



You Shall Name Him  
**JESUS**  
LUKE 1:31

*"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)



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 Naduvilekunel, 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.

**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.

## Pastor's Corner

**“Christmas is Coming.”** There are just three days of Advent left, the final time to prepare our hearts for Christmas. I know there’s an awful lot going on in the next few days, like wrapping presents, preparing delicious foods, and travelling. But, please, don’t let all that distract you from the most important thing: preparing to celebrate the day awaited from almost the beginning of the creation of man, when God first promised that “the woman” would bring forth a son who would crush the serpent’s head. The day when God the Son, Creator of the Universe, to whom all angels bowed in worship, having been conceived in the womb of His mother Mary, entered the world as a poor, defenseless, vulnerable baby, to save mankind from sin and to offer us a share in his eternal life and love.

The day of which the Gospel tells us: “And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly army, praising God, and saying: ‘Glory to God in the highest; and on earth **peace to men of good will.**’”

Listen to the angels this week, and accept the grace of Jesus, and His “peace to men of good will.” And rather than allowing all the busyness and troubles to distract you in the next few days, focus on Jesus. Avoid all sin. Try to show charity and compassion to your neighbor, especially your family members, at every moment—be the one to promote family peace. And love God above everything and with everything you have.

Pray, and in your prayer place yourself in the company and care of Mary and Joseph. Imagine them travelling on the treacherous roads of Galilee and Judea, from Nazareth down to Bethlehem. Think of the cold and even freezing December weather over the several days’ journey. Think of their struggle, but also their joy. For they were not traveling alone: their Savior was with them in Mary’s womb.

Travel with Mary and Joseph, and the unborn Baby Jesus, all this week.

**Eve and Mary.** An excerpt from “Against Heresies,” by **Saint Irenaeus of Lyons**:

*The Lord, coming into his own creation in visible form, was sustained by his own creation which he himself sustains in being. His obedience on the tree of the cross reversed the disobedience at the tree in Eden; the good news of the truth announced by an angel to Mary, a virgin subject to a husband, undid the evil lie that seduced Eve, a virgin espoused to a husband.*

*As Eve was seduced by the word of an angel and so fled from God after disobeying his word, Mary in her turn was given the good news by the word of an angel, and bore God in obedience to his word. As Eve was seduced into disobedience to God, so Mary was persuaded into obedience to God; thus the Virgin Mary became the advocate of the virgin Eve.*

*Christ gathered all things into one, by gathering them into himself. He declared war against our enemy, crushed him who at the beginning had taken us captive in Adam, and trampled on his head, in accordance with God’s words to the serpent in Genesis: I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he shall lie in wait for your head, and you shall lie in wait for his heel.*

*The one lying in wait for the serpent’s head is the one who was born in the likeness of Adam from the woman, the Virgin. This is the seed spoken of by Paul in the letter to the Galatians: The law of works was in force until the seed should come to whom the promise was made.*

*He shows this even more clearly in the same letter when he says: When the fullness of time had come, God sent his*

*Son, born of a woman. The enemy would not have been defeated fairly if his vanquisher had not been born of a woman, because it was through a woman that he had gained mastery over man in the beginning, and set himself up as man’s adversary.*

*That is why the Lord proclaims himself the Son of Man, the one who renews in himself that first man from whom the race born of woman was formed; as by a man’s defeat our race fell into the bondage of death, so by a man’s victory we were to rise again to life.*

**Giving Tree.** Thanks to all of you who gave so generously to the “Giving Tree.” Because of your kindness over 25 families and 140 people, will have a little merrier Christmas this year.

**Christmas Schedule:** Please take time today to revisit our schedule for this week—found below in this bulletin. The **Christmas Eve and Christmas Day schedules are very different** than other Holy Days or Sundays.

Let me extend a particular invitation to Christmas Midnight Mass. I have preached several times about how such a Midnight Mass many years ago was the occasion of an important moment in my own personal spiritual life. There is something very special about that Mass, which begins with the placing of the “Baby Jesus” in the Manger, as we remember that Christ was born in the “Holy Night.” The choir sings so beautifully, all the altar servers are so reverent, and we usually get a large (not too large, though) and devout crowd. Think about joining us this year.

But... a fatherly word of caution: it can be a little tough on the very little ones, that late; so parents, please be prudent.

