

©Diocesan - The Annunciation - Luca Giordano, 1672

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



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  
Virginia Osella, Director of Religious Education  
Mary Hansen, Religious Education Secretary  
Michael Thompson, Plant Manager  
Macrose Naduvilekunnel, Business Manager  
Elizabeth Frazee, Secretary  
Mary Butler, Parish Secretary  
Dominique Murray, Office Assistant

**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

**Email**

Church: Office@straymonds.org  
Pastor: fdc@straymonds.org  
Rel. Ed.: ReligiousEducation@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.

**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 (Latin-English), 11:00 am and 1:00 pm

**WEEKDAY MASSES:**  
Monday - Friday:  
6:30 am & 8:30 am  
7:00 pm (During Advent)  
Saturday: 9:00 am

**Website:** www.straymonds.org

**SACRAMENT OF PENANCE  
(Reconciliation/Confession)**

Wednesday Evening

6:15 - 7:00 pm (during Exposition)

Saturday Morning

8:00 - 9:00 am

Saturday Afternoon

3:30 - 5:00 pm

Sunday Morning

8:30-9:00 am and 10:30-11:00 am

**EXPOSITION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT**

Wednesday from 9:00 am to 7:00 pm

Friday from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm

First Fridays 9:00 am Friday - 9:00 Saturday (Overnight)

**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 to bulletin@straymonds.org 10 days prior to publication date.

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## Pastor's Corner

**Season of Advent.** Today we begin the season of Advent, in preparation for Christmas. Every year most people forget that the Advent season is primarily about *preparing* for Christmas, and instead spend these weeks **pre-maturely celebrating Christmas**, and doing so **from a largely secularized perspective**. And then when the actual 3-week Christmas Season *begins on Christmas Day*, they put all the Christmas things away and go on with life!

This pre-mature celebration isn't necessarily a bad thing, if we see it as part of the strong influence of Christianity on our culture. Many Catholics see people around them start celebrating Christmas, and it's such a wonderful feast they (Catholics) get all caught up in it.

But it's not completely harmless. First of all, much of this early celebration is driven not by a Christian culture, but by commercial interests taking advantage of that culture. Sadly, much of this is nothing more than retailers playing on our emotional attachment to Christmas, in order to increase sales. Increasing sales is not a bad thing, but the reduction of Advent to a period of rampant commercialism/materialism/consumerism and emotionalism *is a terrible thing*. All but forgotten is the spiritual/faith preparation to celebrate the wonder of the birth of the Baby Jesus, our Creator come to redeem us from our sins.

**Please don't let this happen to you this Advent.** This is not to say you can't take part in wholesome "cultural" celebrations, as long as you make sure to also spend time *preparing* for the celebration of *the Day that changed the world forever*. Here are some suggestions:

-- Catholics always prepare for Holy Days by doing penance. In Advent this shouldn't take on anything near the severity of Lent, but we should do some small penance every day to remind us that nothing is more than Christ, and that everything we do is for Him.

-- Add **extra prayers** to your daily routine. **The Rosary** is an excellent addition to our prayers, especially meditating on the Joyful Mysteries, or at least praying one decade every day, meditating on one of the Joyful Mysteries. Maybe you could promise to attend (or lead!) one or more of the Parish Daily Family Rosaries in the Church!

-- **Reading Scripture** is an excellent way to renew your faith in Christ. Perhaps challenge yourself to read one of the Gospels beginning to end in Advent. Or perhaps read short passages daily from the Christmas-related texts: Matthew 1-2, Luke 1-2, John 1:1-17.

-- Of course, **charitable giving** is a great way to prepare for the gift of the Baby Jesus. While it is a fine practice to give presents to people we love, it is an even better practice to give to those who do not know us and cannot give anything back to us. So, make sure you make generous charitable gifts—either directly to those in need or to worthy charitable projects/institutions. **The parish Giving Tree** is one good way to do this, as are some of the special collections.

