



The Parish Press

Newsletter of Saint Raphael Parish Family

Milford, Connecticut

December 2021



Feast of the Immaculate Conception Wednesday, December 8

On the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, a holy day of obligation, we honor Mary and celebrate her “unique holiness.” She is “free from any stain of sin, as though fashioned by the Holy Spirit and formed as a new creature.” (Catechism of the Catholic Church 492-493) The Second Vatican Council reaffirmed this teaching in its document *Lumen Gentium*, No. 56: “The mother of God [is] entirely holy and free from all stain of sin from the first instant of her conception.”

Holy Day Masses

8:00 a.m.
Saint Gabriel Church
7:00 p.m.
Saint Ann Church

The Blessed Virgin Mary, under the title of the Immaculate Conception, is the Patroness of the United States.

Advent Soup and Sandwich Luncheon Saint Gabriel's Hall Sunday, December 5, after 11 o'clock Mass

Admission fee for this light Advent luncheon: hats, gloves, scarves and mittens (or a \$5 donation), all to benefit Boys and Girls Village and the Beth-El Shelter. The taste-tempting menu features three different soups, two kinds of sandwiches, coffee, tea and dessert.



Look for luncheon reps and reserve your spot after weekend Masses. For additional information please contact Rose Marie Marmolejo (rmarmolejo@snet.net or 203-378-5508). Thank you. Bon appétit!

Come Christmas Shopping at the Parish Card & Gift Shop Saturday, December 11 3:30-5:30 p.m. Sunday, December 12 9:30 a.m.-12 noon

Take advantage of this one-weekend only sale at the Card & Gift Shop in the Saint Ann Parish Center. Look for Christmas gifts, stocking stuffers, a treasure, perhaps, from the popular “new to you” tables. Markdown prices are still in effect and our friendly staff is waiting to serve you.

- Advent Wreaths and Candles
- Christmas Ornaments
- Knitted Hats and Scarves
- Rosaries
- Sacramental Gifts
- Prayer cards, Note cards
- Coloring Books, Large Coloring Sheets
- Message Magnets
- Wine Bags, Shopping Bags
- Gifts for home and hostess

Annual Saint Ann Choir Christmas Concert Sunday, December 26, 4:00 pm

The choir's annual gift to the parish, presented on the Feast of the Holy Family, comes wrapped in all the joy and beauty of Christmas. Please come with your family to Saint Ann Church for this very special event.

An Advent Focus: Saints

Advent is a season of preparation. As we journey toward Bethlehem, we prepare our hearts and minds for the coming of the Lord.

What an excellent guide we have this year! Reflecting on and with Saint Joseph, who loved Jesus with a father's heart and was ever faithful in following the Lord's commands, we can take time to focus on the true meaning of Advent and Christmas.

This Advent, too, we'll look more closely at four saints whose feasts fall during the season. Please read in the weekly bulletin about Saint Francis Xavier, Saint Ambrose, Saint Lucy and Saint Peter Canisius. Like all the “holy ones of God,” these saints can challenge and inspire us on our journey.

First Saturday Fatima Rosary December 4, 11:00 a.m.

First Saturday recitation of the Rosary, which began in October, will continue through February. Please join us at Saint Ann Church on Saturday, December 4 as we pray for peace in our troubled world.

Sweet Heart of Mary, be the salvation of the whole world. (One of the seven prayers taught to the three children of Fatima)

Christmas Schedule

Confessions

Monday, December 20
10:00 a.m. at Saint Gabriel Church

Wednesday, December 22
7:00 p.m. at Saint Ann Church

Christmas Masses

Christmas Vigil
Friday, December 24
Saint Gabriel Church
4:00 p.m.

Saint Ann Church
4:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m.

Christmas Day
Saturday, December 25
9:30 a.m.
Saint Ann Church
11:00 a.m.
Saint Gabriel Church



Mary's Magnificat - A Social Justice Meditation

*[The Lord] has performed mighty deeds with his arm;
he has scattered the proud in their inmost thoughts.
He has brought down rulers from their thrones
but has lifted up the humble.
He has filled the hungry with good things
but has sent the rich away empty.*

“The Magnificat never gets the attention that the babe-in-a-manger story of Luke 2 receives at Christmas every year. Maybe this is because what Mary sings about is uncomfortable to a lot of us modern people. She composes a song that’s all about upsetting the social order. Mary sings of a social revolution.

Mary’s time was not all that different from the times we live in today. There were then, as there are today, a few at the top of society and masses of disadvantaged at the bottom. In her song Mary says this is *not* God’s way. It was man who created inequality, but it will take God, with the help of those who believe in Him, to restore justice, equality and harmony to creation.” – Priscilla Stuckey

Priscilla Stuckey blogs at <https://priscillastuckey.com/nature-spirit/>. A writer and spiritual counselor, she has a PhD in religious studies from Berkley’s Graduate Theological Union.

