



# The Parish Press

Newsletter of Saint Raphael Parish Family

Milford, Connecticut

September 2020



As I announced a few weeks ago, Metro Star has opted not to proceed with the purchase of Saint Gabriel School. Because the building remains unoccupied and unused it has recently been the target of vandalism. On August 4, we found that several windows had been smashed in. (Repairs: \$2,600.) On August 11, we discovered that vandals had ransacked the school's interior, discharging fire extinguishers; painting graffiti on walls, tables, and in rest rooms, tearing down exit signs, and more. We are assessing the damage and looking into installing video surveillance and other deterrents to trespassing.

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues its relentless attack on our country, we foresee no changes to the restrictions under which we must celebrate Mass and other devotional and educational activities. Confirmation will be very different this fall. Archbishop Blair has made it clear that he will grant delegation to any priest to celebrate the sacrament of Confirmation in his parish. Of course, all the governmental restrictions must be followed.

As statistics about COVID-19 Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) funding become public, you may have read that "the U.S. Roman Catholic Church" received \$1.4 billion. By way of clarification, "the U.S. Roman Catholic Church" is not an entity, either formally or informally. The Church in the U.S. is comprised of hundreds of separate dioceses and many parishes, churches, schools, and charitable and welfare agencies. These entities employ tens of thousands of people who work to support themselves and their families.

Linked to this claim is an accusation of irregularity that allowed Catholic-based institutions to apply for and receive funds from the PPP. It's also said the Church was "amassing" funds. PPP funds can be used *only* for payroll costs and some specific operating costs, nothing else. As employers responsible for their workers' livelihoods, dioceses, parishes, schools, and agencies were certainly eligible to apply for PPP loans. Any funds they received are being used for their intended purpose: sustaining employees at our parishes, schools, and agencies during the pandemic. It is a certainty that had PPP funds not been made available, any number of furloughs and/or layoffs would have been inevitable. Congress is to be commended for not discriminating against faith-based organizations and their employees. Saint Raphael Parish did apply for and receive PPP Funds. We have every expectation that the loan amount will be forgiven.

## Celebrate Saint Raphael on September 29 Gather for Mass, Enjoy Breakfast to Go

Tuesday, September 29, is the Feast of the Archangels, Michael, Gabriel and our particular favorite, our patron, Saint Raphael. Join us, if you can, at Saint Gabriel Church for the 8:00 a.m. Feast Day Mass, then enjoy "breakfast to go," courtesy of the Pastoral Council. Hope to see you there!

## Something Special Came Our Way in August Father Rob Galea's Live Sunday Mass From Australia Had a Parish Connection

The email notice came late, close to 7 for "something special at 8. Don't miss it." The very special YouTube presentation of Father Rob Galea's *Live Sunday Mass* on Saturday, August 1 lived up to its billing. Father Rob was celebrating Mass for the 18th Sunday in Ordinary Time, with music from New Zealand and readings "proclaimed by Saint Raphael Parish, Connecticut, USA."



Father Rob

How did this happen?! The world, including Australia, had essentially shut down just prior to Holy Week. Father Rob decided to celebrate Palm Sunday Mass, then the great feast of Easter, from his home, accompanied by good friends who sang and proclaimed the readings. Father Rob's is a global ministry, and many people had been watching the Masses via [FRGministry.com](http://FRGministry.com). Thus *Live Sunday Mass* was born, yet another way for Father to share his ministry and his music with people young and old around the world.

As a result, Father's Masses have an international flavor, with music and readings from such far-flung spots as India, Australia, Canada, Brazil, Boston MA, even Devon CT! In response to a request from Father Rob, Peter DeMarco suggested that Michele Mercurio and Kevin Williams, choir members and lectors, might like to read. Both were honored.

Peter enlisted Matt Downs to do the videotaping and on July 24 Matt recorded Michele and Kevin as they read near the statue of Saint Ann. Fr. Rob wanted the videos 8 days before the Mass, enough time to review and edit them so that they could be triggered at the appropriate moments. Once choirs are allowed to sing again Fr. Rob would like the Saint Ann Choir to provide the music for a future YouTube Mass.