-- **Receiving the sacraments** is one of the most important things you can do in Advent. Consider coming to Mass and Adoration during the week, and make sure you go to Confession. As always, we will have confessions every weekday evening during Advent, which means **confession is available every single day during Advent** (except Christmas Eve). Also, we've added a **7pm Mass to every weekday** during Advent: why not commit to come to at least one (extra) weekday Mass every week of Advent?

-- Most importantly, **live the life that Christ came to give us**: make every day about loving God with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength, and your neighbor as yourself. Follow the 10 Commandments, live out the Beatitudes. Forgive others, and be kind, patient, generous, and encouraging. Love one another as Jesus, who out of love for us stripped Himself of the glory of heaven to be born in a cold manger, loves us.

-- Also: take part in the **many special events and liturgies** scheduled in the parish this Advent. Please keep the **insert** of the **Schedule of "Advent & Christmas 2024 Events"** from last week's bulletin somewhere central in your house. In particular, consider:

-- **Lessons and Carols.** Next Sunday, December 8, I invite you to join me, the lectors and the choir for "Lessons & Carols" at 7:00 pm. This is a wonderful program of beautiful Advent music and Scripture readings. Some people think "Lessons" means I'm going to give a lecture or something. Not at all. "Lessons" is simply an old English term for readings from Scripture. By weaving together prophetic readings from the Old Testament and pre-nativity readings from the Gospels, the readers lay out God's breathtaking plan for the birth of His Divine Son. The choir adds to the atmosphere of joyful expectation by leading us in popular hymns and spreading their vocal wings in leading us in carols and a few more complicated choral pieces—they are AMAZING. And afterwards there will be an opportunity for joyful fellowship at a short reception (with delicious seasonal refreshments). This is **really a wonderful evening—you'll have a great time**. Every year the crowd gets bigger because everyone who comes loves it. Please join us.

-- "**Advent Series.**" This year's 3-part Advent Series on the Thursdays of Advent will be in the form of an "**extended homily**" given at the **Thursday evening (7pm) Mass**. By "extended" I mean the homily will be like a longish Sunday homily, about a 15-to-20-minutes. This year my topic will be, "**Hope, Joy and Peace.**" If that sounds a little like a schmaltzy Christmas card, that's on purpose. Because most people tend to over sentimentalize the ideas of hope, joy and peace, considering them mainly from a secular perspective. But as Jesus says, "my peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you." So, get ready to think about what *Jesus* means by Hope and Joy and Peace, and join us every Thursday during Advent, **beginning this Thursday, December 5**, at 7pm Mass.

-- "**Rorate Caeli**" **Mass**. Back by popular demand, Fr. Bergida will celebrate the Rorate Caeli Mass in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary on Saturday, **December 21 at 6:30 am**. This Mass begins just before dawn with **only candlelight**, according to the ancient Advent custom, with the contrasting light and darkness reminding us of the meaning of Advent and the coming ("adventus") of the Light of the world. As the Mass proceeds and dawn breaks, the church becomes increasingly brighter with the light of the rising sun, symbolizing the birth of Christ, born of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

**Immaculate Conception.** Normally the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception falls on December 8. But this year December 8 is the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent (next Sunday), so the Immaculate Conception is **moved to Monday, December 9**. The Vatican has clarified that this **will be a Holy Day of Obligation**. We will have Masses at 6:30am, 8am, Noon, 5pm and 7pm. There is no vigil Mass on Sunday.

