



# The Parish Press

Newsletter of Saint Raphael Parish Family

Milford, Connecticut

December 2020



Many people believe that 2020 has been the worst year in history. Early in January we began to hear reports about a mysterious disease that was killing people in China. What became known as novel coronavirus has now spread to every little corner of the world. 2020 has also seen record-setting wildfires and a super-intense Atlantic hurricane season. Protests against police brutality and Confederate and colonial era injustices have brought millions of people into the streets and other public places. And we have just completed one of the most divisive election cycles ever.

Amid this chaos and confusion comes Christmas. We celebrate the birth of Our Savior. This year we need so desperately to hear the message of peace that comes with the Prince of Peace. We need to remember that Jesus Christ left his heavenly home and took on our human flesh and blood so that we might be saved. Into our troubled world the Christ Child makes His presence known. It is our challenge as Christians to make His peaceful presence more visible despite the difficulties that surround us.

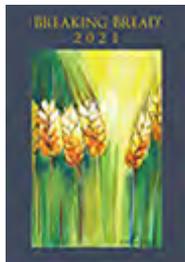
Perhaps we have to start with ourselves, find room for that peace in our hearts so that we can share it with our family and friends, our neighbors and co-workers. Remember, on that first Christmas, Jesus was born into troubled times, into a world rife with political and economic struggles. The palace of the King of Kings was a barnyard, full of farm animals. The promise of Christmas, then and now, is that God is with us. He is Emmanuel.

May you know Christ's peace at Christmas and always.

*Father John*

## Missals for Personal Use

People have asked about ordering daily missals for personal use. It just so happens that we have a 2-church supply of Breaking Bread 2021 which we can't use right now. You are welcome to take one, but we ask that you return it when we can have common missals again for the congregation. Stop in to the sacristy after Mass to claim yours.



## Feast of the Immaculate Conception Tuesday, December 8

On this holy day of obligation we celebrate Mary, conceived without sin. In the words of the U.S. Catholic Catechism for Adults (143), "No sin would touch her so that she would be a fitting and worthy vessel of the Son of God."

It is an ancient feast, celebrated as early as the 7th century. In the United States the celebration predates the Declaration of Independence, and in 1846 the U.S. bishops chose Mary, under the title of the Immaculate Conception, to be the Patroness of our country. During this most difficult time in our history we can turn in confidence to Mary Immaculate. Please see the prayer on page 3.



### Holy Day Masses

8:00 a.m.

Saint Gabriel Church

7:00 p.m.

Saint Ann Church



## Virtual Christmas Card Party Monday, December 14, 6:30-7:30 p.m.

We want *you*, Grade 7-12 teens, to join us for this virtual party. Zoom in, connect with each other and create cards for the sick, elderly and isolated in our community and beyond.

If you can participate - and we hope you can! - contact Maria (as on page 3) by Saturday, December 5 to be sure you receive a packet of card ideas, supplies, instructions and the Zoom link prior to the meeting.

Yes, making Christmas cards can seem like a small thing. But, as Saint Teresa of Calcutta often shared, "In this life we cannot do great things. We can only do small things with great love." This small act of kindness can really make a difference during this uncertain and difficult year, especially for people who are ill, elderly and isolated. P.S. Please share one or two of your favorite snack foods when you call or email to RSVP.

## Christmas Schedule

### Confessions

*At Saint Ann Church only  
because of Covid restrictions*

<b>Tuesday, December 22</b> 7:00 p.m.	<b>Wednesday, December 23</b> 10:00 a.m.
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### Christmas Masses

<b>Christmas Vigil</b> <b>Thursday, December 24</b> Saint Gabriel Church 2:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m. Saint Ann Church 2:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m. 10:00 p.m.	<b>Christmas Day</b> <b>Friday, December 25</b> 9:30 a.m. Saint Ann Church 11:00 a.m. Saint Gabriel Church
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## A Social Justice Meditation

For many of us, the Advent and Christmas seasons are times when we feel an especially strong pull to reach out toward those who are in need. Why? Perhaps one reason is that while Christmas is supposed to be full of joy and togetherness, we realize that there are so many people in the world who are hurting and lonely, and we feel called to close that gap.

