



## 3<sup>rd</sup> 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](http://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](mailto:bulletin@straymonds.org) 10 days prior to publication date.

**Behold,  
I am sending  
my messenger  
ahead of you;  
he will prepare  
your way  
before you.  
Matthew 11:10**

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](mailto:Office@straymonds.org)  
Pastor: [fdc@straymonds.org](mailto:fdc@straymonds.org)  
Rel. Ed.: [ReligiousEducation@straymonds.org](mailto: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.

## Pastor's Corner

**GAUDETE SUNDAY.** Today is “Gaudete Sunday,” or “Rejoice Sunday” (from the first words of the entrance antiphon, “Gaudete in Dómino semper”— “Rejoice in the Lord always”). This reminds us that Advent is a season of “expectant joy” as our anticipation of the great joy of Christmas builds every day as we draw closer to it. This is symbolized in the “rose” colored vestments the priests may wear today, “rose” being a shade of advent violet that is brighter than the normal violets of Advent, as if the brightness of Christmas joy is shining through the subdued preparation of Advent.

I hope we all experience this building joy during Advent. First and foremost, we should experience this spiritually, in our prayers and meditation on the mystery of Christmas, and in reception of the sacraments. In this regard, I encourage you to go to confession this week—we rejoice because Christ was born to save us from our sins, and he pours out this salvation in this holy sacrament—there’s nothing like the joy experienced in having our sins forgiven. Remember, we have will have **2 priests hearing confessions every evening this week, Monday through Friday.** I also encourage you to attend daily Mass: remember we have an **additional Mass at 7pm** on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday.

I also encourage you to join us this **Thursday (December 18)** at 7pm for the final talk in Fr. Bergida’s “**Advent Series**” on “**The Angelic Doctor on the Bread of Angels.**” This week’s topic is “**Of Evil Men and Holy Things.**”

Also, continue your penances this week, especially your extra prayers. Come to Exposition/Adoration, and pray the Rosary, especially as a family. And strive to be heroically kind, patient, forgiving and generous with all you meet.

**Decorations.** The growing spiritual joy also overflows into our practical lives during this season, and expresses itself in the many of the customs of this season, many of which illustrate how this joy gradually builds as we approach the source of our joy, Christmas. We see this, for example, in how the decoration of our homes get more and more “Christmassy” as the days of Advent pass.

But you don’t see that so much inside our church during Advent. One reason for this is because so many decorations abound outside the church, often lacking any sense of gradualness or progression, that I think it’s important to show a contrast in our liturgies—to remind us that Christ is not here yet, that we are waiting and preparing for Him.

Even so, we do incorporate this progression in the church in several ways, including the Advent wreath, the selection of hymns, and the rose vestments.

And this week we step up the decorations, reminding us that Christmas is so near. “I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near” (Num. 24:17).

**A “Successful” Advent.** I am a happy Pastor after the great extended weekend we had last week. First on Saturday, with Breakfast with Saint Nicholas, then on Sunday with Lessons and Carols, and finally Monday with the Masses of the Immaculate Conception.

The main reason I’m happy is because there were so many who attended each of these “events.” This was especially the case with Lessons and Carols, where there had to be over 500 people—and they sang! But the numbers were also outstanding for the Holy Day on Monday—I’m guessing the numbers were comparable to a Sunday. Finally, there were tons of little ones at the Breakfast, which was a lot of fun.

Thanks, especially to the choir and musicians who worked so hard to provide such a magnificent evening of prayerful song for all of us on Sunday! Bravo! And thanks also to

the Knights of Columbus for their hard work in sponsoring “Breakfast with Saint Nicholas.”

**Parishioner Wins Big Victory Against FCPS!** I’m very proud to say that **one of our young parishioners** took a brave stand for Catholic values and Religious Libert—and won! Here’s the story reported last week by the Catholic News Agency.

