

# I WAS BLIND AND NOW I See.

JOHN 9:25

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

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

8750 Pohick Road  
Springfield, VA 22153

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

**WEEKDAY MASSES:**  
Monday - Friday:  
6:30 am & 8:30 am  
7:00 pm on Wednesdays  
Saturday: 9:00 am  
Website: [www.straymonds.org](http://www.straymonds.org)

### SACRAMENT OF PENANCE (Reconciliation/Confession)

**Wednesday Evening**  
6:15 - 7:00 pm (during Exposition)

**First Fridays**  
3:00-4:00 pm and 6:00-7:00 pm

**Saturday Morning**  
8:00 - 9:00 am

**Saturday Afternoon**  
3:30 - 5:00 pm

**Sunday Morning**  
8:30-9:00 am and 10:30-11:00 am

### EXPOSITION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

Wednesday from 9:00 am to 7:00 pm  
Friday from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm

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

**MARRIAGE:** Couples wishing to marry must contact a parish priest at least 6 months prior to the desired wedding date. Couples who are living together will be expected to live separately at least during the 3 months prior to the wedding.

**OCIA:** The Order of Christian Initiation of Adults is the process by which adults (and children who have reached the age of reason) are instructed in the Doctrine of the Church and are prepared to receive the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Eucharist. If you or someone you know, would like to inquire about becoming a Catholic, please call the Parish Office.

**BAPTISM:** Parents are requested to make arrangements with the Parish Office ONE MONTH in advance. Parents must participate in a one-session pre-Baptismal program and are encouraged to do so before the birth of their child. You must be REGISTERED in the Parish 3 MONTHS prior to the Baptism.

**BULLETIN DEADLINE:** Please submit announcements to [bulletin@straymonds.org](mailto:bulletin@straymonds.org) 10 days prior to publication date.



Rev. John C. De Celles, Pastor  
Rev. Joseph D. Bergida, Parochial Vicar  
Rev. Edward R. Horkan, In Residence  
Elisabeth Turco, Director of Liturgical Music  
Jeanne Sause, Director of Youth Apostolate  
Virginia Osella, Director of Religious Education  
Mary Hansen, Religious Education Secretary  
Michael Thompson, Plant Manager  
Maerose Naduvilekunnel, Business Manager  
Mary Butler, Parish Secretary  
Dominique Murray, Office Assistant

#### PARISH OFFICE

Telephone Numbers:

Rectory: 703-440-0535  
Rel. Education: 703-440-0537  
Fax: 703-440-0538

#### Office Hours

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

#### Email

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

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

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

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

4TH SUNDAY OF LENT



## Pastor's Corner

**Midpoint of Lent.** Today is the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent, which means we are halfway through our 40 days of the penitential season. It is called "**Laetare Sunday**," "laetare" meaning "rejoice," and reminds us to remember to lift our gaze to see that beyond the Cross is the Resurrection; in the midst of our sorrow for our lives of sin we also rejoice in the forgiveness and new life won by the Paschal Mystery. The Rose Vestments symbolize this: the dark purple of repentance and sorrow mingled with the light of forgiveness and joy.

But it's also a reminder that half of Lent is head of us, and to rededicate or increase our efforts to keep Lent holy. To those who haven't chosen a penance yet, do it now! To those who are struggling to keep their penances, if your penance is too hard, it's okay to change your penance to something that is challenging but manageable in your situation. To those who just haven't been trying, no excuses—pick up your cross and follow Jesus! And to those who have found their penances manageable and doable, then perhaps you can add some more penances, or intensify the ones you are currently doing.

**More on the Sacrament of Penance.** In order to be forgiven our sins in the Sacrament of Penance three things are required of every sinner/penitent: 1) contrition, 2) confession of our sins, and 3) satisfaction. Most of us understand confessing our sins, but maybe not so much contrition and satisfaction.