The Christmas stories found in the Gospels clearly affirm the season's tradition of compassion. The stories are chock full of love, justice, and God's special concern for those who are poor and vulnerable. This is why many families spend their Christmas mornings in local soup kitchens, serving breakfast to people who are poor and homeless.

G.K. Chesterton (1874-1936), the well-known author and Catholic convert, once wrote about the holiday, "Christmas is built upon a beautiful and intentional paradox; that the birth of the homeless should be celebrated in every home." Merry Christmas.



G.K. Chesterton

*Text taken from The Ampersand, newsletter of the Diocese of Camden, New Jersey. The diocese has no separate offices of Life or Social Justice. Instead, it has what it calls Life & Social Justice Ministries. The two concepts, joined by the ampersand (&), are "impossible to separate."*

### Saint Raphael Christmas Giving Program 2020 - A Patchwork of Possibilities

Our innovative program stewards have come up with a variety of ways for us to continue the heartwarming parish tradition of Christmas generosity to those in need. Please see the possibilities in the "patchwork" below.

<p><b>Organizations Accepting Gifts:</b></p> <p><b><u>Boys and Girls Village</u></b> Using their Amazon link <a href="https://www.myregistry.com/wishlist/wish-list-due-by-dec-11th-please-milford-ct/2586499">https://www.myregistry.com/wishlist/wish-list-due-by-dec-11th-please-milford-ct/2586499</a> choose from among the gifts suggested for a child. The gift is sent directly to Boys and Girls Village. <b>All gifts due by December 11th.</b></p> <p><b><u>Bridgeport Rescue Mission</u></b> Winter Boots Adults and Children (all sizes)</p> <p><b><u>St. Vincent Special Needs Unit</u></b> Sweatpants and Sweatshirts Sizes S, M, L, adults and children</p> <p><b><u>Mary and Joseph's Place</u></b> Baby wash, lotion, wipes, diapers, towels, wash cloths, bottles (3 pack), Desitin, diapers, sleepers (up to size 6 mos.)</p>	<p><b>Organizations Requesting Gift Cards:</b></p> <p>Amistad Catholic Worker Beth-El Center Bridges Families in Need Four Corners RCF Golden Hill Health Care Milford Health Care Milford Senior Center Milford Youth and Family Services West River Health Care</p>	<p><b>Gift Cards in any amount from:</b></p> <p>Amazon Boscov's Dollar Store Michael's ShopRite Stop &amp; Shop Target Walmart</p> <p>\$5-\$10 Gift Cards to: Dunkin Donuts McDonald's Popeyes Subway Wendy's</p>
A row of five stylized evergreen Christmas trees, each with a different shape and size, arranged horizontally.		

Here's how you can be a part of this beautiful ministry of love.

1) Send your check, payable to Saint Raphael Parish (Memo line: Christmas Giving Program), to 501 Naugatuck Ave., Milford, CT 06460 (or drop it in the collection basket). We will then purchase Scrip gift cards for the organizations listed above.

2) Mail gifts/gift cards, clearly designated for *Christmas Giving Program*, to the same address, or leave them in the containers in the vestibules of both churches when you come to Mass.

We will need all gifts/gift cards/checks by **Sunday, December 13th** in order to comply with quarantine protocols. (Note: For Boys & Girls Village use the Amazon link above by *December 11th*.)

Thank you, as always, for your unfailing generosity. Please give from your heart and make this Christmas season a little brighter for those in need. God bless you.

### Gift Cards for the Needy at Saint Gabriel This Year

Not gifts for kids this year, but gift cards for those in need. Our tree will be festive, but tagless!

Purchase a card from any retailer you choose, Stop & Shop, perhaps, ShopRite, or Walmart. Drop it off after the 8:00 or 11:00 a.m., Mass *before* Sunday, December 20.

