

# Solemnity of Saint Raymond of Peñafort



## Saint Raymond of Peñafort Prayer

Glorious Saint Raymond of Peñafort, wise and holy patron, come to the aid of those entrusted to your care, and all who flee to your protection. Intercede for us in our need, and help us through your prayers, example, and teaching, to proclaim the truth of the Gospel to all we meet. And when we have reached the fullness of our years, we beseech you to guide us home to heaven, to live in peace with you, Our Mother Mary, and Our Lord Jesus Christ, Amen. Imprimatur: Most Reverend Michael F. Burbidge, Bishop of Arlington, June 22, 2018

***"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:

Rector: 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.

## Welcome to St. Raymond of Peñafort Roman Catholic Church

8750 Pohick Road  
Springfield, VA 22153

### WEEKEND MASSES:

Saturday Vigil: 5:00 pm  
Sunday: 7:00 am, 9:00 am (Latin-English), 11:00 am and 1:00 pm

### WEEKDAY MASSES:

Monday - Friday:  
6:30 am & 8:30 am  
7:00 pm on Wednesdays  
Saturday: 9:00 am

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

### SACRAMENT OF PENANCE (Reconciliation/Confession)

#### Wednesday Evening

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

#### First Fridays

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

#### Saturday Morning

8:00 - 9:00 am

#### Saturday Afternoon

3:30 - 5:00 pm

#### Sunday Morning

8:30-9:00 am and 10:30-11:00 am

### EXPOSITION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

Wednesday from 9:00 am to 7:00 pm

Friday from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm

First Fridays 9:00 am Friday - 9:00 Saturday (Ovemight)

**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

**Merry Christmas, and Happy Feast of St. Raymond!** Today is the last day of the Christmas Season. The rule is that “Christmas Time runs from...the Nativity of the Lord up to and including the Sunday after Epiphany...” And normally, “The Sunday falling after [Epiphany] is the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord.”

Unless.... a feast of “higher rank” falls on that same Sunday, the Sunday after Epiphany. And this year, it does, with the **Solemnity of St. Raymond**. Our patron saint’s feast is normally celebrated on January 7, but in accordance with canon law I have moved our patronal feast to the following Sunday, January 11<sup>th</sup>. And since the feast of “title of the church” outranks the “Feast of the Baptism of the Lord,” we transfer that lower feast to tomorrow, Monday, January 12.

So, today let’s celebrate Christmas and our Patronal Solemnity, and after Mass join the Knights of Columbus for a **free pancake breakfast** after the Sunday morning Masses.

**Saint Raymond.** For those of you who don’t know much about St. Raymond, I invite you to read the 32-page biography we published a few years ago. If you don’t have one, they are available in the parish office.

As a brief reminder...Raymond was born of a noble family, near Barcelona, in 1175. At the age of 20 he became professor of canon law. In 1210 he left teaching to complete his studies in civil and canon law at the University of Bologna. He went on to hold a chair of canon law at that university for three years. (The date of his priestly ordination is uncertain, but it would seem to be around 1195).

On August 1, 1218, Raymond received a heavenly vision in which the Blessed Mother (“Our Lady of Ransom”) instructed him to help St. Peter Nolasco found the Order of Mercedarians, which would be devoted to the ransom of Christians taken captive by the Moors (Spanish Muslims) (a scene depicted in our new mural). Raymond did not, however, join that order but rather entered the Order of Preachers (“Dominicans”) in Barcelona in 1222. As a Dominican, Raymond continued to teach and preach, and devoted considerable effort working to convert Moors and Jews, coaxing St. Thomas Aquinas to write his *Summa Contra Gentiles* to help in his efforts.

At the request of his superiors Raymond published the *Summa Casuum*, a book on cases of conscience for the guidance of confessors and moralists, the first guide of its kind. This work eventually led to his appointment as confessor and theologian to Pope Gregory IX in 1230. The Pope soon directed Raymond to re-arrange and codify the canons (juridical laws) of the Church, which required him to rewrite and condense centuries of Church decrees. The Pope published Raymond’s work in 1231, and commanded that it alone should be considered authoritative. From then on St. Raymond would be known as the “Father of canon law.”

