



1st Sunday of Advent

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



Welcome to St. Raymond of Peñafort Roman Catholic Church

8750 Pohick Road
Springfield, VA 22153

WEEKEND MASSES:

Saturday Vigil: 5:00 pm
Sunday: 7:00 am, 9:00 am (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

SACRAMENT OF PENANCE (Reconciliation/Confession)

Wednesday Evening

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

First Fridays

3:00-4:00 pm and 6:00-7:00 pm

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.

OCIA: The Order 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.

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
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 upcoming school year.

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.

Stay awake!

For you do not
know on which
day your Lord
will come.

Matthew 24:42

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, as long as 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*.

So I recommend that you do what Catholics have always done in preparing for Holy Days: **do penance**. In Advent this shouldn't take on anything like 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.

So 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!

Also **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.

And 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 an excellent way to do this, as are some of the special collections.

And don't forget to **receive the sacraments**. 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 EXCEPT THURSDAYS (so M, T, W, F):** 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 2025 Events"** from last week's bulletin somewhere central in your house. In particular, consider:

-- **Lessons and Carols.** Next Sunday, December 7, I invite you to join me, the lectors, the choir and 300 or 400 of your fellow parishioners 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." The last few years the Advent Series has been incorporated into a Holy Hour in the Church. This year we're going back to the Parish Hall where Fr. Bergida will give 3 one-hour talks on each of the Thursdays of Advent. His topic will be "The Eucharist." As you know, Father has a Licentiate in Sacred Liturgy, so he's a real expert on the history, development, doctrine and traditions surrounding the Eucharist. I'm looking forward to hearing his talks, and I hope to see you there,

beginning this Thursday, December 4, at 7pm. Notice that this is the time we have our extra Masses on the other weekdays of Advent this year, but **I didn't schedule Masses for Thursday evenings** so that you could all attend the Series.

"Rorate Caeli" Mass. Once again Fr. Bergida will celebrate the Rorate Caeli Mass in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary on Saturday, **December 20 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. If you want a preview, go to our website on initial the pop-up menu click "WATCH MASS (Livestream and Archive)," and on the next page click "Rorate Caeli Mass 2024."

Oremus pro invicem. Fr. De Celles

MASS INTENTIONS

Monday, December 1st

6:30 am Paula Panganiban +
 8:30 am Goody Litorja +

Tuesday, December 2nd

6:30 am Joan Garster +
 8:30 am Souls of Legion of
 Mary members +

Wednesday, December 3rd

6:30 am Jeanne Shannon +
 8:30 am Rita Reap +
 7:00 pm Celebrant's Intentions

Thursday, December 4th

6:30 am Weston Taylor
 8:30 am Robert Calogero +

Friday, December 5th

6:30 am Frederick Lompa +
 8:30 am Cindy Hatcher

Saturday, December 6th

9:00 am Jean Anezin +

Vigil Mass

5:00 pm
 Bill Leckey +

Sunday, December 7th

7:00 am
 Robert Orsino +

9:00 am
 Parishioners

11:00 am
 Larry McKinley +

1:00 pm
 RE Students &
 Families

5:00 pm Vigil
 Nick Blaze Damon +

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.

Kathleen McGovern

Peter Lawton

Please pray for the sick of our parish

Glenn Bliss
 Michael O'Neill
 Cindy Laird
 Patricia Lewis
 Mai Pham
 Jason Saenz
 Phyllis Zitnik
 John Florio
 Carolina Baker
 Debra Henkel
 Gaudencio Dizon

Paul Haynes
 Nena Brennan
 Serrin Foster
 Donald Trayer
 Ellen Trayer
 Arlene Pietraszko
 Virginia Cummings
 Mary M. Dixon
 Edward J. Susank
 Helen Estabrooks

Annette Haynes
 Beth Fitzgibbons
 Jean Keegan
 Florence Miller
 Robert Petitti
 Joann Alba
 Alicia Tocconi
 Jay & Linda Cabacar
 Rita Felkel

