



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

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.

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.

Pastor's Corner

Stations of the Cross. An important form of prayer during Lent is the Stations of the Cross, which can be prayed at home, but is most beneficially prayed in a place where "Stations" are physically erected, as they are in our church, and along the perimeter of the woods behind our church.

Historically, this devotion goes back to the earliest days of the Church: tradition tells us that the Blessed Mother used to visit the places of her Son's Passion every day. By the beginning of the 4th century the route from Pilate's praetorium up the hill to Calvary was well worn and marked with the key stations of his suffering, and pilgrims came from all over the nascent Christian world to walk the "Via." By at least the 5th century the devotion spread outside of the Holy Land, and it particularly expanded in popular piety through its promotion by St. Francis of Assisi in the 13th century.

Today, virtually every Catholic church has a version of the 14 Stations. And while the devotion may be fruitfully practiced throughout the year, it is particularly fitting to Lent. So please, consider praying the Stations, especially in the church, either by yourself or with your family, and/or joining other parishioners every **Friday evening in Lent at 7pm**.

Note that a *plenary indulgence* is gained by those who make them before Stations lawfully erected (e.g., in a church), while devoutly meditating upon the passion and death of the Lord, while moving from one station to the other (at least the leader must move during public Stations), and fulfilling the other usual requirements for a plenary indulgence.

The Sacrament of Penance: Catechism of the Catholic Church" (continued from last week)

"THE ACTS OF THE PENITENT. 1450 "Penance requires . . . the sinner to endure all things willingly, be contrite of heart, confess with the lips, and practice complete humility and fruitful satisfaction."

Contrition. 1451 Among the penitent's acts contrition occupies first place. Contrition is "sorrow of the soul and detestation for the sin committed, together with the resolution not to sin again."

1452 When it arises from a love by which God is loved above all else, contrition is called "perfect" (contrition of charity). Such contrition remits venial sins; it also obtains forgiveness of mortal sins if it includes the firm resolution to have recourse to sacramental confession as soon as possible.

1453 The contrition called "imperfect" (or "attrition") is also a gift of God, a prompting of the Holy Spirit. It is born of the consideration of sin's ugliness or the fear of eternal damnation and the other penalties threatening the sinner (contrition of fear). Such a stirring of conscience can initiate an interior process which, under the prompting of grace, will be brought to completion by sacramental absolution. By itself however, imperfect contrition cannot obtain the forgiveness of grave sins, but it disposes one to obtain forgiveness in the sacrament of Penance.

1454 The reception of this sacrament ought to be prepared for by an examination of conscience made in the light of the Word of God....

The Confession of Sins. 1455 The confession...of sins, even from a simply human point of view, frees us and facilitates our reconciliation with others. Through such an admission man looks squarely at the sins he is guilty of, takes responsibility for them, and thereby opens himself again to God and to the communion of the Church in order to make a new future possible.

1456 Confession to a priest is an essential part of the sacrament of Penance: "All mortal sins of which penitents after a diligent self-examination are conscious must be recounted by them in confession"

1457 According to the Church's command, "after having attained the age of discretion, each of the faithful is bound by an obligation faithfully to confess serious sins at least once a year." Anyone who is aware of having committed a mortal sin must not receive Holy Communion, even if he experiences deep contrition, without having first received sacramental absolution, unless he has a grave reason for receiving Communion and there is no possibility of going to confession. Children must go to the sacrament of Penance before receiving Holy Communion for the first time.

1458 Without being strictly necessary, confession of everyday faults (venial sins) is nevertheless strongly recommended by the Church. Indeed the regular confession of our venial sins helps us form our conscience, fight against evil tendencies, let ourselves be healed by Christ and progress in the life of the Spirit...

Satisfaction. 1459 Many sins wrong our neighbor. One must do what is possible in order to repair the harm (e.g., return stolen goods, restore the reputation of someone slandered...). Simple justice requires as much. But sin also injures...the sinner himself, as well as his relationships with God and neighbor. Absolution takes away sin, but it does not remedy all the disorders sin has caused. Raised up from sin, the sinner must still recover his full spiritual health by doing something more to make amends for the sin: he must "make satisfaction for" or "expiate" his sins. This satisfaction is also called "penance."