*Oremus pro invicem. Fr. De Celles*

**MASS INTENTIONS**

**Monday December 2nd**

6:30 am Fran Sabraw +  
 8:30 am Lyda Miranda +  
 7:00 pm Celebrant's Intentions

**Tuesday December 3rd,**

6:30 am James Peters +  
 8:30 am Martha Tanner  
 Baker +  
 7:00 pm Celebrant's Intentions

**Wednesday December 4th,**

6:30 am Caroline Mullen  
 8:30 am Robert Calogero +  
 7:00 pm Celebrant's Intentions

**Thursday December 5th,**

6:30 am Sr. Flordelina  
 Espiritu +  
 8:30 am Clare Fischer +  
 7:00 pm Celebrant's Intentions

**Friday December 6th,**

6:30 am Jean Anezin +  
 8:30 am Jim Sabraw +  
 7:00 pm Celebrant's Intentions

**Saturday December 7th**

9:00 Sr. Francis de Sales +

**Vigil Mass**

5:00 pm  
 Maria Saraceno +

**Sundav, December 8th**

7:00 am **Fr. Horkan**  
 Katie Riordan

9:00 am **Fr. Bergida**  
 Parishioners

11:00 am **Msgr. Rippy**  
 Ponciano Villaflores +

1:00 pm **Fr. Ce Celles**  
 RE Students & their  
 Families

**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)

**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!** All are invited to attend.

**Giving Tree help Needed!** This year we are sponsoring 31 families. All families are either parish families, referred by a parish family, or given to us by Our Lady of the Blue Ridge in Madison, VA. The requests for Gift Cards are on the trees in the narthex and Physical Gift Items will be on a Signup Genius that you may access through our website. Instructions are on our website and next to the trees in the Narthex. Please share Christ's love this Christmas season by helping a needy family celebrate! **All gifts are due before December 15,** but the **earlier the better!** Please call the parish office with any questions. Giving trees are up in the Narthex.

**Family of Jesus Prayer Group:** Weekly meetings are in the Church on Mondays at 3:00 pm. If you have any prayer requests, please 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.

**Men's Prayer Group:** On the first and third Saturdays of each month a group of men meet in the parish hall to pray and read the Scriptures. **Our next meeting will be December 7th.** For more information, call Dave Wilson, 703-966-5327 or email [maryndavew7705@gmail.com](mailto:maryndavew7705@gmail.com)

**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.

**Brian Groth Peter Pacheco**

**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 Ted Tolpa Nena Brennan Serrin Foster Donald Trayer Ellen Trayer Arlene Pietraszko Virginia Cummings	Helen Zogaib Margaret Norton Effie Mutumanje Jose Lavina Stanley Ondrusek Helen Estabrooks Annette Haynes Beth Fitzgibbons Tom Swengros Jean Keegan
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**Upcoming Events at St. Raymond Church**

- Nov 30-Dec 1 **Keep Christ in Christmas Card Sales**
- Dec 1 **Donut Sunday**
- Dec 1-2 **NO CCD Classes on Dec. 1st- WE HAVE CLASSES ON DEC. 2nd**
- 2nd, No classes on Dec. 8th.**
- Dec 2 **RCIA class**
- Dec 2 **Family of Jesus Prayer Group**
- Dec 2 **Giving Trees are up in the Narthex**
- Dec 3 **Adult Bible Study**
- Dec 3 **Adult Choir**
- Dec 3 **Junior Legion of Mary 4-5pm**
- Dec 3 **Legion of Mary 6:30pm**
- Dec 4 **Adoration 9am- 7pm**
- Dec 5 **First Advent Series Extended Homily 7pm Mass**
- Dec 6 **First Friday Nocturnal Adoration**
- Dec 7 **Communal First Saturday Devotion**
- Dec 8 **Advent Lessons and Carols 7pm**
- Dec 9 **The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary- Holy Day of Obligation- Masses: 6:30am, 8:30 am, noon, 5pm and 7pm -Parish Office Closed**

**Advent Lessons and Carols.** Please join us on **Sunday, December 8, 2024 at 7:00 pm** for a program of beautiful Advent music and Scripture readings, called "**Lessons and Carols.**" Weaving together prophetic readings from the Old Testament and pre-nativity readings from the Gospels, the readers lay out God's breathtaking plan for the birth of Our Savior. The choir adds to the atmosphere of joyful expectation by leading us in popular hymns and singing a few special choral pieces. Afterwards, everyone gathers downstairs for some seasonal refreshments and Christian fellowship.