Upcoming Events at St. Raymond Church

- 11/21-12/14 Giving Trees up in the Narthex
 11/28-12/21 K of C Christmas Tree Sales
 11/30 NO RE Classes on Sunday evening
 12/1 RE Classes (Monday evening)
 12/1 Bible Study morning class 9:30-11:00 am
 12/1 Family of Jesus prayer group 3pm in the Church
 12/2 Bible Study evening class 7:00-8:30 pm
 12/2 Junior Legion of Mary 4:15-6:15pm Maurer Rm.
 12/2 Legion of Mary 6:30pm—Library
 12/3 Adoration 9am-7pm
 12/4 Bridge Club
 12/5 First Friday Nocturnal Adoration
 12/6 First Saturday Communal Devotion Maurer Rm.
 12/6 Men's Prayer Group, Parish Hall
 12/6 Breakfast with St. Nicholas, Parish Hall
 12/7 Donut Sunday hosted by Trail Life
 12/7 Lessons and Carols Church at 7pm, reception following in parish hall
 12/8 **The Immaculate Conception of the BVM-Holy Day of Obligation-Parish Offices Closed**
Masses: 6:30 am, 8:30 am, Noon, 7:00pm

**View livestreaming of the Holy Mass
 at St. Raymond's**

www.straymonds.org

**Monday - Friday Daily Mass at 8:30 am
 Saturday at 9:00 am**

**Sunday Mass at 9:00 am & 11:00 am
 (See the website for Holy Days)**

**DURING ADVENT: Masses every evening 7pm
 except for Thursdays for Advent Series 7pm in the
 Parish Hall.**

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 November! All are invited to attend.

Advent Lessons and Carols. Please join us on Sunday, December 7, 2025 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: 100th Anniversary! We invite you to join us for Communal First Saturday Devotions on **December 6th immediately following 9am Mass.** This December marks the 100th Anniversary of our Lord appearing to Venerable Sister Lucia requesting this powerful & beautiful devotion of Five First Saturdays to "console your Mother". On this very special anniversary, we are honored to have Father Horkan offering a 15-minute meditation on the 3rd Joyful Mystery, as we draw near to Our Mother & prepare our hearts this Season of Advent. **Following 9am Mass, we pray the Daily Family Rosary in the Church; and then proceed to the MAURER ROOM for Fatima prayers & meditation.** Concludes by 10:45am. All are invited!

The Knights of Columbus are selling Christmas Trees & Wreaths in the church's south parking lot this week; sales will continue through Thursday Dec. 21 (or until sold out). Please support the Knights who use the contributions to support St. Raymond and other various local charities throughout the year. Points of contact are: Jim Hildebrand- 571-585-5475; Phil Bettwy- 703-868-9411; and John Crennan- 339-223-0887.



Book Club News: Our next meeting will be on Thursday, December 11th at 9:30 AM in the Parish Hall. **This will be our annual Advent Brunch.** Please bring a food item to share. We will be discussing **1917: Red Banners, White Mantle** by Warren Carroll. The schedule for the full year can be found on the parish website: <https://straymonds.org/ministries-and-groups/book-club/>. New members are welcome. If you have questions or plan to join us for the first time in December, please contact Jim Mault at bookclub@straymonds.org.



THE FULLNESS OF KNIGHTHOOD: Join the Knights! Your very own St. John Bosco Council #12846 has just been awarded **STAR COUNCIL** and received the **STATE DEPUTY AWARD** as one of the most outstanding councils in the

Commonwealth of Virginia. These noteworthy awards are only earned by strong Catholic men tirelessly working together to serve their parish, community and their nation. Why not become part of the most impactful Catholic fraternity in the world, grow in your faith, and discover mutual support from a true brotherhood built on shared Catholic values? Now is the **perfect time** to take your place with us. Just go to <https://www.kofc.org/joinus> or use the QR code below to experience the Knights free for one year. Enter our council #12846 for local information when you register. Knights of Columbus informational materials are in the Narthex, please have a look. Please contact our Deputy Grand Knight, Dave Hayes, at cell (703) 380-4550 if you have any questions or want to learn more about the many benefits of being a Knight! Get in the game, answer the call, **LIVE FULLY; BECOME A KNIGHT!**



Upcoming Events:

DECEMBER

- 1-21 Christmas Tree Sales (Church Parking Lot)
- 6 Men's Prayer Breakfast (7:30 am, Parish Hall)
- 6 Breakfast with St. Nicholas (Parish Hall, 9:30-11:00 am)
- 6 Richmond Polar Plunge (Pocahontas State Park)
- 8 Monthly Council Meeting (7pm Library-Rosary, 7:30 pm Parish Hall)
- 13 Wreaths Across America (Arlington National Cemetery, 4th Degree starts at 6am)
- 20 Men's Prayer Breakfast (7:30 am, Parish Hall)
- 26 Caroling with St. Nicholas, a la Creche (7pm, Friday)

"Keep Christ in Christmas" Christmas Cards – From Oct 25-26 to Dec. 6-7, the Knights of Columbus will be selling religious Christmas cards in the Narthex after all the Masses.