1460 The penance ...must correspond as far as possible with the gravity and nature of the sins committed. It can consist of prayer, an offering, works of mercy, service of neighbor, voluntary self-denial, sacrifices, and above all the patient acceptance of the cross we must bear...

Trans Surgery. Did you see this story last week, here report by Foxnews.com (excerpt):

"So-called "gender-affirming surgery" could lead to potentially dangerous mental health effects, a new study has found. Transgender individuals face 'heightened psychological distress,' including depression, anxiety and suicidal ideation, 'partly due to stigma and lack of gender affirmation,' as stated in the study, which was published in *The Journal of Sexual Medicine*....

"The study focused on 107,583 patients 18 and over with gender dysphoria, some who underwent surgery and others who did not.

"They determined rates of depression, anxiety, suicidal ideation and substance-use disorders were 'significantly higher' among those who underwent surgery, assessed two years later.

"Males with surgery had depression rates of 25% compared to males without surgery (11.5%). Anxiety rates among that group were 12.8% compared to 2.6%...[A]mong females... those with surgery had 22.9% depression rates compared to 14.6% in the non-surgical group..."

CYO Basketball. Congratulations to our 8th Grade CYO Boys' basketball team for outstanding with a win against St Ambrose, 36-25, in the CYO Division Championship game last Sunday. I'm very proud of y'all, as I am of the kids playing on 4th Grade Boys and Girls teams and 7th Grade Girls team—all 43 kids, as well all their coaches. Thanks and God bless you!

Angelus Tabernacle. I'm happy to announce that after several years of petition our Bishops, Angelus Academy has received permission to reserve the Blessed Sacrament in their school chapel, and began doing so last Friday after the school Mass. The parish donated the tabernacle. Thanks to Jim and Michael Hildebrand and Luis Tapia for making it ready for use. And thanks to Bishop Burbidge for his permission.

Oremus pro invicem. Fr. De Celles

MASS INTENTIONS

Monday, March 17th

6:30 Margaret Hogan
 8:30 Marilyn Krause

Tuesday, March 18th

6:30 am William Kirchoff
 8:30 am James Kolakowski +
 7:00 pm Priest's Intentions

Wednesday, March 19th

6:30 am Mary & Vernon Butler
 8:30 am Joseph Perricone +
 7:00 pm Priest's Intentions

Thursday, March 20th

6:30 am Renate Blocker +
 8:30 am Aisha +
 7:00 pm Priest's Intentions

Friday, March 21st

6:30 am Daniel Panganiban +
 8:30 am Mark Admana

Saturday, March 22nd

9:00 am Fred Cagney +

Vigil Mass

5:00 pm **Fr. Bergida**
 Carol Carnes + &
 Patricia McCormick +

Sunday, March 23rd

7:00 am **Msr. Rippy**
 David S. Gresdo +

9:00 am **Fr. Bergida**

Parishioners

11:00 am **Fr. De Celles**

Jeanne Seiberling +

1:00 pm **Fr. Horkan**

Macaria Ramas +

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

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 John Florio Carolina Baker	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 Helen Estabrooks Annette Haynes Beth Fitzgibbons Jean Keegan Joann Alba Margaret M. Hill Bill Roche Florence Miller
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Upcoming Events at St. Raymond Church

- Mar 15-16 Legion of Mary - Auxiliary Contact and Recruitment Drive in Narthex after all Masses**
- Mar 16-17 CCD Classes**
- Mar 17 RCIA**
- Mar 18 Adult Bible Study Parish Hall**
- Mar 18 Junior Legion of Mary 4:15-5:15pm Maurer Room**
- Mar 18 Legion of Mary 6:30pm Library**
- Mar 19 7 pm Mass with Lenten Series Extended Homily**
- Mar 21 Weekly Lenten Friday Nocturnal Adoration**

ADORERS URGENTLY NEEDED– Both Wednesday and Friday. Wednesday adorers are needed for 1 pm and 5 pm. Friday Adorers needed at all time slots between 9am and 2pm. Please consider spending an hour with Our Lord during Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. If you are interested to sign up for Wednesdays, please call Leslie Schratz at 703-569-1940. If you would like to sign up for Fridays, please call Elizabeth Frazee in the parish office at 703-440-0535.