### Fun Facts About the Production

It was Sunday, 10 a.m. in Bendigo, Australia, where Fr. Rob was saying the Mass in the rectory chapel of Saint Kilian's Church. Here in Milford it was 8 p.m. the day before.

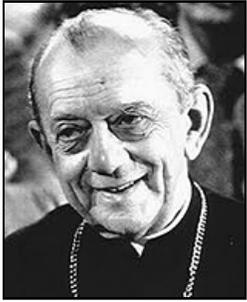
Listen closely as you watch the Mass (use the link below) and you'll hear a plane flying over Saint Ann's. A few takes were required - fire engines and motorcycles came whizzing down Naugatuck Avenue as Matt was taping. Great job, everyone!

<https://www.frgministry.com/online-resource/sunday-mass-august2nd-2020>

## A Social Justice Meditation

“When I give food to the poor, they call me a saint. When I ask why they are poor, they call me a communist.”

*Dom Hélder Câmara*



Dom Hélder Câmara

**Dom Hélder Pessoa Câmara (1909–1999)** was a Brazilian Catholic Archbishop. During his tenure (1964-1985) he was called the “Bishop of the Slums” for his support of the urban poor. With other clerics, he encouraged peasants to free themselves from their conventional fatalistic outlook by studying the gospels in small groups and proposing the search for social change from their readings.

Under Dom Helder’s guidance, the Brazilian Roman Catholic Church became an outspoken critic of the 1964-85 military dictatorship. He was nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize in 1973, but never received it, due to the strong opposition of the Brazilian military. His cause for sainthood is under active consideration by the Vatican (he has the title *Servant of God*). In the Brazilian Anglican Church, he is already considered a saint, with a feast day on August 27th.

### Frank Lacerenza - Teaching as Ministry and Reflections on Retirement

September’s here and for the first time since he was an elementary school student at Sacred Heart in Stamford, Frank Lacerenza isn’t going back to school. An active parishioner and highly esteemed educator, Frank recently retired from Saint Mary School in Milford where he had served as principal since 1991. Our staff reporter asked him to reflect on his career as an educator.

A product of a Catholic school education (Sacred Heart, Stamford Catholic), Frank was looking for a public school job after earning his B.A. in Elementary Education and History at Iona. Then, “good timing or God’s plan,” something came up in the school in his home parish. Once teaching, he “was hooked” and came to realize that “this was not just a job, it was a ministry.”



Frank Lacerenza

By the time he had his Masters in Administration the Catholic schools were looking for lay principals to replace the Sisters who had run the schools for many years. Good timing/God’s plan - Frank became a principal at Saint Bernadette’s in New Haven “right around the time I moved to Milford.” Fast forward several years, he was offered the principalship at Saint Patrick’s in Bridgeport, “a great place to serve - urban, blue collar with many families of various races and ethnicities.” After four years, with the regionalization of schools in the Bridgeport diocese, Saint Patrick’s closed its doors. As it did, the principal at Saint Mary’s was leaving, “with no sister to replace her.” Frank wondered: Good timing again? God’s plan? Offered the job, he was able to stay in Milford, his children remained at Saint Gabriel School and “here we are 29 years later!”

Frank and his wife Arlene, a recently retired Marriage and Family Therapist, have no plans to leave Milford. Frank serves as a parish lector and Arlene has been helping with some landscaping around Saint Ann Church. Both hope to expand their volunteerisms once it is safe to do so. (Without the “burdensome job” excuse Frank is confident that Arlene “will have things for me to do around the house.”)

Frank’s closing remarks (see column at right) are a paean to the value of Catholic school education.

“Catholic schools make our religion a total part of the education of our children. We pray every day. Religion is a subject, but our faith is integrated with all the other subjects as well. This includes social studies, where students learn how people need to work with each other and, even more importantly, science, where students learn all about God’s great gift of creation and how important it is to safeguard it.

I respect the public schools and their educators and admire the work they do. But they cannot expressly include God in what they teach; we can. They can’t pray; we can. They might celebrate winter and spring, but we celebrate Christmas and Easter. Children have to learn that our faith is not just we do on weekends - it is a 24/7 thing - which it is in a Catholic school.