**Beggars after Mass.** This time of year we often find people begging in our parking lot after Mass. Sometimes they come with little children, even babies, and with very sad stories. **Please do not give to them.** I know that sounds harsh, but these folks are almost always **professional panhandlers, scam-artists**, who know they could come to the parish office during the week for help, but they don’t because they know we would spot them as pros. Please trust me on this. If you want to help the poor, give to the parish “family/emergency assistance” fund. And please pray for the poor, and for the scam artists.

**New Poll.** Interesting numbers in a new Poll reported in the National Catholic Register:

Regarding the President’s policy on **deporting illegal immigrants**: “Yet a majority of Catholic voters (54%) say they support Trump’s policies calling for the detention and deportation of unauthorized immigrants on a broad scale; 30% are opposed, and 17% neither favor nor oppose. ...60% of white Catholic voters ...favor detentions and deportations on a broad scale...Notably, Latinos ...are split on the issue: 41% say they support it, while 39% are opposed.”

Other issues: “Catholic voters expressed a clear consensus (65%) in favor of states giving parents **tax-funded vouchers** they can use to help pay for tuition for their children to attend private or religious **schools of their choice**...”

“A majority of Catholic voters, 55%, are in favor of **the death penalty** for a person convicted of murder, while 20% are opposed and 25% are unsure.”

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

**MASS INTENTIONS**

**Monday, December 22nd**

6:30 am Tom Crean +  
 8:30 am Michael & Sheryl Klebba  
 7:00 pm Celebrant's Intentions

**Tuesday, December 23rd**

6:30 am Dan Kobliska +  
 8:30 am Suzy & Keith McCready  
 7:00 pm Celebrant's Intentions

**Wednesday, December 24th**

6:30 am Richard Raymond +  
 8:30 am Edson Visaya  
 4:00 pm Celebrant's Intentions  
 6:00 pm Celebrant's Intentions  
 8:00 pm Celebrant's Intentions  
 Midnight Celebrant's Intentions

**Thursday, December 25th**

9:00 am Celebrant's Intentions  
 11:00am Celebrant's Intentions  
 1:00 pm Celebrant's Intentions

**Friday, December 26th**

8:30 am Gayle Leigh +

**Saturday, December 27th**

9:00 am Franas Lilly

**Vigil Mass**

5:00 pm Fr. De Celles  
 Tom Crean +

**Sunday, December 28th**

7:00 am Msgr. Rippy  
 Keith & Suzy McCready

9:00 am Fr. Bergida  
 Parishioners

11:00 am Fr. De Celles  
 Vince Drouillard

1:00 pm Fr. Horkan  
 Derek Admana+

**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 Ryan Higgins 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
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**Upcoming Events at St. Raymond Church**

12/21 K of C Christmas Tree Sales ending today  
 12/21 NO RE Classes  
 12/22 NO RE Classes  
 12/22 NO Bible Study  
 12/22 NO Family of Jesus prayer group  
 12/23 NO Bible Study evening class  
 12/23 Junior Legion of Mary 4:15-6:15pm Maurer Rm.  
 12/23 Legion of Mary 6:30pm—Library  
 12/25 Christmas- see schedule of Masses below-Parish  
 Office closed 12/25 & 12/26  
 12/24 Adoration 9am-7pm  
 12/25 NO Bridge Club  
 12/26 Adoration 9am-3pm  
 12/26 Caroling at the Creche (7pm— Front of Church)  
 1/3 Men's Prayer Breakfast (7:30am Parish Hall)

**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)**



**Remaining Confession Times for Advent-**  
**Dec. 22— 6-7pm**  
**Dec. 23— 6-7pm**  
**Dec. 24— No Confessions**

**Parking at St. Raymond:** During the Christmas Season, the church parking lot has extra traffic and may fill up. Limited street parking is available but can cause concern for our neighbors. One option available to you involves parking in the commuter lot at Gambrell Road and Fairfax County Parkway, where you can take advantage of carpooling. Please consider this as an option during the Advent & Christmas seasons. The Fairfax County Police will be monitoring the yellow striped "No Parking" zones in the parking lot, and tickets will be issued if violations occur. Please be considerate of our neighbors, and do not park where you block their driveways. Infractions will be ticketed and may possibly mean towing as well. Thank you!