*“A Catholic Virginia student will receive payments including attorney’s fees after a school district conceded a lawsuit she brought over the district’s transgender policies.”*

*“The student, identified in the October lawsuit as ‘Jane Doe,’ said the Fairfax County School Board violated her constitutional rights when it subjected her to ‘extreme social pressure’ to affirm transgender pronoun conventions.”*

*“Doe, identified as a ‘practicing Roman Catholic who strives daily to live in accordance with her faith,’ felt compelled to engage in self-censorship in which she attempted to ‘avoid using pronouns altogether’ in many circumstances due to fear of punishment from school officials, according to the suit.”*

*“When she expressed concerns over sharing a bathroom with a male student, meanwhile, she was told she could ‘use a private restroom if she felt uncomfortable,’ according to the suit.”*

*“On Dec. 2 the law group America First Legal called the case a ‘major victory,’ saying the Fairfax school district conceded the lawsuit, offering ‘nominal damages’ and paying costs including attorney’s fees.”*

*“This outcome sends a clear message: School systems and officials cannot disregard the safety, privacy, and dignity of students in favor of radical gender policies,” the group said.*

*“‘No student should face the threat of punishment or be pushed aside for asserting their fundamental constitutional rights,’ attorney Ian Prior said in the release.”*

*“The settlement comes amid broader efforts to roll back extreme transgender ideology and LGBT policies at schools around the country, including rules that allow boys to access girls’ restrooms and other private spaces....”*

*“In August, meanwhile, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services told states that they would be required to remove gender ideology materials from K–12 education curricula or face the loss of federal funding.”*

**Parish Finances.** I apologize for not releasing this sooner, but please find the Finance Report of the year ended June 30, 2025 (“2025”), inserted in this bulletin. I have included a side-by-side comparison with last year (“2024”) for your reference.

**For 2025, Operating Income** (mainly from offertory and long-term maintenance collections, and other donations) was **\$2,527,159**, up \$35,420 (or 1.4%) from the prior year, while Operating Expenses were \$2,383,468, up \$69,884 (or 3%) from the prior year, leaving us a **Net Operating Income of \$143,690, down \$34,463** from the prior year. Note that this number included a one-time increase (doubling) in the interest paid to us on our “DIAL” (savings) account in the amount of \$42,472.

We also had **Extraordinary Income, a Dividend** on our DIAL account of **\$100,000**. This left us with **Net Income (the bottom line) of \$243,690**.

On the Balance Sheet side of things, we had Cash of \$236,882 in checking and **\$2,528,961 in savings**. Of the cash in savings, \$348,424 is restricted, i.e., funds dedicated for specific types of expenditures.

Our sole liabilities amount to only \$20,879.09 in Accounts Payable.

Please feel free to contact me or Maerose Naduvilekunnel in the parish office with any questions about the report.

**Oremus pro invicem. Fr. De Celles**



**MASS INTENTIONS**

**Monday, December 15th**

6:30 am Edward Jose Petrovitch +  
 8:30 am Nelly Drouillard  
 7:00 pm Celebrant's Intentions

**Tuesday, December 16th**

6:30 am Robert Haynes +  
 8:30 am Jeanne Gedney +  
 7:00 pm Celebrant's Intentions

**Wednesday, December 17th**

6:30 am Pope Francis +  
 8:30 am Shue Wong +  
 7:00 pm Celebrant's Intentions

**Thursday, December 18th**

6:30 am Jon & Sarah Laird  
 8:30 am Katie Schweitzer

**Friday, December 19th**

6:30 am Tom & Suzanne Barrett  
 8:30 am Maximillian Wright  
 7:00 pm Celebrant's Intentions