Lenten Soup Suppers: Please join your fellow parishioners for a delicious but simple meal each Friday during Lent, 5:30. Bring your family or a friend and either a pot of homemade meatless soup, macaroni & cheese, fruit, salad or bread to share. **The Daily Family Rosary** will take place at 6:30pm followed by **Stations of the Cross** in the church at 7pm each Friday. Please join us!

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 if you are interested in joining us.

Legion of Mary annual Acies Ceremony: The Potomac Comitium of The Legion of Mary cordially invites all Legion of Mary members, active and auxiliary, and family members, to participate at the Annual Acies Ceremony to be held on Saturday, March 22, 2025 at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church, 12807 Valleywood Dr., Lake Ridge, VA. The regular Saturday Mass is at 9:00am, and the Acies ceremony will directly follow the Mass. A Potluck reception follows in Fellowship Hall, located in the church basement. Donated food items provided by any family may be dropped off prior to the Mass in the hall; please bring your serving utensil. (luncheon ends around 1:00pm.) St. Raymond's point of contact for information: Judy Mayer, text: 703-627-7320 or email jmayer9014@aol.com

EXTRA WEEKDAY LENTEN MASSES

Monday –Friday: 6:30am & 8:30am

Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday: 7:00pm

Wednesday Lenten Series are extended Homilies during 7pm Mass

Special Feast Days

St. Joseph, March 19: Masses- 6:30am, 8:30am & 7:00pm

Annunciation, March 25: Masses-6:30am, 8:30am & 7:00pm

LENTEN CONFESSION SCHEDULE

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday (not Weds.):

March 6-April 4: 6:30pm-7:00pm

April 7-April 15: 6:00pm-7:00pm

Wednesday: March 12-April 16: 6:00pm-8:00pm

First Fridays: March 7 and April 4: "Extra Confessions" from 3-4pm and 6-7pm

Saturday: 8:00am-9:00am; 3:30pm-5:00pm

Sunday: After the 7:00 and 9:00am Masses, until the start of the next Mass.

Fasting and Abstinence

Ash Wednesday and Good Friday are days of both fasting and abstinence, and every Friday in Lent is a day of abstinence. Failure to "substantially" keep these penances is grave matter (e.g., potentially a mortal sin). The law of abstinence requires that no meat may be eaten on these days, and binds all Catholics who are 14 years old or older. No other penance may be substituted. The law of fasting binds those who are between the ages of 18 and 59. The Church defines "fasting," for these purposes, as having only one full meal a day, with two additional smaller meals permitted, but only as necessary to keep up strength and so small that if added together they would not equal a full meal. Snacking is forbidden, but that does not include drinks that are not of the nature of a meal. Even though these rules do not bind all age groups, all are encouraged to follow them to the extent possible. Children in particular learn the importance of penance from following the practice of their older family members. The sick, pregnant or nursing mothers, and other folks with special physical circumstances may be partially or totally exempt from these rules—use good judgment and take care of yourself.



2 FUN FACTS ABOUT THE KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS

(Alyssa Murphy (Oct. 9, 2020) from the National Catholic Register). #3. Overall, the draw of the Knights of Columbus to Catholic men has been their

call to service: "Men were drawn to the organization since the order also took great care and concern for service — service to one's Church, community and family — with virtue." Every Knight learns upon induction that charity is the organization's foundation. This dedication to service echoes the framework of chivalry. **JOIN US.** Go to <https://www.kofc.org/joinus> or use the **QR code below** to experience the Knights for one year free of dues. Click "Add" and complete the form. Leave the representative code blank, but enter our council # **12846** for local information upon registration. Please contact our Deputy Grand Knight, John Larvie at cell (571) 356-4170 if you have any questions or wish to learn more about the many benefits of being a Knight.



UPCOMING EVENTS

3/15--St. Patrick & St. Joseph Dinner (doors open at 6:30 pm)
3/21--Knights serve at the Lenten soup Supper
3/22-23 Car Raffle Ticket Sales (Narthex)

CAR RAFFLE UPDATE: Car raffle tickets have been mailed to each family. Thanks to all those who have returned their tickets and special thanks to those who have requested extras to sell to their relatives, friends, neighbors, and co-workers. Sales are off to a great start! Please note that raffle tickets must be returned to All Saints in the envelope provided. Additionally, car raffle tickets will be available for purchase after all Masses next weekend, March 22-23. Thank you for your support!

