



The Parish Press

Newsletter of Saint Raphael Parish Family

Milford, Connecticut

December 2024



Advent & Christmas Reflection Booklet

Take a copy of Jessie Bazan's *Waiting in Joyful Hope*, available at all the church doors. Let the booklet's daily stories, reflections and meditations guide you on your journey toward the manger.

Advent Music & Reflection Sunday, December 8 at 3:00 p.m. Saint Ann Church

Music by the Saint Ann Choir
Advent Reflections by
Msgr. Robert Weiss



Pre-Christmas Coffee And December 14/15

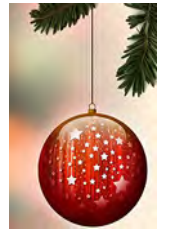
Sip a little and nosh a bit the weekend of December 14/15 when you gather after Mass with the parish family at the Parish Center or Saint Gabriel Hall.

Annual Saint Ann Choir Christmas Concert Sunday, December 29, 4:00 p.m.

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 presentation.

Don't Miss the Christmas Fair! Saturday, December 7, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. Saint Ann Parish Center

The doors open at 9 a.m. on December 7 for the annual spectacular that is the parish Christmas Fair. Browse the vendor booths for unique holiday gifts and the raffle room, with its array of terrific prizes. Visit the Fair's exciting new Nativity Room, where you can reflect on the birth of Christ as you admire the Nativity sets that are on display.



The bakery, that groaning board of tempting goodies, will be open all day. Snack while shopping and take some treats home for dessert. Break for lunch at the Christmas Fair Kitchen with its tasty menu items and reasonable prices. Ho, Ho, Ho! - S. Claus will be on hand. (Look for a bearded fellow in a bright red suit.) And just in as we went to press: the Grinch will be making an appearance! (Just so you know, he'll be in green.)

We look forward to seeing all of you at the Fair, a marvelous event and a great fund raiser for Saint Raphael Parish.

Help Wanted: Fair Setup Volunteers

Monday, December 2, 6:00 p.m.
Saint Ann Parish Center
Come on down! And thanks very much.

Christmas Schedule

Confessions

Friday, December 20
7:00-7:30 p.m. at Saint Ann
Saturday, December 21
3:00-3:30 p.m. at Saint Ann
Monday, December 23
10:00-10:30 a.m. at Saint Gabriel

Christmas Masses

Christmas Vigil
Tuesday, December 24
4:00 p.m. at Saint Ann
4:00 p.m. at Saint Gabriel
8:00 p.m. at Saint Ann

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

The Parish Giving Program - a Well-loved Tradition An Opportunity to Bring Christmas Joy to Others

You can't miss the program's Giving Trees, standing tall in the vestibules of both churches, decorated gaily with gift tag ornaments. On each tag: an item, perhaps a gift card, that will go to someone in need or will brighten the day of a health care facility resident. Many of the program's recipients, as you know, are served through local organizations.

Please take a gift tag, or two, or several! Return the requested item(s), gift tag(s) attached, by Sunday, December 15 if you can. Our delivery elves want to make sure everyone receives their gifts by Christmas. Thank you for your generous support, for continuing to bring Christmas joy to others.

Calling Christmas Giving Program Volunteers!

Help needed: weekend gift check-in and sorting **and** help with deliveries, beginning Monday, December 16. There will also be additional delivery dates to make sure gifts arrive before Christmas. If you can help, or if you have questions please contact Kathleen Buchanan (203-606-6476), Rose Marie Marmolejo (203-378-5508) or Maria Tomasetti, atomasetti@snet.net or 203-988-8598 (voice or text). Thank you very much!



Donna's Creation Care Corner Christmas Tree: Real or Artificial? - an Ecological Question



In this month's Creation Care Corner Donna weighs in on the real vs. artificial Christmas tree debate from, as you would expect, an ecological perspective. Here are some of the pros and cons from either side of the issue.

Real (and tasty)

Pros:

1. For every real tree a farmer harvests, he plants 1-3 seedlings; these living trees absorb carbon dioxide.
2. Reused or recycled, real trees have an amazingly productive second life.
3. They can fight beach erosion or aid in other state habitat projects; placed lengthwise or upright in backyards or added to a brush pile, trees provide shelter for overwintering birds and animals.
4. Sunk into ponds, chemical-free trees provide habitat for fish.
5. Goats love to chomp chemical-free trees! (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NZMG_S8pLWU)

Cons:

1. Although real trees absorb carbon dioxide while growing, as we drive from lot to lot to find the perfect tree, stopping, starting and idling, our car emissions increase the trees' carbon footprint.
2. Fertilizer used on the trees is made from petroleum; therefore, it damages wildlife and soil conditions.
3. Used trees placed at the curb are taken to landfills.
4. While decomposing in a landfill, each tree that once absorbed carbon dioxide will release a whopping 35 lbs of it.