Warmth and Love from Blue Mantle and Creative Hands

Mittens, hats and the occasional scarf adorn the festive tree that stands in Saint Gabriel Hall, thoughtful gifts as the cold weather approaches for Food Pantry patrons and anyone in need in the community. Lynn Perry was the driving (knitting?) force behind this great project, with enthusiastic support from other Blue Mantle ministers. Well done!

Val Yergeau donned her Santa hat the weekend before Thanksgiving to deliver more than 50 shawls and lapghans, the work of parishioners and the Creative Hands ministry, to Lord Chamberlain Nursing & Rehabilitation Center and St. Vincent’s Medical Center. Thank you!

‘Tis the Season . . . For Our Christmas Giving Program

Traditions of the Christmas season: wreaths, carols, Nativity scenes, decorating trees, baking cookies, making lists . . . and the generosity of the Saint Raphael Parish family to those in need. Your kindness to those who are ill, who are lonely or who are in financial need warms your hearts and theirs.

Here are ways you can be part of this special ministry this year:

- * Send your check, payable to Saint Raphael Parish (Memo: Christmas Giving Program) to 501 Naugatuck Ave, Milford, CT 06460 or drop it in the the collection basket. We will purchase SCRIP cards for participating organizations.
- * Mail gift cards, clearly designated for Christmas Giving Program, to the same address, or leave them with ushers in the vestibules of both churches, again clearly labeled as Christmas Giving Program.
- * Drop off gift items in the containers in the vestibules of either church.

We will need your gifts, gift cards and checks by **Sunday, December 12** to ensure delivery to our community partners and families in need. Thank you for giving from your heart and making this Christmas season a little brighter for others. Questions? Please contact Kathleen Buchanan, kbuchanan203@gmail.com or Maria Tomasetti (as on page 3)

Gift Cards For:

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| Amistad | Bridgeport Rescue Mission | Milford Health Care Center |
| Catholic Worker House | Bridges | Milford Senior Center |
| New Haven | Families in Need | Milford Youth and Family Services |
| Beth-El Center | Golden Hill Health Care Center | West River Health Care Center |
| homeless shelter and food service | | |

Organizations Accepting Gifts:

- | | |
|---|---|
| Boys and Girls Village | Mary and Joseph's Place |
| Online Registry: | Baby lotion, baby wash, disposable diapers |
| https://www.myregistry.com/organization/boys-and-girls-village-milford-ct/3058012/giftlist | (newborn to size 6), baby wipes, Desitin, |
| | boys & girls sleepers (sizes 0 to 3 months |
| | and 3 to 6 months), baby bottles (3 bottle |
| | packs), hooded towels, baby wash cloths |
| Saint Vincent Special Needs Unit | Four Corners Residential Care Facility |
| Sweatpants and Sweatshirts, Sizes S, M, L, | Details to follow |
| XL, Children and Adults | |

Human Trafficking Myth vs Fact

Our series continues.

Myth: Human trafficking victims always come from situations of poverty or from small and/or rural towns.

Fact: Although poverty can be a factor in human trafficking since it is often an indicator of vulnerability, poverty alone is not a single causal factor or universal indicator of a human trafficking victim. Trafficking victims can come from a range of income levels, and many may come from families with higher socioeconomic status.

For help or if you need additional information call the National Human Trafficking Hotline (1-888-373-7888).

GIFT in December - Catholic Prayers

During December's GIFT sessions we will open the treasury of Catholic prayers to learn more about them, discuss and pray them, all in age-appropriate ways. We'll look at traditional prayers like the Sign of the Cross, Our Father, Hail Mary, Doxology, Acts of Contrition and many others. We'll also consider ways to pray through Advent and Christmas, including the Advent wreath, Advent calendar, the O Antiphons and Blessings of the Christmas Tree and of the Manger. All of these prayer paths lead us to a more intimate relationship with God the Father, Jesus and the Holy Spirit and call us to bring the light of Christ to the world.

Donations for IRIS

(New items only, please)

Sheet sets (full or twin size)

Towels, Washcloths

Toiletries:

toothpaste, toothbrushes

toilet paper

shampoo, conditioner

deodorant, shaving cream

hand and body soap

feminine hygiene products

combs/brushes, first aid kits

We invite GIFT families to bring Christ's light to others this season through IRIS (Integrated Refugee & Immigrant Services). The mission of this non-profit agency in New Haven (<https://irisct.org/>) is to help refugees and other displaced people establish new lives, strengthen hope, and contribute to the vitality of Connecticut's communities. If you can, please bring an item from the list at left, or a small donation, to December's sessions. Thank you.

If you have any questions about the GIFT program, please contact Maria Tomasetti, 203-988-8598 (voice/text) or atomasetti@snet.net.

Prayer Life: Catholic Prayers

Friday, December 10

6:30 - 8:15 p.m.

Sunday, December 12

12:30 - 2:15 p.m.

Tuesday, December 14

6:30 - 8:15 p.m.

All sessions will begin in Saint Ann Church with the opening prayer service and Deacon George's overview.