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 March!** All are invited to attend.

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.

2025 BISHOP'S LENTEN APPEAL (BLA) - This year's theme is: "Abounding in Hope." After reflecting upon the blessings God has given you, please prayerfully consider a pledge. Sharing your gifts with the 40+ ministries and programs funded by the BLA truly impacts the lives of thousands across our diocese. You can make a gift at: www.arlingtondiocese.org/BLA or scan the QR code on the right:



Legion of Mary - Auxiliary Contact and Recruitment Drive:

On March 15-16, the Legion of Mary (Adults and now Juniors!) will host an Auxiliary contact and Recruitment drive. Auxiliaries -- please come to the table in the narthex to check your membership contact information. Additionally, information about the adults and juniors meetings and events will be available. Come join us do light apostolic works for the parish, primarily within our parish boundaries.

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

SAINT RAYMOND'S RESPECTS LIFE

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

May the laws of our land be made to reflect your natural law which You have written on every human heart – those already born and those which beat in their mother's womb.

Be not complacent! Did you know that there is a fast-tracking move afoot in the Virginia Assembly to make abortion a constitutional right in our Commonwealth?

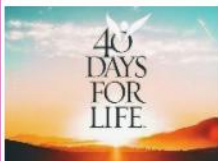
In January the Virginia Assembly (both chambers) passed a constitutional amendment which would allow abortion at any point in pregnancy. The amendment which cannot be vetoed by the governor would also eliminate parental consent, end health protections for women and girls, and force taxpayers to fund abortion. It would also eliminate Virginia's current law limiting abortion at 27 weeks. November 2025 election of the House of Delegates must occur before the amendment is taken up again. Stay informed!



Save the date! The Virginia March for Life will take place on **Wednesday April 2** in Richmond. St Raymond's is sending one bus. Sign up in the narthex. To stay up to date on life issues in Virginia, please visit <https://vacatholic.org/>. Stay informed. Stay engaged. Make phone calls. Write letters.

Visit your Legislators. Lives are on the line.

The spring campaign of **40 Days for Life** will take place from 5 March – 13 April. **Our witness weekend will be 5-6 April** in front of the Falls Church 'Healthcare' Center. We will also be present for an hour every Friday afternoon throughout the campaign. Come with a friend. Bring your Rosary. There are hours when the facility is closed. This is a spiritual battle. Sign-up sheets are in the narthex.



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. There is a great need for diapers, formula, wipes, clothes up to 2T. Please do not leave bouncy seats, walkers, gates or jogging strollers. Thank you for your understanding.

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

Tepeyac Pro Life OB/GYN: Transforming Hearts Through Healthcare. tepeyacobgyn.com 703-273-9440. The center strives to be an instrument of the healing power of God's mercy and love, to nurture a deeper respect for all human life. **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, **Project Rachel Ministry:** (703) 841-2504 or info@helpafterabortion.org

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>

Sunday 3/16: Youth Group & CCD

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

3:30-5pm Jr. High Youth Group—Grades 7 & 8

5-6:30pm 7-8th Grade CCD

6:30-8pm HS Youth Group—Grades 9-12

High School Youth Group families - please consider sharing your time and talent by providing one "dinner item" or dessert this semester for the approximately 30 youth that attend YG each week. The details are in the sign-up genius which can be found at <https://bit.ly/HSYGsnacks>. Thank you for supporting the Youth Apostolate! If you have any questions, please contact Mary Hansen mary.hansen@straymonds.org

DEEPEN YOUR PRAYER LIFE THIS LENT

Start your Fridays with Mass & discussion afterwards

6:30AM MASS & BREAKFAST EVERY FRIDAY

All 7-12th graders are invited to join us for 6:30am Mass & breakfast with Fr. Bergida & Fr. Horkan in the hall after. **RSVP** so we have enough food. <https://bit.ly/FRIDAYRSVP> RSVP by Wed. if you need a ride to school.

