



The Parish Press

Newsletter of Saint Raphael Parish Family

Milford, Connecticut

February 2024



Lent - A Season of Repentance, A Season of the Heart

Ash Wednesday, February 14, marks the beginning of Lent, the penitential season that allows us to prepare for the celebration of the Lord's Passion, Death and Resurrection.

It is a season of grace, a time for reflection and spiritual growth, a time to respond to the Lord's call through the prophet Joel, "Return to me with all your heart." Through prayer, fasting and almsgiving, the three traditional pillars of Lent, we strive to change our hearts, to turn them to the Lord. The parish offers us a variety of ways to do that.

Ash Wednesday February 14

Mass and Ashes

8:00 a.m.

12:00 Noon

Saint Gabriel Church

7:00 p.m.

Saint Ann Church

Lenten Reflections: The Seven Penitential Psalms

It is an ancient tradition in the Church, especially during Lent, to pray and meditate on the Seven Penitential Psalms. Since the 7th century A.D. Psalms 6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130 and 143 have been designated Penitential, suitable to express repentance.

Starting on the Tuesday evening before Ash Wednesday and continuing through the Tuesday evening of Holy Week we will send one of the Psalms and a reflection to everyone on our parish mailing list. (Printed copies will be available for those who do not have internet access.) Please consider them an opportunity for weekly prayer and meditation. The Psalms and Reflections for February are:

Psalm 6: A Prayer in Distress

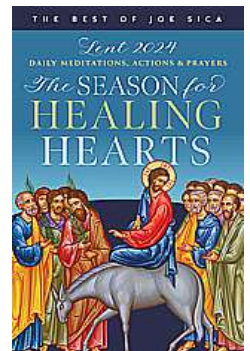
Psalm 32: Prayer for Remission of Sin

Psalm 38: Prayer of an Afflicted Sinner

The reflections, available through the USCCB, were written by author and lecturer Graziano Marcheschi, M.A., D Min.

Inspirational Lenten Booklets

In what is considered a classic work, *The Season for Healing Hearts*, Fr. Joe Sica offers his own "down-to-earth" solutions to common problems. He challenges us to *act* in the face of disappointments, to bring the healing touch of Jesus to people who are hurting.



Copies of the booklet, a gift from the parish, will be available at the doors of both churches beginning the first weekend of February.

Look, too, for Lenten-themed Care Notes and Prayer Notes. You will find a limited selection of these concise, easy-to read booklets, a ministry of Saint Meinrad Archabbey, in the church vestibules.

February Stations of the Cross

Friday afternoons
3:00 p.m.

Saint Ann Church
Livestreamed

February 16

Stations with
Father Michael Clay

February 23

Stations for Peace

Friday evening

February 23

Led by Parish Teens
6:30 p.m.

Saint Ann Church
Livestreamed

Pray the Stations of the Cross

On Friday afternoons at Saint Ann Church walk with Jesus through the Stations of the Cross, a well-loved devotion that allows us to reflect on Jesus' agonizing journey to Calvary. The stations will be broadcast via livestream at the parish website www.saintraphaelmilford.org.

Friday Evening Stations

On three Friday evenings during Lent we will pray the Stations of the Cross from Catechism Angel. Designed for families with children and teens, they are meaningful for people of all ages. As we move from Station to Station we will think prayerfully about what Jesus was going through, how he bore his suffering, how we can live like him.

Parish Lenten Supper March 1 It's a Family Event - Come Join Us!

Friday, March 1 at 6:00 p.m.

Saint Ann Parish Center

\$15/ adults \$5/children 12 and under

Catered by Lasse's

Bill of Fare

Baked Cod w/lemon and tartar sauce

Roasted Vegetables

Macaroni and Cheese

Dinner Rolls

Beverages: Water, Soft Drinks, Coffee, Tea

Dessert: Baked Goods (courtesy of our Parish Bakers), Clementines

Lenten Reflection

Father John Brinsmade

Make your reservations after Masses the weekends of February 17 and February 24

or call:

Kathleen Buchanan (203-606-6486)

Rose Marie Marmolejo (203-378-5508)

We hope that families, teens and many parishioners will be with us for these teen-led Stations on the Friday evening posted above and/or on March 8 at Saint Gabriel's, March 22 at Saint Ann's.