**Contrition.** As the Catechism teaches [1452-1460], Contrition:

*"...is 'sorrow of the soul and detestation for the sin committed, together with the resolution not to sin again... When it arises from a love by which God is loved above all else, contrition is called 'perfect'... Such contrition remits venial sins; it also obtains forgiveness of mortal sins if it includes the firm resolution to have recourse to sacramental confession as soon as possible." Note, since it is practically impossible to be certain if we have such "perfect contrition," so we should not presume it, and are still required to receive the Sacrament of Penance before receiving Holy Communion if we are aware of an unconfessed mortal sin.*

*"Most of the time contrition is usually not "perfect," so it is called "imperfect" (or "attrition")." Imperfect contrition is born not from pure love of God "above all else" but "of the consideration of sin's ugliness or the fear of eternal damnation and the other penalties threatening the sinner.... Such a stirring of conscience can initiate an interior process which, under the prompting of grace, will be brought to completion by sacramental absolution. By itself however, imperfect contrition cannot obtain the forgiveness of grave sins, but it disposes one to obtain forgiveness in the sacrament of Penance."*

**Satisfaction.** "Satisfaction" refers to the real effort to make up for our sins, and comes in two ways: "reparation" and "expiation" Let's look a little closer at this. As the Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches [1452-1460]:

*"Many sins wrong our neighbor. One must do what is possible in order to repair the harm (e.g., return stolen goods, restore the reputation of someone slandered, pay compensation for injuries). Simple justice requires as much." This is called 'making reparation.'*

*"But sin also injures and weakens the sinner himself, as well as his relationships with God and neighbor. Absolution takes away sin, but it does not remedy all the disorders sin has caused. Raised up from sin, the sinner must still recover his full spiritual health by doing something more to make amends for the sin: he must 'make satisfaction for' or 'expiate' his sins. This satisfaction is also called 'penance.'"*

When a priest gives a "penance" in confession, many

people wonder how when something as small and simple as "saying three Hail Marys" can serve as an adequate penance/satisfaction. But remember, we could never do enough penance to pay for all our sins—only Jesus can do this, and does so, on the Cross. The penance after confession is an important personal effort at trying to make amends. Moreover a simple and clear penance, such as some short prayers, makes a good practical penance because: 1) if done devoutly they can be an important first step forward toward God, 2) they are more likely to be done immediately, so that the penance won't be forgotten and the penitent can immediately renew the life of grace, and 3) they avoid the confusion of more ambiguous or ambitious penances, so the penitent won't be wondering, "did I do enough?" "did I do too much?" "did I do it right?"

**Lenten Schedule.** Make sure you take full advantage of all the special events in the parish during Lent, especially the opportunities for prayer and receiving the sacraments, detailed on our parish Lenten Schedule, available through the link on the pop-up menu on our website. In particular, I invite you to attend Mass this **Thursday, March 19, the Feast of St. Joseph.** In addition to the regular morning Masses we have an evening Mass at a **special time, 6:00PM.**

After that evening Mass for St. Joseph, I invite you to join me **this Thursday at 7pm** in the Parish Hall as I continue my **Lenten Series** entitled, "**The Mass Explained.**" This week my topic is: "**The Rituals, Prayers and Symbols, Part Two.**" I hope to see you there.

**Bishops' Legal Advice to Supreme Court.** Last week the attorneys for the American Bishops (USCCB) filed an "amicus curiae" brief with the Supreme Court of the United States as it prepares to consider the legality of the President's Executive order excluding certain persons from birthright U.S. citizenship, including the children of most illegal immigrants. Of course the Bishops oppose this EO.

The brief claims, among other arguments, that, "Birthright citizenship is consistent with the Church's fundamental teaching regarding every human person's inherent dignity" and "The executive order is immoral."

