



# The Parish Press

Newsletter of Saint Raphael Parish Family

Milford, Connecticut

May 2020



As I write this article, it has been one month since we stopped holding public Masses in our two beautiful churches of Saint Gabriel and Saint Ann. On March 13, as news of the dangers of the coronavirus became clearer, Archbishop Blaire dispensed all Catholics of the Archdiocese from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass. The Third Sunday of Lent (March 15) saw only 291 worshippers at our four weekend Masses (down significantly from 708, our average Sunday attendance). It was only four days later that the need to restrict large gatherings of people would be necessary if the virus was to be contained. So, on March 18 I went to Saint Ann Church to do something I had never done in my 38 years of priesthood. I went to say Holy Mass alone. There was no server, no lector, no one.

The church was unnervingly empty. To be honest, I really wasn't sure what to do. This went against all the training I had received in the seminary. We were taught in the wake of the Second Vatican Council that Mass was a communal event, not the private possession of the priest. I used to give workshops on the theme of the "Ministry of the Assembly," a term I first heard used by Fr. Eugene Walsh, SS, a great theologian, liturgist, and writer. The premise is that the Sunday assembly (or congregation) is not a group of couch potatoes who sit and stand and kneel and watch as Mass is being done for them. The Assembly has an active participatory role as much as do the lectors, cantors, servers and others.

So you can imagine my unease when I walked into the sanctuary that Wednesday afternoon unaccompanied, kissed the altar and began. The sign of the cross. "The Lord be with you." An awkward silence followed. Wait, do I say the responses to myself? "And with my spirit?" Confusion and uncertainty followed. I was very self-conscious that something was not right. Something was definitely missing. And what I missed was all of you, the dear parishioners of Saint Raphael Parish.

Now that public Mass has been discontinued beyond the original date of April 3 and then April 30 to some unspecified date in the future, I will continue to celebrate, still uneasily, a daily Mass for your intentions and for all those impacted by this horrible pandemic. But rest assured, you are missed. I look forward to seeing you refill the pews of our churches, hopefully in the not so distant future.

Blessings to all.

*Father John*

## May And the Fifty Days of Easter

Easter is not simply a Sunday, it is a Season, fifty days of joyful exultation from Easter Sunday to Pentecost. The Season of rejoicing continues all this month and includes the feasts of Ascension and Pentecost, which are among the principal celebrations of the Liturgical Year.

### Ascension Thursday May 21

Forty days after His resurrection, as his apostles looked on, Jesus ascended into heaven. He was "lifted up, and a cloud took him from their sight." (Acts 1:9) The Psalm response for the Holy Day Mass is pure poetry: *God mounts his throne to shouts of joy: a blare of trumpets for the Lord.*



Jesus, the head of the Church, has gone before us into the Father's heavenly kingdom so that we, the members of his Body, may live in the hope that we will one day be with him forever.



### The Feast of Pentecost Sunday, May 31

The Feast of Pentecost, fifty days after the Feast of the Resurrection of the Lord, marks the close of the Easter Season and the birthday of the Church.

When God created the heavens and the earth the Holy Spirit - the Breath of God - was "the mighty wind sweeping over the waters" (Gen 1:2). The Spirit was present again "like a strong driving wind" on Pentecost when Mary and the apostles were all in one place. Tongues "as of fire" came to rest on each of them. Filled now with the Holy Spirit they began to proclaim Jesus to the vast crowds gathered in Jerusalem (Acts 2:1-4). That outpouring of the Spirit on Pentecost ushers in the beginning of the Church.

Editor's Note: As we go to press we cannot say when we'll be able to gather together again for Sunday or Holy Day Masses. Please watch for updates from Father John.



### Honor Mothers This Month

Remember to honor Mom on Mother's Day, Sunday May 10. This might be a year for simpler celebrations, small but meaningful ways to express your love.

The entire month of May is dedicated to Mary, Mother of God and Our Mother. In a recent addition to the Church calendar we celebrate The Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church. The new Memorial falls, fittingly, on the Monday after Pentecost, June 1 this year.