Knights of Columbus Coats for Kids Drive: A huge thank you to all St. Raymond's parishioners who participated in this year's Coats for Kids drive. Your generosity made this year our best yet. We received or purchased over 200 coats that were donated to ECHO, Lorton Community Action Center and Christ House. Thanks to you, a child in need will have a nice, warm coat for the winter season. **THANK YOU!**

2025-26 Adult Bible Study: St. Raymond's will study the topic of "Hearing the Voice of the Lord in the Major Prophets" on Monday mornings from 9:30 to 11:00 A.M. and again on Tuesday evenings from 7:00 to 8:30 P.M. (except for holidays) in the Parish Hall, from Monday, September 15, 2025 through May, 2026.

Breakfast with Saint Nicholas- SATURDAY December 6th! Saint Nicholas is coming to St. Raymond Church! He will be here on Saturday, December 6th, after the 9:00 am Mass. The Knights of Columbus, St. John Bosco Council, will host Saint Nicholas along with providing a pancake breakfast (until 11:00AM) 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. 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).

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 6th.** For more information, call Dave Wilson, 703-966-5327 or email maryndavew7705@gmail.com.

John Paul the Great Clinics & Workshops - 4th-8th grades!

Saint John Paul the Great Catholic High School has a few exciting opportunities for younger students to hone their skills and explore their interests! Boys Wrestling Camp is back (ongoing - end of January), Girls Basketball Clinic (Sat, Dec 13th), and Super Science Saturday (Sat, Feb 28th) this winter! Click here to start your registration: <https://saintjohnpaul.mypaysimple.com/s/middle-school-event-registration>

ST. RAYMOND'S RESPECTS LIFE



For you formed my inward parts. You wove me in my mother's womb. Psalm 139:13

Our **Wrapped In Love** program is up and stitching. Pray for the mothers and babies who will be wrapped in love by your efforts as you create baby blankets for distribution at Pregnancy Care Centers or for use by sidewalk counselors – wherever we find a need. Blankets may be delivered to the parish office or MaRiH collection box in the narthex.

MaRiH Pregnancy Care Center... is very grateful for our continued support! Donations welcome in the narthex collection box near the elevator. Greatest needs: **winter coats up to 2T**, diapers, formula, wipes, winter clothes up to 2T. Please do not leave bouncy seats, walkers, gates or jogging strollers. Thank you for understanding.

Do you know someone who works in the abortion industry and wants to get out? *And Then There Were None* can help. Visit Abortionworker.com. Call or text 888-570-5501

Has the sorrow of miscarriage or still birth touched your life? **A Mom's Peace**, offers discreet support to families with bereavement, burial and remembrance assistance. Visit amomspeace.org.

Angel Wall: Have you suffered the loss of a child or grandchild? If you would like to honor the memory of your deceased child, please contact the Parish Office to have your child's name added to the Angel Wall in the narthex.

To those who have suffered an abortion:

"Do not give in to discouragement and do not lose hope. **The Father of Mercies** is ready to give you His Forgiveness and His Peace in the Sacrament of Reconciliation." **Project Rachel** helps women and men who are carrying the grief and sorrow of a past abortion. (888)456-HOPE. Men: (703) 841-3833. Confidentiality always respected. www.helpafterabortion.org.

THE ABORTION PILL now accounts for 65% of all abortions. Women often regret the desperate isolated decision to take the abortion pill. **Call the abortion reversal helpline 855-209-4848. It may not be too late.** abortionpillreversal.com.