All the research shows that the best way to prepare children to be the faith leaders of the future, besides the example of their parents, is through a quality Catholic education. This is important to all of us, whether we have children or not, and it’s why I am so grateful to God that His Holy Spirit guided me to this ministry, even if it was just in a small way, helping young people become the thinking, active, Christian adults of tomorrow.”

Frank Lacerenza’s keys to positive progress at Saint Mary School since 1991

*Accomplished only with the support and cooperation of pastor, parish staff, teachers and parents.*

\*Transition from part-time to full-time Kindergarten *before* the public schools did it, resulting in a greater number of K students feeding into grades 1-8.

\*The Preschool move from part day to full five day for 4 year olds and full three days for 3 year olds. More working parents able to use our preschool program, resulting in a feeder to Kindergarten.

\*The beginnings of a comprehensive Advancement program from only several volunteers to a full time person to oversee marketing, recruitment and some fund raising. The result: better publicity for the school, more families recruited and more money raised in the Annual Fund – all of which kept tuition down and the school viable.

# GIFT

## Growing in Faith Together



### All Ages GIFT Sessions To Begin in October

GIFT program families, couples, and singles, you've got mail! (Or you should have gotten mail.) In late August we sent information about our plans for this year's program. Here are some of the key points:

\*Sessions will begin in late October. We hope to offer small group, in-person classes for family, teen and adult sessions, as well as a virtual alternative via Zoom or take-home packets.

\*Until large group gatherings, like our traditional meal together, are possible, we'll ask families to eat dinner or lunch before coming to our sessions. We're exploring usable formats for opening prayer and song and Deacon George's introduction. We look forward to resuming our standard GIFT format when it is safe to do so.

\*The overall theme for the upcoming season is *Living the Moral Life*. October's focus: *Love of God and Neighbor*.

\*We will follow all guidelines re: use of face masks/coverings, hand sanitizer, safe distancing and sanitizing our learning spaces after each use.

\*We may adjust our tentative plans according to your feedback on completed registration forms. Please be sure to express all of your preferences when you return the forms.

Questions or concerns? Contact Maria Tomasetti, as at right.



### Rainforest Explorers VBS Camp: A Great Week - Jesus Led the Way!

There were two ways adventurous VBS campers could explore the rainforest this year. Ten young campers chose the 2-hour, in person camp for 5 days, August 10-14. They enjoyed Bible Storytelling, Bible Challenge, Arts & Crafts, Rainforest Explorers Dance (moves coordinated by Abbey!) and Snacks (a time to be mask-free).

Some 25 young people opted for the innovative Take-Home Camp Kits, packed with camp materials and giveaways, including the Rainforest Explorers CD and DVD. (Extra copies available. Contact Maria, as at right.)

Special thanks to all our campers for adapting so well to the new format and safety requirements and to the terrific volunteers who made both camp formats happen: Abbey Candelora, April Scepaniski, Bianca Armellino, Hunter Fonck, Ken Giordano, Misai Lam, Eira Rodriguez, Alina Rodriguez, Angie Wargo and Michelle Armellino, who captured campers and volunteers in these photos.

The words from the camp theme song are a perfect key to our Rainforest adventure: *Jesus is my treasure, He leads the way!*



## Sacramental Program Notes



### Initial Meetings (via Zoom)

#### Confirmation

**Thursday, September 10, 7:00-8:30 p.m.**

For parents and teens entering Grade 9 (or older). *Not* for families who participated in our Confirmation program during 2019-2020.

#### First Communion/First Reconciliation

**Saturday, September 12, 10:30-11:30 a.m.**

For parents only of children entering Grade 2 (or older) who have not yet prepared to receive these sacraments.

For Zoom link and meeting details or additional information contact Maria Tomasetti - 203-988-8598 (voice or text) or [atomasetti@snet.net](mailto:atomasetti@snet.net).

Note: We hope to be able to offer small group, in-person classes as well as a virtual alternative and/or make-up sessions for our First Reconciliation, First Communion and Confirmation classes.

### Adult Confirmation Classes

The parish is planning a weekly evening program for adults (age 18 or older), who made their First Communion in the Catholic Church but have not yet received the sacrament of Confirmation. A series of six 2-hour sessions will begin in late September. Adults who complete the program will be able to receive the sacrament of Confirmation in October of this year. Please contact Maria (as above) for details.