**Daily Family Rosary leaders needed!** St. Raymond's has a Daily Family Rosary in the church: Mon-Fri at 6:30pm and Saturday and Sunday after the 9am Mass. **Please visit our website to sign up to lead during December!** All are invited to attend.

**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)  
26 Caroling with St. Nicholas, a la Creche (7pm, Friday)

**JANUARY**

- 3 Men's Prayer Breakfast ( 7:30am, Parish Hall)  
11 St. Raymond Pancake Breakfast (After 7, 9 and 11 am Masses)  
12 Membership Meeting (7:00pm Rosary-Library; 7:30pm Meeting Parish Hall)  
17 Men's Prayer Breakfast (7:30am, Parish Hall)

**Caroling at the Creche:** The Knights are sponsoring a family evening of signing traditional Christmas Carols in front of the Creche outside the Church on Friday, December 26th at 7pm following the family Rosary. Hot drinks and cookies will be provided. The event is free to everyone. In case of inclement weather, we will meet in the Parish Hall and then move up to the Creche in the Church as a group.

**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 Sunday 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.



**ATTENTION ALL ADULT VOLUNTEERS! OUR ANNUAL VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION DINNER WILL BE SATURDAY, JANUARY 3RD. ALL ADULT VOLUNTEERS AND THEIR SPOUSES ARE INVITED TO JOIN FR. DE CELLES FOR DINNER. PLEASE RSVP BY DECEMBER 29TH WITH THE PARISH OFFICE.**

**ST. RAYMOND'S RESPECTS LIFE**

**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!

**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.

**Virginia Pro Life Day.** January 15<sup>th</sup> in Richmond! *Meet with your legislators to advocate for pro-life causes followed by Mass with Bishops Burbidge and Knestout or visit the chamber galleries.* [vaprolifeday.org](http://vaprolifeday.org). The parish is not providing transportation. Carpools recommended.

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 [amomsppeace.org](http://amomsppeace.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

**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>



**Fri. Dec. 26th: 7pm Family Christmas Caroling** The Knights are sponsoring a family evening of signing traditional Christmas Carols in front of the Creche outside the Church on Friday, December 26th at 7pm following the family Rosary. Hot drinks and cookies will be provided. The event is free to everyone. In case of inclement weather, we will meet in the Parish Hall and then move up to the Creche in the Church as a group.



### **Steubenville Youth Conference : July 16-19, 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.

### **Sun. Dec. 21 & 28: NO Youth Group or CCD**

Sunday youth group & CCD will resume on January 4th. Enjoy the Christmas season with your family!

### **NO Youth Apostolate 6:30am Mass & Breakfast until 2025**

Youth Apostolate 6:30am Mass & Breakfast resumes January 9.

### **Tues. January 6: 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.

### **Saturday January 10: High School Swing Dance (6:45-9pm)**

Make sure you bring a [YA Info Sheet](#) if you do not have one on file yet this year. Please arrive by 7pm. Doors will lock at 7:15pm.

### **Tuesday January 13: Talitha Koum: HS Girls' Group**

**7-8:30pm (Maurer Room)** ALL High School Ladies are invited to be part of our authentic sisterhood in Christ, deepening our faith, sharing life & growing in holiness & friendship together.



**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

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 was **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 8, 2026**.

Have a Blessed and Merry Christmas!!!



**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://blessedisshe.net/>). The final 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.

**Junior Legion of Mary.** Children between the ages of 7 – 12+ at St. Raymond's who have received their First Holy Communion and parents seeking an extracurricular activity that enriches a young person's spiritual life and engages them in age-appropriate spiritual works of mercy under the spiritual direction of Father Bergida, please consider joining the Junior Legion of Mary. Meetings will be every Tuesday, 4:15-5:15pm, in the rectory Maurer Room. Two adult members of the Legion (Virtus certified) lead the meetings. Parents are welcome to attend / participate. Please email Patty Miller, [pamiller35@gmail.com](mailto:pamiller35@gmail.com), or call / text her at: C - 703-663-0480.

**Legion of Mary invitation** Do you want to develop a closer relationship with our Mother Mary and her Son and our Savior, Jesus Christ? The Legion of Mary meets weekly on Tuesday evenings at 6:30pm in the Library. All auxiliary members and anyone interested in joining the Legion of Mary are welcome! Point of Contact: Judy Mayer, [jmayer9014@aol.com](mailto:jmayer9014@aol.com), or 703-627-7320.