**First Saturday Devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary:** We invite you to join the Luminaries of Holy Mary for Communal First Saturday Devotions on **December 7.** Immediately following 9am Mass, we will pray the Holy Rosary in the Church as a part of the Daily Family Rosary; and then we will proceed to the MAURER ROOM for Fatima prayers & a special meditation on the mysteries, with the intention of consoling our Blessed Mother in reparation for sins and conversion of poor sinners. Will conclude by 10:45am. Please join us!

**First Friday Nocturnal Adoration Dec. 6.** 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 Dec. 6.** 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.



**KNIGHTS KEEP CHRIST IN CHRISTMAS.** Check the Narthex after Mass for all the things Knights do this time of year—and don't forget your Christmas tree from the Knights! **Sales begin right**

**after Thanksgiving.** While your at it, why not **BECOME A KNIGHT?** First year is free of dues--Just go to <https://www.kofc.org/joinus> or use the QR code below to experience the Knights free for one year: click "Add" and complete the form. Leave the representative code blank, but enter our council #12846 for local information upon registration. Please contact John Larvie at cell (571) 356-4170 with any questions. **ANSWER THE CALL TO LIFE. BECOME A KNIGHT!**



### UPCOMING EVENTS

11/2-3-Dec.14 "Keep Christ in Christmas" Christmas Cards Sales

Nov 29-Dec 19 Christmas Tree Sales in Parking lot

**"Keep Christ in Christmas" Christmas Cards** – Every weekend thru Dec. 14, the Knights of Columbus will be offering religious Christmas cards in the Narthex after all the Masses.

**Christmas Tree Sales.** The Knights of Columbus are selling Christmas Trees and Wreaths in the Church parking lot from Nov. 29 through Thursday, December 19 (or until sold out). Please support the Knights, who use the contributions to support St Raymond Parish and various other local charities throughout the year. Points of Contact are: Mark Menotti, 401-644-7128; Phil Bettwy, 703-868-9411; and John Crennan, 339-223-0887.

**Legion of Mary invitation** Do you want to develop a closer relationship with our Mother Mary and her Son and our Savior, Jesus Christ? The Legion of Mary meets weekly on Tuesday evenings at 6:30pm 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.

**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](mailto:mlcastry@gmail.com).

**Snow Team Volunteers Needed:** Saint Raymond's is looking for Snow Team Volunteers to help in potential snow removal and treating for all doorways and sidewalks for the church and rectory. For more information, please contact the office at 703-440-0535.

**ADORERS NEEDED-** Friday Adorers needed at 11am, 12pm and 1pm. Please consider spending an hour with Our Lord during Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. If you are interested, please call the parish office at 703-440-0535.

**St. Martin of Porres is looking for Volunteers!** We are looking for volunteers to help collect items from the Narthex and deliver them to the Springfield Resource Center. If you are interested in helping, please contact the parish office at 703-440-0535.

**Advent Gift Shop Sales-**This weekend the Gift Shop will have tables in the Narthex with seasonal gifts for sale after all Masses. Stop by to purchase Advent candles, cards, calendars and many gift ideas for Christmas.

### 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 (Mary Rose in Haste – to help Elizabeth) 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).



**Save the date! Join us for the National March for Life. Friday 24 January. St Raymond's will send three buses. Watch for sign-ups in the narthex - after Christmas!**

Even with the wonderful blessing of *Roe v. Wade* being overturned, the necessary work to build a culture of life in the United States of America is not finished. Sadly, the number of abortions annually is still well over 900,000. Many national legislative battles loom, including even keeping longstanding Hyde protections, which limit government funding for abortion. Our most important work is changing hearts and minds. We work and pray to create a culture where abortion is unthinkable.

