



The Parish Press

Newsletter of Saint Raphael Parish Family

Milford, Connecticut

January 2021



We say goodbye, and, for many, good riddance to 2020, and pray that 2021 will bring much needed change. Many have suggested that 2020 was the worst year ever. After all, we struggled through a global pandemic, unlike anything most of us have ever seen. We experienced unheard of sickness and death around the world. Our two churches were empty from March 17 until June 8, when weekday Mass was once again open to the public. It was not until a month later that public weekend Masses resumed, but with severe limitations. This past year also saw urban unrest, racial tensions, severe wildfires. Sure, 2020 has been a tough year, but certainly not the worst year.

Maybe it is just a matter of perspective. Most of us have not lived through a World War I or World War II. Though we may have seen several recessions, very few of us have lived through the Great Depression. And, although we are apprehensive about a divided nation, none of us had to suffer through the Civil War that literally ripped our country apart.

As we move from 2020 to 2021, let us reflect on the fact that we live in the best times of history. Harvard University psychologist Steven Pinker argues we might be living in the most peaceful time of human existence. The world always has its ups and downs. We need to remember we have been here before and we have gotten through it. We still have it rather good.

So, yes, adios, au revoir, arrivederci and farewell to 2020. Welcome to 2021.

Father John

Kelly Armour: At Rainbow's End



Kelly smiles her rainbow smile

Behind every name on our parish prayer list there's a story. Kelly Armour, daughter of parishioners Gail and Charlie Phillips, daughter-in-law of Janet and the late Bill Armour, has written hers in a newly self-published book, *At Rainbow's End, A Memoir of Perseverance Through Adversity*. Drawn from her personal journals, the memoir recounts her family's journey with "seizures, brain cancer, Selective Mutism, Chron's disease and more." It's also a journey of love, friendship, great kindness and ever-deepening faith.

Kelly's adolescent dizziness progressed in early adulthood to seizures, but a girl "with a wedding to plan" (Kelly married Bill, her "knight in shining armour," in 2001) was "too busy for seizures." Medications would "fix me right up." They didn't, but. "Luckily, I sought out God for help, and He has never failed me."

Bill's deep love for Jesus was an inspiration. "The power of Bill's words when he prayed for me was amazing." Kelly, too, learned to listen for God's voice. While praying her daily Rosary she discerned the Lord's very unexpected call to teach religious education.

Working with first and second graders became a joy for her and for the homebound who received caring notes created by her students. Meeting her for the first time, elderly ladies would tear up as they told her how much the children's notes had meant to them. (Story continues under Kelly on page 4)

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



T4S

Super Bowl of Caring 2021

Quarterbacked by our Teens for Service, we're headed for this year's Souper Bowl of Caring, the annual youth-organized effort to alleviate poverty and hunger in our local community. Key dates:

Saturday, January 30, 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Saint Ann's Parking Lot, 501 Naugatuck Ave.

Contactless, drive-thru drop off of non-perishable food items and paper goods. Drive through, pop your trunk; masked teens, practicing safe distancing, will unload your donations.

Saturday, and Sunday January 30 and 31

After all Masses at Saint Ann's and Saint Gabriel's

Contactless drop off of non-perishable food items and paper goods at tables set up outside each church's entry doors. Teens, wearing masks and practicing safe distancing, will remove and sort the donations for delivery.

Primary recipients of our donations will be the Saint Gabriel Food Pantry, Milford Food Bank and Beth-El Center, including its Meals to Go Food Service. Please see January's weekly bulletins for each group's "most needed" items and for specifications for donations by check, for which we'll be very grateful. As always, thank you for your generosity!

A Social Justice Meditation

What does it mean for a Catholic to be “pro-life”? For some, it simply means to be against abortion and euthanasia. The Church, however, takes a broader perspective. The meditation below, from the Rev. James J. Martin, reflects that broader view:

“I am pro-life. That means that I am not only for the dignity of the human being from the moment of conception, but also for the dignity of the human being until the natural end of life.

That means that I support anything that helps a person live a full, healthy and satisfying life, in every part of the world. So I am for care for the poor, for a living wage, for affordable health care, for adequate housing, for a humane work environment, for equal pay for women, for generous childcare, for the support of the aged and the infirm.

That means I support caring for the marginalized and all those who feel left out, mocked, lonely, ignored or frightened. To me, this is what being pro-life is all about.”



James J. Martin, S.J.

