



**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
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.

**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.

Then let us
celebrate
with a feast,
because this
son of mine
was dead,
and has come
to life again,
he was lost,
and has
been found.

Luke 15:23, 24

Pastor's Corner

Midpoint of Lent. Today we celebrate the 4th Sunday of Lent, the traditional midpoint of the 40 days of the penitential season. Actually, there are 46 days from Ash Wednesday to Holy Saturday (inclusive). But the counting of the 40 days has never included the 6 Sundays of Lent, because, the 40 days have always been days of modified fasting, and Sunday was never a day of fasting since it is the Lord's Day. Moreover, though Good Friday and Holy Saturday are not technically "Lent" but the "Triduum, even so, the Triduum retains the penitential character of Lent, so there are still 40 the penitential days. Confused? Sorry.

That being said, this is the midpoint *Sunday* of Lent, and is called "**Laetare Sunday**," "laetare" meaning "rejoice." It is considered a sort of a slight lifting of the austerity and somberness of Lent as Holy Mother Church reminds us to lift our gaze to see that beyond the Cross is the Resurrection; in the midst of our sorrow for our lives of sin we also rejoice in the forgiveness and new life won by the Paschal Mystery. The Rose Vestments symbolize this: the dark purple of repentance and sorrow mingled with the light of forgiveness and joy.

Halfway now, I know some of us are struggling to keep the penances we set for ourselves for Lent, and others have procrastinated in choosing a penance. Ok ladies and gentlemen, we still have half of Lent left to rededicate or increase our efforts to keep Lent holy. If you haven't chosen a penance yet, do it! If you're struggling to keep your penances because they're too hard, change to something that is challenging but doable for you. And if you just haven't been trying, pick up your cross! Finally, if your penances have been easy to do, then add some more penances.

"For Your Penance, Say One Hail Mary." In order to be forgiven our sins in the Sacrament of Penance three things are required of every sinner/penitent: 1) contrition, 2) confession of our sins, and 3) satisfaction. Most of us understand contrition (being sorry) and confessing our sins, but you may not be familiar with the term "satisfaction" in this context. "Satisfaction" here refers the real effort to make up for our sins, and comes in two ways: "reparation" and "expiation" Let's look a little closer at this.

Many sins clearly harm other people, e.g., we stole something from them, we hurt their feelings, etc.. Justice requires we make restitution, or "reparation" in some way, the best we can. So, if we've stolen something we give it back. Maybe it was something we did long ago and we can't give it back; instead, we can, for example, donate to a charity as an effort toward that end.

But as the Catechism reminds us, "sin also injures and weakens 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 'act of expiation' is also called an act of 'penance.'"

So, when a priest gives a (act of) "penance" in confession, many people wonder how when something as small and simple as "saying three Hail Marys" can serve as an adequate satisfaction. But remember, we could never do enough penance to pay for all our sins—only Jesus can do this, and he did this on the Cross. The penance received in confession is a small but important personal effort to make satisfaction.

Moreover a simple and clear penance, such as some

short prayers, makes a good practical penance because: 1) if done devoutly they can be an important first step forward toward God, 2) they are more likely to be done immediately, so that the penance won't be forgotten and the penitent can immediately renew the life of grace, and 3) they avoid the confusion of more ambiguous or ambitious penances, so the penitent won't be wondering, "did I do enough?" "did I do too much?" "did I do it right?"

Lenten Series and Shroud Exhibit. Every Wednesday at the 7pm Mass I've been giving a series of Lenten homilies on "The Wounds of Jesus' Passion." I started with the wounds of the Scourging, then moved to the Crown of Thorns, then the Carrying of the Cross, and this week I will discuss the "Wounds of the Nails."

During these homilies I've often referred to the image of the **Shroud of Turin**. If you don't know, the Shroud is a centuries old linen cloth that bears the image of a crucified man that many believe to be Jesus of Nazareth. Many scientific studies have been done to confirm or debunk this belief, and I would maintain the bulk of the evidence seems to confirm. I think it is the miraculous image of the Crucified and Buried Christ.

But see for yourself: all during Lent until Easter Sunday the Saint John Paul II National Shrine in Washington, DC is sponsoring the "**National Shroud of Turin Exhibit**." "Tracing the movement of the Shroud in history, the exhibit explores what the Shroud reveals about salvation, drawing from both Sacred Scripture and scientific research. The exhibit also includes a replica of the Shroud of Turin..., a sculpture entitled *The Sign* that renders a life-size, three-dimensional image of the Man of the Shroud, over 40 gallery panels containing images and text, and prayer resources."