### Congratulations . . .

. . . to Luke Capobianco, who received the Sacrament of First Reconciliation on July 25. May you always remember how much God loves you.

### Additional Class of 2020 High School Graduates



**Jonathan Law**

**Abigail Lonergan**

*University of Connecticut  
Chemistry*

**Saint Joseph High School, Trumbull**

**Abigail Lambert**

*Loyola University, Maryland  
Philosophy for Pre-Med Studies*

### K of C Tinto Council 47 Scholarships

Congratulations to Jacob Ciolkosz and Angelina Wargo, Jonathan Law Class of 2020, who received scholarships in the amount of \$500 from the Knights of Columbus Tinto Council 47.

This is the first year the Council has presented awards to graduating high school seniors from Saint Raphael Parish. Thank you, Tinto Council 47, and kudos to Jacob and Angie!

**Rainforest Pics, Retirement Notes, A Breakfast Invitation and More!**

Check out the photos from the in-person option of our 10th VBS camp, an adventure to the Rainforest. Be aware that the maskless campers, the ones with the big smiles, are on snack break!



On the Feast of the Archangels, September 29, come to Mass and celebrate Saint Raphael. Then enjoy breakfast, a special treat from the Pastoral Council.

Look behind the scenes at Fr. Rob Galea's *Live Sunday Mass* and read about Fr. David's drive-by parade. Frank Lacerenza offers reflections on retirement and the value of a Catholic education.

During September, a month dedicated to Our Lady of Sorrows, we can offer this prayer, *Virgin most sorrowful, pray for us.*

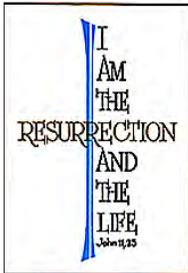
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**In Memoriam**



Saint Raphael's mourns the recent loss of  
Mary Agnes Brooks Toshiko Mohring  
Thomas P. O'Dwyer Jr. Ruth Slavin  
Lidia Baldelli Thomas A. Mallon  
Antoinette Puma Msgr. Gene Gianelli  
Martha Zamfino Jane Astram  
Catherine Vernon Carmen D'Avignon

May they rest in God's peace forever.

**We Welcome With Love . . .**

the newest member of our parish family,  
Zoey Mangan

who was baptized on Sunday, July 19 at Saint Gabriel Church. May God bless, guide and protect you, Zoey, and keep you always close to his heart.



**Parish Press Info Due September 11**

News, comments, photos for our October newsletter are due in our editorial offices by Friday, September 11. Send them via email ([parishpress06460@gmail.com](mailto:parishpress06460@gmail.com)) or call Ann Eden (203-874-8744). Thank you!

**Thursday Meetings for Creative Hands**

Come knit, crochet, start a project or finish one when Creative Hands meets on Thursday evenings at 6 o'clock in the Saint Ann parish library. Call Valerie at 203-687-9568 to learn more.

**Bereavement Support Available by Phone**



If you are grieving the loss of a loved one please reach out to our Bereavement Support Group. We cannot meet in person, but we are only a phone call away. We offer a kindly heart and a sympathetic ear, a way to ease your burden, if only for a while.

Call us at 203-877-4020. Let us walk with you on what can be a sad and lonely journey.

**Great Parade, Great Sendoff!**

The smile and the sign say it all - Father David's congratulatory parade was a success, a heartfelt tribute to one of Saint Raphael's favorite visitors. Having earned his PhD at Notre Dame this spring, Father stopped in Milford for a whirlwind visit on July 25. In a bit of whimsical inspiration, his friends and long-time hosts, Jane Holler and Dan Marecki, invited parishioners to drive by, congratulate Father and wish him well. Dozens of parishioners responded. There were signs and smiles and an outpouring of love and appreciation. Father was "quite surprised and deeply touched." In a 2017 interview he shared that he was studying theology "for the purpose of teaching theology in East Africa." Aspirations fulfilled: Father left last month for Africa where he will be teaching at Catholic University of East Africa in Nairobi. An Irish blessing for an ND alum: May the road rise to meet you, Father David. God bless you always.