The complete schedule for Friday afternoon Stations in March will be published in next month's newsletter. Thank you.



**Coffee And . . . With a Hint of Mardi Gras?
Sip and Savor After All the Weekend Masses February 10 and 11**

Stop in to the Parish Center or Saint Gabriel's Hall after Mass the second weekend of this month for coffee and conversation with those congenial folks, the members of the Saint Raphael Parish family.



Select from a variety of tasty treats. (But, we wonder, will there be King Cake? You can look for it, but most likely will not find that oval-shaped sugary treat, synonymous with Mardi Gras and New Orleans.. Next year, perhaps?). But Coffee And weekend is the perfect time to visit the parish Card & Gift Shop (in the Parish Center) and to pick up or order Scrip cards, an easy way to support Saint Raphael Parish.

**News from the Card & Gift Shop
New Look, New Inventory**

The Shop has had a a bit of a makeover these last few months. It all began when one of our staff tried unsuccessfully to find an anniversary card for someone in the family. No local shop had what she was looking for, and the cards she did see were very pricey. Finding quality, lower priced cards became the mission that led to the makeover.

We invite you to come in and see the results. We are located in the Saint Ann Parish Center library, open on Thursday evenings (6-8) and on Coffee And weekends.

Our new selections include cards for:

- Birthdays (general and family)
- Wedding Anniversary (10th, 25th, 40th, 50th)
- Ordination and Ordination Anniversary
- New Assignment for Clergy
- Baptism, First Communion, Confirmation, RCIA
- Thank You, Get Well, Sympathy
- Graduation, Congratulations
- Christmas and Easter
- Mother's Day, Father's Day, New Home

Most cards are \$2 each, 3 for \$5.50.

Please stop by. We'd love to see you!

Are You on the Parish Mailing List?

If you are receiving the latest parish information and updates, the digital version of *The Parish Press* and the Worship Aid for weekend Masses, then we have your email and you are on the mailing list.

If you're missing these items, and you'd like to receive them, please let us know. Send your preferred email to anneden44@gmail.com, subject line: *Please add my email.*

Have You Registered with the Parish?

To register for Saint Raphael Parish, simply pick up a registration form at the doors of Saint Gabriel or Saint Ann Church. Once you've filled it out you can return it to the parish office at 501 Naugatuck Avenue. or drop it in the basket when you come to Mass.

A Social Justice Note



Monday, February 8, the feast day of Saint Josephine Bakhita, has been designated an international day of prayer and awareness against human trafficking. Through prayer we not only reflect on the experiences of those who have suffered through this affront to human dignity, but also comfort, strengthen, and help empower survivors.

**Shopping with
Supports Saint Raphael's**



Shopping with Scrip is a painless way to raise funds for Saint Raphael Parish. Here's how it works:

You buy a gift card for a local or online merchant at the Card & Gift Shop or from Pat Dumas, our parish gift card expert. You get the full value of the card when you shop with it but the merchant gives back a percentage of your purchase amount to the parish. There are literally hundreds of brands/merchants that participate in the Scrip program and you can use the cards locally or online. If your favorites participate please consider buying a Scrip card before your next shopping trip

The percentage that brands/merchants give back varies from a mere 1.1% to more than 10%, depending on the merchant. Among those that give back 10% or more are:

- | | | |
|-------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| 1-800-Flowers | Gap | Nike |
| Aeropostale | Dave & Buster's | Old Navy |
| American Eagle | J. Crew | Outback |
| Banana Republic | L.L. Bean | Pizzeria Uno |
| Bass Pro/Cabela's | Land's End | Saks 5th Ave. |
| Bloomingdale's | Macy's | Talbots |

For further information or to place an order for Scrip cards please call Pat Dumas (203-878-2774). Thank you!

Donna's Creation Care Corner

The Scourge of Plastic Pollution

Long Island Sound, which hugs the 17+ miles of Milford's coastline, is under threat. The reason? Our overuse of plastic disposables, like straws, which take years to break down and end up in the Sound. The resulting microplastic pollution, according to Save the Sound, "negatively impacts water quality, marine life and human health."