As St. John Paul II observed during his 1998 visit to the Shroud in the Cathedral of Turin:

"Contemplation of that tortured Body helps contemporary man to free himself from the superficiality of the selfishness with which he frequently treats love and sin. Echoing the Word of God and centuries of Christian consciousness, the Shroud whispers: believe in God's love, the greatest treasure given to humanity, and flee from sin, the greatest misfortune in history."

That is exactly the intention of my Lenten Series too. So go see the exhibit, but also join us this Wednesday at 7pm Mass.

Pope Francis. Did you see this story, here reported (excerpt) by Reuters? "*Pope Francis came so close to death at one point during his 38-day fight in hospital ...that his doctors considered ending treatment so he could die in peace, the head of the pope's medical team said.*"

"After a breathing crisis on February 28 that involved Francis nearly choking on his vomit, 'there was a real risk he might not make it,' said Sergio Alfieri, a physician at Rome's Gemelli hospital...."

"We had to choose if we would stop there and let him go, or to go forward and push it with all the drugs and therapies possible, running the highest risk of damaging his other organs....In the end, we took this path,' he said...."

"Francis has been prescribed a further two month period of rest...to fully heal."

Pray for the Holy Father.

Oremus pro invicem. Fr. De Celles

MASS INTENTIONS

<p><u>Monday, March 31st</u> 6:30 Michael Mugno 8:30 Paul & Marie Sundberg+</p>	<p><u>Saturday, April 5th</u> 9:00 am Don & Louise Sundberg +</p>
<p><u>Tuesday, April 1st</u> 6:30 am Rev. Michael Taylor 8:30 am Andrew Shealy 7:00 pm Priest's Intentions</p>	<p><u>Vigil Mass</u> 5:00 pm Fr. Bergida Catherine Hansen</p>
<p><u>Wednesday, April 2nd</u> 6:30 am Stephen Mugno 8:30 am J. J. Kelly + 7:00 pm Priest's Intentions</p>	<p><u>Sunday, April 6th</u> 7:00 am Msr. Rippy Martha Riedel +</p>
<p><u>Thursday, April 3rd</u> 6:30 am Joyce Ann O'Connor + 8:30 am James William King, Jr + 7:00 pm Priest's Intentions</p>	<p>9:00 am Fr. De Celles Parishioners</p>
<p><u>Friday, April 4th</u> 6:30 am Martha Mugno + 8:30 am Josefino Arevalo +</p>	<p>11:00 am Fr. Bergida Edmund Healy +</p> <p>1:00 pm Fr. Horkan RE Students and Their Families</p>

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.

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

<p>Glenn Bliss Tom Dietz Michael O'Neill Cindy Laird Patricia Lewis Mai Pham Jason Saenz Phyllis Zitnik John Florio Carolina Baker Sharon Falat</p>	<p>Debra Henkel Gaudencio Dizon Paul Haynes Ted Tolpa Nena Brennan Serrin Foster Donald Trayer Ellen Trayer Arlene Pietraszko Virginia Cummings Helen Zogaib</p>	<p>Margaret Norton Effie Mutumanje Helen Estabrooks Annette Haynes Beth Fitzgibbons Jean Keegan Joann Alba Margaret M. Hill Bill Roche Florence Miller</p>
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Upcoming Events at St. Raymond Church

- Mar 30** Gift Shop open after all Masses
- Mar 3-31** CCD Classes
- Mar 31** RCIA
- Apr 1** Adult Bible Study Parish Hall
- Apr 1** Junior Legion of Mary 4:15-5:15pm Maurer Room
- Apr 1** Legion of Mary 6:30pm Library
- Apr 2** Virginia March for Life, Richmond
- Apr 2** 7 pm Mass with Lenten Series Extended Homily
- Apr 4** Weekly Lenten Friday Nocturnal Adoration
- Apr 4** Soup Supper (5:30) & Stations of the Cross (7pm)
- Apr 5** Communal First Saturday Devotion
- Apr 5** Men's Prayer Group
- Apr 6** Donut Sunday
- Apr 10** Book Club Parish Library 9:30 am

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.

First Saturday Devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary: We invite you to join for Communal First Saturday Devotions on **April 5th**. Immediately following 9am Mass, we pray the Holy Rosary in the Church as a part of the Daily Family Rosary; and then we will proceed to the PARISH HALL 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. Concludes by 10:45am. Please join us!



4 of 12 FUN FACTS ABOUT THE KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS ([Alyssa Murphy](#) (Oct. 9, 2020) from the National Catholic Register). #4. The two founding principles of the Knights of Columbus are charity and unity.

