

Epiphany of the LORD

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



We saw his
star at its
rising and
have come
to do him
homage.

Matthew 2:2

©Diocesan



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
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Office Hours

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

Email

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

TUITION ASSISTANCE: Please inquire with our office about the availability of partial scholarships for the upcoming school year.

Angelus Academy
7644 Dynatech Ct, Springfield, VA 22153
703-924-3996

Angelus Academy is a fully-accredited pre-K through 8th grade Catholic School affiliated with the Diocese of Arlington. Although it has no official connection with St. Raymond's, the parish has a longstanding close relationship with Angelus Academy. Many of our parish children already happily attend school there.

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

Pope St. John Paul II
Homily, Epiphany, 6 January 1979

"Arise (Jerusalem), for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you", the Prophet Isaiah cries out (60:1), in the eighth century before Christ, and we listen to his words today in the 20th century A.D. and admire, really admire, the great light that comes from these words. Through the centuries, Isaiah addresses Jerusalem, which was to become the city of the Great Anointed, of the Messiah: "And nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising... your sons shall come from far, and your daughters shall be carried in the arms... A multitude of camels shall cover you, the young camels of Midian and Ephah; all those from Sheba shall come. They shall bring gold and frankincense, and shall proclaim the praise of the Lord" (60:3-4; 6).

We have before our eyes these three—so tradition says—three Magi Kings who come on pilgrimage from afar with camels and bring with them not only gold and incense, but also myrrh: the symbolic gifts with which they went to meet the Messiah who was awaited also beyond the frontiers of Israel. We are not surprised, therefore, when Isaiah, in his prophetic dialogue with Jerusalem, carried out through the centuries, says at a certain point: "your heart shall thrill and rejoice" (60:5). He speaks to the city as if it were a living man.

"Your heart shall thrill and rejoice". On Christmas Eve, finding myself together with those participating in the eucharistic liturgy at midnight here in this Basilica, I asked everyone to be, in mind and heart, more there than here; more in Bethlehem, at the birthplace of Christ, in that stable-cave in which "the Word became flesh" (Jn 1:14). And today I ask the same of you. Because the Magi Kings, those strange pilgrims from the East, came just there, to that place, south of Jerusalem. They passed through Jerusalem. They were led by a mysterious star, the star, an exterior light that moved in the firmament. But they were led even more by faith, the inner light. They were not surprised by what they found: neither by the poverty, nor the stable, nor the fact that the Child lay in a manger. They arrived and they fell down "and worshipped him". Then they opened their caskets and offered the Child Jesus gold and incense, of which Isaiah speaks, but also myrrh. And after having done all that, they returned to their country.

Because of this pilgrimage to Bethlehem, the Magi Kings from the East became the beginning and the symbol of all those who, through faith, reach Jesus, the Child wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger, the Saviour nailed to the cross, he who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, taken down from the cross and buried in a tomb at the foot of Calvary, rose again on the third day. These very men, the Magi Kings, three according to tradition, from the East, became the beginning and the prefiguration of all those who, from beyond the frontiers of the Chosen People of the Old Covenant, have reached and still reach Christ by means of faith.

"Your heart shall thrill and rejoice", Isaiah says to Jerusalem. In fact the heart of the People of God had to dilate in order to contain the new men, the new peoples. This very cry of the Prophet is the keyword of the Epiphany. It was necessary to dilate the heart of the Church continually, when more and more new men entered it; when, following in the steps of the shepherds and the Magi Kings, from the East new peoples kept arriving in Bethlehem. Now, too, it is always necessary to dilate this heart according to the needs of men and peoples, ages and times.

The Epiphany is the feast of the vitality of the Church. The Church lives her awareness of God's mission, which is carried out through her. The Second Vatican Council helped us to realize that the "mission" is the proper name of the Church, and in a certain sense defines her. The Church becomes herself when she carries out her mission. The Church is herself, when men—such as the shepherds and the Magi Kings from the East—reach Jesus Christ by means of faith. When in the Christ-Man and through Christ they find God again.

The Epiphany, therefore, is the great feast of faith. Both those who have already arrived at faith, and those who are on the way to arrive at it, take part in this feast. They take part, rendering thanks for the gift of faith, just as the Magi Kings, full of gratitude, knelt before the Child. The Church, which becomes more aware of the vastness of her mission every year, takes part in this feast. To how many men it is still necessary to bring faith! How many men must be won back to the faith, which they have lost, and that is sometimes more difficult than the first conversion to faith! But the Church, aware of that great gift, the gift of the incarnation of God, can never stop, can never tire. She must continually seek access to Bethlehem for every man and for every period. The Epiphany is the feast of God's challenge....

Once more, therefore, I borrow the words of Isaiah to express the wishes "Urbi et Orbi" and say: "Arise! Your heart shall thrill and rejoice!" Arise and sow the strength of your faith! May Christ enlighten you continually! May men and Peoples walk in this light. Amen.