In 1238 he was elected Master General of the Dominican Order, the second successor to St. Dominic, but he resigned two years later, claiming that at 63 years old he was too old for the job. He continued his writing, preaching and pastoral work, as well many important responsibilities entrusted to him by various popes, for another 37 years until his death in Barcelona on January 6, 1275, at the age of 100.

But St. Raymond had one last great miracle to perform. Six years before his death, King James of Aragon invited him to come to Majorca with him to preach to the Muslim inhabitants. But when he arrived on the island the saint discovered that King James had brought his mistress along. Raymond demanded he send her away, and when the King refused, Raymond tried to sail

back to Spain, but the King forbade any ship to let him board, Raymond simply bowed his head in prayer, made the sign of the cross, and, by the grace of God, sailed 160 miles back to Spain using just his great cape as both a skiff and a sail.

He is the patron saint of lawyers, both canon and civil. And our patron as well! St. Raymond of Peñafort, pray for us!

**Consistory.** Last week Pope Leo met with all the Cardinals of the Church (the “College of Cardinals”) in what is called a “consistory” to consult with them on the topics of Liturgy, Governance and Synodality. This is a very significant development, since, although the College of Cardinals exists to advise the Pope like this, Pope Francis never called such a meeting and, having a unique (some would say “autocratic”) governing style he really didn’t use the Cardinals in this way. I write this as the consistory is just beginning, so at this point I have no idea what will come of it. But let’s pray it is all for the good of God’s Holy Church.

**Charlotte.** The Bishop of Charlotte, SC, Bishop Michael Martin, has been in the news a lot lately as he has sort of declared a liturgical war against traditional liturgical practices in his Diocese.

Some bishops believe that they have an almost autocratic authority (there’s that word again) over their dioceses, especially when it comes to liturgy. This is incorrect. A Bishop, for example, can’t override the Universal norms and laws of the Church (i.e., laws coming from the Pope), or change Church teaching or doctrine. He also cannot violate the natural or canonical rights of his people, priests or Pastors.

In the last few months, Bishop Martin has issued several liturgical rules (or proposed issuing them) that seem to many, including myself, to violate universal Church norms and/or the rights of the faithful. This week **30 of the priests** (about ¼ of all the priests of the Diocese), 20 of whom are Pastors, responded by sending a set of “dubia” (“questions”) to the Vatican’s Dicastery for Legislative Texts, inquiring as to whether the most dubious of these norms are valid.

According to the “The Pillar” website these include whether a diocesan bishop may prohibit:

- the erection of altar rails within churches in his diocese;
- the use of an altar rail in parishes where the rails already exist and are used by parishioners to receive communion;
- a pastor from placing kneelers to accommodate those who wish to receive Holy Communion while kneeling;
- priests from wearing certain styles of vestments when those vestments are not elsewhere prohibited in Church law;
- Communion by intinction;
- liturgical elements, such as prayers, gestures, chants, or ornaments, on the grounds that such elements are commonly associated with the pre-Vatican II celebration of the Mass.

**God bless these 30 priests of Charlotte!** It is not disobedient to exercise one’s rights, including the right to appeal to Rome, especially in defense of universal law and the good of the faithful. May the Lord provide justice for His people.

**March for Life.** St. Raymond’s will send three buses to the National March for Life on **Friday, January 23**. Signups and the schedule are in the narthex. There is **no charge** for parishioners to ride the bus but you **must reserve your seat!**