**Saturday, December 20th**

9:00 am Liberato Cruz +

**Vigil Mass**

5:00 pm **Fr. Horkan**  
 Donald Bondarchuk +

**Sunday, December 21st**

7:00 am **Msgr. Rippy**  
 Bob & Gerri Laird

9:00 am **Fr. De Celles**  
 Parishioners

11:00 am **Fr. Horkan**  
 Barbara De Celles +

1:00 pm **Fr. Bergida**  
 Kathleen Roberts +

**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  
 George Watson  
 Emily Calayag

**Upcoming Events at St. Raymond Church**

11/28-12/21 K of C Christmas Tree Sales  
 12/14 Deadline to return Giving Tree Gifts  
 12/14 RE Classes  
 12/15 RE Classes  
 12/15 NO Bible Study  
 12/15 Family of Jesus prayer group (No meetings on 12/22 and 12/29—Resumes on 1/5)  
 12/16 NO Bible Study evening class  
 12/16 Junior Legion of Mary 4:15-6:15pm Maurer Rm.  
 12/16 Legion of Mary 6:30pm—Library  
 12/17 Adoration 9am-7pm  
 12/18 Bridge Club  
 12/18 Advent Series on the Eucharist-Parish Hall 7pm  
 12/19 Adoration 9am-3pm  
 12/20 Rorate Caeli Mass 6:30 am  
 12/20 Men's Prayer Group  
 12/20 Advent Luncheon for Seniors 12-2pm

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

**[www.straymonds.org](http://www.straymonds.org)**

**Monday - Friday Daily Mass at 8:30 am**

**Saturday at 9:00 am**

**Sunday Mass at 9:00 am & 11:00 am**

**(See the website for Holy Days)**

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



**Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday:**

**12/15-12/23: 6-7pm**

**Wednesday: 6-7pm**

**Saturday: 8-9am**

**Sunday: 8-9am & 10:15-11am**

**Free Advent Luncheon For All Seniors**

**WHO: All Seniors 55 years young and above**

**WHERE: St. Raymond's Parish Hall**

**DATE: Dec. 20, 12:00 - 2:00 pm**

**MENU: Turkey and all the trimmings**

**RSVP: by Dec. 12 by emailing**

**[office@straymonds.org](mailto:office@straymonds.org)**

**Or by calling the office at 703-440-0535**

**Christmas Mass Schedule**



**Wednesday, December 24 Christmas Eve**

**4 pm Children's Mass**

**6 pm Children's Mass**

**8 pm Mass**

**Midnight (12 am) Mass with Carols & Christmas Music at 11:30 pm**

**Thursday, December 25th, Christmas Day**

**Masses at 9 am, 11 am and 1 pm (No 7 am Mass)**

**Please note: There is no 6:30 Mass on Friday, December 26th**



**Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God**

**Wednesday, December 31**

**Masses at 7 pm and Midnight (12am)**

**Thursday, January 1**

**Masses at 9 am, 11 am and 1 pm (No 7 am Mass)**

**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)
- 20 Men's Prayer Breakfast (7:30 am, Parish Hall)
- 26 Caroling with St. Nicholas, a la Creche (7pm, Friday)

**CAROLING AT THE CRECHE:** The Knights of St. John Bosco Council invite all families of the parish to participate in our fifth annual Caroling at the Creche on Friday, December 26th at 7pm following the family rosary. Food and beverages will be provided. We will share hot chocolate and treats as we sign traditional carols to wish Happy Birthday to the baby Jesus in the creche outside the Church. The event will move indoors in case of inclement weather.

**Protecting Our Future: Child Protection & Safety:** The Office of Child Protection & Safety was created to assist all parishes and schools in creating a safe environment where our children are free from sexual abuse, physical abuse and neglect. The office provides various services including child abuse prevention training for employees, volunteers, children and youth and criminal background history investigations for employees and volunteers who work with children. For more information about services provided by the Office of Child Protection & Safety as well as diocesan policy regarding the prevention of child abuse, please visit our website at [www.arlingtondiocese.org](http://www.arlingtondiocese.org).

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

**The Knights of Columbus are selling Christmas Trees & Wreaths** in the church's south parking lot this week; this is the final weekend for sales which end on 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.



**Giving Tree Gifts. Thank you everyone who participated in the Giving Tree this year. In case you have not turned in your wrapped present or gift cards please try to turn them in by December 14th.** Please call the parish office with any questions or to let us know about a late delivery.

**ST. RAYMOND'S RESPECTS LIFE**

**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.

**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.

**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. Thank you!

Do you need counsel for a real life (not theoretical) beginning or end of life ethical issue? Contact the **National Catholic Bioethics Center** for a free consultation. [www.ncbcenter.org/ask-a-question](http://www.ncbcenter.org/ask-a-question)

Wondering what to get yourself or that special someone for Christmas (or anytime)? Take the pro-life message into the public square wherever you go! **Choose Life License Plates** information is available by searching choose life at [dmv.virginia.gov/vehicles/license-plates](http://dmv.virginia.gov/vehicles/license-plates). A portion of the sale of every plate goes to support Heartbeat International. Remember, He came that we might have life!