In 1898, the order's magazine, The Columbia, explained, "a Knight should live according to the virtues of loyalty, charity, courtesy and modesty, as well as "self-denial and careful respect for the feelings of others." Over time, these reduced to charity and unit. Fraternity and patriotism emerged later. **WHY NOT 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

4/2 40 days for life Knights Rosary
4/8 Membership meeting (all members) 7:30 Parish hall (7:00 Rosary)



Help us make our church even more beautiful as we celebrate Christ's Resurrection! Flowers are a wonderful way to symbolize the new life we receive through Jesus' death and resurrection. If you would like to honor your loved ones this Easter, we invite you to send in your envelopes soon. Thank you so much for your support!

HELP NEEDED-USHERS AND LECTORS: Please consider volunteering to be an Usher or a Lector at Mass. Contact the parish office if interested, call 703-440-0535.

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:



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.

Volunteers Needed to help straighten the pews on the Groveland side of the church. Please contact the parish office 703-440-0535 if interested.

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 that beat in their mother's womb.

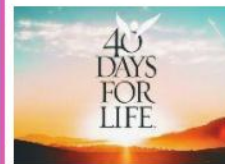
Be not complacent! Did you know that there is a fast-tracking move afoot in the Virginia Assembly to make abortion a constitutional right in our Commonwealth?

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!



The Virginia March for Life will take place this **Wednesday April 2** in Richmond. There are a few seats left on the St. Raymond's bus. Sign up in the narthex today! 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** is underway! **Our witness weekend is NEXT WEEKEND: 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 open or closed. This is a spiritual battle. Sign-up sheets are in the narthex. Come and see!

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 3/29: 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 CCD

6:30-8pm HS Youth Group—Grades 9-12

Sunday 4/6: Fr. Horkan will give a talk about Suffering during high school youth group 6:30-8pm after dinner and activity. Have you ever wondered why God, who is all good, allows so much suffering? Come learn more about the meaning, value and mystery of suffering, a timely topic as we head into these final weeks of Lent. There will be time after the talk for Q & A.

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, April 5 (10:15am-1pm)

40 Days for Life Prayerful Pro-Life Witness

7-12th Graders, please join us in praying outside the abortion clinic in Falls Church to change hearts and save lives. Bring your rosary and a friend. We will pray for an hour then come back for a slice of pizza in the parish hall. We will car pool from St. Raymond's. Chaperones needed. *Permission slips (available on bulletin boards & online <http://bit.ly/YAforms>) due Tuesday, 4/1*

June 23-June 29 (ish)

St. Raymond's Week of Faith, Fun & Service!

Details currently being worked out, but the plan is to have a mix of 1-3 events (faith, fun or service) each day. Exact days TBD but they will be within June 23-29 time frame. Examples of things currently in the works include a visit to the Dominican House of Studies in DC with a talk by Fr. Gregory Pine, O.P., pilgrimages to local Catholic sites, serving with various local apostolates such as the Little Sisters of the Poor, and fun outings such as white water rafting in Ohiopyle, PA, and rock climbing.

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. More info. At <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

Praying your family is having a blessed Lent! Please remember to take the whole family to Confession if you haven't done so already. **Confessions are available every day at St. Raymond's**; please see the schedule at the beginning of the bulletin. **Stations of the Cross** every Friday at 7pm is another great event to attend as a family.

Attention parents of 8th grade students:

Sponsor Paperwork was due on March 20!

Confirmation Gown Order form is due no later than April 10th. The form is in the red Confirmation folder. If you cannot find it, please refer to the Google Drive folder.

Parents of students preparing to receive the Sacrament of the Eucharist for the first time in May:

First Holy Communion Mini-Retreat will take place Saturday, May 3 from 8:30 am - 12:30 pm here at St. Raymond's; **Please RSVP ASAP**. Also, don't forget to **sign up for a First Communion Mass**.

Looking Ahead: There will be no CCD classes on April 13/14 and 20/21 for Holy Week and Easter.

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.

Book Club News: Our next meeting will be on Thursday, April 10th at 9:30 AM, in the Parish Library. We will be discussing "**He Leadeth Me**" by Fr. Walter Ciszek. The schedule for the full year can be found on the parish website: <https://straymonds.org/ministries-and-groups/book-club/>. New members welcome. If you have questions or plan to join us for the first time in April, please contact Jim Mault at bookclub@straymonds.org.

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.

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

Donut Sunday, Next weekend, April 6th after the 7:00, 9:00, and 11:00 am Masses. Stop by the Parish Hall after Mass to enjoy some treats and drinks and meet your fellow parishioners. We will also have LOST & FOUND items out for you to check. March's Donut Sunday will be hosted by our Lectors.