Artificial (and longer lasting)

Pros:

1. Ideal when family members have allergies, or pets obsess over real trees.
2. It takes ten Christmases for an artificial tree to achieve the same carbon emission level as a real tree we buy annually.
3. Eco-friendly artificial trees do exist! ONCOR (<https://oncortrees.com>) makes their trees in the USA from recycled, non-toxic PVC plastic. They have a low carbon footprint.
4. Artificial trees can be repurposed to decorate fireplace mantles, staircases, front doors, etc. Ideas at <https://www.pinterest.com/tammylynnprince/recycled-artificial-christmas-trees/>

Cons:

1. Shipping artificial trees from China (the source of many artificial trees) increases carbon emissions.
2. Metal and plastic used to make artificial trees increase carbon emissions.
3. Since most artificial trees are not recyclable, they end up in landfills.

Donna's Conclusion

It does matter a little whether we buy a real or an artificial tree; but what matters more significantly is what we do with that particular tree afterwards. Our Creator expects us to take the extra time and to make the extra effort to ensure that none of His gifts, which He has given to us so freely, are wasted. When Christmas is over, store your artificial tree for next year or "remake" into some stunning decorations. If yours is a real tree, don't "kick it to the curb." There is a goat, a fish, a bird, one of God's amazing creatures, out there somewhere just waiting for it, as a safe habitat - or, perhaps as lunch!

Early Parish Press Information Deadline: Friday, December 6 for January's Newsletter

What's new in the new year? Send your news, notes, comments and photos to parishpress06460@gmail.com or call Ann Eden (203-874-8744). Thanks very much.



Help Decorate Saint Ann's for Christmas!

Tuesday, December 24 at 9:00 a.m.
Help us make our beautiful church reflect the joy of the season.

Saint Raphael Parish Invites You To Ring in the New Year

Tuesday, December 31, 2024

Saint Ann Parish Center

8:00 p.m. - 1:00 a.m.

Buffet Supper, BYOB

Adults Only (No Walk-ins)

\$45 per person, pay in advance

Call 203-260-4750 or 203-874-3848

GIFT Sacramental Program Dates

Confirmation

Prayer Life

including the Mass

Sunday, December 8
12:30 - 2:00 p.m.

or

Tuesday, December 10
6:30 - 8:00 p.m.

Candidates Only

Parish Center Classroom

GIFT Advent/Christmas Celebration Open House **Sunday, December 15 - anytime between noon and 2:00 p.m. or** **Tuesday, December 17 - anytime between 6:00 and 8:00 p.m.**

Attention, GIFT families: Please plan to be with us for this year's Advent/Christmas celebration and open house at the Saint Ann Parish Center. Choose the day and invite your guests. Take time out of your busy schedule to remember the true meaning of Advent and Christmas.

Enjoy pizza and snacks as you visit the seasonal information and activity centers. Try your hand at wreath crafts or Nativity crafts - or both. Decorate a Jesse tree and discover why we add a new ornament each day. Check out the Advent and Christmas puzzles, learn about the O Antiphons and create Christmas cards for homebound/ill parishioners and residents of local health care facilities. Listen again to the Bible's beautiful story of the birth of Jesus, then gather at closing for carols around the crèche.



The Season of the Holy Spirit

November was the Season of the Holy Spirit at Saint Raphael Parish as twenty-four parishioners received the Sacrament of Confirmation. Congratulations to all the newly confirmed, now sealed with the Holy Spirit and strengthened by the gifts of the Spirit for service to the Body of Christ. May God bless them always.

Parish Teens Confirmed November 3

The Most Reverend Juan Miguel Betancourt, Auxiliary Bishop of Hartford, conferred the Sacrament of Confirmation on twenty-one Saint Raphael Parish teens during a Sunday afternoon Mass at the Cathedral of Saint Joseph on November 3. Archbishop Christopher J. Coyne was the principal celebrant, Bishop Betancourt the principal concelebrant. The names of the teens, including saints' names they've chosen for Confirmation, appear, below.