*Oremus pro invicem. Fr. De Celles*

**MASS INTENTIONS**

**Monday, January 12th**

6:30 am Mohn Downing +  
8:30 am Michael Berger

**Tuesday, January 13th**

6:30 am Bart Downing Family  
8:30 am Samuel Berger

**Wednesday, January 14th**

6:30 am Tolpa Family  
8:30 am Tom Crean +  
7:00 pm Celebrant's Intentions

**Thursday, January 15th**

9:00 am Hugel Family  
11:00am Dennis Lacot +

**Friday, January 16th**

6:30 am Dennis Paul O'Connor +  
8:30 am Margaret Norton +

**Saturday, January 17th**

9:00 am Linda Pasternak +  
  
**Vigil Mass**  
5:00 pm **Msgr. Rippy**  
Barbara Brady +

**Sunday, January 18th**

7:00 am **Fr. Hokan**  
Peter Hansen  
  
9:00 am **Fr. Bergida**  
Parishioners  
  
11:00 am **Msgr. Rippy**  
Nick Blaze Damon +  
  
1:00 pm **Fr. De Celles**  
Jerry Gonyea +

**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  
Helen Estabrooks  
Michael Snavely

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

**Upcoming Events at St. Raymond Church**

1/11	St. Raymond's Feast Day Breakfast after the 7am, 9am and 11 am Masses
1/11	RE Classes
1/12	RE Classes
1/12	NO Bible Study
1/12	Family of Jesus prayer group
1/13	NO Bible Study
1/13	Junior Legion of Mary 4:15-6:15pm Maurer Rm
1/13	Legion of Mary 6:30pm—Library
1/14	Adoration 9am-7pm
1/15	Bridge Club
1/15	Book Club 9:30am- Parish Library
1/16	Adoration 9am-3pm
1/17	Men's Prayer Group
1/18-19	NO RE Classes
1/19	Martin Luther Jr. Holiday— Parish Offices Closed, One Mass at 10am
1/23	National March for Life— Soup supper following

**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](mailto:maryn-davew7705@gmail.com).

**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](http://www.sevensistersapostolate.org). Please contact Renee LeBoeuf for more information [renee.leboeuf@gmail.com](mailto:renee.leboeuf@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 [mlecastry@gmail.com](mailto:mlecastry@gmail.com).

**CALLING ALL COOKS – March for Life Chili Dinner Support (1/23).** We need a combination of 20+ crockpots of chili, soup, and mac & cheese to feed the 3 busloads/165 parishioners attending the March for Life. Rolls, cookies, fruit and veggies, as well as kitchen helpers are needed too. Please sign up to contribute your crockpot specialty. Then drop it off **before the 10:30 Mass or after 3:00 pm** on the date of the March to help welcome the hungry marchers home. You are welcome to enjoy the dinner too as **you don't have to march to be a part of the March for Life team!** If you cannot stay, please pick up your crockpot by 7:00 pm. Sign up via the parish website, or <https://tinyurl.com/2026M4LChili>





**THE FULLNESS OF KNIGHTHOOD:** Join the Knights! Your very own St. John Bosco Council #12846 has just been awarded the prestigious **STAR COUNCIL** and received the distinguished **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? Our Knights do everything from supporting life to staying informed on important topics, organizing parish dinners, sponsoring seminarians, recognizing outstanding youth, and supporting Special Olympics—you name it! Magnify your impact by joining us! Grab a Knight after Mass and ask him the benefits of becoming a Knight! Knights today stand intractably for their **FAITH**, their **FAMILIES**, and their **COUNTRY**. Don't compromise; **join the Knights!** 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. 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 (Washington, DC)
- 24-25 Italian Dinner ticket sales
- 31 Knights' Mass and Fellowship/Family Night Reception (5pm Mass and Dinner Parish Hall)

**St. Raymond's 2026 Snow Team:** Your Parish needs your HELP! St. Raymond's is seeking industrious, cold weather loving, able-bodied people to join the 2026 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.

The Secular Carmelite Community of Thérèse of the Child Jesus offers a **Day of Recollection at Holy Spirit Catholic Church, Annandale VA, February 28, 2026** from 8:30am - 1pm. Br. Nathanael of Jesus, OCD will speak on **"Your strength will lie in silence and hope"- Marian asceticism with St John of the Cross.** \$20 per person (cash or check) will be collected at the door. Registration begins at 8:30am, 9am Mass followed by light refreshments, 10am first talk, 11am Holy Hour with Confession, 12pm second talk with Q&A. For more information contact Suzanne at [skoucheravy56@gmail.com](mailto:skoucheravy56@gmail.com) or Veronica at [veronicaroyal@icloud.com](mailto:veronicaroyal@icloud.com).

**2026 Annual K of C- Holy Spirit Free Throw Contest-** Boys and Girls aged 9 and Under, 10-14 yrs. (12 age/gender categories). Located at the Holy Spirit School Gym on Sunday, January 18th, 2026. Registration begins at 7:30pm, Contest begins at 7:45pm Questions: [knights@holyspiritchurch.us](mailto:knights@holyspiritchurch.us)

#### SAINT RAYMOND RESPECT 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!

***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.

**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](http://whosmy.virginiageneralassembly.gov).

**The Virginia General Assembly will be in session from 14 Jan – 14 March. Please pray in reparation for anti-life legislation. Refer to the purple cards in the pews.**

**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](mailto: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 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](http://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](http://amomspeace.org).