## Kudos to Saint Raphael's Zoom Technical Crew

Fairfield Prep's move to online classes and liturgies via Zoom meeting prompted a question from sophomore Michael Deveny. "Why can't we do this at Saint Raphael's?" An altar server at Saturday's Vigil Mass since 2012, Michael is now the lead altar server at Prep and the first sophomore to be appointed Master of Ceremonies for all school Masses. The thought of no Holy Week services at his parish "weighed heavily."

By the end of March Michael and his mom Terri had met with Father John who was "open to the idea and excited about the possibility of bringing services to parishioners in their own home."

How to make that happen? The broadcast would originate at Saint Ann Church, a brick building with no internet connection. How to pick up a wifi signal within the church? Mobile hot spot? Signal not strong enough. Optimum Wifi? Okay, but not really strong enough for live-stream. A wifi booster? Bought one - incompatible with Optimum.

It was almost Palm Sunday, time was running out, so the team decided to go with what they had, hoping to improve things before Holy Thursday. And so they did. The solution? Connecting directly to the internet from the router in the parish house basement using a 125 ft. ethernet cable.

### Parishioner comments:

*Mass today was just wonderful.*

*I needed this.*

*Peace be with all of you.*

*Mass was beautiful. Thanks to everyone who made it happen.*

*Thank you, Father John, and God bless.*

Because Michael would be serving, Terri said, "He appointed me Chief Technical Officer (LOL!) during Mass to ensure a seamless broadcast." Michael's other challenge: setting up the actual meeting and making a secure connection. Research with Zoom helped him fine tune those details.

Both Michael and Terri shared their personal feelings about the project: *Michael*: "It was my privilege. I've served during Holy Week since I became an altar server, and it just wouldn't seem right not to participate in this most sacred celebration. Fairfield Prep has taught me to be a "Man for Others" and to use my time and talents to benefit my community. I thought this was the best use of my talents during this crisis."

*Terri*: "It's been very rewarding helping Michael throughout this process, and I'm very proud of his dedication to the Church and our community. It's been wonderful knowing that so many people have been enriched by this work we've done."

We've been enriched and blessed, Terri. Sincere thanks and kudos to you and Michael for a job well done. God bless you for your goodness.

## A Social Justice Meditation

"Working with the poor and with immigrants, you see how much their experience resonates with Mary's experience in the Gospel. You read Matthew's account of the flight into Egypt, and you see that Mary and Joseph were refugees. All of a sudden, she is not this plaster statue anymore. We even can say that Mary was a homeless immigrant living in exile, because, after the crucifixion, she went to a foreign country with the disciple John. This in addition to the fact that she was, for a while, an unwed pregnant teenager and, later, the mother of a convict. The richness of her portrait in Scripture is incredible."

*Deirdre Cornell*



Deirdre Cornell

May is Mary's month. In her book *American Madonna: Crossing Borders with the Virgin Mary*, author Deirdre Cornell chronicles the three years she spent with her family as Maryknoll Missioners in Mexico. Blending personal reflection, Marian scholarship and social justice advocacy, Cornell deepens our understanding of Mary by allowing us to see her through the lens of Latin American people who are devoted to her. Through them, she discovers a universal mother who invites us to cross the borders of cultural, economic and linguistic difference to locate our common humanity and spiritual heritage.



The Deveny Family  
(l-r): Chuck, Michael, Nicholas and Terri

### Family Profile

*Chuck and Terri: Met while roller skating when they were 16. Married at Saint Ann Church in 1986.*

*Chuck: Works in power plant at Yale-New Haven Hospital's Saint Raphael Campus.*

*Terri: Business Mgr. for Milford Board of Education. Both deemed "essential," so they continue to work "during this terrible time."*

*Nicholas: Franklin Pierce University, Class of 2022. Elementary Ed major. Would love to teach kindergarten.*

*Michael: Honors student. Favorite subjects: Theology and English. Has started visiting colleges. Dream school: Georgetown. Wants to attend law school.*

*Special Interests: Family travel, Disney, cruises. Have visited over 20 countries. Dream trip: the Vatican. Faithful Big Blue fans- were at MetLife Stadium for Eli Manning's last game.*

**GIFT**  
**Sacramental Program Updates**  
**May Virtual Meetings Via Zoom**

Parents and Guardians, check your email for the meeting IDs and passwords for the "via Zoom" classes listed below.