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](http://amomspeace.org).

**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](http://www.helpafterabortion.org).

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](http://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

### 12/14: Last High School Youth Group of 2025

6:30-8pm High School Youth Group

*Are you able to contribute some snacks or heavy hors d'oeuvres one Sunday evening next semester* for our high school youth group to enjoy? For more details go to <https://bit.ly/feedthehungryteens>

### Tues. Dec. 16: Sons of Thunder: 7-8:30pm (Maurer Room)

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

### Friday, December 19th: 6:30am Mass & Breakfast

**Calling all 7-12th Graders:** Add Mass before class as a part of your Friday sacrifice, then come downstairs for breakfast with Fr. Bergida & Fr. Horkan before school! Please RSVP if you possible, at <https://bit.ly/FRIDAYRSVPS>

### Sat. Dec. 20: High School Ice Skating Outing (11:15-2:15pm)

High School students looking for a fun way to kick off your Christmas break are invited to join us for an outing to Harris Pavillion in Manassas. We will car pool from St. Raymond's. Cost \$13/ per person (includes skate rental). Permission slips, <http://bit.ly/YAforms> due 12/17. Compliant adult chaperones/ drivers needed. Please contact Jeanne if you can help.



### Sun. Dec. 21: 6:30-10pm

#### Help Decorate the Church for Christmas

**High School, College Age & Compliant Adult Volunteers Needed** Meet in the Narthex. Come for an hour or stay the whole time if you can! We will take all the help we can get! If you can help, please sign up at <https://bit.ly/DECORATE25>



### 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! In our ever-changing world, Jesus is the answer to the longing of our hearts for meaning, fulfillment, security, and love. Join our group in road tripping to Franciscan University in Steubenville, OH to experience the peace of Jesus Christ. Go to <https://bit.ly/STEUBENVILLE> for details.



#### **Jeanne Sause**

Director of the Youth Apostolate (Grades 7-12)

[youth@straymonds.org](mailto:youth@straymonds.org) Call/Text: 571-334-9890

Email Jeanne to be added to the weekly email list for the most updated info on Youth Apostolate news & upcoming events!

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

**Please note:** There WILL be CCD classes 12/14 and 12/15  
There will be NO CCD classes 12/21 - 12/29.

**Parents of students in preparation for First Holy Communion 2026:** the First Holy Communion Registry Form with Certificate of Baptism and Birth Certificate attached is **due Dec. 15th**.

**Parents of students preparing for Confirmation in May 2026:** Service Hours form and Experience forms are **due** in the Religious Education Office by **January 18, 2026**.

Praying that your family has a blessed Advent! All students in **Religious Education grades 3-12** and their families are encouraged to take advantage of the **many opportunities for Confession during this penitential season of Advent**. There are opportunities every day of the week - check the bulletin for the schedule.

**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.19th, 6:30-8:30pm. A fourth meeting will be on Dec. 22nd, 6:30-8:30pm, in the Library. Contact Elise Hamilton to sign up or with any questions: [2EliseHamilton@gmail.com](mailto:2EliseHamilton@gmail.com), (703) 300-4131.

**"Rorate Mass" Saturday, December 20 , 6:30 am.**  
The *Rorate Caeli* Mass is a votive Mass of the Blessed Virgin Mary offered on the Saturdays of Advent. Traditionally the Mass is offered in the dark hour right before sunrise. Physical darkness in the church symbolizes a world darkened by sin and in need of the Savior. The liturgy illuminated (almost) solely by candles, reminds us of the prophets and John the Baptist, who gave witness to the true light coming into the world (see John 1:9). The Holy Sacrifice will be offered similarly to the 9am Sunday Mass. The Eucharistic Prayer will be said aloud in Latin, but without the microphone. The darkness and quieter tone facilitate a greater interior quietness and reflection on the mysteries of the Incarnation and upcoming Nativity. Come find out why this Mass is called *Rorate*. Experience why many since the middle ages have found this way of praying an amazing preparation for Christmas!