Know of a person/family in need? Submit information, in confidence, to Rose Marie Marmolejo after the 11 o'clock Mass or call 203-378-5508.  
Thank you very much!

## GIFT: Growing in Faith Together All Ages Faith Formation

As part of the year's overall topic, *Living the Moral Life*, December's GIFT participants will explore the 7th Commandment, "You shall not steal," and the 10th Commandment, "You shall not covet your neighbor's goods." What do these two parts of God's law mean for our lives as Catholics? The *U.S. Catholic Catechism for Adults* says that to keep these commandments "we need to acquire the virtues of moderation in our possessions, justice in our treatment of others, respect for their human dignity, and solidarity with all peoples." This session engages everyone in discovering how to be good stewards of their time, talent and treasure.

### Living the Moral Life

Being Good Stewards

In-Person Class Schedule:

Friday, December 11  
6:30 - 8:00 p.m.

Sunday, December 13  
12:00 Noon - 2:30 p.m.

Tuesday, December 15  
6:30 - 8:00 p.m.

Saint Ann Parish Center Hall

For registered families and participants only.

No walk-ins permitted.

### GIFT Sacramental Program Schedule

#### First Reconciliation

Required Learning Session #2

Virtual:

Wednesday, December 2  
6:30 - 8:00 p.m.

#### Confirmation

In-Person:

Sunday, December 6  
1:00 - 2:30 p.m.

Virtual:

Tuesday, January 5  
6:30 - 8:00 p.m.

Prayer Life

#### For all Sacrament Sessions:

In-Person: Saint Ann  
Parish Center Classrooms  
Virtual: Zoom Information  
to follow

In-person dates at right are only for those who have registered in advance. To request a change of date or to change from in-person to virtual classes please notify Maria ([atomasetti@snet.net](mailto:atomasetti@snet.net) or 203-988-8598 - voice or text) at least one week before the scheduled session. Those who have registered for GIFT's virtual option will receive an email from Maria with information and dates and Zoom links for your sessions.

An email will go out to all registered families/participants prior to December's sessions with a YouTube video of the welcome, the opening prayer and song, and Deacon George's presentation. Questions? Please reach out to Maria (as above).

### Special and Moving RCIA Celebrations

RCIA, the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, is a process of discovery and formation, a journey of faith by which adults come into full communion with the Catholic Church.



On Saturday, October 24, during a special Mass for the catechumens and their families, Kiara Harris, Mariah Harris and Christopher James Rickard V received the Sacraments of Initiation, Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist. During the 9:30 Mass on Sunday, October 25, Kathleen Charland was received into the Catholic Church. Father John conferred the Sacrament of Confirmation and Kathleen received Holy Communion for the first time. Congratulations, Kiara, Mariah, Christopher and Kathleen. Welcome to the Saint Raphael Community of Faith.

### Congratulations to the Confirmandi!

During Masses on consecutive Friday evenings Father John administered the Sacrament of Confirmation to twenty young parishioners. Sealed now with the gifts of the Holy Spirit, Confirmandi, may you use your many talents to renew the face of the earth.

#### Friday, October 30, Saint Gabriel Church:



Christian Sebastian Andriolas  
Robert Francis of Assisi Boyle  
Derek Anthony of Padua Cascone-Kirkland  
Nicholas Thomas Coleman  
Jacob Michael the Archangel Cupole  
Matthew Patrick Galligan  
Leonard Anthony of Padua Ialeggio  
Rylie Rose Venerini Keller

#### Friday, November 6, Saint Ann Church:

Emma Rachel Acri  
Michael the Archangel Adao  
Gustavo Antonio Aragon  
Logan Francis of Assisi Bernier  
Robert Maximilian Kolbe Dabrowski  
Connor Stephen Dudley  
Joshua Michael the Archangel Yazdzik  
Cesar Lucas Mendez  
Arthur Vincent De Guzman Moral  
Deven Albert the Great Rivera  
Eira Rose of Lima Rodriguez  
Jahir Miguel Mendez Velazquez

*Lord,  
send out  
your Spirit,  
and renew  
the face  
of the earth.*

### Blessings on Your First Communion . . .

Jonathan Gabriel Lawless

who received Jesus for the first time in Holy Eucharist at the 11 o'clock Mass at Saint Gabriel's on Sunday, November 15. May the peace, the joy and the light of Jesus remain with you always.