THE POWER OF PRAYER. Abortionists and those who work in the abortion industry trespass against us. Yet how much more they offend Almighty God! Every abortion deforms the abortionist and desensitizes him or her to the humanity of both the mother and child violated through abortion. **Pray fervently for the conversion of abortionists.** Somehow, they have been led astray by greed, ignorance, a misguided sense of compassion or perhaps evil itself.



Save the date! Join us for the National March for Life. Friday 23 January. St Raymond's will send three buses. Watch for sign-ups in the narthex - after Christmas!

St. Raymond's Youth Apostolate

NO Youth Group or CCD this weekend 11/30
Have a Happy Thanksgiving with your family!!



NO Youth group Next week 12/7

This will give you the opportunity to attend the beautiful evening of Lessons & Carols with your family. It is such a great way to enter into the season of Advent and to prepare your heart for Christmas!



MOUNT 2000 Eucharistic Retreat (Feb. 6-8) **Open to all high school students!**

Mount 2000 is a weekend Eucharistic retreat that includes Mass, Adoration, Confession, exciting speakers and musicians, and breakout sessions led by seminarians. The total cost for the retreat is \$130. *We will leave after school, at 4pm on Friday & return 3pm Sunday.

Go to <https://bit.ly/MOUNT2000> for more details and/or to register, **Registration DUE December 10th!!**



Sat. 12/6: 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 6th**. 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/stnick25>

Sun. 12/7: 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.**



Steubenville Youth Conference : July 17-19, 2026

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. More info. coming soon!

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!

A new **YA Info. Sheet** is **REQUIRED** to be turned in once **each school year** for every child **prior** to participating in any Youth Apostolate event on or off site. <http://bit.ly/YAforms>

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

There will be **NO CCD classes** this evening, 11/30.
There **WILL** be CCD classes this Monday, 12/1.

CCD Families: Lessons and Carols is next weekend, Dec. 7 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, and their class on 12/8 is cancelled for the Holy Day. See you there!

For planning purposes:

There will be **NO CCD classes** 12/21-12/22 or 12/28-12/29.

Midterm Exams will be administered the week of January 11th 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.

Advent Book Group for Women ages 22-40. Are you looking to go deeper this Advent? Come join us for a women's Advent devotional book group, journeying with *In Time: A Catholic Advent Devotional for Women about Time and Waiting* by Claire Dwyer. (available for purchase at <https://blessedissh.net/>). Meet in the Maurer Room by the parish office on Friday Dec. 5th, 12th, and 19th, 6:30-8:30pm. Optional fourth meeting TBD on Dec. 22 or 23. Contact Elise Hamilton to sign up or with any questions: 2EliseHamilton@gmail.com, (703) 300-4131.

Our American Heritage Girls troop will honor our fallen veterans by laying wreaths upon their graves at the Soldiers' and Airmen's Home National Cemetery. Please consider sponsoring a wreath today helping them cover the cemetery on December 13th. Wreaths Across America donates back to our troop for each wreath sponsorship the girls obtain helping us run the troop and build women of integrity. <https://tinyurl.com/VA0683WAA>

New and Improved Giving Tree "Some give freely, yet grow all the richer" Prov. 11:24 Once again, we are sponsoring over 30 families from both our parish community and Our Lady of the Blue Ridge in Madison, VA. This year there will be tangible gifts on the trees as well as gift cards to choose from, plus additional gifts on the parish website's Sign-Up Genius. A working QR code will help you access that list. Instructions can be found on signs near the trees in the narthex or on the Giving Tree page on the parish website. Contact the parish office with any questions. All gifts are due on or before December 14. Please share Christ's love this Christmas season by helping a family in need; both receiver and giver will be blessed!



Our Lady of Ransom Scholarships to Catholic Schools are Available.

Please send requests for 2025-26 tuition assistance to Fr. De Celles or contact the parish office for more information. We can also help cover homeschooling expenses.

CHURCH PERSECUTED

The dominos are beginning to fall on transgenders participating in women's sports. The NCAA recently banned men who now claim to be women from participating in women's sports. The International Olympic and Paralympic Committee followed suit. A United Nations report revealed that "by 30 March 2024, over 600 female athletes in more than 400 competitions have lost more than 890 medals in 29 different sports' to transgender competitors."

