



The Parish Press

Newsletter of Saint Raphael Parish Family

Milford, Connecticut

February 2025



Jubilee Year 2025 Pilgrimage Sites

A Jubilee Year is a time of extraordinary grace, of renewal, forgiveness and spiritual growth. Catholics are encouraged to make a pilgrimage, to journey away from the ordinary toward God. Pope Francis has said, “A pilgrimage is not just a journey in search of a place; it is also journey of the heart.”

Ideally, pilgrims will journey to Rome, but those who can’t travel to the Eternal City can visit a church, basilica or shrine that has been designated as a sacred site here in the U.S. Among these are:

The Basilica of the Immaculate Conception
74 W. Main Street, Waterbury, CT

The National Shrine of the Divine Mercy
2 Prospect Hill Road, Stockbridge, MA

Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception
400 Michigan Ave. NE, Washington, DC

Pilgrims who visit a sacred place-pilgrimage site during Jubilee 25 can obtain a special plenary indulgence. Look for details (Jubilee Special Indulgence) at our parish website <https://www.saintraphaelmilford.org>.

A Post-Valentine Coffee And This Month! February 15/16 After all the Masses

Warm smiles, warm (or cold, if you prefer) beverages and tasty treats await at Coffee And at Saint Gabriel Hall or the Saint Ann Parish Center after all the Masses on February 15/16. The dates are easy to remember - between Valentine’s Day and President’s Day! Hope to see you there.



Looking for a Few Good Men



St. Raphael’s Knights of Columbus, Tinto Council #47 is looking for men at least age 18, practicing Catholics, who would like to support our parish, give back to our community and grow in their faith. Through our fraternal organization Knights have exclusive access to our highly regarded portfolio of insurance and retirement products, backed by ethical and Catholic business practices.

Charity is a foundational principle of the Knights of Columbus, and our works of charity in parishes, local communities and at state, national and international levels have made the world a better place.

Want to help those in need, serve our parish, grow in faith, and become a better Catholic and a better man? Contact Richard Wheeling at 203-520-3250. or email him at gktinto47@yahoo.com.

Father Hau’s Semester Break Adventure

In August of last year we welcomed Father Joseph Hau, who is staying with us at Saint Raphael while he pursues a Master’s Degree at Holy Apostles College and Seminary in Cromwell and takes ESL classes at Sacred Heart University.

Father Hau has celebrated Mass with us, joined us for GIFT sessions, the Christmas Fair and social events - he particularly enjoyed the parish picnic! - and been a smiling and genial presence since he arrived. He’s traveled a bit as well, especially during his Christmas/semester break. Our staff reporter caught up with him recently for an interview.

Home for Father is Vŭng Tàu, a beautiful coastal city in the south of Vietnam. Perched on a scenic hillside is Our Lady of Bai Dau, Father’s parish church and a Marian pilgrimage destination for thousands. Towering nearby on Big Mountain is a 32m high statue of Our Lady, who stands, holding the infant Jesus in her arms, eyes facing the sea.

Ordained in January of 2021 Father Hau came to the U.S. at the behest of his bishop to study for an MA in Pastoral Studies with a concentration in Marriage and Family. Once he receives his degree - target late 2026 - he will go back to Vietnam and do pastoral work in his diocese. Staying in Milford makes it easier for him to get to each of his schools. It also “helps me improve my English and learn about your culture and American pastoral experiences.”

This is Father’s first visit to the United States, which is “very different from Vietnam, in language and in culture.” What has surprised him? “Vietnamese people think that few Americans attend Mass,” daily or on weekends. But “at Saint Raphael’s many people attend Mass every day. Moreover, the atmosphere of the liturgy is very good and holy.”

It’s a long way from Vŭng Tàu to Milford - 8800+ miles - and Father misses his family, “especially my mom.” But he has priest friends from Vietnam in various U.S. cities. Visiting them became his semester break adventure.

First stop: New Orleans, where he celebrated Mass with Fr. Dominic Manh Nguyen, his newly ordained best friend and former classmate at the University of Law in Vietnam. They did some sightseeing and “tried the famous Cafe Du Monde.” In Mississippi he said Mass and enjoyed Vietnamese food with Fr. Carlisle, a new friend. Of all the places he visited in Mississippi, he “liked a chicken farm best.” From the Deep South Father traveled (*Go to page 3*)

Focus on the Pastoral Council's Human Concerns and Social Justice Committee

According to the Saint Raphael Pastoral Council's Constitution and By-laws, its Human Concerns and Social Justice Standing Committee "discerns needs of persons in the parish and wider community and identifies resources to meet those needs." The committee has been working diligently to meet that responsibility in two specific areas: Prevention of Domestic Violence and establishing a Parish Pro-Life Ministry. Their reports follow.