It has been severely criticized from all directions. As a Catholic, it's hard to understand how the order is "immoral," or not "consistent with...human dignity." And as an American it seems SCOTUS is not considering the morality of the EO, but rather trying to clarify clarification the technical meaning of the words of the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment that limit the automatic citizenship to "All persons born ...in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof," specifically the phrase "subject to the jurisdiction thereof."

This amendment was passed after the Civil War to recognize the citizenship of former slaves. But many say it has been abused, especially by illegal immigrant parents. Regardless of what we might like the law to say, the question before the SCOTUS is not what it "ought to mean" but what it does mean, legally.

On matters of absolute or clearly defined Church moral norms, like abortion or religious freedom, it is the Bishops' duty to actively share the Catholic perspective. But when it is a matter of interpreting the meaning of a U.S. law, they should recognize their limitations. And when it comes to imposing their personal prudential moral judgments in matters not clearly governed by defined or common Church teaching, they should always tread very carefully.

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

<u>MASS INTENTIONS</u>	
<p><b>Monday, March 16th</b> 6:30 am Joshua Thomas &amp; Michael Kuzma +/+ 8:30 am Tom Dietz + 7:00 pm Celebrant's Intentions</p> <p><b>Tuesday, March 17th</b> 6:30 am Joe Bonafede + 8:30 am Tom Delaney 7:00 pm Celebrant's Intentions</p> <p><b>Wednesday, March 18th</b> 6:30 am Jane A. Rippy + 8:30 am David Barnickle + 7:00 pm Celebrant's Intentions</p> <p><b>Thursday, March 19th</b> 6:30 am Vernon &amp; Mary Butler 8:30 am Joseph Perricone + 6:00 pm Celebrant's Intentions</p> <p><b>Friday, March 20th</b> 6:30 am Claire Ward 8:30 am Cindy Hatcher</p>	<p><b>Saturday, March 21st</b> 9:00 am John &amp; Virginia Larvie</p> <p><b>Vigil Mass</b> 5:00 pm <b>Fr. De Celles</b> Taejung Welch+</p> <p><b>Sunday, March 22nd</b> 7:00 am <b>Fr. Bergida</b> Rogelio Edwards +</p> <p>9:00 am <b>Fr. Bergida</b> Parishioners</p> <p>11:00 am <b>Fr. De Celles</b> Ted Tolpa +</p> <p>1:00 pm <b>Fr. Horkan</b> Dorothy Gatlin +</p>

**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.

**Ryan Higgins                      Peter Lawton                      Brandon Skiba**

**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 Snavelly Annette Haynes	Beth Fitzgibbons Jean Keegan Robert Petitti Joann Alba Alicia Tocconi Jay & Linda Cabacar Rita Felkel Colleen O'Connor Pat Kolakowski
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**Upcoming Events at St. Raymond Church**

- 3/15 RE Classes and Youth Apostolate Events
- 3/16 RE Classes
- 3/16 Adult Bible Study 9:30 am in Parish Hall
- 3/16 Family of Jesus prayer group 3pm in Church
- 3/17 Adult Bible Study 7 pm in Parish Hall
- 3/17 Junior Legion of Mary 4:15-6:15pm Maurer Room
- 3/17 Legion of Mary 6:30pm Library
- 3/18 Adoration 9 am—7 pm
- 3/19 Bridge Club in Parish Hall (RSVP Required)
- 3/19 Feast Day of St. Joseph additional Mass at 6 pm
- 3/19 Lenten Series 7 pm Parish Hall
- 3/20 Nocturnal Lenten Adoration Fri. 9am– Sat. 9am
- 3/20 Lenten Soup Supper, 5-6:30pm Parish Hall
- 3/20 Stations of the Cross 7pm
- 3/21 Men's Prayer Breakfast

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

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

**EXTRA WEEKDAY LENTEN MASSES**

Monday-Friday: 6:30am & 8:30am  
Monday-Wednesday: 7:00pm

**Special Feast Days**

St. Joseph, March 19: Masses- 6:30am, 8:30am & 6:00pm  
Annunciation, March 25: Masses-6:30am, 8:30am & 7:00pm