Saturday, March 18: Sons of Thunder: HS Guys' Group 7-8:30pm (Maurer Room)

High School Men: Come hungry (physically and intellectually) and ready to rumble. Sons of Thunder meets 1st and 3rd Tuesday of the month from 7-8:30 pm in the Maurer Room with Phil, Nate, and Father Bergida.

**Saturday, March 22: High School Swing Dance
7-9pm (Parish Hall)** All high school students are invited! **We have instructors** so please don't worry if you have never danced before. Most of the folks who have been attending had never swing danced before, but now are quite good! See flyer or email for more info. Please bring a completed 2024-2025 YA Info. Sheet if you do not yet have one on file for this school year and ask any friends you invite to do so as well.

**Sunday, March 23: Junior High (Grades 7-8) Swing Dance
3:30-5pm (Parish Hall)** Last semester, our first ever Jr. High Swing Dance was such a huge hit that we decided to do another one this semester!! NO experience necessary! We will have plenty of teachers.. Invite your friends! All participants must bring a completed 2024-2025 YA Info. Sheet if not yet on file.

Associates of St. John Bosco Scholarship applications are open! These scholarships are open to **high school seniors through college juniors** who have demonstrated an intense desire to live out their faith on their college campus and who seek to serve the Church in some capacity after graduation. Website for more information. <https://bit.ly/ScholarshipsAndContests>
Deadline: May 19

High School Bible Study is on hiatus during Lent.

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

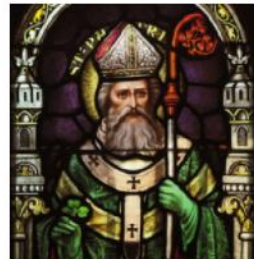
Attention parents of 8th grade Confirmation students, the following paperwork is due no later than March 20:

1. Sponsor Eligibility letter (from sponsor's home parish)
2. Statement of Sponsor form

Please note: Confirmation rehearsal is scheduled for May 18th at 2:30 pm

Confirmation ceremony will be celebrated May 19th at 7 pm

Happy Feasts of St. Patrick and St. Joseph this week!



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 6, 2025.

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 if you are interested in joining us.

25th Anniversary of Theology on Tap in the Diocese of Arlington: We want to celebrate with you! Since the beginning, this ministry has helped young adults grow in their faith and build Christ-like community. Join us on March 19, 2025 from 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. at the Columbus Club, Arlington, VA to celebrate. All are invited! Our shepherd, Bishop Michael Burbidge as well as the first Theology on Tap speaker 25 years ago, Fr. James Gould, and Director of Youth and Young Adult Apostolates and current organizer of Theology on Tap in Alexandria, Mariane Staron, will give brief remarks about this ministry over the years. There will also be complimentary hot hors d'oeuvres, a draft beer and wine cash bar, and a custom 25th Anniversary Theology on Tap memento for every guest! Reserve your spot for \$15 purchase today at <https://www.arlingtondiocese.org/event/25tot/>

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 April 5th.** For more information, call Dave Wilson, 703-966-5327 or email maryndavew7705@gmail.com.

JOIN the CHOIR at St. Raymond's: Do you want to sing with the choir for Lent and Easter? Singers who have a pleasant voice and sing in pitch are welcome. We practice on Tuesdays from 7:00 to 8:30 pm and sing at 11:00 am Mass on Sundays with a warm-up at 10. The repertoire of the choir contains masterpieces of classical liturgical choir music. Enjoy wonderful fellowship, music training and the joy of making uplifting music for the liturgy. Contact Elisabeth Turco at music@straymonds.org or call 703-506-4644.

Gift Shop for Lent: Stop by the Shop's table in the narthex after the Sunday Masses on the weekend of March 29-30. We are also available by appointment. Email us at giftshop@straymonds.org.

CHURCH PERSECUTED

Two weeks ago (Church Persecuted March 2, 2025), we reported the massacre of 70 Christians inside a Protestant church in the Republic of Congo by a group of Islamic militants linked with Islamic State (ISIS). As brutal as this may seem, this is not the most dangerous place in Africa for Christians. The International Christian Concern (ICC) reported that in the past two decades, at least 50,000 Christians have been killed in Nigeria with hundreds of thousands of Christians being displaced.