Some simple actions can help lessen the pollution:

- *Decline plastic straws from restaurant servers. (Fish mistake straws for food, with disastrous results.)
- *Use bamboo/reusable flatware for picnics or takeout.
- *Switch to hand/body soap bars rather than liquid soap or body wash. (Millions of their plastic containers enter the recycling/garbage stream, but few are actually recycled.)
- *Invest in a glass or stainless steel water bottle. (In the U.S. more than 60 million water bottles end up in landfills or incinerators *every day*.)
- *Continue to use reusable grocery bags when you go food shopping.

For other suggestions about ways to care for Creation, in accord with the concern Pope Francis expressed in his encyclical *Laudato Si'*, reach out to Donna DiMassa at dm.dimassa@prodigy.net or 203-444-4289.

Sacrament of Reconciliation

Sunday, February 25
12 Noon-2:15 p.m.

or

Tuesday, February 27
6:00-8:15 p.m.

Sessions begin with a
pizza dinner in
the Parish Center.

GIFT for February: The Sacraments, Reconciliation

During February, as Lent begins, we will explore the Sacrament of Reconciliation, a gift from God. The Church continues the healing and saving work of the Lord Jesus Christ, the physician of our souls and bodies. Just as Jesus forgave the sins of the paralytic and restored him to bodily health (Mark 2:1-12) he has willed his Church to continue that work, in the power of the Holy Spirit, even among her own members (CCC, 1421). Session participants will come to see this sacrament as a celebration of God's forgiveness and an opportunity for conversion as they explore the Rite of Reconciliation.

God knows that we need to express our regret for failing to love, and to hear his words of forgiveness. This sacrament is our opportunity to say *Amen* to God's love and forgiveness by a true change of heart. During this session we will look at how our sins are forgiven because God loves us and wants to be reconciled with us always. When we celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation we show that we, too, seek reconciliation with him *and* with the community we've hurt by our sins.

While this session is required for our Confirmation candidates, we encourage all GIFT participants and other parishioners to be with us. Lent seems like the ideal time to further your understanding of the current Church teaching on this beautiful Sacrament of Healing. Please contact Maria Tomasetti atomasetti@snet.net or 203-988-8598, (voice or text), if you have questions or would like additional information.

GIFT Sacramental Program Dates

First Communion

Learning Session #1

Saturday, February 3
10:00 a.m.-12:00 noon

(A weekday evening make-up class will be scheduled.)

Required for children
with parent/guardian.

Confirmation

Living the Moral Life

Sunday, February 4
12:30-2:00 p.m.

or

Tuesday, February 7
6:30-8:00 p.m.

For candidates only.
Sessions begin with pizza.

All sessions at Parish Center
501 Naugatuck Avenue.



T4S Souper Bowl of Caring Continues this Month



The drive-thru Saturday phase of this year's teen-led effort to fight hunger and poverty has come to a successful conclusion. But the need remains great, and we ask that you continue your generous support throughout February. Donations this year will go to The Saint Gabriel Food Pantry, Beth-El Center and Amistad Catholic Worker House, which offers support and hospitality in the Hill Neighborhood of New Haven.

Please bring your donations when you come to weekend Masses. A "most-needed items" list for each organization is posted in the weekly bulletin. Monetary gifts, which are always appreciated, should be placed in a sealed, labeled envelope, if possible.

Checks for the Food Pantry should be made out to Saint Raphael Parish, with Saint Gabriel Food Pantry on the memo line. The Food Pantry is also grateful for ShopRite gift cards. Checks for Beth-El can be made payable to Beth-El Center. Thank you.

Summer VBS Camp SCUBA

Diving into Friendship with God July 22 through July 26



Registration is open for this summer's VBS camp, where young people ages 4-11 will take a deep dive into an amazing undersea adventure. It's a week of exciting activity, Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to noon at the Parish Center. Suggested donation: \$25 per camper (\$5 per day). Staff positions are open: We need adult and teen volunteers, ages 12 or older.

Contact Maria (as above) to register, to volunteer, or for more details. Let the adventure begin!

CRS Rice Bowl Our Parish Lenten Project



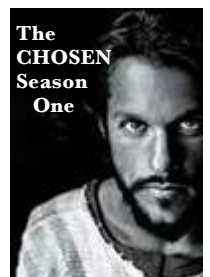
Families and faith communities in the U.S. can put their faith into action by devoting their Lenten prayers, fasting and almsgiving to change the lives of people who suffer in poverty in Uganda, (where Father Emmanuel serves the rural poor of Fort Portal Diocese) and in El Salvador and Indonesia. Their stories are available at <https://www.crsricebowl.org/stories-of-hope/intro>.