Domestic Violence: Prevention Through Awareness and Education

Domestic Violence is an emotional subject, one that's difficult to discuss and even more challenging to address. But it is very real. Working in partnership with BHcare, a Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic, our Human Concerns committee hopes to create awareness and provide education about services that are available for domestic violence victims.

BHcare's mission is to provide practical assistance and support for victims, provide safety for them and break the cycle of violence.

During the past year our committee has placed notices in the weekly parish bulletin to make people aware of BHcare's services. Creating awareness is essential: it can take as many as 7 interactions with BHcare for an individual to seek protection from an abusive partner. BHcare helps address the many factors involved in this effort, such as finances, children, a support system, pets, housing and more. In addition, their counselors help clients to make connections to churches that can provide spiritual guidance.

BHcare serves 19 Connecticut towns in the New Haven and Valley areas. Their Umbrella Center for Domestic Violence Services (UCDVS) serves an average of 5,840 victims a year. (In 2024 they helped 264 Domestic Violence victim families in Milford, an increase of 5% from 2023.) As part of the state's Lethality Assessment Program, law enforcement officers responding to a domestic violence call use a screening tool intended to prevent homicides and serious injury by encouraging victims to use support and shelter services. In the New Haven and Valley areas referrals are made to UCDVS. The services they provide include advocacy, counseling, case management, safe houses and criminal court-based support. All services are free and confidential.

Victims can reach out to CTSafeConnect (a 24/7 state hotline) at 1-888-774-2900 or to The Umbrella Center directly at 203-780-2037 (M-F, 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.). For free presentations and material on this vital topic, call Rachael Schippiani, BHcare's Coordinator of Community Education and Volunteer Programs at her direct line: 203-892-6360.



Fr. Hau and Fr. Minh
in New Orleans.

(Fr. Hau, continued) to Denver, where he went snowboarding for the first time ("amazing!") then headed for Minneapolis and "the coldest weather in the U.S." He wisely spent the day visiting "a beautiful art museum" (indoors!). During ten days in Detroit Father made Jubilee 2025 pilgrimages with friends to the Solanus Casey Center and to the National Shrine of the Little Flower. He celebrated Christmas Eve Mass at St. Therese of Lisieux Church and a Christmas Day Mass at a Vietnamese parish, Our Lady of Grace. He "met Vietnamese friends everywhere" and "had lovely times." Father is back now in "green and beautiful," Connecticut, in Milford, where he likes the beach and "feels more comfortable." In Vietnam he enjoys badminton, but now "I love to watch American football with Fr. John. I am a big fan of Notre Dame" (No surprise!)

Father has a message for Saint Raphael's: "Thank you for accepting me in your parish. I am happy to be a part of your community." And we are blessed to have you, Father, as part of our parish family.



Saint Raphael Pro-Life Ministry

Volunteers for our nascent pro-life ministry met online in early January to learn more and to discuss how they might help.

Many were surprised that the number of abortions did not decline after Roe v. Wade was overturned in June 2022. In fact, the number increased in every state except those which have legislated a total abortion ban. Sadly, 79% of women who had abortions were never informed about resources available if they chose life. 73% chose abortions for financial reasons (www.savethestorks.com).

Our ministry's mission: to create a pro-life culture in Saint Raphael Parish. Our vision: "Every parishioner demonstrates a commitment to Pro-Life in every word and deed every day." Our strategy: To identify others who can help and to collaborate with other pro-life organizations.

Six volunteers will contact some 15 collaborator organizations to ask, "How can we work with you to make a difference?" Wally Hauck and the committee will collect the information and present the results at the group's next online meeting, set for January 30 at 7 p.m.

If you can help, if you would like to be part of this vibrant and vital new ministry or to attend our upcoming meeting, please contact Wally at 203-874-8484 or wally@wallyhauck.com.

Saint Raphael Parish Website

<https://www.saintraphaelmilford.org>

The Nicene Creed:

Jesus' Death and Resurrection

Sunday, February 23
12:00 noon-2:15 p.m.

or

Tuesday, February 25
6:00-8:15 p.m.

Saint Ann Parish Center Hall

Begin with a pizza dinner!

GIFT for February: Death and Resurrection of Jesus

During February's GIFT session we will look more deeply into what we believe about Jesus' suffering, death, resurrection and ascension and learn more about what we refer to as the Paschal Mystery, Jesus' life death and resurrection. Through the Paschal Mystery we learn that true love is self-giving. Jesus gave His life for us out of love and in doing so showed us how to love others.

In age-appropriate ways, we will also journey with Jesus through the liturgies of the Sacred Triduum (Three Days) - Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter (both the Easter Vigil and Easter Sunday).

The great feast of Easter is the central feast of the Church. All other feasts of the Church year hinge on the glorious celebration of Christ's resurrection. During this session we will also learn how we can prepare for Easter during the season of Lent, which begins next month.

GIFT (Growing In Faith Together) is the Saint Raphael Parish faith formation program. For additional information about the program or about this month's GIFT session please contact Maria Tomasetti, atomasetti@snet.net or 203-988-8598 (voice or text).

