



The Parish Press

Newsletter of Saint Raphael Parish Family

Milford, Connecticut

March 2021



Right now we are in the middle of Lent. Immediately after Jesus was baptized by His cousin John the Baptist, He went away by himself into the desert. There he fasted and prayed, and Satan appeared to him three times, tempting him. Jesus stayed in the desert for 40 days. The Church says that Lent is a 40-day period of unity with “the mystery of Jesus in the desert.”

By sacrificing small things, as well as fasting, praying, and giving to charity, Catholics are invited to experience a period of prayer like the one Jesus experienced, and to prepare themselves to resist Satan’s temptation and fulfill the mission God has given the Church.

When I was growing up, Lent meant a Friday menu of mac and cheese, tuna sandwiches, and grilled cheese. Lent was also the giving-up season. We would ask each other, “What are you giving up for Lent?” (I have mentioned before how I was always ready to give up brussel sprouts.)

A Lenten fast doesn’t have to consist of just fasting and abstaining from the things we love. It can mean adding things during this season of Lent, things that will make our lives more meaningful. Being a more attentive spouse, extra prayer time, doing some spiritual reading. Each year our parish provides a reflection booklet for Lent to all parishioners who would like one. Saint Raphael participates in Operation Rice Bowl, the almsgiving program of Catholic Relief Services. Both of these initiatives were highlighted in the February edition of *The Parish Press*.

The key is to choose something that you will sustain through the whole of Lent, and something that does not gravely disrupt your family life or the people around you. If you drive miles to work, don’t give up driving. If you take care of young children, don’t commit to all-night prayer vigils, at least not every night. Lent is about how much we can turn to God the Father, through Jesus, and hand over our lives to him. That should be the center of our Lenten discipline.

Father John

Virtual Stations of the Cross Friday, March 12, 6:30 p.m.

Saint Raphael’s parish teens will lead the Stations via Zoom, in a format created by well-known catechist Gwen Costello. The simple, direct language of Gwen’s *Praying the Stations with Children* appeals to people of all ages, not just to children.

Following a brief description of what happened to Jesus at each stop along the Way of the Cross participants say together, “If we had been there, Jesus, we would have” . . . stepped up, done something brave and courageous. Then the reflection: “But would we really . . .?” How do we react today when others are in need or are treated unjustly? Each station closes with the simple prayer, “Jesus teach me how to follow you.”



All GIFT-registered families will receive the Zoom link and meeting information for this very special presentation of the Stations. Other parishioners who would like to participate should reach out to Maria (atomasetti@snet.net or 203-988-8598 - voice or text) for the information.

Lenten Fast and Abstinence

Ash Wednesday and Good Friday are obligatory days of fasting and abstinence for Catholics during Lent. In addition, all Fridays during Lent are obligatory days of abstinence.

Fasting, required for those ages 18 to 59, means eating only one full meal a day and two light meals, with no eating in between. (Liquids are permitted.) *Abstinence*, for those ages 14 and older, means not eating meat.

In addition to Father John’s suggestions at left about fasting, the USCCB proposes giving up meals and donating the cost of those meals to Catholic Relief Services through CRS Rice Bowl, our parish Lenten project.

Lenten Program Planned for March

Peter DeMarco and Amy Ekeh, working with the parish cantors, are planning a virtual program of music and meditation later this month. Details were not available as we went to press, so watch the weekly bulletin for details as they come together. This team’s well-deserved reputation for inspirational presentations precedes them. You won’t want to miss what promises to be a memorable evening.

Lenten Opportunities for Reflection, Prayer, and Almsgiving

**Mending Our Hearts*, a booklet of Lenten reflections, is available at the main doors of both churches. A wonderful Lenten companion.

*You’ll find links to a variety of presentations of Stations of the Cross at our parish website <https://saintraphaelmilford.org>.

*If you haven’t done so already, pick up your CRS Rice Bowl at the main doors of the church. Put your faith in action and make the world a better place for everyone.



A Social Justice Meditation: “Judge not that ye be not judged”

When someone wants to justify their life choices, they often pull out their trump card, “Judge not, lest ye be judged!” But when Jesus said that (Matt 7:1) he certainly wasn’t saying that we can’t evaluate whether someone’s choices are wrong.

