

FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY

He shall be called a Nazorean

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



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

Email

Church: Office@straymonds.org
Pastor: fdc@straymonds.org
Rel. Ed.: ReligiousEducation@straymonds.org

Office Hours
Monday-Friday 9:30 am - 4:30 pm

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.

©Diocesan

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.

Pastor's Corner

Merry Christmas! I hope you all had a blessed and merry Christmas Day. But, the celebration of the Birth of God the Son, Jesus Christ, is too great an event to celebrate on only one day, so Christmas continues well past December 25th.

First, we have the “**Octave of Christmas**,” eight days of celebrating, ending on January 1, the Solemnity of the **Mother of God**, as if it were still the Lord’s birthday. Beyond that we have “**the twelve days of Christmas**” running from Christmas day until January 6, which in most of the world is the **Solemnity of the Epiphany**. In the U.S., however, the liturgical celebration of **Epiphany** is always moved to “the Sunday occurring between 2 January and 8 January,” which is next Sunday, January 4. Then we continue to celebrate “**Season of Christmas**” for an extra week, until the following Sunday which is usually the **Solemnity of the Baptism of the Lord** (but see my note below).

All through those days, until January 11 this year, we will still be celebrating Christmas. So, “Merry Christmas.”

Thanks. I’d like to say “thanks” all those who worked so hard to make Advent and Christmas so special this year. In particular, the choir, cantors, musicians and Elisabeth Turco for all the beautiful music. All the volunteers, young and not so young, for their work on Breakfast with Santa, Lessons and Carols and the Senior Lunch (particularly the American Heritage Girls and Trail Life boys). The Knights of Columbus for all they did in so many ways. All the sacristans, for all their work in preparing the sanctuary. Julie Mullen and her family and the rest of the flower committee, for decorating the church so beautifully. To the ushers who helped make everything run so smoothly, especially our head usher, Patrick O’Brien. To all those who contributed so much in time and treasure to the Giving Tree, especially Sheri Burns who coordinated everything. To all those who assisted in special ways at the Mass, especially the altar boys, lectors (led by Patty Pacheco), extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion (led by Barbara Aldridge and Christine Spengler). Also thanks to Luis Tapia and Dania Ochoa, for keeping the church so clean. A special thanks to the rest of our dedicated parish staff, Mike Thompson, Mary Butler, Maerose Naduvilekunnel, Virginia Osella, Mary Hansen, Dominique Murray, Jeanne Sause, Erin Burns and Catherine Hansen who all worked very hard during Advent. And finally, to my brother priests, Fr. Bergida (especially for his “Advent Series”), Fr. Horkan and Msgr. Rippy for their dedicated service to the parish. I know I’ve left out lots of groups and names; my apologies. Thank you all, and God bless you all.

New Year’s. I look forward seeing all of you this Wednesday or Thursday on New Year’s Eve or Day, to celebrate the **Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God (a holy day of obligation)**. Maybe I’ll see some of you at Midnight Mass: we keep things simple at this Mass, but it’s the perfect way to bring in the New Year. May the Christ Child bless you in the New Year, and may His Blessed Mother will keep you in her care. Blessed and Merry Christmas, and Holy and Happy New Year!

Solemnity of St. Raymond. Our patron saint’s feast is normally celebrated on January 7, but canon law allows the pastor, with the permission of the Bishop, to move the patronal feast (“title of the church”) to the following Sunday. So, with Bishop Burbidge’s permission (thanks Bishop!), I am **transferring the liturgical observation of St. Raymond’s to Sunday, January 11th**, as I did last year. As noted above, that this is also the last Sunday of the Christmas Season, which we would normally celebrate as the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord. But since St. Raymond’s feast (a “solemnity” to us)

“outranks the “Feast” of the Baptism, the celebration of the **“Baptism of the Lord” be transferred to the following Monday, January 12**.

In conjunction with the celebration of our patronal Solemnity on Jan. 11, the Knights of Columbus will be sponsoring a **free pancake breakfast after the Sunday morning Masses**. All are welcome!

Volunteer Dinner. This coming Saturday, January 3, is our annual dinner in appreciation for all those who volunteer their time to support the activities of the parish. If that should include you, and you haven’t rsvp’d yet, please contact the parish office or your committee chairman asap.