James J. Martin, S.J. is an American Jesuit priest, writer, and editor-at-large at *America*, the national Catholic magazine. In 2017 Pope Francis appointed him as a consultant to the Vatican's Secretariat for Communications. Martin's outreach to the LGBT community is the subject of his most recent book, *Building a Bridge: How the Catholic Church and the LGBT Community Can Enter into a Relationship of Respect, Compassion, and Sensitivity*.

Joseph, The Saint We Need in 2021



In mid-December the Holy Father proclaimed a “Year of Saint Joseph” from December 8, 2020 to December 8, 2021. Father James Martin, writing in *America* on December 13, commented, “In this dark season, in the middle of a global pandemic, if you wonder if God is with you, if God sees what you are going through, then Saint Joseph is your patron.”

Saint Joseph is the inspiration and the guiding light of the Men’s Group that meets on Tuesdays at 7:00 p.m. Gathered at Saint Gabriel’s Hall for evening prayer, members discuss Sunday’s Gospel reading and consider how it applies to their lives. To learn more about the group contact John Marmolejo at 203-895-7696 or jmarmole@snet.net.

An Invitation from CONECT



Do you want to be part of a relationship-based movement that promotes discovery, research, analysis, and articulation of a moral voice in our community?

Then meet with CONECT via ZOOM on Tuesday, January 12 from 7:00-8:30 p.m. RSVP using this link https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfn2LSP3mZHsBEX0UUKDXteqsdB9NgfYxiO3Qc_eOkGkiS4mQ/viewform. Here are some details about the organization:

CONECT (Congregations Organized for a NEw CT) is a non-partisan collective of 37 congregations and institutions from New Haven and Fairfield Counties. Representing more than 20,000 people from different races and faith backgrounds, living in both cities and suburbs, CONECT is made up of people who have joined together to take action on social and economic justice issues of common concern.

CONECT believes in the power of relationships and that people working together have the power to change their communities for the better.

Saint Raphael has been part of CONECT since 2011. We invite you to experience the power of CONECT from the comfort, convenience and safety of your home on Tuesday evening January 12th.

Learn more about CONECT on Facebook, at their web site and from Caroline Wetzel, a Saint Raphael parishioner and CONECT Leader.

CONECT Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/CONECT.IAF/>

CONECT web site

<http://www.weconnect.org/>

Caroline Wetzel

cwetzel@procyonpartners.net



The Food Pantry continues to meet the challenge of providing for those in need. Food distribution (Thursday mornings beginning at 10) is by appointment only. Call 203-878-3075 to schedule an appointment or to make a donation. In addition to foodstuffs, we need hygiene products, hand soap, bar soap, shampoo, toothpaste, dishwashing liquid and laundry detergent. Gift cards are always welcome. Thank you very much.



Let the Children Come to Me First Reconciliation Saturday, December 10

We read in Matthew's Gospel (19:13-14) that children were brought to Jesus "that he might lay his hands on them and pray." The disciples objected, but Jesus said, "Let the children come to me, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."

On Saturday, December 10 at Saint Ann Church ten young parishioners came to Jesus for the first time in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, a sacrament that allows Jesus to express his love for children today. Congratulations, young people. Please remember always how much God loves you and that yours is the kingdom of heaven.

Jocelyn Brennan
Nora Burns
Samuel DiMartino
Connor Heinmiller
Matteo Kenworthy
Thomas Marter
Lena Rivera
Ryan Rivera
Bryce Tuba
Gian Venditti

GIFT for January Child Lures and Teen Lures Prevention Program

The Archdiocese of Hartford now requires that families with children and teens registered in our GIFT program (Grade 1 through Confirmation) participate in the Child Lures and Teen Lures Prevention Programs - even if they have done so previously. Even one year can make a difference in level of understanding. Child Lures is designed for children through grade 6 with a parent/guardian. Teen Lures is designed for preteens/teens grade 7 or older with a parent/guardian.

GIFT Sacramental Program Schedule

Confirmation

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

Prayer Life

Virtual: Zoom
Information to follow

The programs introduce personal safety to children and teens and empower them to detect, avoid and report inappropriate behaviors and unsafe situations. The programs are age-appropriate. The 2021 schedule for in-person and virtual sessions appears at right. Due to the nature of this content, all programs - for both children and teens - require the participation of an adult.

We will notify all GIFT families via email if, due to health and safety considerations or very low in-person attendance, we need to shift to an "all virtual" format for January. All adults will receive a parent guide to help with continued reinforcement of these important personal safety tips at home. Questions? Please contact

Maria Tomasetti, 203-988-8598 or atomasetti@snet.net.

Child Lures/Teen Lures Schedule

In-Person:

Friday, January 22
6:30 - 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, January 24
1:00 - 2:00 p.m.

Tuesday, January 26
6:30 - 7:30 p.m.