When I condemn someone else’s behavior, whether it’s blatantly sinful or just different from my own, I pass judgment according to *my own strengths* and opinions. When God evaluates that person, he takes into account *everything* about that person – their biology, sinful tendencies, weaknesses, family history, current struggles, and a thousand other factors in their life. God’s judgment is perfectly just, while mine is terribly skewed. Without omniscience, all my judgments are going to be off kilter. When God judges a person, his judgment flows out of his omniscience. That’s why it’s perfect.

But there’s a massive difference between judging arrogantly and judging with humility. That middle ground between harsh judgment and no judgment at all is compassionate judgment, judgment tempered by the love of Jesus.

Compassionate judgment seeks to stay faithful to the Bible but also love the person who struggles. Jesus didn’t say, “Judge not lest ye be judged” in order to make us meek and mild people who celebrate everyone and everything. Jesus said it so that we would be slow to judge and so that our judgment would be tempered by mercy. It is a good rule to follow as we seek to right the injustices and wrongs of our world and make it a better place for all God’s children.



Stephen Altrogge

Stephen Altrogge is a young Christian who blogs at The BlazingCenter.com. He describes himself as “a husband, dad, writer and coffee drinker,” and says, “I take Jesus very seriously. The rest - not so much.”

First Reconciliation January 13

Congratulations to Lily Buglione, Seth Empric, Philip Fiordelisi, Viktoria Kmiecik, Molly Maziarz and Cristian Salamanca. These six young parishioners met Jesus for the first time in the Sacrament of Reconciliation on Saturday, January 23.

Always remember, little ones, how much God loves you and how Jesus calls you to follow Him.

The Colors of the Liturgy

Red vestments at Confirmation, white at weddings, violet during Lent - why and when does the Church use certain colors? And what do they mean? Follow the dots for a brief explanation.

● Violet symbolizes penance, humility, melancholy. The color of Advent and Lent. Originally a color associated with royalty, over time it came to represent penance.

● Rose symbolizes anticipation, rejoicing
Used: Gaudete Sunday (the 3rd Sunday of Advent) and Laetare Sunday (the 4th Sunday of Lent) as a reminder of the upcoming joyful events.

● Red symbolizes blood, fire, passion
Used: Representing blood, Palm Sunday, Good Friday, feasts of apostles, evangelists, martyrs. As a symbol of the Holy Spirit, used on Pentecost Sunday, the sacrament of Confirmation.

○ White signifies purity, joy, light, glory
Used: Christmas and Easter seasons; feasts of Our Lord (excluding those related to His passion), the Virgin Mary, the angels and saints who are not martyrs; at nuptial Masses and baptisms.

● Green symbolizes hope, life, anticipation
Used: Ordinary time, a season focused on the Lord's 3-year public ministry, His teachings and miracles; a reminder that the mission of the Church is to share the hope and life of Christ with the world.

Great Souper Bowl Weekend!

One word for the Souper Bowl of Caring weekend: **Wow!** *Wow!* *Wow!* was it cold those last two days of January, with temps down in the teens. *Wow!* the parishioners were generous: our T4S team received over 700 items as well as monetary donations to help alleviate poverty and hunger in our local community. *Wow!* the teens were terrific, carrying donations into the Parish Center, sorting items, loading cars, and delivering donations to our recipient organizations.



Kudos and thanks to everyone who braved the bitter cold to support our drive-thru Saturday and drop-off Sunday event. Beth-El Center, Saint Gabriel Food Pantry and the Milford Food Bank are most grateful for your kindness. MVP for this Souper Bowl: T4S, our indomitable quarterback!

Looking for the Parish Website?

It’s a great source of information. You can find the weekly bulletin, our link to live streaming and much more.

<https://saintraphaelmilford.org>



According to the Girl Scouts, It’s Cookie Time!