Maria will send (USPS) or drop off hard copy packets and materials the young people will need for class.

**Confirmation**

**Catholic Social Teaching**

Sunday, May 17, 12 noon-1:30 pm  
Virtual class via Zoom  
Required for candidates

**Weekly Mass Summaries**

Please email all summaries for the weekly virtual and television Masses you have been attending to Maria Tomasetti ([atomasetti@snet.net](mailto:atomasetti@snet.net)).

Please include: your name, Mass date, location of virtual or television Mass and a short summary of the homily.

**First Communion**

**Learning and Praying the Rosary**

Saturday, May 16, 11:00 am-12 noon  
*or*  
Tuesday, May 19, 6:30-7:30 pm  
Virtual class via Zoom

Required for 1st Communion families

**Touring the Church and Sacristy**  
**Liturgy of the Eucharist Review**

Still hoping to offer this class in the church as an in-person experience, perhaps in June. If necessary, we will offer several opportunities for the tour to ensure compliance with public safety guidelines.

**Banner Kits Have Arrived!**

Completed banners can be used as pew markers for First Communion. We are planning for porch drop-offs or staggered pickups in May



**Class of 2020**  
**Grad Celebration**  
**Rescheduled to**  
**Saturday, July 18**

Our annual Graduation Celebration has been moved to the 4 o'clock Vigil Mass on Saturday, July 18. We want to honor all members of the very unique Class of 2020, grade school, high school and college graduates. Invitations with complete details were going out as we went to press. Look for yours, grads, and please plan to be with us.

**Summer VBS Camp -**  
**Keeping Our Options Open**

Our summer Rainforest adventure for campers ages 4-10 is still on the parish calendar, but we've written the dates (July 20-24) in pencil as we wait for guidelines from the State of CT and from the Archdiocese about public gatherings and physical distancing. It seems best right now to pause and pray for the end of the current public health emergency and to plan for possible alternatives that will allow us to offer a fun and safe experience for everyone, our staff and our young campers.



In keeping our options open, we've reserved a second slot (August 10-14), a cushion in case there's greater flexibility during August. We're also considering possible options:

- \*3-day camps (Mon/Wed/Fri *or* Tue/Th/Sat) for smaller groups of campers
- \*Opening/Closing Assembly adjustments re: setup and location
- \*Adjustment to snack process. (Never fear: there will be snacks!!)

As we pause and pray we've made no firm decisions. Maria would really appreciate input from the families of potential campers.

**If** our in-person summer VBS camp is possible this year, given the status of the public health emergency and safety considerations:

- \*Would you be interested in enrolling your child/children?
- \*For which of the two proposed weeks (July 20-24 or August 10-14)?
- \*Are you interested only in the traditional 5-day camp?
- \*Would you enroll your children in a 3-day camp as described above?
- \*If yes, would you prefer M/W/F or T/Th/S (9:15 am - 12:30 pm)?

Please get back to Maria Tomasetti ([atomasetti@snet.net](mailto:atomasetti@snet.net) or 203-988-8598 - cell) as soon as possible. Your input is vital for our planning.

Because of the uncertainty we have not yet opened official registration. You can, however, save the space for your children now, and help us plan for the number of campers and volunteers. Bonus! Every family that expresses interest will receive a Rainforest Explorers Music CD/DVD as a free gift (whether we camp or not)! Thank you for all your prayers, patience and support during this uncertain and challenging time. Rainforest Explorers: Jesus Leads the Way!!