**Regret often follows when a woman ingests the 'abortion pill'.** If you know someone in this situation, contact [abortionpillreversal.com](http://abortionpillreversal.com) 24/7 helpline: 877-558-0333. **It may not be too late.**

**Introducing Olivia!!!** Olivia is the world's most realistic and medically accurate animation of a baby's development in her mother's womb. [babyolivia.com](http://babyolivia.com)

**Tepeyac Pro Life OB/GYN: Transforming Hearts Through Healthcare.** [tepeyacobgyn.com](http://tepeyacobgyn.com) 703-273-9440. The center strives to be an instrument of the healing power of God's mercy and love, in order that a deeper respect for all human life may be nurtured. **Thank you for your referrals and your support.**

**Have you had an abortion?** The Father of Mercy is waiting to welcome you in reconciliation. For confidential inquiries, contact **Project Rachel Ministry:** (703) 841-2504 or [info@helpafterabortion.org](mailto:info@helpafterabortion.org) Please continue to pray for those who are imprisoned for peacefully standing up for the lives of the unborn. May Our Lord console them in their suffering.

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

### 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>

#### **Sun. 12/1: NO Youth Group or CCD**

**Have a Happy Thanksgiving with your family!!**

#### **Fri. Dec. 6, 13 & 20 Apostolate 6:30am Mass & Breakfast**

We will meet December 6th, 13th and 20th this month.  
7-12th graders are invited to join Fr. Bergida & Fr. Horkan for 6:30am Mass & breakfast in the hall after. **RSVP** to help us gauge how much food we need. And **RSVP by Wed. if you need a ride to school after.** <https://bit.ly/FRIDAYRSVP>

#### **Fri. Dec. 6, 13, 20: High School Lectio Divina (7-8pm Library)**

Looking for a way to deepen your spiritual life this Advent?  
Grow in faith, prepare your heart for Christ and meet new people at the same time! **BYOB** (Bring Your Own Bible)...and a friend!  
Everyone is invited to join us for the family rosary at 6:30pm too!



#### **Sat. 12/7: Breakfast with St. Nicholas (9:30-11am Parish Hall) High School Volunteers Needed 7:30am-12pm**

The Knights of Columbus are in need of HIGH SCHOOL volunteers & compliant adults to help make & serve breakfast at their annual St. Raymond's Breakfast with St. Nicholas in the parish hall on **Saturday, December 7th**. Arrive at 7:30am to help decorate the church hall, cook & serve breakfast, and clean up by 12pm. Sign up to help at <https://bit.ly/stnick2024>

#### **Sun. 12/8: NO Youth Group or CCD**

#### **Sun. 12/8: Lessons & Carols (7-8pm in the Church)**

All families are encouraged to attend our parish Lessons and Carols, a peaceful evening of scripture readings and music meant to prepare our hearts for Christmas. Everyone is invited downstairs for refreshments afterwards. Note, **this event is a parish/family event**, NOT a Youth Apostolate event.

#### **Sun. 12/15: Youth Group & CCD**

*This will be the ONLY Sunday Youth Group mtg. this month!*

Youth Group meets in the Parish Hall. All are invited!

**3:30-5pm** Junior High Youth Group — Grades 7 & 8

**5-6:30pm** 7-12th Grade CCD

**6:30-8pm** High School Youth Group **Talent Show**— Grades 9-12

### **Steubenville Youth Conference July 11-13, 2025**

Current 8-12th graders are invited to join us for a weekend away with a few thousand Catholic teens to encounter God and experience His love through the power of the Sacraments, dynamic Catholic speakers, uplifting music and new friends! In our ever-changing world, Jesus is the answer to the longing of our hearts for meaning, fulfillment, security, and love. Join our group in road tripping to Franciscan University in Steubenville, OH to experience the peace of Jesus Christ. More info. <https://bit.ly/steubenville2025> & on YA bulletin boards.

**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!

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

There will be **NO CCD classes this evening, 12/1.**

There **WILL** be CCD classes this Monday, 12/2.