Fourth Sunday of Lent - March 30, 2025

While he was still a long way off, his father caught sight of him and was filled with compassion. He ran to his son, embraced him and kissed him." (Luke 15:20) Our Father calls us to run toward the path He has prepared for us. Is He inviting you to share this compassion with others through a vocation to the priesthood or consecrated life? Talk to your priest or reach out to the Vocation Office at (703) 841-2514 or via email: vocations@arlingtondiocese.org

CHURCH PERSECUTED

(continued from last Sunday)

Today is Laetare Sunday. Ten years ago, on Laetare Sunday in 2015, Akash Bashir stopped a suicide bomber trying to enter a Catholic Church in Lahore, Pakistan as the bomber detonated the bomb. Akash died immediately, but in doing so, he saved hundreds of Catholics who were inside attending Mass. His last words were “If I have to die, I’ll die, but I won’t let you in.”

Persecutions against Christians are commonplace around the world. Earlier this month, we wrote about the bombing of Churches and kidnapping and killing of Catholics in various parts of Africa. The persecution of Christians has been reported in Syria with a new Islamic regime in place and gangs roving the countryside. Pakistan is no exception. Imagine your Catholic church surrounded by a fence with formal guards protecting it from terrorists. That was the situation that Akash found himself in on that fateful Lenten Sunday ten years ago.

The funeral Mass for Akash was presided over by the Archbishop of Lahore. Hundreds of Catholics were present and prayed in thanksgiving because Akash saved their lives. Akash was suddenly, in death, propelled into fame – “a fame of holiness” they called it.

Interestingly, the Pakistanis don’t use the word for “martyr,” because of its strong association with the Muslim religion. They use a word that translates into the English “hero.”

The locals began praying to Akash spontaneously immediately after his death and it continues today. The investigation into the cause of his sainthood began and in 2024, he was recognized as a Servant of God. The cause for his canonization continues.



Get In-Formed!

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

Watch A Lent to Remember. These five episodes, picked from the Augustine Institute’s programs *Symbolon* and *Forgiven: The Transforming Power of Confession*, present Christ’s love in His suffering on the Cross and His mercy in the Sacrament of Confession.

Listen to The Fourth Cup. Dr. Scott Hahn uses Scripture to explain the parallels between the Jewish Passover celebration and the Last Supper and Jesus’ death on Calvary.



For Kids. Watch *Brother Francis: The Stations of the Cross*. The familiar character introduces children to the purpose of the Stations and then walks them through age-appropriate reflections on each of the 14 stations.

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 limited spots available in some grades for the 2024-25 school year, but spaces are going fast!

Apply soon!

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

Call or Email Julie Maimone, Director of Admissions, at Admissions@angelusacademy.org for more information or to schedule a tour.

Come visit us and see why our students love coming to school. Thank you for your continued prayers and support.

www.AngelusAcademy.org 703-924-3996
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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](https://www.ArlingtonDiocese.org/FIAT), or contact vocations@arlingtondiocese.org. Deadline to register and submit permission form is April 6.

Annual Easter Egg Hunt, Saturday, April 27th at 2:30 pm behind the Parish Hall: Children ages 12 and under are invited, free of charge, no RSVP necessary! This year, we are inviting all parishioners to sign up to donate eggs and candy by April 22nd. Please check your email for the Sign up Genius sign up! For more information, please contact the parish office.

Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD)

- If you are 70-1/2 or more, please consider making an IRA Charitable gift to the parish before December 31.

- If you are 73 or older and need to make required minimum distributions (RMD) from your IRA, your QCD counts toward your annual RMD for the year.

QCDs can have a significant tax benefit for you. Eligible accounts for QCDs can be made from most

IRAs, including Traditional IRAs, Rollover IRAs, Inherited IRAs, and Roth IRAs. Always consult your

Tax professional regarding your specific situation. Use our parish address: St. Raymond of Penafort

Catholic Church, 8750 Pohick Road, Springfield, VA 22153.

SUNDAY OFFERTORY 03/23/2025

MARCH FAITH DIRECT

Sunday Offertory	\$12,449.00	\$66,850.50
Family Assistance	\$802.00	\$2,552.00
Maintenance Fund	\$843.00	\$5,325.00
OLOR Scholarship	\$1,279.00	\$9,503.00
Aid to Eastern Europe		\$1,915.00
Black & Indian Mission		\$1,030.00

The Second Collection this week is for Catholic Relief Services, please be generous.





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