Year End Donations. Every year at this time we get inundated with requests for donations from all sorts of charitable groups. Unfortunately, many of these groups are not doing work consistent with God’s will, and others may have good intentions, but are inefficient or ineffective in using their resources.

So, you don’t have to give to every group who asks for help, and I recommend you give mainly to those groups you have confidence in. The groups I give to and would recommend for your consideration include: the Little Sisters of the Poor, Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Arlington, House of Mercy, Project Rachel, Gabriel Project, Mary’s Shelter (Fredericksburg), the Poor Clares, Angelus Academy, Christ the King—Chesterfield Academy and the St. Dominic Monastery in Linden, VA. And of course, St. Raymond’s parish is a very worthy charity...

Pope St. John Paul II
Homily, Holy Family Sunday, December 31, 1978

The deepest human problems are connected with the family. It constitutes the primary, fundamental and irreplaceable community for man....The Church wishes to bear a particular witness to that too during the Octave of Christmas, by means of the feast of the Holy Family. She wishes to recall that the fundamental values, which cannot be violated without incalculable harm of a moral nature, are bound up with the family...It is necessary to defend these fundamental values tenaciously and firmly, because their violation does incalculable harm to society and, in the last analysis, to man....

What are these values?[T]rying to express ourself concisely, let us say that here it is a question of two fundamental values which fall strictly into the context of what we call "conjugal love". The first of them is the value of the person which is expressed in absolute mutual faithfulness until death: the faithfulness of the husband to his wife and of the wife to her husband. The consequence of this affirmation of the value of the person, which is expressed in the mutual relationship between husband and wife, must also be respect for the personal value of the new life, that is, of the child, from the first moment of his conception.

The Church can never dispense herself from the obligation of guarding these two fundamental values, connected with the vocation of the family...While maintaining respect for all those who think differently, it is very difficult to recognize...that anyone who betrays conjugal faithfulness, or who permits life conceived in the mother's womb to be wiped out and destroyed, behaves in a way consistent with true human dignity. Consequently, it cannot be admitted that programmes...which admit such behaviour serve the objective well-being of man....

Felicem Nativitatem Domini et Oremus pro invicem. Fr. De Celles

MASS INTENTIONS

Monday, December 29th

6:30 am Tom Crean +
8:30 am Mary Healy +

Tuesday, December 30th

6:30 am Mr. & Mrs. Frank Massettta +
8:30 am Tom Crean +

Wednesday, December 31st

6:30 am Ted Tolpa +
8:30 am Harold Ellis +
7:00 pm Celebrant's Intentions
Midnight Celebrant's Intentions

Thursday, January 1st

9:00 am Barbara Brady +
11:00am Tom Crean +
1:00 pm Jacqueline Gil +

Friday, January 2nd

6:30 am Ted Tolpa +
8:30 am Prohaska Family

Saturday, January 3rd

9:00 am Kirsti +, Maeroose, Mary B. and office staff

Vigil Mass

5:00 pm **Fr. Bergida**
Teofilo & Filomenada
Tulayba +

Sunday, January 4th

7:00 am **Msgr. Rippy**
Donna & Rick Roads

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

Parishioners

11:00 am **Fr. Bergida**

Benita Ortega &
Zenaida

1:00 pm **Fr. Horkan**

Family of Jesus
Prayer Group

**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)

**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)



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 Gambrill 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 and January! All are invited to attend.

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	Paul Haynes	Annette Haynes
Michael O'Neill	Nena Brennan	Beth Fitzgibbons
Cindy Laird	Serrin Foster	Jean Keegan
Patricia Lewis	Donald Trayer	Florence Miller
Mai Pham	Ellen Trayer	Robert Petitti
Jason Saenz	Arlene Pietraszko	Joann Alba
Phyllis Zitnik	Virginia Cummings	Alicia Tocconi
John Florio	Mary M. Dixon	Jay & Linda Cabacar
Carolina Baker	Edward J. Susank	Rita Felkel
Debra Henkel	Helen Estabrooks	George Watson
Gaudencio Dizon		