**LENTEN CONFESION SCHEDULE**

(Except Ash Wednesday, Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday and Easter Sunday)

**Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday (not Weds.):**

Feb. 19-March 20: 6:30pm-7:00pm

March 23-31: 6:00pm-7:00pm

**Wednesday: February 25-April 1: 6:00pm-8:00pm**

**First Friday: March 6 : "Extra Confessions" from 3-4pm and 6-7pm**

**Saturday: 8:00am-9:00am; 3:30pm-5:00pm**

**Sunday: 8:30am-9:00am; 10:30am-11:00am**

See the Lenten schedule poster at all entrances and our website.

**Fasting and Abstinence**

Ash Wednesday and Good Friday are days of both fasting and abstinence, and every Friday in Lent is a day of abstinence. Failure to "substantially" keep these penances is grave matter (e.g., potentially a mortal sin). The law of abstinence requires that no meat may be eaten on these days, and binds all Catholics who are 14 years old or older. No other penance may be substituted. The law of fasting binds those who are between the ages of 18 and 59. The sick, pregnant or nursing mothers, and other folks with special physical circumstances may be partially or totally exempt from these rules—use good judgment and take care of yourself.

**Last Year's Blessed Palms** – There are boxes for blessed palms at each exit of the Church until the end of Lent. The parish will dispose of them properly. "Once a religious object is blessed... it must be treated with reverence and not be used in either an improper or profane way." (Code of Canon Law)

**WEEKLY LENTEN FRIDAY NOCTURNAL ADORATION!**

On Friday March 20th and every Friday during Lent through March 27th. Please see the sign up genius on our website to sign up!

**LENTEN SERIES-** Fr. De Celles is offering a five week series of talks on "The Mass Explained". The next talk is on "The Rituals, Prayers and Symbols, Part 2" this Thursday, March 19th at 7pm in the Parish Hall.

**Lenten Soup Supper on March 20th** Please join your fellow parishioners for a delicious but simple meal **each Friday during Lent, 5-6:30pm**. Bring your family or a friend and either a pot of homemade meatless soup, macaroni & cheese, fruit, salad or bread to share. **Stations of the Cross** takes place in the church at 7pm each Friday. Please join us!

**JOIN the CHOIR at St. Raymond's:** Do you want to sing with the choir for Lent and Easter? Singers who have a pleasant voice and sing in pitch are welcome. We practice on Tuesdays from 7:00 to 8:30 pm and sing at 11:00 am Mass on Sundays with a warm-up at 10. The repertoire of the choir contains masterpieces of classical liturgical choir music. Enjoy wonderful fellowship, music training and the joy of making uplifting music for the liturgy. Contact Elisabeth Turco at [mu-sic@straymonds.org](mailto:mu-sic@straymonds.org) or call 703-506-4644.



**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. Now is the **perfect time** to take your place with us. Just go to <https://www.kofc.org/joinus> 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:**

**MARCH**

21 Men's Prayer Breakfast ( 7:30am, Parish Hall)

**APRIL**

4 Men's Prayer Breakfast (7:30am, Parish Hall)

11-12 KofC Recruitment Drive (After all Masses, Narthex)

13 Membership Meeting (7pm Library – Rosary; 7:30pm, Parish Hall)

18 Men's Prayer Breakfast (7:30am, Parish Hall)

**2026 Multi-Car Raffle:** All Saints Church (Manassas, VA) has once again invited our parishioners to participate in their Multi Car Raffle. Prizes include four 2026 vehicles from Ourisman Ford of Manassas (Ford Escape, Mustang, Maverick Truck (Hybrid) and Bronco Sport). One \$5.00 ticket offers the purchaser a chance to win all four vehicles plus \$42,000 (including one for \$20,000) in cash prizes. You will be receiving tickets in the mail within the next week or so. Please consider selling/purchasing the tickets mailed to you. Thank you for your support!