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NEXT SUNDAY: Solemnity of St. Raymond. Our patron saint's feast is normally celebrated on January 7, but exercising my canonical authority as pastor, and with Bishop's permission, I am **transferring the liturgical observation of St. Raymond's Feast to NEXT Sunday, January 11th**, as I did last year. This will also be the last Sunday of the Christmas Season, but the liturgical celebration of Feast of the Baptism of the Lord, which would normally be celebrated next Sunday, will 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!

Pro-Life Essay. Congratulations to parishioner **Thomas Pacheco**, who won Second place (middle school students) in the American Life League's 2025 **National Pro-Life Essay**. Thomas is an 8th grader at Angelus Academy, and one of our newest Altar Servers. I am very proud of his thoughtful and heartfelt work, which I commend to your reading at: <https://all.org/culture-of-life-studies/courageous-love>.

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

MASS INTENTIONS

Monday, January 5th

6:30 am Ted Tolpa +
8:30 am Andrea Verchuck +

Tuesday, January 6th

6:30 am Donald Fogg +
8:30 am George T. Elliott, III +

Wednesday, January 7th

6:30 am Eunice M. Brown +
8:30 am Jacob Berger
7:00 pm Celebrant's Intentions

Thursday, January 8th

9:00 am Ted Tolpa +
11:00am Mary Berger

Friday, January 9th

6:30 am Loretta Hugel +
8:30 am Daniel H. DeCelles Sr. +

Saturday, January 10th

9:00 am Julia Robbins
Jury+

Vigil Mass

5:00 pm **Fr. De Celles**
Tom Crean +

Sunday, January 11th

7:00 am **Msgr. Rippy**
Mike & Maddy Laird

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

11:00 am **Fr. Bergida**
Joe Brady +

1:00 pm **Fr. Horkan**
Robert Schichtel +

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

Upcoming Events at St. Raymond Church

1/4	Donut Sunday after 7am, 9am and 11am Masses
1/4	RE Classes
1/5	RE Classes— Evening
1/5	NO Bible Study
1/5	Family of Jesus prayer group
1/6	NO Bible Study evening class
1/6	Junior Legion of Mary 4:15-6:15pm Maurer Rm.
1/6	Legion of Mary 6:30pm—Library
1/7	Adoration 9am-7pm
1/8	Bridge Club
1/8	Book Club 9:30am- Parish Library
1/9	Adoration 9am-3pm
1/11	St. Raymond's Feast Day Breakfast after the 7am, 9am and 11 am Masses

Donut Sunday, THIS 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 17.** For more information, call Dave Wilson, 703-966-5327 or email maryn-davew7705@gmail.com.

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.

Do you desire a more meaningful prayer life? Perhaps God is inviting you to an intercessory prayer ministry that helps keep a sense of awe and gratitude for His presence through His priests. Please consider joining the Seven Sisters Apostolate who prays an hour specifically for our St. Raymond's priests (at the church during a time you choose). Each priest at St. Raymond's should have at least one sister praying for him each day of the week. Join one of the Seven Sisters teams, or join as a Substitute. Visit www.sevensistersapostolate.org. Please contact Renee LeBoeuf for more information renee.leboeuf@gmail.com.

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)

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.

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 January!** All are invited to attend.



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

- 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)
- 23 National March for Life

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 Penafort, pray for us!

Home School Group: for more information visit our website www.homeschool-life.com/va/straymondhsg/ Or email straymondhsg@gmail.com.

Mothers' Group: Do your young children need a bit more excitement? Are you looking for Catholic friendship with fellow mothers? Come to the moms' meet-up on Wednesday mornings! We alternate between meeting at our church and parks. Email Michelle for more information at mlcastry@gmail.com.

Bridge Club: All levels of players are welcome. We play Bridge cards each week in the Church Hall. Contact Lois Kotlowski at 703-455-6567 bridgeclub402@gmail.com if you are interested in joining us.

View this bulletin online at www.DiscoverMass.com

ST. RAYMOND'S RESPECTS LIFE



Life is a Gift! Join us for the **National March for Life**. Friday 23 January. St Raymond's will send three buses. Sign-ups and the schedule are in the narthex.

There is no charge for parishioners to ride the bus but, you must reserve your seat! Come back to the parish for the best Chili Dinner and fellowship ever! Stay tuned for details!

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. vaprolifeday.org. The parish is not providing transportation. Carpools recommended.*

Whether in person, by phone, email or regular mail, we are all urged to contact our representatives in Richmond to politely voice our opposition to any support of the proposed abortion amendment in Virginia. Otherwise, *'Silence implies consent'*! whosmy.virginiageneralassembly.gov.

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 hil-debrandseven@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 MaRH collection box in the narthex. Thank you!

MaRH 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.**

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



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.



Meal Contributions Needed:

Are you able to contribute some snacks or heavy hors d'oeuvres one Sunday evening for our high school youth group to enjoy? Details online at <https://bit.ly/feedthehungryteens> We are also looking for folks who would be willing to contribute a breakfast casserole or other meatless dish one Friday this semester. More details at <https://bit.ly/breakfastfriday>

1/4 : High School Youth Group (Parish Hall)

5-6:30pm Religious Ed

6:30-8pm High School Youth Group

Friday, January 9th: 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>

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

PRAYERS FOR A HAPPY AND BLESSED NEW YEAR to all our CCD families!