Hunger knows no season, and so the Saint Gabriel Food Pantry remains in operation, but on a limited basis during this most challenging time.

Pantry volunteers are now required to pre-package food for 21 meals per person per week. The CT Food Bank supplies fresh fruit, vegetables and meat so the Pantry's greatest needs currently are pasta and pasta sauce, tuna, peanut butter, jelly, cereal, brownie mixes and condiments like ketchup and mustard. They would also appreciate dishwashing liquid, laundry detergent and personal hygiene products like bar soap, shampoo and toothpaste. Note: The pantry cannot distribute any home prepared meals.

To make a donation to this very worthy effort, please make arrangements by calling 203-878-3075 on Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday before 6:00 pm. (Without public Masses our regular supply system does not function.) Food distribution, by appointment only, is on Thursdays, beginning at 10:00 am. Schedule an appointment at 203-878-3075, M/W/F before 6:00 pm.

**Pastoral Council Note: Selection process has been canceled for this year. Current members' terms have been extended.**

## May: Celebrations, Need for Donations, Zoom Report and More

As we go to press our staff, like our parishioners, continues to Stay Safe, Stay Home. But even in the face of sadness, uncertainty and the continued cancellation of public Masses and liturgies, we can rejoice in the wonder of the resurrection.



We are an Easter people and *Alleluia* is our song. During May we have a lot to celebrate: mothers, especially our mother Mary; the closing weeks of the Easter season and the two great feasts of Ascension and Pentecost.

Meet our Zoom technical crew (that's Michael, above), respond to the food pantry's call for donations and weigh in on summer's VBS camp. Find peace and comfort in the gifts and beauty of May.

### ***The Parish Press***

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Milford, Connecticut  
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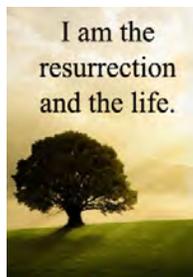
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### **In Memoriam**

Saint Raphael's mourns the recent loss of

Richard Malaro  
Zygmunt Paliwoda

We pray, too, for all who have succumbed to the coronavirus. May all our beloved dead know the joy of communion with God.



I am the  
resurrection  
and the life.

### **Bereavement Support Is a Phone Call Away**



Our Bereavement Support group has been unable to meet during the current public health crisis. But we are available, a mere phone call away. To ease your pain we offer a calming voice, an open heart, a listening ear. Please don't hesitate to reach out to us at 203-877-4020. May God give you peace.

### ***Parish Press Info Due May 12***

If you have news, photos or stories you'd like to share with the parish family in our June issue, please submit them to [parishpress06460@gmail.com](mailto:parishpress06460@gmail.com) by Tuesday, May 12 or call Ann Eden (203-874-8744).

### **Join Our Google Group - The Latest Parish Info and Updates Will Go Straight to Your Inbox!**

You'll also receive the digital version of the newsletter. Send your info (name, address, preferred email) to [parishpress06460@gmail.com](mailto:parishpress06460@gmail.com). Thank you!

### **We Welcome With Love . . .**

the newest member of our parish family,

Emilia D'Ambrosia

who was baptized on Sunday, March 15 at Saint Ann Church. God bless you, Emilia. May your life be filled with love and laughter.



### **Men of Saint Joseph Meeting Online**

The Men of Saint Joseph continue to gather on Tuesday evenings to pray, and to discuss Sunday's Gospel and how it applies to their lives.

You won't find them at Saint Gabriel's Hall, however. These crafty gentlemen - their patron was a craftsman, was he not?! - are zoom meeting, practicing social distancing while maintaining their strong spiritual connection. To join this special group or to learn more you may call John Marmolejo at 203-375-2912.

### **The Ease of Online Giving**

We are very grateful to all of you who have been mailing your regular contributions to the office. A simpler way to donate - no checks, no cash, no stamps - might be online giving. For details go to the parish website [www.saintraphaelmilford.org](http://www.saintraphaelmilford.org) or, if you're reading this on your computer, click the button above.