Virtual Teen Lures:
Thursday, January 28
6:30 - 7:30 p.m.

Virtual Child Lures:
Friday, January 29
6:30 - 7:30 p.m.

Blessings on Your First Communion, Logan!

Logan Gabriel Lawless made his First Communion at the 11 o'clock Mass at Saint Gabriel's on Sunday, November 15. We printed his name incorrectly in December's *Parish Press*. Our apologies, Logan.

A First for T4S: Virtual Winter Family Fun Night Saturday, February 6, 6:00 - 7:30 p.m. via Zoom



Winter Family Fun Night is going virtual this year! Families with children ages 3 through 10 are invited to Zoom in between 6 and 7:30 p.m. on Saturday, February 6 for a rollicking good time. Share the joy - invite close friends and other family members to participate!

Our parish teens are still discussing and deciding, finalizing the lineup of fun winter activities. These ideas are on the drawing board:



- * Winter and Valentine arts & crafts
- * Reading of winter themed children's book
- * Winter song sing-a-long
- * Winter puzzle time!
- * Play-Doh creations



The teens are hoping that lots of families will be Zooming in! If you'd like to be part of this terrific activity please contact Maria (as above) by Monday, February 1.

Benefit for you: You'll receive the Zoom link and meeting information. Benefit for us (and the participants!); we'll have time to mail or deliver Family Fun Night materials like craft materials and Play-Doh to your home. Have a favorite winter song or children's book (*Owl Moon*, *The Snowy Day*)? Suggest it to Maria - it could make the lineup!

January, New Beginnings

January. New month, new year, and we hope for better things. How wonderful that we begin with the Solemnity of Mary, the Mother of God.



January's birthstone is the garnet, which represents constancy, or, in the words of one remarkable young woman, perseverance in the face of adversity. Read a bit of her Rainbow's End story inside.

CONNECT has extended an invitation (see page 3) and our parish teens are deep into planning for two major events, the Souper Bowl of Caring in January and February's Winter Family Fun Night.

January, known for its cold and snow, is also Hot Tea month, National Oatmeal Month and National Soup Month. Enjoy every one of its 31 days!

The Parish Press

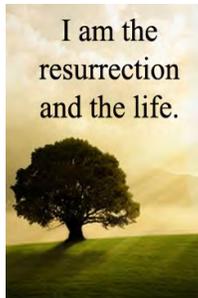
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SAINT RAPHAEL PARISH

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We Wish You Peace in the New Year.



I am the
resurrection
and the life.

In Memoriam

Saint Raphael's mourns the recent loss of

Clementine Perruccio
Betty Lou Randall
Rose Marie Caprio
Eileen Lawton
Kaylena Angela Circone
David H. Buchanan
Otto Keegan, Jr.
Dirac Twidwell

May they rejoice forever in God's eternal kingdom of light, happiness and peace.

Bereavement Support: Reach Out in Your Need



If the loss of someone you love has left you feeling bereft and alone in the new year, please know that you can reach out to our Bereavement Support group. We can't meet in person, but we are only a phone call away.

Allow us to share your burden and your memories, to listen to the story of the one you miss so much and to offer comfort in your loss. Call us at 203-877-4020. May God give you peace.

Info for February's *Parish Press* Due January 12

News, notes, photos and comments for February's newsletter are due in our editorial office by Tuesday, January 12. Send them to parishpress06460@gmail.com or call Ann Eden (203-874-8744). Thank you.

We Welcome With Love . . .

the newest member of our parish family,

Emma Grace Ripple
Lily Strong



Emma was baptized on Sunday, December 20, at Saint Ann Church. Lily received the life-giving waters of Baptism on Sunday, December 20 at Saint Gabriel Church. May God bless and protect you, little ones, all the days of your life.

Kelly (continued from page 1)

Kelly's aren't the only health issues for her little family. Bill has Chron's disease and the resulting spinal arthritis. Will, the apple of his parents' eyes, suffered from Selective Mutism until 4th grade when he read an essay about Becca, his late grandfather, at a school assembly. "My son's voice," Kelly wrote, "is the sweetest sound I have ever heard."

The memoir brims with such special moments: her awareness of the brevity of life; her desire "not to waste the precious gift of another day"; radiation at New Haven's McGivney Center, where she learned about Blessed Michael McGivney. Watch her amazing video, at <https://archdioceseofhartford.org/month-of-mcgivney-oct-16/>.

The title of her book (available at Amazon.com). echoes the words of a friend: "Without a little rain there would be no rainbows." Thank you for sharing the rainbows, Kelly. May God bless you always.