Your donations, through the iconic Rice Bowl cardboard collection boxes or online using the link above will help provide lifesaving support to more than 250 million people in more than 120 countries. 75% of your donations support the work of Catholic Relief Services around the world. The remaining 25% remains in the Archdiocese of Hartford for local efforts to alleviate hunger and poverty. (Our Saint Raphael Food Pantry Garden was awarded a grant last year from the Archdiocese's CRS Rice Bowl Local Grant Fund.) Giving Lenten alms seems like an ideal way to return to the Lord "with all your heart."

The Chosen Continues Its Run in the Parish Center Sunday Screenings Scheduled for February 4 and 18

Audiences in the Parish Center's "classroom turned theater" have been very emotional as they lost themselves in the ongoing presentations of Season One episodes of *The Chosen*. And there are more to come! On February 4: Episodes 5 and 6; February 18: Episodes 7 and 8. Everyone is invited. Admission is free. Curtain goes up at 2:30 p.m. Taken together, the episodes run until about 4:30.

Questions? Please call Rose Cox (203-878-6427) or Cindy Sissick (203-874-0746) or email Maria (as above).



February Focus: Lent A Season of the Heart

The Lord speaks to us through the prophet Joel in the 1st reading on Ash Wednesday, February 14. "Return to me," he invites us, "with all your heart." Look inside for different ways to respond to the Lord's loving invitation.

The popular presentation of episodes from Season 1 of *The Chosen* continues on two Sundays this month, 1st Saturday Fatima Rosary concludes and we offer a new perspective on shopping with Scrip.



Don't miss February's Coffee And, and be sure to reserve your spot for our Lenten Supper, scheduled for March 1st.

Send a Valentine message to those you love. Let them know that they are close to your heart.

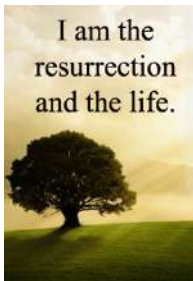
The Parish Press

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In Memoriam



St. Raphael's mourns the recent loss of:

Donald Kosa	Florence Reden
Marietta Schembari	Edward Reilly
Paul Leparik II	Frank Patak
Karl Fuchs	Lauren Tvardzik
Carol Holmes	Laura Yatsinko
John "J.P." Maroney	
Susan Farrell	
Rev. Charles H. Allen, S.J.	

May they, through the mercy of God, receive their heavenly reward.

Bereavement Support Sunday, February 11 at 2:00 p.m.



The Bereavement Support group will meet on Sunday afternoon, February 11, at 2 o'clock in the Saint Ann Children's Chapel. If you are grieving because of the death of someone you love, please join us. Ease the

burden of your grief by sharing your thoughts with others who have known the devastating pain of loss. You may call Joanne (203-877-4020) if you have questions or need further information.

Information for March Newsletter Due February 7

Short month means early deadline! Please send your news, notes and photos for the March issue of *The Parish Press* to parishpress06460@gmail.com by Wednesday, February 7 or call Ann Eden (203-874-8744). Thanks!

Rosary Devotions

First Saturday Fatima Rosary Concludes February 3

The monthly first Saturday recitation of the Fatima Rosary, which began in October, will conclude on Saturday, February 3. Please pray the Rosary with us at Saint Ann Church starting at 11:00 a.m., as we honor the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

Rosary Recitation Every Tuesday at Noon Saint Ann Children's Chapel (Enter by the church door nearest the Chapel)

Last Thursday of the Month Evening Rosary
Pray with the Knights of Columbus
February 29, 7:00 p.m.
Saint Ann Parish Center

February Meetings

Men of Saint Joseph
Tuesday evenings, 7:00 - 8:15 p.m.
Saint Gabriel Church Hall

Social Gathering Team
Tuesday, February 20, 6:30 p.m.
Saint Ann Parish Center

Protecting Connecticut's Children
Thursday, February 22, 7:00-8:00 p.m.
Via Zoom Invitation
Contact Wally Hauck:
wally@wallyhauck.com