**Annual Easter Egg Hunt,** Saturday, April 12th at 2:30 pm behind the Parish Hall: Children ages 12 and under are invited, free of charge, no RSVP necessary! This year, we are inviting all parishioners to sign up to donate wrapped candy and stickers by April 8th. Please check your email and our website for the sign up! For more information, please contact the parish office.

**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 March 21st.** For more information, call Dave Wilson, 703-966-5327 or email [maryndavew7705@gmail.com](mailto:maryndavew7705@gmail.com).

**Do you desire a more meaningful prayer life?** 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).



**Help us make our church even more beautiful as we celebrate Christ's Resurrection!** Flowers are a wonderful way to symbolize the new life we receive through Jesus' death and resurrection. If you would like to honor your loved ones this Easter, we invite you to send in your envelopes soon. Thank you so much for your support!

**SAINT RAYMOND'S RESPECTS LIFE**

**The Virginia General Assembly concluded its 2026 session on March 14. Please continue to pray in reparation for anti-life legislation. Refer to the purple cards in the pews. "Pray ... for our leaders, and for all those in power, even for those who persecute you and hate you, and for those who are enemies of the cross." St Polycarp, bishop and martyr (69-155AD)**

**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.**



Spring campaign is underway! Thank you to those who have already participated. Our witness weekend is 28-29 March. Sign-up sheets are in the narthex. **There's a terrific video on our parish website.** [straymonds.org/40-days-for-life-4/](http://straymonds.org/40-days-for-life-4/) Check it out! Questions? Contact Liz at [hildebrandseven@gmail.com](mailto:hildebrandseven@gmail.com)

**Virginia March for Life. Richmond on Wed. April 22.** St Raymond's is sending one bus. Details to follow. [marchforlife.org/virginia](http://marchforlife.org/virginia)

**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 MaRiH collection box in the narthex. Thank you!

**MaRiH Pregnancy Care Center... WOW!!! Did you see the mountain of boxes of diapers in the narthex last week?! Thank you for the tremendously generous outpouring of support!** Philippians 1:3 says it best. Donations welcome and so very much appreciated in the narthex collection box near the elevator. **Greatest needs:** winter coats and clothes up to 2T, diapers, formula, wipes. Please do not leave bouncy seats, walkers, gates or jogging strollers.

Has the sorrow of a 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 week-end 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 the YA bulletin boards by the church entrances.

### 3/15: High School Youth Group (Parish Hall)

5-6:30pm Religious Ed  
6:30-8pm High School Youth Group

### 3/22: High School Youth Group + Jr. High Youth Welcome!!

**Dinner, Adoration with reflection & Confession Available**  
**6:30-6:50pm** Dinner will be served in the parish hall after RE  
**6:50-8pm** Join Fr. Bergida for a special holy hour for 7-12th graders! *Parents/families are encouraged to stay for the holy hour as well. There will be Exposition with time for silent prayer.*

### Tues. March 17 : 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, March 28 (10:15am-1pm)

#### 40 Days for Life Prayerful Pro-Life Witness

**7-12th Graders**, please join us in praying outside the abortion clinic in Falls Church to change hearts and save lives. Bring your rosary and a friend. We will pray for an hour then come back for a slice of pizza in the parish hall. We will car pool from St. Raymond's. **Chaperones needed.** *Permission slips (available on bulletin boards & online <http://bit.ly/YAforms>) due Tuesday, 3/24.*

### Every Friday in Lent: 6:30am Mass & Breakfast

**7-12th Graders: Add Mass before class as a part of your Lenten sacrifice**, then come downstairs for breakfast with Fr. Bergida & Fr. Horkan before school! RSVP at <https://bit.ly/FRIDAYRSVPS> if possible. We can bring you to your school right from breakfast if you RSVP by Wednesday.

