothers' Group: 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.

Women of the Parish are invited to join The Women's Apostolate to Youth (WAY), an inter-generational lay association for Catholic women, whose shared charism is the spiritual well-being of young people. **Women are invited to join us 3 Wednesdays a month at 7:30pm -all at St. Raymond's this year.** We are discussing writings of St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross and Women of the Bible. Each meeting is designed to stand alone -perfect for women interested in getting to know WAY. Our third monthly event is a Holy Hour and Mass to pray for troubled youth. **January's Holy Hour and Mass is on Jan. 31st at 7:30 pm in the church.** For the complete schedule and for more information, please visit www.waywomen.com and email womenofway@gmail.com, or call the parish office.

**ST. RAYMOND'S KNIGHTS IN ACTION!**

In addition to leading with faith, protecting our families, and defending values in a busy, changing world, Knights of Columbus are committed to serving others. In fact, from October-December, your St. John Bosco Council of St. Raymond's Parish provided financial support to three Seminarians, purchased benches which will be installed in front of the church in the coming months, conducted the "Breakfast with Santa" and "Caroling at the Creche" events, raised over \$17,000.00 for Project Manger, and with your generous support, provided 116 coats to local charities in support of the "Coats for Kids" Campaign. Additionally, your Knights supported a blood drive which resulted in the collection of 51 lifesaving blood units, conducted its Annual Christmas Tree Sale which raised over \$10,000.00 and contributed countless hours of other services in support of the Parish.

With all that they do, they need all the help they can get! Join the St. John Bosco Council of St. Raymond's parish today! Simply go to <https://www.kofc.org/joinus> or use the QR code below 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 the many benefits of being a Knight! Answer the call ... **BECOME A KNIGHT!**

The Knights of Columbus Asian Fusion Dinner, Saturday, January 27, 2024 at 6:30pm in the parish hall. Come enjoy delicious lumpia, kimbap, sweet & sour pork, and much more! Tickets will be sold after all Masses January 20/21. Ticket Prices are \$6.00 for children (5-12), \$17.00 for Adults and \$60.00 max for Families. We will also sell tickets at the door. You can use the QR Code here for tickets as well.



February Blood Drive. The Knights of Columbus are sponsoring a blood drive on behalf of Inova Blood Donor Services on Saturday, February 3rd at Nativity parish hall from 7:00 am to 12:00 pm. Please consider signing up for a 15 minute time slot within that period and giving the Gift of Life. You may sign up either on-line at www.inovabloodsaves.org or in the Narthex after all masses in the coming weekends. If you have any questions or difficulty signing up, please contact Mark Maslyn of our parish at (202) 679-3293 (m/text) or by email at: mam7253@msn.com.

CAR RAFFLE TIME! All Saints Church (Manassas, VA) has once again invited our parishioners to participate in their Multi Car Raffle. Prizes include four 2024 vehicles from Ourisman Ford of Manassas (Ford Escape, Mustang, Ranger Truck and Bronco Sport). One \$5.00 ticket offers the purchaser a chance to win all four vehicles plus \$40,000 (including one for \$20,000) in cash prizes. You will be receiving tickets in the mail within the next week or so. Please consider selling/purchasing the tickets mailed to you.

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.

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

A Best Choice Mobile Ultrasound is coming to Saint Raymond's Parking lot!!!

Come tour the unit after any of the morning Masses on **Sunday, January 28!** -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. **Come and See!**

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. Saint Raymond's will be sending one bus to Richmond. Seats are free but reservations are required. Sign Up sheets are in the narthex. **Voice your prolife support in Virginia!** For more information: vaprolifeday.org.

The spring Campaign of **40 Days for Life** begins on Ash Wednesday –February 14. Stay tuned for sign-up sheets in the narthex.

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.

Restricting abortion is unfair to the poor and minorities who need it the most. Are you serious? Does anyone really believe that abortion demonstrates concern for the poor? Planned Parenthood, the largest provider of abortions in the US, places most of its clinics in minority neighborhoods, not to help the poor but rather to eliminate minorities. Margaret Sanger, the foundress of PP was a eugenicist. Now abortion is the number one killer of black people in our country. It's a lucrative business, not a charity. Abortion is not compassionate. Nobody needs it. We can all live without it. **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>**

January 21: BOTH YOUTH GROUPS at 4pm TODAY

4-5:30pm High School & Jr. High Youth Group: Adoration
Join us for a special holy hour for our 7-12th graders! Exposition with a short talk by Fr. Bergida, followed by time for silent prayer (bring a journal, pen, rosary & Bible or spiritual reading) Confession and Benediction. Pizza will be served in the hall afterwards. *Parents/families are encouraged to stay for the holy hour as well.*

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

Talitha Koum: High School Girls' Group

5:30-7pm Monday, January 22nd (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! **This semester Talitha Koum will typically meet on the 2nd & 4th Mondays** of the month, from 5:30-7pm in the Maurer Room. Make sure to check the bulletin, email or calendar for dates. New folks are always welcome to check it out!