Congratulations . . .

. . . to Connor Grivalsky, Liam Grivalsky, Teagan Maguire, Sofia Noel and Ava Welcome, who received the Sacrament of First Reconciliation on Saturday, December 21 at Saint Ann Church. May you always remember how much God loves you.

GIFT Sacramental Program Dates

First Communion Class 1

Saturday, February 1
10:00 a.m -noon

in 2 Parish Center classrooms
Required for children
with parent or guardian

Confirmation

*Living the Moral Life
Overview of
Catholic Social Teaching*

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

or

Tuesday, February 4
6:30-8:00 p.m.

Candidates only
Parish Center Classroom

Summer 2025 VBS Camp, A Preview of Coming Attractions

True North! Trusting Jesus in a Wild World

Monday through Friday, July 21-25, 9 a.m. - Noon for Campers Ages 4-11



What appeared in our *Parish Press* inbox on a particularly bitter January afternoon but advance information about this summer's VBS Camp. As the staff was sipping hot chocolate and lamenting wind chills in the low teens we learned about *True North! Trusting Jesus in a Wild World*, an Alaskan adventure where campers trek the tundra and admire the beauty of glistening glaciers. Brr!

But for young campers during late July in Connecticut, what could be more exciting?! They will be transported from the Saint Raphael Parish Center and Grounds to a place where the Northern Lights glow over Alaska's majestic mountains and racing rivers. As they trek the tundra amid the rugged terrain of this incredibly beautiful place they will discover how easy it is to lose sight of what's true in our wild world today. Pointing them toward Jesus, *True North!* shows them that Jesus is a faithful friend we can always trust. Jesus is our *True North!*

True North! Activity Centers will include Wild Bible Adventures, Crafts and Imagination, Music/Dance, Glacier Games, Sticky Scripture, Tundra Treats and Opening and Closing Celebrations.

Campers will focus on a different daily Bible story as they journey through the Gospel of Matthew. Bible buddies like Ponder, the sea otter, Clawdia, the King Crab, Kody the Bear, Earnest the Bald Eagle and Bruce the Moose will help them remember their Bible points:



Day 1: When we wonder, we can trust Jesus.

Day 2: When we feel alone, we can trust Jesus.

Day 3: When we feel powerless, we can trust Jesus.

Day 4: When we need hope, we can trust Jesus.

Day 5: When we need help, we can trust Jesus.

Suggested donation for this year's VBS adventure is \$25 per child (\$5 per day), and camp scholarships are available. Registration opens Saturday, March 1. For further information or a registration form contact Maria Tomasetti, as above.

Our VBS camp will need adult and teen volunteers (age 12 and older). A volunteer kick-off meeting will be scheduled for late May. Please reach out to Maria for information about the camp and about roles for volunteers. Thank you!

Here Comes February!

Welcome, February, the second and shortest month of the year, even when we add Leap Year Day. But the February calendar has notable highlights, like Ground Hog Day, Valentine's Day, Lincoln's and Washington's birthdays and the Super Bowl.

This month's *Parish Press* has a focus on our Human Concerns and Social Justice Committee, additional details about Jubilee Year 2025 and a preview of *True North!*, this year's summer VBS camp. You can also read about Father Hau's semester break adventure. (*That's* why we didn't see him at Christmas and New Year's!)

During February, the month of the Holy Family, may your families be blessed with peace and joy.

The Parish Press

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In Memoriam



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

Grace Cooper	Helen Fisher
Geraldine Iliff	Paul Randolph
William Sembiante	John Scalici
Dcn. Edmund Ramos	Dolores Edwards
Jedidiah Mohring	James Brown
Margaret O'Neill	Monica Judge
President Jimmy Carter	

May God welcome them to His everlasting kingdom.



Bereavement Support: Sunday, February 2

The parish Bereavement Support group will meet on Sunday afternoon, February 2, at 2 o'clock in the Saint Ann's Children's Chapel. Please consider joining us if you are struggling because of the death of someone you love. Let others who have known the pain of loss help you on your journey toward healing. You may call Joanne (203-877-4020) for further information.

Submit March Newsletter Information by February 10

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

We Welcome With Love . . .

. . . the newest members of our parish family:

Michael Harrington
Henry Hughes
Cassie Healey



Michael was baptized on Sunday, December 15 at Saint Gabriel Church. Henry and Cassie received the life-giving waters of Baptism at Saint Ann Church, Henry on Saturday, December 21 and Cassie on Sunday, January 19. God bless you, little ones. May you live always in the light of His love.

First Saturday Rosary Devotion Concludes February 1

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

February 9 is World Marriage Day

On the second Sunday of February the Church salutes the beauty of marriage and honors all those who have said yes to one another in a sacramental commitment of love. We celebrate all the married couples of Saint Raphael Parish. May God bless them and keep them always close to His heart.