Now the U.S. Second Circuit Court of Appeals has reversed an earlier decision by a lower court ordering a school be banned from the Vermont Principals Association (VPA), which regulates extracurricular activities in middle and high schools in Vermont. In *Middle Vermont Christian School v. Saunders*, the school was originally banned from participating in VPA activities because it forfeited a basketball game in which the opposing team had a "transgender" athlete. Middle Vermont, a Christian academy, was thus prohibited from participating in sports against VPA schools or activities such as science fairs, plays, and other non-sporting activities at VPA schools due their Christian principles.

The school cited the First Amendment's Free Exercise clause in which the Middle Vermont school would have to "accept transgender competitors as female, contradicting their Christian beliefs." The federal district court denied Middle Vermont's request for a preliminary injunction allowing them to retain their eligibility to participate in such activities, but on appeal, the Second Circuit reversed the decision.

"At the heart of its analysis, the Second Circuit determined that the plaintiffs were likely to succeed in showing that the 'VPA's decision was indeed accompanied by official expressions of hostility to religion." The Court also found that VPA "ignored the detailed procedural requirements governing its disciplinary process...[and] flouted its own rules."

Next January the U.S. Supreme Court takes up two cases involving states that have banned transgender athletes from participating in women's sports. Last month the Supreme Court heard arguments and seemed favorably inclined to overturn a Colorado ban of therapists from counseling minors who come to them with gender dysphoria. The dominos are beginning to fall.

<https://www.catholicworldreport.com/2025/11/15/a-win-for-religious-freedom-and-womens-rights-in-sports-in-vermont/>

FORMED®

Get In-Formed!

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

Watch: How to Advent

Advent sometimes just feels like that time that is sandwiched between Thanksgiving and Christmas – life is hectic with Christmas shopping, parties, the school year ending, and so much more. In *How to Advent*, we will discover the rich traditions that mark this season and how they aid us in preparing our hearts for the birth of the child Jesus at Christmas. Guided by priests, religious, professors, and a charismatic host, you will gain practical tips and spiritual reflection on the practices of the Advent calendar, Advent wreath, Jesse tree, and nativity scene.

Watch and Draw: For Kids: King David | Drawing Closer to God: Salvation History | Episode 7

Learn how to draw figures from Scripture as you learn their stories. King David was an amazing figure in the Old Testament. Join Ms. Kim in this episode of *Drawing Closer to God* as she recounts his story and teaches kids how to draw him.

E-book kids: Christians Courageous by Aloysius Roche

For every half-dozen heroes antiquity could muster, Christendom produced thousands, and often from the strangest holes and corners. Instead of drying up the spirit of adventure, the Fire of Pentecost kindled it anew and made it burn with an unquenchable flame. The Master's parting instructions to His followers resulted in a host of enterprises quite as daring as any to be found in Homer.

Available for FREE! To set up an account, visit [Formed.org/signup](https://www.Formed.org/signup) and select our parish. Please consider leading this important ministry, call the Parish office at 703-440-0535

View this bulletin online at www.DiscoverMass.com



Angelus Academy, Where the Truth of Catholic teaching takes flesh in the lives of 3 year-old to 8th grade children and their families.

There are limited spots available in some grades for the 2025-26 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
7644 Dynatech Ct., Springfield, VA 22153

Qualified Charitable Distributions

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

Chesterton Academy of Christ the King, a small co-ed classical high school that is part of the international Chesterton Schools Network, will be opening at St. Lawrence Catholic Church next fall. Chesterton Academies are known for their strong Catholic identity anchored in daily school Mass, rigorous classical curriculum, screen-free socratic seminar format, and affordable tuition. Visit Chesterton-ChristTheKing.org to learn more, to join our mailing list, or to apply. The priority application deadline for rising freshmen is Friday, December 19, 2025.

Family of Jesus Prayer Group: Weekly meetings are in the Church on Mondays at 3:00 pm. If you have any prayer requests, please let us know by emailing Elaine Perricone at jpebt@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.

PARISHSOFT- FORMERLY FAITH DIRECT: Faith Direct has now changed to ParishSoft. The New login URL is ParishSOFT Giving-Login. To donate or sign up, please visit our website: <https://straymonds.org> and choose the Faith Direct button on the upper right of the front page of the website. 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. Thank you for your continued support of our parish family. God bless you.

Sunday Offertory 11/23/25 will be included next week

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