Session is required for Confirmation candidates with a parent or guardian and encouraged for all GIFT families/participants.

T4S

Working Meeting
Wednesday, December 15
6:30 - 7:30 p.m.



Congratulations, Confirmandi!

Calling all teens in Grades 7 through 12! We're hoping you'll join us for two special service projects on Wednesday evening, December 15, 6:30-7:30 in the Parish Center, 501 Naugatuck Avenue campus.

First up, packing items our GIFT families have donated for Integrated Refugee & Immigrant Services. (See the GIFT article and the IRIS box above.) If you would like to donate, too, please bring an item to the meeting.

Also on the agenda, assembling "gifts of comfort and support" bags for parishioners who are ill or homebound. Inside each bag: a handmade card with a prayer for the parishioner who receives it. Teens will have an opportunity to assist as "delivery elves" between December 18 and 23. Check for details with Maria, as above.

GIFT's Virtual Celebration of the Saints

What did GIFT families learn about saints during the virtual celebration last month? They aren't superheroes, according to Pope Francis, but ordinary people who followed God "with all their heart" and spent their lives serving others.

As a boy Martin de Porres took care of sick people and animals and later cared for the poorest of people, especially African slaves. Elizabeth of Hungary, a princess, knew how important it was to serve the poor and the sick. (Dressed as Elizabeth, Amelia shared her drawing of this princess saint taking bread to the poor in her country.) Families shared information about Andrew the Apostle; Rose of Lima, the first American-born saint to be canonized by the Catholic Church; and Catherine Labouré, patron of the elderly, the sick and the Miraculous Medal. Rosa, Frida and Victoria showed a picture that hangs in their home of Our Lady of Guadalupe, who appeared to the Aztec boy Juan Diego, a powerful reminder that God loves and accepts all people.

On the calendar for next November: an in-person celebration of the saints! Whose story will you tell?

On Sunday afternoon November 7, 22 young parishioners received the Sacrament of Confirmation during a Mass at the cathedral in Hartford. Archbishop Leonard Blair, the Principal Celebrant, greeted the congregation, which included candidates from 7 different parishes, warmly: "Welcome to your beautiful Cathedral of Saint Joseph."

Auxiliary Bishop Juan Miguel Betancourt, SEMV, served as Principal Concelebrant. Father John and the pastors of the other six parishes also concelebrated the Mass. Michael Deveny was an altar server.

After the Renewal of Baptismal Promises and the Laying on of Hands the candidates, accompanied by their sponsors, approached Archbishop Blair and Bishop Betancourt in separate lines for the Anointing with Chrism. Sealed now with the gifts of the Holy Spirit, they can spread among men and women "the pleasing fragrance of Christ." May God bless them always. The newly confirmed are:

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
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

**Journeying, Giving, Reflecting,
Celebrating . . . and More**

Our Advent journey has begun. Like the Magi we seek a newborn king whom we will greet with the gift of our love. Use the *Advent with Saint Joseph* booklet to guide you.



Look inside for ways you can express your love by participating in our Christmas Giving program, giving gifts that reflect God's concern for those in need. Read about our parish knitters and the gifts of warmth they have provided for others, as well as what GIFT families shared about the saints.

Celebrate our nation's patroness, see what's available at the parish gift shop, and congratulate the Confirmandi.

We wish you a blessed and holy Christmas.

The Parish Press

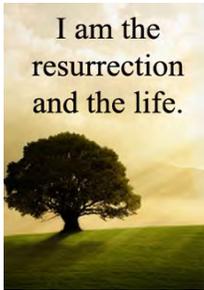
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*Let there be peace on earth.
Merry Christmas!*

In Memoriam



I am the
resurrection
and the life.

St. Raphael's mourns the recent loss of

Helen Williams Laura Hufcut Gilbertson
Anne Elise Black David Gilbertson
William Cuff, Jr. David Flanagan
Christopher Schulte

May they enjoy the splendor of God's eternal glory.

We Welcome With Love . . .

. . . the newest members of our parish family

Camila Benvenuti
Lilliana DePalma

Camila was baptized on Sunday, October 3.
Lilliana received the life-giving waters of Baptism on Sunday, October 10.



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

Bereavement Support

Sunday, December 12 at 2:00 p.m.



The parish Bereavement Support group will meet on Sunday afternoon, December 12 at 2 o'clock in the Saint Ann Children's Chapel.

Please plan to be with us if you are grieving the loss of someone you love. Let us walk with you on that very difficult road from grief to healing. If you have questions or need additional information, call Joanne (203-877-4020). May God give you peace.

Saint Raphael Parish Website
<https://saintraphaelmilford.org>

January's Newsletter Info Due December 7

Please send your news, notes, comments and photos to parishpress06460@gmail.com or call Ann Eden (203-874-8744). Thanks very much.

Decorate Saint Ann's for Christmas!



Join us, if you can, on
Friday morning
December 24 at 9 o'clock.
All are welcome!
Thank you.



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