Satisfy your Girls Scout cookie craving the weekend of March 27/28 at the Girl Scout Cookie Booth in the back parking lot at Saint Ann Church. Look for your favorites - Thin Mints, Samoas, Tagalongs and more. You’ll find a complete list of local GS cookie booths at <https://www.girlscouts.org/en/cookies/cookies.html>. Yum!

GIFT
Sacramental Program
Schedule

First Communion

Learning Session #2
Liturgy of the Eucharist

In-Person:

Saturday, March 6
10:00 a.m. - 12 noon *or*

Virtual:

Thursday, March 11
6:30 - 8:00 p.m.

Tour of St. Ann Church/Sacristy

In-Person:

(10 children w/parent/guardian)

Saturday, March 20
10:00 a.m. - 12 noon *or*

Virtual:

Monday, March 29
6:30 - 8:00 p.m.

All sessions are for
children w/parent/guardian.

Confirmation

Required for Candidates
Sacred Art & Music, including
Tour of St. Ann Church/Sacristy

In-Person:

Sunday, March 7
1:00 - 2:30 p.m. *or*

Virtual:

Wednesday, March 10
6:30 - 8:00 p.m.

For all Sacrament Sessions:

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



value of working together, while in *Snowman Paul at the Winter Olympics* by Yossi Lapid, Paul is schooled in the importance of being truthful.

There were crafts (snowman puppets and Valentine hearts), winter word searches and a group crossword puzzle (6 across: a unique crystalized object that falls from the sky - snowflake - and lots of those fell the next day!) The fun activities also included Play-Doh and age-appropriate coloring pages as well winter songs like *Jingle Bell Rock*, *Frosty the Snowman* and *Jingle Bells*. Thanks and a thumbs-up to Viktoria, who played the piano for *Jingle Bells*! Great job!



GIFT: Living the Moral Life: Being Truthful

The focus of this month's GIFT session is the eighth commandment, "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor," which calls us to be honest and genuine with all people in our every act, deed and dealing. To be honest we must be sincere, open, trustworthy and truthful. We must tell the truth always, no matter how difficult that might be.

Explore the meaning and challenge of living the eighth commandment within our families, in our relationships with others, at work, at school, in society at large.

The schedule at right is 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 or 203-988-8598 - voice or text) well in advance of the scheduled session.

The popular new Virtual Adult session with Deacon George is scheduled for **Monday, March 22, 7-8 p.m.**

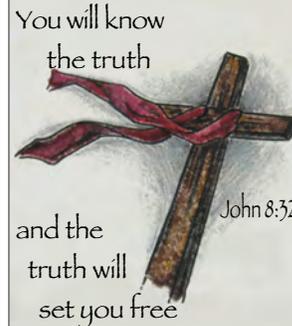
Maria will send the Zoom links to registered GIFT families for the family and teen sessions and to any adults interested in the adult session with Deacon George.

Registered families/participants can look forward to receiving a YouTube video of the welcome, the opening prayer and song, and Deacon George's presentation prior to the March sessions.

Just Ahead of the Sunday Storm: Our First Virtual Winter Family Fun Night

Saturday, February 6 would have been the 10th anniversary of Winter Family Fun Night, a long-time parish tradition. No gatherings allowed in 2021, but our parish teens were undaunted. Pooling their creative efforts Abbey Candelora, Misai Lam, Allyza Moral and Arthur Moral went virtual. WFFN became VVFFN (V for Virtual) and it was on!

Kids ages 3-10 and their parents Zoomed in and listened to two great snowman stories with a message. In Steven Kroll's *The Biggest Snowman Ever*, mice Clayton and Desmond learn the



In-Person Schedule:

Friday, March 19
6:30 - 8:00 p.m.

Sunday, March 21
1:00 - 2:30 p.m.

Tuesday, March 23
6:30 - 8:00 p.m.

Saint Ann
Parish Center Hall
No walk-ins permitted.

Virtual Schedule:

Family Session
Wednesday, March 24
6:30 - 8:00 p.m.

Teen Session
Thursday, March 25
6:30 - 8:00 p.m.