Nigeria is the most dangerous place for Christians to live in the world "due to the continued attacks from Islamic terrorist groups." Assaults, robberies, rapes and murders are a daily occurrence "while the government wrings its hands," reported Jeff King, president of the ICC. "The toll is approaching what some would call genocide." Three other African nations: Democratic Republic of Congo, Mozambique and Ethiopia, are ranked second, third and fourth, respectively. All of these nations lie primarily in Muslim-led countries. We have reported here many times over the years that the largest Islamic group responsible for these deaths in Nigeria is the jihadist group Boko Haram.

Nigeria lies on the West African coast with an extensive coast line on the Atlantic. Lying north of Nigeria and extending to the Mediterranean Sea (less the fertile coastal area near the sea) is the Sahara desert encompassing all of Northern Africa. Moslems settled along the Mediterranean coast beginning in the 4th century.

Christian missionaries (Augustinian and Capuchin monks) came to Nigeria from Portugal in the 15th century and settled on the coast. Christianity took a strong hold in the nation as the missionaries moved northward converting Christian farmers. These are the individuals (along with priests nuns) who are often the victims of the attacks. As Boko Haram moves south taking over more and more land, more and more Nigerians are slaughtered. Today Nigeria is about 54% Muslim and 46% Christian with Catholics making up about 1/3 of the Christians. Let us pray that the world will recognize the carnage in Nigeria and take action to protect the Christian population https://catholicvote.org/nigeria-once-again-declared-worlds-deadliest-country-for-christians/?mkt_tok=NDI3LUxwFUS0wNjYAAAGZCft59ooKC49yRUKMJKAJ1VdwEyu3GVyPedIDQruKvbdzMeU3bBTa8VpIrRrLwriN92bk2r290q9rZqZITosWJYEIS-g4c23OWIEhaUPVg

https://catholicvote.org/nigeria-once-again-declared-worlds-deadliest-country-for-christians/?mkt_tok=NDI3LUxwFUS0wNjYAAAGZCft59ooKC49yRUKMJKAJ1VdwEyu3GVyPedIDQruKvbdzMeU3bBTa8VpIrRrLwriN92bk2r290q9rZqZITosWJYEIS-g4c23OWIEhaUPVg



Get In-Formed!

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

*Listen to **Guard What Has Been Entrusted to You.** 17th century Bishop Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet gives a sermon for the Feast of St. Joseph (Mar 19).*

*Watch **In the Footsteps of St. Patrick.** This docudrama follows St. Patrick's (Mar 17) travels through Ireland.*



***Audio Book.** Listen to **Tears of Christ.** Use St. John Henry Newman's forty-two Lenten meditations to grow closer to Christ this Lent.*

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



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Scholarships to Catholic Schools are still available!

Please send requests for tuition assistance to Fr. De Celles or contact the parish office for more information. We can also help cover homeschooling expenses.

Holy Hour Offering Cards. Are you making a Holy Hour for a loved one or a friend? There are complimentary Holy Hour Offering Cards (with envelopes) available in the narthex suitable for mailing. Please feel free to take one and let someone know that you are remembering them in prayer.

For high school girls What do sisters do all day? Sometimes they garden! In the spirit of St. Francis, spend a day working in God's creation with the Franciscan Sisters of the Eucharist and gets some good insights to prepare for Holy Week. It's Saturday April 12 from 9am – 3pm at their convent in Falls Church. Day will include Mass, talk, lunch and gardening. Bring gardening gloves and tools if you have them. Cost is \$15. For more information and to register visit ArlingtonDiocese.org/FIAT, or contact vocations@arlingtondiocese.org. Deadline to register and submit permission form is April 6.

The Parish Library is located outside the Parish Hall. Staffed by Parish Volunteers, it is open on Saturdays from 1-5 and Sundays from 10-2. With over 5,000 Catholic items for adults and children in written and AV form, there's something for everyone! Come and see! "You will not find anyone who is truly striving after his spiritual advancement who is not given to spiritual reading." St Athanasius.

2 MINUTES- 2 VIRTUE: Get your Sunday Gospel reflection and challenge delivered straight to your email inbox by subscribing to 2m2v. Scan the QR code or text "2m2v" to 84576.



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