CCD Classes resume this week - January 4 and 5 with Midterm Exam review.

Midterm exams will be administered January 11 and 12 for grades 1-8.

Mark your calendars: There will be **NO CLASSES** January 18 and 19 in observance of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday.

Mass Attendance Cards are an important part of the sacramental preparation requirements for students in grades 2, 7, and 8. Please be sure to use your cards or submit a bulletin when you attend a different parish. Feel free to contact our office with any questions.

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.

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 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.

St. Martin de Porres Committee - collects food on an ongoing basis for the Springfield Resource Center, which serves over 250 families in the Springfield area. A collection box is in the Narthex and donations are collected and distributed weekly. Suggested food items are listed, but all donations are welcome (no clothing). For equitable distribution, smaller packaging is requested (i.e. 1 lb bags of rice vs. 5 lb. bags, 1 qt. oil vs. 1 gal oil).



Our Lady of Ransom Scholarships to Catholic Schools are Available. Please send requests for 2025-26 tuition assistance to Fr. De Celles or contact the parish office for more information. We can also help cover homeschooling expenses.

CHURCH PERSECUTED

As the beginning of the 250th year of our nation's independence, it is worth reflecting on the words of the Venerable Fulton Sheen as he penned the book, *A Declaration of Dependence*, in 1941 as the United States was officially entering World War II.

The Declaration of Independence...is a Declaration of Dependence. We are independent of dictators because we are dependent on God. God is the necessary factor of our salvation. As a result, he is to be the center of our lives. His ways ought to permeate every aspect and area of our lives: education, employment, pleasure, mourning, socializing, etc. All is done in sight of the omnipotent Lord, and all we do should be done reflecting this knowledge. Our every interaction should be filled with the love of our Savior.

Sheen continues (from *War and Peace An Anthology* (Sophia Press, 2022) of his writings):

America has no need of stressing the danger from without.... But it is the duty of those interested in God and morality and peace to emphasize a less popular theme – and a more needed one – the danger from within.

A distinguished historian of London, Professor Toynbee, proves that out of nineteen civilizations in the history of the world no less than sixteen broke down through their own acts before any alien human force succeeded in dealing them a mortal blow.... In practically sixteen of the nineteen cases, the historian, as a coroner of civilization, wrote down the verdict of "suicide."

... The preservation of America is conditioned upon discipline and self-sacrifice, but since these are inseparable from religion and morality, the future of America depends on Americans' attitude toward God and the Cross of His Divine Son.

Let us not lose sight of God as we celebrate our nation's 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. Let us live by its words:

We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness....

FORMED®

Get In-Formed!

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

Watch: God's Doorkeeper: St. André of Montreal

On January 6, 1937, the death of a humble doorkeeper for a boys' college drew over a million people to Montreal for his funeral. For forty years, Brother André Bessette of the Congregation of Holy Cross welcomed people at the door and became known as a miraculous healer. God's Doorkeeper looks at the heart and legacy of Brother André as a man of prayer, of hospitality, and of compassion, a man who draws people in to experience a God who is love.

Watch: Triumph of the Heart-Available for rent

In the harrowing confines of Auschwitz's starvation cell, Catholic priest St. Maximilian Kolbe volunteers to die in place of another prisoner, joining nine others condemned by the Nazis. As despair and fear grip the group, the pressures of starvation, internal ideological division, mount. But throughout, Kolbe's appeal to their shared humanity and Polish identity forges a brotherhood that culminates in a poignant act of sacrifice that echoes beyond the cell, illuminating hope in one of history's darkest moments.

The Jeweller's Shop: A Modern Mystery by Pope John Paul II Based on Pope John Paul II's best-selling book, this film tells of the struggles and triumphs in the marriages of three couples. A mysterious Jeweller (Burt Lancaster) acts as a mystical advisor to the couples, encouraging them to keep love at the center of their lives. Beautifully filmed with an outstanding cast that includes Olivia Hussey and Ben Cross. John Paul II called it "the best possible film based on my play."



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

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.

Saint John Paul the Great Catholic High School – Gala & Auction "A Legacy of Life." Join us on Saturday, February 7, 2026, for an engaging evening with a delicious buffet dinner, dancing, and presentation by Andrea Picciotti-Bayer, a nationally renowned speaker, highlighting the profound impact John Paul is having in our local community and beyond. The night will also include both live and silent auctions—all in support of Catholic education. For information on how to support John Paul, visit: <https://onecau.se/johnpaulgala>. We look forward to celebrating with you!

John Paul the Great Clinics & Workshops - 4th-8th grades! Saint John Paul the Great Catholic High School has a few exciting opportunities for younger students to hone their skills and explore their interests! **Drama Workshop** (Sat, Feb 7th), **Super Science Saturday** (Sat, Feb 28th), **Girls Volleyball Clinic** (Sat, Mar 28th), **Boys Wrestling Camp** is back (ongoing - end of January), and more on the way! Click here to start your registration: <https://saintjohnpaul.mypaysimple.com/s/middle-school-event-registration>



The December 21st, 28th and January 4th Collections will be posted in Next Week's Bulletin due to early bulletin deadlines.

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