We were delighted that Amelia, Brooklyn, Ethan, Eva, Frida, Julian, Michael, Nicole, Patrick, Victoria, Viktoria and their parents were with us! Special thanks to our parish teens for all their work with planning, preparation, presenting the program, and keeping the children engaged. To quote one of the moms who participated, "My children had a blast!"

Roll on the Rocky Railway at Summer VBS Camp 2021

Young people can ride the rails with Jesus on the Rocky Railway, this year's Summer VBS camp. Two options are available: **An at-home experience** (take-home bags, one virtual summer fun night) *or* **In-Person** (up to 20 campers ages 4-10, with Covid safety precautions). Interested in the in-person option for your camper(s)? Please vote for the week you prefer: July 26-30 or August 9-13. Exact hours haven't yet been finalized, but either week will have morning sessions.

Railway? The Rockies? Memory buddies like Ava the eagle, Finn the salmon and Lawrence the elk? Sounds like a mountain of fun! If you have questions, or if you'd like to cast your ballot for a preferred week of in-person adventuring, please contact Maria (as above) and climb aboard!



Colors, Teens, Optimism

Snow was on the ground and in the forecast as we went to press, but the first day of spring is on the March calendar. Brave daffodils will soon appear in the



bright, cheerful yellow that makes us optimistic about the future. Read inside about the colors of the liturgy - mostly violet during Lenten March - and what they mean.

Read, too, about the other colors of the liturgy. Why red on Pentecost and Good Friday? White at Christmas and Easter? What is the significance of rose vestments and when does the priest wear them?

And check out the reports on our busy parish teens, who have made the *for service* part of **T4S** come alive this year.

Enjoy March. It's Optimism Month!

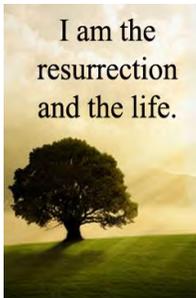
The Parish Press

A Publication of Saint Raphael Parish
Milford, Connecticut
Editor: Ann K. Eden
Production Staff: Lou Eden, Nancy Vai
Printing: Graphic Image, Milford, CT

SAINT RAPHAEL PARISH
Saint Ann Church Saint Gabriel Church
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MILFORD, CT
PERMIT NO. 362

In Memoriam



I am the
resurrection
and the life.

Saint Raphael's mourns the recent loss of

Giuseppina Provenzano
Mary Boyle Raymond
Jeniffer Valenzuela Moreno
John Thomas
Eleanor Carra
Janis Romer Kelsey

May they behold the face of Christ, who is the resurrection and the life.

Bereavement Support - A Phone Call Away



If you feel the need for comfort and support as you grieve the loss of someone you love, please reach out to our Bereavement Support group. We are a mere phone call away (203-877-4020). Call and let us ease your burden.

Extension of Sunday Mass Dispensation

In light of the continued circumstances surrounding the pandemic, Archbishop Blair has now extended the dispensation from the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days for all the Faithful in the Archdiocese of Hartford up to and including Sunday, May 23, 2021, which is Pentecost Sunday.

The elderly, those with pre-existing conditions, those who are fearful and anxious and those who are taking care of a sick or homebound person need not be concerned about missing Mass during the period of dispensation.

Parish Press Info Due March 15

Information for April's newsletter - news, notes, photos, comments - are due in our office by Monday, March 15. (Yes, the dreaded Ides of March!) Please send them to parishpress06460@gmail.com or call Ann Eden (203-874-8744). Thank you.

Shawls, Lap Robes, Thanks and Valentines . . .

. . . all came together in late January when Nancy Vai, on behalf of Creative Hands, delivered the shawls and lap robes created with love by Saint Raphael parishioners to Lord Chamberlain Nursing and Rehabilitation Center. Kris, the facility's recreation director (and an alum of St. Ann School), was "thrilled" to receive them and "kept thanking us." The gifts, which filled the back of Nancy's car, as you can see, would be given to the residents along with "candy and other goodies" on Valentine's Day. Sweet!



Spring Ahead! Adjust Your Clocks! Daylight Saving Time Begins on March 14

**March 17 is Saint Patrick's Day
A Great Day for the Irish!**

(and isn't everybody a little bit Irish on Saint Patrick's Day?!)