**Calling all BAKERS!** One of our parishioners, Mr. Bob Keegan, is begging for your help in providing the **120 DOZEN COOKIES** he has been asked to bring with him for the upcoming Kairos Prison Ministry Retreat **If you are willing to help by baking a dozen cookies (or more!) by Tuesday, April 14th, please sign up at <https://bit.ly/120cookies4prisoners>** \*You may earn service hours **Cookies can be dropped off** at the parish office any time, but no later than Tuesday, April 14th.

Jeanne Sause

Director of the Youth Apostolate (Grades 7-12)  
[youth@straymonds.org](mailto:youth@straymonds.org) Call/Text: 571-334-9890

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

A new **YA Info. Sheet** is REQUIRED to be turned in once **each school year** for every child *prior* to participating in any Youth Apostolate event on or off site. <http://bit.ly/YAforms>



## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Attention parents of 2026 Confirmation students, the following paperwork was due on March 12:

1. Sponsor Eligibility letter (from sponsor's home parish)
2. Statement of Sponsor form

**Please note:** Confirmation rehearsal is scheduled for May 18th at 7 pm

Confirmation Mass is scheduled for May 19th at 6 pm (candidates and sponsors required to arrive by 5!)

**Looking Ahead:** There will be no CCD classes on March 29/30 and April 5/6 for Holy Week and Easter.



Happy Feasts of St. Patrick and St. Joseph this week!



## Annual Spring Senior Luncheon

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

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

**DATE:** April 11th, 12:30 - 2:30 pm

**MENU:** Honey Baked Ham and all the trimmings (Free!) RSVP by April 6th by emailing [office@straymonds.org](mailto:office@straymonds.org) Or calling the office at 703-440-0535



**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.

**Chesterton Academy of Christ the King**, a small co-ed classical high school that is part of the international Chesterton Schools Network, will be opening at St. Lawrence Catholic Church this fall. Chesterton Academies are known for their strong Catholic identity anchored in daily school Mass, rigorous classical curriculum, screen-free socratic seminar format, and affordable tuition. Visit [Chesterton-ChristTheKing.org](http://Chesterton-ChristTheKing.org) to learn more or to apply. Limited spaces remain for rising freshmen for the 2026-2027 school year.

**ART, DRAMA, MUSICAL THEATRE CAMPS for K-12 in a Catholic setting!** Spotlight on the Arts Summer Camps offers **Broadway Spotlight, Drama Bootcamp, Art Explorer, and Arts & Crafts Fun Camp** this July to students across the Diocese. This July 13th - 24th young people are invited to experience top level instruction as they engage in creative fun through Acting, Visual Art, Music, and more! Taught by professional Catholic educators very accomplished in their area of expertise, each week concludes with either an Art Showcase or a Theatrical Performance by the campers. Through March 31st, **all camps are \$35 off plus everyone gets a free t-shirt.** Additionally, there are extra discounts for families that enroll 3 or more kids! Learn more and register at [www.SpotlightSummerCamps.com](http://www.SpotlightSummerCamps.com)

**Girls Volleyball Clinic at John Paul - March 28<sup>th</sup>** Join us at Saint John Paul the Great Catholic High School for our Girls Volleyball Clinic on Saturday, March 28th from 9-11am! Open to 4th - 8th grade girls! Participants will have the opportunity to work on fundamentals while receiving guidance from JP coaches and JP student athletes! We hope to see you there! Click here to start your registration: <https://saintjohnpaul.mypaysimple.com/s/middle-school-event-registration>

**CHURCH PERSECUTED**


Over the past months, the federal and state courts have made several religious liberty-based rulings in favor of Catholic or Christian entities. Here is a brief review of them:

In December 2025, The Minnesota State Court of Appeals ruled that the Archdiocese of St. Paul lawfully dismissed a “transgender” librarian from a Catholic school. The court ruled that, “Because the allegations in [the] complaint would interfere with an internal church decision that affects the Archdiocese’s faith-based mission to educate young people in the Catholic faith and would foster excessive government entanglement with religion, the district court properly dismissed those claims.”