#### **To those who have suffered an abortion:**

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

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

Women often regret the desperate isolated decision to take the **abortion pill**. Call the abortion reversal helpline **855-209-4848**. It may not be too late. [abortionpillreversal.com](http://abortionpillreversal.com).

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

## 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>

#### 1/11: High School Youth Group (Parish Hall)

5-6:30pm Religious Ed

6:30-8pm High School Youth Group (*this will be a regular youth group, NOT Adoration as previously mentioned*).

#### 1/18/25 NO Youth Group or Religious Ed. due to MLK Holiday

#### Friday, January 16 & 30: 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 at <https://bit.ly/FRIDAYRSVPs> if possible.

#### 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.

#### Tues. January 20: 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.

**Fri. Jan 23: March for Life** St. Raymond's Youth Apostolate will be joining the parish for the annual March for Life on Friday, January 23. **Parents are encouraged to join us**, however, if any **7-12th graders** would like to go but do not have parents going, please come with the youth apostolate! We will march with the parish, helping to carry our banner. Permission slips are online at <http://bit.ly/YAforms>

**Jeanne Sause**

Director of the Youth Apostolate (Grades 7-12)  
[youonth@straymonds.org](mailto:youonth@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

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

There are **NO CCD CLASSES NEXT WEEK** January 18, and 19 in observance of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday.

**2026 Confirmation candidates (8th grade)** the following paperwork was due **January 8th**: Service Hours Record form and Service Experience forms (2). Please email forms or drop off a hard copy ASAP.

**Parents of Students who are preparing to receive the Sacrament of Penance** for the first time on Saturday, February 7th: be sure you have turned in the **First Holy Communion Registry form and Certificates of Birth and Baptism** to the RE Office - they were due in December!

**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.

**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](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.

**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

What will the Church in Venezuela look like with Nicolás Maduro, its long-time dictator, now in U.S. custody? Twenty-five years ago, Venezuela was a prosperous oil-rich nation. That changed with the election of Hugo Chávez as president at the turn of the century, running the country until his death in 2013. Chávez was succeeded by Nicolás Maduro, who was reelected multiple times. The 2024 election was clearly viewed as fraudulent and has not been recognized by many nations around the world.

Maduro's nationalization of the banking and oil industry, and his socialistic policies, ran the poverty level up to nearly 90% today. Nearly 31 million Catholics comprise 98% of the population. Since the 2024 election, he began persecuting the Church and especially bishops for protesting that election result. High poverty led the nation's middle class to flee (one count estimates eight million individuals), many to the United States.

When asked if this tension between the Catholic Church and the state could lead to a similar situation as in Nicaragua where bishops and priests were imprisoned, exiled, and murdered, Archbishop Jesús González de Zárate, president of the Venezuelan Bishops' Conference, noted just days prior to the extraction of the Maduros last Saturday, "The bishops pray and work so that the Church does not go through a similar situation."

Martha Patricia Molina, author of the report "Nicaragua: A Persecuted Church," noted that when dictatorships like those of Maduro identify a de facto power of others, "they begin to attack it until it disappears." When, in Venezuela, as in Nicaragua, all resistance by civil society disappears, then the socialist regime "will focus its fury and punitive power against the prelates."

What can we expect? We hope and pray that a stable government is soon established and those Venezuelans who fled can return to their country, rebuild the infrastructure and industrial base, return to their churches, and return it to its glory days of the last 20<sup>th</sup> century. "The work of the Catholic Church goes on within the country's turbulent reality, a task that is far from easy due to 'the autocratic drift of national politics,'" as the bishops stated at the beginning of last year.

<https://www.catholicnewsgency.com/news/268789/Catholic-church-in-Venezuela-could-undergo-more-persecution>



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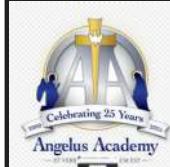
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Christmas	\$ 7,391.00
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Offertory	\$ 15,542.00
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**Dec. 28th** **Jan. 4th, 2026**

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Fam. Assistance	\$ 1,415.00	\$ 965.00
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