Upcoming Events at St. Raymond Church

12/28	NO RE Classes
12/28	NO OCIA
12/29	NO RE Classes
12/29	NO Bible Study
12/29	NO Family of Jesus prayer group— resumes 1/5
12/30	NO Bible Study evening class
12/30	Junior Legion of Mary 4:15-6:15pm Maurer Rm.
12/30	Legion of Mary 6:30pm—Library
12/31	Adoration 9am-7pm
12/31	New Year's Eve— Mass 7pm and Midnight
1/1	Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God— Parish office closed 1/1 and 1/2. Masses 9am, 11am and 1pm
1/1	NO Bridge Club
1/2	First Friday Nocturnal Adoration
1/3	Men's Prayer Breakfast (7:30am Parish Hall)
1/3	Communal First Saturday Devotion
1/4	Donut Sunday Next Weekend

First Saturday Devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary: We invite you to join us for Communal First Saturday Devotions on **January 3, 2026** immediately following 9am Mass to console our Mother in reparation to her Immaculate Heart. Following 9am Mass, we pray the Daily Family Rosary in the Church; and then proceed to the PARISH HALL for Fatima prayers & meditation. Concludes by 10:45am. All are invited!

Donut Sunday, next weekend, January 4th after the 7:00, 9:00, and 11:00 am Masses. Stop by the Parish Hall after Mass to enjoy some treats and drinks and meet your fellow parishioners. We will also have **LOST & FOUND** items out for you to check. January's Donut Sunday will be hosted by our Homeschool Group.

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

Watch for our Constant Contact Updates! If you are not receiving emails from the parish, please contact the parish office at 703-440-0535 or office@straymonds.org to verify your email address.



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:

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)

St. Raymond's 2025-26 Snow Team: Your Parish needs your HELP! St. Raymond's is seeking industrious, cold weather loving, able-bodied people to join the 2025-26 Snow Removal Team. The Snow Team will work with the Plant Manager to clear the sidewalks and entryways in proximity of the Church during snow and/or ice events. Equipment is provided; sidewalks and aprons must be clear no less than 30 minutes before the first Mass of the day (and as needed thereafter). Snow Team members must have transportation that enables them to get to the church in inclement weather. Earn \$20.00 per hour. For more information or to apply, please contact the Parish Office, at 703-440-0535 during office hours.

St. Raymond Feast Day Breakfast - January 11th! Once again, our Knights of Columbus have graciously offered to cook up a delicious pancake breakfast after the 7:00AM, 9:00AM and 11:00AM morning Masses on Sunday, January 11th. They will be assisted in serving by our middle school youth. Come enjoy a free breakfast of pancakes, eggs, bacon, sausage, and fruit while we celebrate our Parish's patron Saint. St. Raymond of Peñafort, pray for us!



ATTENTION ALL ADULT VOLUNTEERS! OUR ANNUAL VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION DINNER WILL BE SATURDAY, JANUARY 3RD AFTER THE 5PM MASS. 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



Congratulations to Angelus 8th Grader Thomas Pacheco for placing 2nd in American Life League's National Pro-Life Essay Contest. Read Thomas' essay, 'Courageous Love' at all.org/culture-of-life-studies/courageous-love

Wrapped In Love is up and stitching. Would you like to participate but need yarn? **We have yarn to share!** Contact Liz at hildebrandseven@gmail.com. Pray 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 15th 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.** vapro lifeday.org. The parish is **not** providing transportation. **Carpools recommended.**



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.

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

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.

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.

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.

St. Raymond's Youth Apostolate *Merry Christmas!*

"O Holy Night, so long awaited, which has united God and man forever! You rekindle our hope. You fill us with ecstatic wonder. You assure us of the triumph of love over hatred, of life over death." ~Pope St. John Paul II



Steubenville Youth Conference : July 16-19, 2026

Registration is now open!!

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. Registration and more information can be found online at <https://bit.ly/STEUBENVILLE> or on YA bulletin boards by the church entrances.



Sun. 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 HS Guys' Group

7-8:30pm (Maurer Room) High School Men: Come hungry (physically and intellectually) and ready to rumble. Sons of Thunder meets 1st & 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 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

Ms. Osella and Mrs. Hansen are praying for all of you during this holy time! Remember that the celebration of Christmas lasts 8 days and continues through the season of Christmas, which concludes with the Solemnity of the Baptism of the Lord on January 12. Enjoy this joyful season.



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, 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, 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 us know by emailing Elaine Perricone at ipebtp@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.



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.

Book Club News: Our next meeting will be on Thursday, January 8th at 9:30 AM, in the Parish Library. We will be discussing "Ten Dates Every Catholic Should Know" by Diane Moczar. The schedule for the full year can be found on the parish website: <https://straymonds.org/ministries-and-groups/book-club/>. New members welcome. If you have questions or plan to join us for the first time in January, please contact Jim Mault at bookclub@straymonds.org.