We previously reported that last June, the U.S. Supreme Court in a 9-0 decision ruled in favor of the Superior (Minn.) Diocese Catholic Charities Bureau in a long-running state tax exemption. On December 15, 2025, the Wisconsin Supreme Court blocked the state attorney general’s attempt to circumvent the SCOTUS decision and eliminate the exemption entirely. Hopefully this will end a decades-long battle between Catholic Charities and other Christian plaintiffs and the state. In the SCOTUS decision, Justice Sonia Sotomayor wrote: “It is fundamental to our constitutional order that the government maintain ‘neutrality between religion and religion’. There may be hard calls to make in policing that rule, but this is not one.”

The 9<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court of Appeals has barred Washington State from applying its Washington Law Against Discrimination to religious employers. The law prohibits employers from considering “sexual orientation” in hiring decisions. The state claimed the First Amendment requires it to exemption only “ministerial” employees, but the court ruled in *Union Gospel Mission of Yakima v. Brown* that the mission can require moral standards of all employees.

Pope Leo XIV called the defense of religious freedom “not optional but essential. Rooted in the dignity of the human person, created in God’s image and endowed with reason and free will, religious freedom allows individuals and communities to see the truth, live it freely, and to bear witness to it openly.”



## Angelus Academy

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As we begin planning for the 2026-2027 school year, we are preparing to fill several teaching and staff positions. We are excited about the opportunity to welcome new faculty members who are passionate about serving Jesus in His little ones as part of our Catholic liberal arts school in the classical tradition. Currently, we have employment opportunities in a variety of roles, including the Head of School, a few teaching positions in grades K-5, and the Fundraising-Events Manager.

We invite you to help us spread the word in your family and our parish community! If you know anyone who may be an excellent fit for our school, please encourage them to reach out to us at [employment@angelusacademy.org](mailto:employment@angelusacademy.org) for more information.

**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](mailto:office@straymonds.org) to verify your email address.

**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 75 or older and need to make required minimum distributions (RMD) from your IRA, your QCD counts toward your annual RMD for the year. QCDs can have a significant tax benefit for you. Eligible accounts for QCDs can be made from most IRAs, including Traditional IRAs, Rollover IRAs, Inherited IRAs, and Roth IRAs. Always consult your Tax professional regarding your specific situation. Use our parish address: St. Raymond of Penafort Catholic Church, 8750 Pohick Road, Springfield, VA 22153

**“The 2026 Bishop’s Lenten Appeal, In Christ, We Are One”,**

Thank you to everyone who already participated in the BLA! If you haven’t yet had a chance to make your gift, we still need your help. Every family matters in helping our parish reach its goal. No gift is too small. Your participation supports vital ministries our parish depends on: seminarian formation, religious education, youth ministry, Catholic Charities, and more. You can also give a one-time gift or pledge. Give today at [arlingtondiocese.org/bla](http://arlingtondiocese.org/bla) or scan the QR code.



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**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.

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Kids: *Watch– Lent with Brother Francis*



**Watch: The Total Gift-** Saint Katharine Drexel, a canonized Catholic saint from the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, who chose a life dedicated entirely to serving marginalized communities. Born into a wealthy Philadelphia family, Katharine Drexel used her fortune to challenge societal norms and dedicate her life to education and racial healing. Our documentary, hosted at the majestic Cathedral Basilica of Saints Peter and Paul, explores her transformative journey from a life of privilege to becoming a religious pioneer.

**Has your spiritual life been enriched by Formed.org? We need VOLUNTEERS for a committee to promote and spread enthusiasm for this amazing resource to our parishioners. If you’d like to bless our community in this way, contact the parish office at 703-440-0535**

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