**CCD Families: Lessons and Carols is next weekend, Dec. 8 at 7pm!** All students and their families will attend the Advent Lessons and Carols this year. Please see the recent email for more information. Please note that Monday students will attend the special event on Sunday in addition to their regular class on 12/9. See you there!

**Parents of students preparing for First Holy Communion (CCD, Catholic school and homeschool):** the First Holy Communion Registry Form with BIRTH Certificate and Baptism Certificate attached is due in the Religious Education Office by **December 16th**. If your child was baptized at St. Raymond's, you do not need to attach the Baptism Certificate.

#### **For planning purposes:**

There will be **NO CCD classes 12/22-12/23 or 12/29-12/30.**

**Midterm Exams** will be administered the week of January 12th for Grades 1-8. Please work with your children in learning the material for the First Semester presented in the Basic Study Questions booklet for their grade level.

### **Our Trail Life USA Troop is actively seeking volunteers to join our team!**

We are reaching out to our parish community for dedicated individuals who are eager to contribute, whether or not you have children in the troop. We are looking to fill several key committee positions, including Secretary, Community Service Chair, Equipment Coordinator, Recruiting Chair, Activities Chair, Ceremonies Coordinator, and Youth Ministries Coordinator. Training and support will be provided. If you are interested or would like more information, please contact Joshua Raines at [TrailLifeUSA@straymonds.org](mailto:TrailLifeUSA@straymonds.org).

### **8<sup>th</sup> Grade Students Catholic Schools Placement Testing:**

For those interested in attending Catholic High Schools in the Diocese of Arlington. Test date: Sat. Dec. 7<sup>th</sup>, 2024. Students must register on-line on the high school's website by the registration deadline. The testing fee should accompany the registration.

### **Shadow a Wolf for a Day! (Active through May 2025)**

September 2024 - May 2025

Shadow Days at John Paul are officially open for this year! Do you have an 8th-10th grader who is interested in seeing what it is like to be a JP student? Sign them up for a Shadow Day visit! For registration and more details, please visit: [https://jpthegreat.schooladminonline.com/portal/new\\_inquiry](https://jpthegreat.schooladminonline.com/portal/new_inquiry)

**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 or [bridgeclub402@gmail.com](mailto:bridgeclub402@gmail.com) if you are interested in joining us.

**2024-25 Adult Bible Study:** St. Raymond's will study the Gospel of John on Tuesday mornings from 9:30 to 10:30 A.M. and again on Tuesday evenings from 7:00 to 8:00 P.M. (except for holidays) in the Parish Hall, from Tuesday, September 10, 2024 through Tuesday, May 13, 2025.

**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)**

**CHURCH PERSECUTED**

Under recent dictatorships, Nicaragua has become a “third-world country.” History has shown that democratic regimes only work well when the population has a strong moral/religious base and religious freedom and human dignity are protected. But if the leader removes the religious base, social and economic chaos ensues.

Nicaragua’s dictator, Daniel Ortega, delineates this by his actions. Bishop Carlos Enrique Herrera Gutiérrez of Jinotega, Nicaragua, is president of the country’s bishops’ conference. When he was saying Mass on Sunday November 10, pro-Ortega mayor of Jinotega, Leonidas Centeno, interfered by playing loud music outside the cathedral. In response, as Mass began Bishop Gutiérrez boldly stated: “Before beginning this Eucharist, we ask the Lord for forgiveness for our faults and also for those who do not respect worship. This is a sacrilege — what the mayor and all the municipal authorities are doing — and I am going to tell them so because they know the time of the Mass.” As a result, the diocesan Facebook page was taken down by the government, and Bishop Gutiérrez became the third Nicaraguan bishop to be expelled by the Ortega dictatorship this year. There are currently four dioceses without a shepherd and 44 priests have been expelled.