CHURCH PERSECUTED

This continuation from last week concludes a recent article in *The Catholic Thing* "Fear — Hope — In Europe's Christmas Markets" by Michele McAloon (12/13/25).

"German bishops today are notoriously reticent about evangelization in the public square. But at least some view the markets as an opportunity, as a place where the symbols of the Christian faith can be embraced openly. And...the widespread sense of the failure of progressivism is an opening for the faith, if the Church has the wisdom to take advantage of it.

"So...not so surprising that in the center of almost every market in secular progressive Germany, there is still a crèche and a Christmas tree, though in some places the connection to Christ is being played down. For example, a number of years ago in Wiesbaden...the town council decided to change the Christmas market name to the "Shooting Star" market...to be more "inclusive." Other places have made similar changes.... But whatever that means, there is usually still a crèche, and the locals still refer to it as the *Weihnachtsmarkt* or Christmas market.

"...Ironically, some of Europe's most beautiful and oldest markets are not in Germany, but in Alsace, the eastern region of France bordering Germany. Even small towns often have a *Christkindelsmarik*, which in the Alsatian dialect translates as the Market of the Christ Child.

"... [T]he earliest parish record of the purchase of a Christmas tree dates back to 1521 in Sélestat, France, whereas in Germany only to 1605 in the Cathedral of Strasbourg (then a German city). Originally, these Christmas trees would be suspended from a beam in the ceiling. Tree decorations consisted of red apples, as a reminder of temptation, and Communion wafers, symbolizing the Redemption. Today, the Christmas tree in the Strasbourg market, firmly planted in the ground, is reported to be the tallest in France.

"In spite of the many challenges to the Faith in the world today, holding a steaming mug of Gluhwein, standing under an ancient bell tower or cathedral spire, in the midst of a Christmas Market, is to understand viscerally a depth of warmth and light that ultimately emanates from the Christ Child. Many despair of Christianity in Germany, but the endurance of Christmas Markets may be a sign of hope in a dark winter's night."

View the entire article at <https://www.thecatholicthing.org/2025/12/13/fear-and-hope-in-europe-s-christmas-markets/>.

FORMED®

Get In-Formed!

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

Watch: Guadalupe: The Miracle and the Message

The most important event in the evangelization of the New World occurred in December, 1531. Guadalupe: The Miracle and the Message traces the history of this transformative event from the 16th century to the present. Featuring interviews with leading theologians, historians, and experts on the scientific inquiries into the miraculous image, this gripping film explores both the inexplicable mysteries behind the image, and the continued relevance of the Guadalupe apparition to the modern world.

Watch: Joseph of Nazareth

The first feature film ever on the story of St. Joseph, who was a carpenter, the husband of Mary, and the foster father of Jesus Christ. Scripture tells us that St. Joseph was a "just man" and that God gave him the most daunting task ever asked of a man—to be the husband of the woman who would give birth to the Messiah and the father and protector of this Holy Family. He would be the man closest to Christ.

Watch Kids: Christmas Special | Laugh and Grow Bible for Kids

Based on the award-winning Bible! Join Minno kids Margot, Lexi, Miguel, and Logan on a heartwarming journey through the Christmas story. Hosted by the Hopeful World, this beautiful retelling of the story of Jesus' birth will help kids understand the true meaning of Christmas. Viewers both young and old will be filled with hope as they recall God's promise fulfilled through our Savior's arrival.



Available for FREE! To set up an account, visit 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/

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

Inclement Weather Policy

In the event of Weather or Emergency closings, St. Raymond's Parish NO LONGER follows Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) decisions.

In the event of Weather or other Emergency situations, notice of cancellations or closings of parish events and/or facilities will be posted to the parish website. If possible/practical the parish will also send out an email to all parishioners notifying them of the closing/cancellations.

There are only TWO exceptions to any closing decisions we make and issue:

1) Regularly scheduled Masses and Confessions will NEVER be cancelled due to inclement Weather.

2) Meetings of very small groups that receive the pastor's personal permission, in which case members will be notified of the exception personally by their group leader.

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](http://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!

Sunday Offertory for 12/21/25 will be posted on 01/04 due to early bulletin deadline

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