### In Our Time of Need

#### Pray to Mary, the Immaculate Conception

O Virgin Immaculate, Mother of God and Patroness of our country,  
We, your children turn to you in this pandemic.  
Our troubles are numerous; our fears are great.  
Grant that we might deposit them at your feet,  
Take refuge in your Immaculate Heart,  
And obtain peace, healing, rescue  
and timely help in all our needs.  
You are our Mother.  
Pray for us to your Son. Amen

### Donate to the Saint Gabriel Food Pantry

The Food Pantry, a lifeline for so many, has continued to operate during this difficult time. You can assist by donating pasta and pasta sauce, peanut butter, jelly, tuna, cereal, brownie mixes and condiments like mustard and ketchup. Gift cards are always welcome.

Please call 203-878-3075 to make a donation. Thanks.

## Holy Day, Christmas Giving Update, Sacramental Celebrations and More

On Tuesday, December 8 we celebrate the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, the patronal feast of the United States. Look inside for the Holy Day Mass times.

The violet vestments of Advent remind us that we are preparing for Christmas, the season of giving. Our Christmas Giving program has an amazing array of possibilities for reaching out this year to people in need. See the "giving patchwork" on page 2.



The parish's October/November season of sacramental celebrations was wonderful and uplifting. Congratulations to all those who received Sacraments of Initiation.

Have a peaceful, joyous Christmas.

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

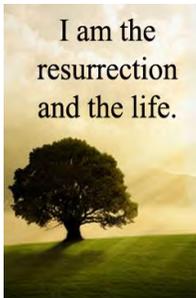
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## SAINT RAPHAEL PARISH

Saint Ann Church Saint Gabriel Church  
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Milford, CT 06460-5048

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*Let there be peace on earth.  
Merry Christmas!*



I am the  
resurrection  
and the life.

### **In Memoriam**

Saint Raphael's mourns the recent loss of

Kathleen Provencher  
Marybeth Charbonneau  
Florence Madarang  
Raymond Vincent DeCrescenzo  
JoAnn Kelly Mapes  
Richard Gaudette

May they know God's love and mercy and behold his face in heaven.

### **Bereavement Support:**

#### **A Source of Comfort As You Grieve**



The holidays, once so joyful, can be particularly difficult for anyone who is grieving, especially in this year of Covid. The entire world seems to have turned upside down and you are struggling, perhaps in isolation, with the incredible pain of loss.

Please consider reaching out to our Bereavement Support Group. Although we have not resumed our in-person meetings we are available to listen, to share your burden, to offer consolation. Call us at 203-877-4020. May God give you peace.

### **Info for January's Parish Press Due December 4**

Christmas is coming, and that means a *really* early deadline for January's newsletter: Friday, December 4. Please send your news and notes, suggestions, comments and photos to [parishpress06460@gmail.com](mailto:parishpress06460@gmail.com) or call Ann Eden (203-874-8744). Thank you.

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

the newest members of our parish family,

Michael Maziarz  
Emilia Bartozzi  
James Compton  
Riley Anne Greenwood  
Bernard Giovannino Toohey



Michael was baptized on Saturday, October 17, at Saint Gabriel Church. Emilia and James received Baptism's life-giving waters on Sunday, October 18, at Saint Gabriel's.

Riley received the sacrament of Baptism on Saturday, November 14 at Saint Ann Church. Bernard was baptized on Sunday, November 15, also at Saint Ann's.

Walk always in the light of the Lord, little ones, and know how much you are loved.

**Friday, January 1  
Solemnity of Mary,  
The Mother of God**

(No Vigil Mass)

**Holy Day Masses**

**9:30 AM**

**Saint Ann Church**

**11:00 AM**

**Saint Gabriel Church**