Alexandra Camilla Aragon
Kieran Michael Burns
Alexander Joseph Chacon
Jacy Vincent de Paul Ciszkowski
Arianna Catherine of Bologna Cruz
Christopher Jude Dowling
Luca Francis of Assisi Forte

Brooke Cecilia Gachi
Kaylee Nicole Galligan
Jud-Arah Francis de Sales Guillaume
Ava Augustine Kraynak
Vaughn Joseph Kraynak
Megan Sebastian Lazarski
Michael Francis of Assisi Liscinsky

Patrick Aidan McKenna
Aislyn Cecilia McKenna
Desmond Michael Murphy
Yeiden Sebastian Nieves
Christopher Joseph Ramirez
Sadie Rose of Lima Timmeny
Paulo Michael Tutunjian

Adult Confirmations at the Cathedral

Leonardo Leo Faura and Jocelyn Rose of Lima Peters received the Sacrament of Confirmation from Archbishop Christopher J. Coyne on Wednesday evening, November 6, at the Cathedral of Saint Joseph.

Confirmation at Saint Ann Church

Father John administered the Sacrament of Confirmation to Gabriel Joseph DiGioia during the 4 o'clock Vigil Mass at Saint Ann Church on Saturday, November 9.

Sacrament of First Reconciliation **Saturday, December 14**



Children in our Sacramental program will meet Jesus for the first time in the Sacrament of Reconciliation beginning at 1 o'clock Saturday afternoon, December 14 at Saint Ann Church. Please keep these little ones in your prayers.

My God, I am sorry for my sins with all my heart. In choosing to do wrong and failing to do good, I have sinned against you whom I should love above all things. I firmly intend, with your help, to do penance, to sin no more, and to avoid whatever leads me to sin. Our Savior Jesus suffered and died for us. In his name, my God, have mercy.

Successful Can & Bottle Drive

A heartfelt "thank you" to everyone who contributed to the success of November's one-day Can & Bottle Drive.

Your kindness inspired others. When people in line with our crew at the recycling center heard that we were trying to help the victims of Hurricanes Helene and Milton, they added their recyclables to ours. One man made a cash donation. In all, your efforts raised \$363.

Please keep the storms' victims in your prayers.

Advent Begins, We Await the Coming of the Prince of Peace

The new liturgical year begins on the first Sunday of December as we enter into the season of



Advent and prepare for the coming of the Christ Child, the Prince of Peace. It's a time to pause, to reflect on the meaning of Christ in our lives.

The Christmas Giving Program's trees are at the church doors, opportunities to reach out to people in need. Don't miss the Christmas Fair on December 7 or the Advent program of music and reflection on Sunday, the 8th. Made plans for New Year's Eve? See page 2 for a parish option.

We wish you all the joy and wonder of the Christmas season. *Gloria in excelsis Deo.*

The Parish Press

A Publication of Saint Raphael Parish

Milford, Connecticut

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

In Memoriam

Saint Raphael's mourns the recent loss of . . .

Victoria Riggione	Doryce Funteral
William Harty	Raven Carofano
Yves Allard	Ralph Abed
Margaret Gallagher	Frank Battaglia
Donna LaFramboise	Sharon DeRosa

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

Bereavement Support: Sunday, December 1



If you are feeling bereft at the approach of the holidays, lost and alone following the death of someone you love, please consider meeting with our Bereavement Support group on Sunday afternoon, December 1, at 2 o'clock in the Saint Ann's Children's Chapel. You may call Joanne (203-877-4020) for further information.



Wednesday, January 1
Solemnity of Mary, the Mother of God
Masses for the Holy Day

9:30 a.m. Saint Ann Church

11:00 a.m. Saint Gabriel Church

We Welcome With Love . . .

. . . the newest members of our parish family:

Jack Flores
Claire Bewighouse
Giada Altieri
Ella Cairo-Offerson



Jack was baptized on Saturday, November 2 at Saint Ann Church. Claire received the life-giving waters of Baptism on Sunday, November 3 at Saint Gabriel Church. Giada and Ella were baptized, "brought to new life through water and the Holy Spirit," at Saint Ann Church, Giada on Sunday, November 17, Ella on Sunday, November 22.

May God bless you, Jack, Claire, Giada and Ella, and may you grow in faith, joy, wisdom and in the love of the Lord.

Love and Best Wishes

as you begin your married life together . . .



Zachery and Alexandra (Stephen) Baskin
. . . who were married on Saturday, October 26 at Saint Gabriel Church.

Congratulations! May you become one in heart and mind and always be united in love for each other.