**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.

**CHRIST HOUSE-WE NEED A CO-LEADER IN 2026!** Please consider co-leading this most important ministry, so many are in need of a good meal and fellowship. For more information, call the Parish office at 703-440-0535.

**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 [jpebtp@verizon.net](mailto:jpebtp@verizon.net) or by calling the parish office. You may also write down your prayer requests and drop them in the "Prayer Box" on the table in the narthex of the church.

We are still collecting Christmas Flower Donations and names for remembrance.

Please contact the Parish Office with any questions.



## CHURCH PERSECUTED

The next two columns are extracts from a recent article in *The Catholic Thing* "Fear — Hope — In Europe's Christmas Markets" by Michele McAloon (12/13/250).

"Advent in Germany is brightened by its world-famous Christmas markets. The smell of grilled sausage, Germany's famous mulled *gluhwein*, and gingerbread (*Lebkuchen*) blend together under multicolored lights creating a cheerful experience in anticipation of Christ's birth. Whether it is a two-day affair at a local monastery or the town fire station, or one of the huge metropolitan markets in Munich, Berlin, or Dresden, Christmas markets, now, as in centuries past, are an integral part of the economic and social fabric of Germany, and a potential sign of hope. Though they are also currently threatened by dark shadows.

"Tragically, in the past ten years, festivities have been marred by violence. Terrorists have murdered marketgoers in Magdeburg, Trier, Berlin and in several markets in France. German and French authorities have now been forced to take measures to prevent these threats almost everywhere.

"Today, pedestrian zones typically have a hard barrier to prevent the ramming of automobiles into crowds. In many markets, entrance is strictly controlled with bag and body searches. Unusually for Germany, where police are rarely seen in everyday life, there is a heavy police presence, and surveillance cameras watching over every corner of the markets.

"Thankfully, terrorism has not intimidated the people. This year, attendance at the Christmas markets is projected to break record numbers finally returning to pre-pandemic levels....

"Market days often coincided with Christian feast days. Local people would walk to town to worship and then stay to shop at the market. Before the Protestant Reformation, December 6, the Feast of St Nicholas, was a traditional time for children to receive gifts. Parents would buy their children toys at the market and leave them in their children's shoes during the night to honor the good bishop of Myra (a charming custom but also a precursor of Western consumerism).

"... The relationship between the Church and the Christmas markets has always been somewhat ambivalent. Catholic and Protestant clergy understood both the spiritual and economic importance of these markets. They encouraged worship during the season, but were also happy to charge rent for vendors' stalls, often located in the churchyard."

Continued next week or view the entire article at <https://www.thecatholicthing.org/2025/12/13/fear-and-hope-in-europes-christmas-markets/>

# FORMED®

## Get In-Formed!

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

**Watch: 30 Minutes BC- A Nativity Play-** creatively explores the profound emotions and intimate struggles of Mary and Joseph during the final 30 minutes before the birth of Jesus. As the clock ticks down, the couple navigates a whirlwind of hope, joy, and uncertainty, turning to God amidst it all.

**Watch: Sleigh Ride:** documents two Dominican friars' harrowing mission to celebrate Christmas Mass for three small villages in remote Alaska that have no assigned priest. With only 5 hours of sunlight, during the coldest time of the year, the friars will drive over 28 hours and 548 miles through high winds and snow packed roads bringing Christmas to the ends of the earth.

**Watch: The Story of St. Nicholas:** Brother Francis tells the true story of Saint Nicholas, a compassionate bishop known for his generosity, who inspired the tradition of gift-giving. Discover how his legacy evolved into the beloved holiday figure now known as Santa Claus



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



**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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Qualified  
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**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

**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 January 3rd.** For more information, call Dave Wilson, 703-966-5327 or email [maryndavew7705@gmail.com](mailto:maryndavew7705@gmail.com).

**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 week (12/25) is for our Scholarship Fund**

### Sunday Offertory

12/14/25

Offertory	\$ 12,574.00
Fam. Assistance	\$ 2,115.00
Maintenance Fund	\$ 7,120.00
OLOR	\$ 1,240.00
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