Friday 6:30am Mass & Breakfast Club this week 1/26

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!



WorkCamp/Summer Service Week ADULTS Needed

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 after school is out in June or July. **Please email Jeanne if you are interested in being on the committee of volunteers to help organize/execute this event for our high school youth.** We'll set up a planning meeting soon!

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

- * Scholarship opportunities are available. Check the website for details and deadlines. <https://bit.ly/StRayYAnews>
- * 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>

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!

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

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Parents of Second Grade and RCIC students: First Penance is scheduled for Saturday, February 10th immediately following the 9 am Mass. Please check your email for more details.

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

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

The Parish HSG is offering a new RPM co-op for Catholic families with nonverbal or verbally limited children (severe autism/CP/Down Syndrome/etc.) RPM (Rapid Prompt Method) uses a letterboard and spelling to learn/ increase communication. The class will meet every Monday from noon to 2pm, beginning February 5th. Sessions will be led by a level 4 RPM practitioner either in person or through Zoom, and cost depends upon the number of families. For more information contact Sarah Castle, 978.995.6603, cscastlefreelance@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.

Healing Our Past: Victim Assistance Ministry: The Victim Assistance Ministry offers referrals to therapists with experience working with victims/survivors of sexual abuse as well as referrals for spiritual assistance. In addition the diocese offers Masses and prayer services for healing for victims/survivors of sexual abuse, as well as various other support services. If you or someone in your family has been abused or victimized by someone representing the Catholic Church, we encourage you to contact our Victim Assistance Coordinator at 703-841-2530. All calls are confidential. For more information about services provided by the Victim Assistance Ministry, please visit our website at www.arlingtondiocese.org.

Saint John Paul the Great Catholic High School Annual Mardi Gras Gala, February 10th at Sweeney Barn. Lead by the Dominican Sisters of St. Cecilia, John Paul is the only high school with a four year bioethics curriculum. For more information, please visit www.jpthegreat.org.

Saint Ambrose Catholic School OPEN HOUSE January 28th, 11:00-1:30pm. www.stambroseschool.org, (703) 698-7171.

Church Persecuted

Christian leaders have been calling on the Nigerian government to take action to prevent the continued attacks by Muslim Fulani herdsmen in Nigeria's middle belt region, a relatively fertile stretch of land which has been inhabited by Christian farmers for decades. The more recent attacks seem to coincide with Christian feast days. In 2022, this column reported 39 Catholics were slaughtered while attending Mass at St. Francis Xavier Owo Catholic Parish in the Ondo Diocese. This past Christmas, 200 were killed in a series of attacks on Christian villages in the region. Over the past two decades, authorities believe that over 20,000 Christians have been killed. In one study, 3,462 were killed in the first 200 days of 2021.

The Fulani herdsmen continue to move south into the more fertile regions of Nigeria leaving a trail of blood and murder in their wake.

A Christian advocacy group, International Christian Concern, has recognized Nigeria as "one of the most dangerous countries in the world to be a Christian." The United States has been standing by doing little to encourage Nigeria to take action to stop the attacks. Abraham Cooper, the chair of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, said that, "There is no justification as to why the State Department did not designate Nigeria... as a Country of Particular Concern." Cooper and vice chair Frederick, in a January 4 statement, noted the Christmas attacks as "just the latest example of deadly violence against religious communities in Nigeria." Because of previous attacks, Nigeria was on the list of countries of Particular Concern, but were taken off the list by the Biden administration in 2021.

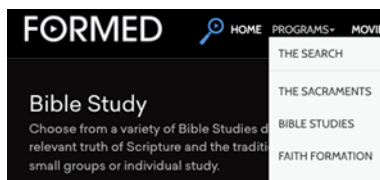
<https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/256487/thousands-of-christians-in-nigeria-rally-to-demand-action-after-christmas-massacres> News Agency

FORMED®

Get In-Formed!

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

New Year's Resolution: Dive deeper into Scripture



From the Formed home page, search the term "Bible" or select "Bible Studies" under the "Programs" menu for numerous Bible Study resources, videos, talks, and ebooks. Many have links to purchase a study guide and/or leader's guide. Study on your own, with family and friends, or start a group!.

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/

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 if a family truly can't afford Catholic school, even with the above scholarships. These decisions are made 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).

2024 Catholic Charities Ball, "Mingle and Mix at the Ritz," is a celebration **exclusively for young adults**, held at The Ritz Carlton in Tysons Corner on Friday, February 2, 2024, from 8:30 PM to 12:30 AM. It offers attendees a chance to mingle and mix in a lively environment. Tickets available for purchase until January 26: <https://bit.ly/2024>

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.

DUE TO INCLEMENT WEATHER, THE TOTALS FROM THE JANUARY 14, 2024 COLLECTION WILL BE IN NEXT WEEK'S BULLETIN

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