Félix Maradiaga, president of the Freedom for Nicaragua Foundation, lamented that these actions are yet “another attack against religious freedom and human dignity in Nicaragua and demands international attention and condemnation.” In addition to these atrocities, President Daniel Ortega and his wife, Vice President Rosario Murillo are doing their utmost to prevent priests from entering hospitals to administer the sacrament of anointing of the sick. Only clergy affiliated with the Ortega regime have permission to enter hospitals, although some priests have been able to enter on occasion wearing non-clerical clothing.

(“Dictatorship in Nicaragua expels president of country’s bishops’ conference,” by Walter Sánchez Silva, ACI Prensa Staff, Nov 15, 2024 / 15:25 pm. This story was first published by ACI Prensa, CNA’s Spanish-language news partner. It has been translated and adapted by CNA. <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/260517/dictatorship-in-nicaragua-expels-president-of-bishops-conference>)



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>

*Watch Rooted.* Twenty-five short daily reflections for the Advent season focusing on the lineage of Jesus Christ. Based on the idea of the Jesse Tree.

*Watch Behold: Advent with Sr. Miriam James.*

These four brief videos provide a theme and practical ideas for transformation each week of Advent: Mary as our mother, St. Joseph as our father, childlike with Jesus, and peace in your family.



FOR KIDS. *Watch Nicholas: The Boy Who Became Santa* (Dec. 6) and *Francis Xavier and the Samurai’s Lost Treasure* (Dec. 3)

**Available for FREE!** To set up an account, visit [Formed.org/signup](https://Formed.org/signup) and select our parish. Questions? Need help? Email us at [formed@straymonds.org](mailto:formed@straymonds.org)

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**Scholarships to Catholic Schools. St. Raymond’s will again offer a one-time \$2,000 scholarship** for each parish child who is switching from public school (k-12) to Catholic school for the upcoming school year. **For all parish families**, each student in Catholic grade school can receive \$1,000 and Catholic high school students can receive \$2,000. This amount is renewable every year and is subject only to minimal qualification terms. You need to be a parishioner and send a request for the scholarship to Fr. De Celles. Also, 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. Contact the parish office for more information.

**Junior Legion of Mary.** Children between the ages of 8 – 12+ at St. Raymond’s who have received their First Holy Communion and parents seeking an extracurricular activity that enriches a young person’s spiritual life and engages them in age-appropriate spiritual works of mercy under the spiritual direction of Father Bergida, please consider joining the Junior Legion of Mary. Meetings will be every Tuesday, 4:00-5:00pm, in the rectory Maurer Room. Two adult members of the Legion (Virtus certified) lead the meetings. Parents are welcome to attend / participate. Please email Patty Miller, [pamiller35@gmail.com](mailto:pamiller35@gmail.com), or call / text her at: C - 703-455-9327.

**Breakfast with Saint Nicholas- SATURDAY December 7th!** Saint Nicholas is coming to St. Raymond Church! He will be here on Saturday, December 7th, after the 9:00 am Mass. The Knights of Columbus, St. John Bosco Council, will host Saint Nicholas along with providing a pancake breakfast assisted by the St. Raymond Youth Apostolate. Saint Nicholas will speak with the children and share about his life and the origin of Santa Clause and a Catholic perspective of Santa and his amazing ability to celebrate Jesus’ birth every year through the giving of gifts to children throughout the world. This event is free and open to all. Please bring a canned good to share with our needy neighbors through the Lorton Community Action Center (LCAC).

**Free Christmas Luncheon For All Seniors**

WHO: All Seniors 55 years young and above

WHERE: St. Raymond’s Parish Hall

DATE: Dec. 28, 12:00 - 2:00 pm

MENU: Turkey and all the trimmings

RSVP: by Dec. 20 by emailing [office@straymonds.org](mailto:office@straymonds.org)

Or by calling the office at 703-440-0535

**Last Week’s Collection**

Due to an early bulletin deadline, last week’s Collection will be in next week’s bulletin.

Next week’s Collection is for Catholic Charities Christmas Collection



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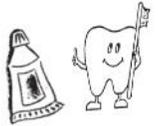
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