We are still collecting Christmas Flower Donations and names for remembrance. Please contact the Parish Office with any questions.



## CHURCH PERSECUTED

Pope Leo XIV's recent visit to Turkey revived memories of the genocide of the Armenian Catholics and Orthodox by Ottoman Turks in 1915. Parishioner Dr. Robert Royal in his book, *Catholic Martyrs of the Twentieth Century – A Comprehensive World History*, (Crossroads

Publishing Company, NY, 2000) reported that "The Armenian Catholic Church counts 7 bishops, 126 priests, 47 nuns, and around 30,000 lay people were among those who lost their lives for their faith...." (pg. 1) More recently, in 2023, a similar event occurred in the region as Azerbaijan, an ally of Turkey and a Muslim nation bordering on Armenia conducted a violent takeover of the Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan. This mass exodus of ethnic Armenians led to the "ethnic cleansing" resulting in more than 100,000 Christians forced from their homes.

Geographically, Armenia, with its population just under 3 million is one of the few Christian countries in the Middle East and claims to be the oldest Christian nation dating back to the fourth century. It is sandwiched between two much larger Muslim nations — Turkey and Azerbaijan. While Christians have been eradicated from most of the countries in the Middle East, Armenia has clung to its Christianity despite its geography. The two countries were at peace when part of the USSR, but no longer have the Soviets to keep peace since then.

In August 2025, President Trump negotiated a peace treaty between Azerbaijan (signed by its president Ilham Aliyev) and Armenia (signed by Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan) ending the decades of conflict between the two nations. They also signed bilateral economic agreements with the U.S. about trade, transit, energy, technology, and infrastructure. As recently as December 7, at a panel held as part of a forum in Qatar, representatives of both nations reported that they were using positive terms in discussing the long-term peace arrangements between the two nations. One report showed that the two nations' border patrols were no longer carrying weapons with ammunition.

# FORMED®

Get In-Formed!

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

**Watch: Adore-Advent with Fr. John Burns** You have a choice this Advent: Get caught up in the annual rush of shopping, decorating, and parties or slow down and take a few minutes each day to remember who this season is really about—Jesus. In Adore, popular author and speaker Fr. John Burns and illustrator Valerie Delgado of Pax.Valerie will help you reclaim the sacred sense of longing and joyful hope at the heart of Advent, focusing on a new theme each week—vigilance, preparation, nearness, and Emmanuel—that you can relate to your own life.

**Kids Watch: Brother Francis— The Days of Advent** Brother Francis leads us on a daily journey in this special seasonal celebration of the coming of the Lord! Featuring meditations, prayers, and suggested activities to keep our focus on Christ this Christmas.

**Watch: Behold- Advent with Sr. Miriam James** Let the Holy Family be your light through Advent as you receive the healing power of Christ. In this beautiful guided video series, Sr. Miriam James Heidland, SOLT—author of the bestselling book *Restore* and co-host of the *Abiding Together Podcast* — walks with you as you explore familial wounds with the help of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. Each week of Behold will focus on a different theme that you can connect to your life in a practical way



**Available for FREE!** To set up an account, visit [Formed.org/](https://Formed.org/) sign up 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](http://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://AngelusAcademy.org/admissions-overview/applying/)

Call or Email Julie Maimone, Director of Admissions, at [Admissions@angelusacademy.org](mailto:Admissions@angelusacademy.org) for more information or to schedule a tour.

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**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](https://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.

**PARISHSOFT- FORMERLY FAITH DIRECT:** Faith Direct has now changed to ParishSoft. The New login URL is <https://giving.parishsoft.com/App/Giving/FD-64>. 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.

**The Second Collection THIS weekend is for Catholic Charities Christmas Collection**

**Sunday Offertory**

**12/07/25**

Offertory	\$ 16,529.00
Fam. Assistance	\$ 990.00
Maintenance Fund	\$ 1,435.00
OLOR	\$ 2,468.00
Immaculate Conception	\$ 4,204.00
Christmas Flowers	\$ 2,332.00



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# *St. Raymond of Peñafort's Sunday Bulletin*

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