



The Parish Press

Newsletter of Saint Raphael Parish Family
Milford, Connecticut

March 2025



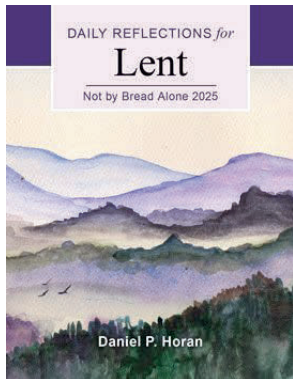
Lent

Lent: A Season of Hope

Our Pilgrimage Begins on Ash Wednesday, March 5



Lent begins in purple and ashes, traditionally associated with repentance and humility. It is a season of prayer, fasting and almsgiving. In addition, as Pope Francis has written, "Lent is precisely the season of hope, when we turn back to God." The Holy Father, who often reflects on the theological virtues in his messages, used a poetic image from the French poet Charles Péguy in describing Lent as a time of conversion, when "faith and charity take hope, this small child, by the hand. They teach her to walk, and at the same time, she leads them forward." Please read here and in the weekly bulletin about the various Lenten opportunities available this month at Saint Raphael Parish. May we live, learn, grow and rejoice as we make our Lenten pilgrimage.



Not By Bread Alone, Daily Reflections for Lent

Prayerfully journey through Lent with inspiring and meaningful reflections on the daily Mass readings. In just a few minutes each day, the insightful meditations of *Not by Bread Alone* can deepen your experience of this season of prayer and penance. The booklets, a gift from the parish, are available at the doors of both churches.

From the introduction by Daniel P. Horan: "The reflections in this little book are invitations to remember that Lent is always tied to the joy of Easter, to the Christian hope expressed in the resurrection. The way we come to know that joy and hope, even amid the suffering and struggles of our world, is by becoming people of Scripture and prayer. Consider

these reflections an invitation to deeper engagement with Scripture this Lent. And may the meditations and prayers that accompany them provide you with food for your own spiritual journey."

A Lenten Evening of Prayer

Monday, March 10, 7:00 p.m. at Saint Ann Church

Please join us at Saint Ann Church for an evening of prayer on March 10, the first Monday of Lent. The evening will begin with Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. After a brief period of silent Adoration parishioners will lead us in a Litany of Hope. Adoration concludes with Benediction. Then, holding the monstrance containing the Blessed Sacrament, Father John will bless all those who have gathered, before he returns the Blessed Sacrament to the tabernacle. Hope and the Blessed Sacrament - inspiration as our Lenten journey continues. Please plan to be with us.

"Stretch Out Your Hand": A Lenten Evening of Music and Reflection

Monday, March 24, 7:00 p.m. at Saint Ann Church

Reflections by Amy Ekeh. Music by Peter DeMarco and the Saint Ann Choir

"Stretch Out Your Hand" promises to be a very special way station during our Lenten pilgrimage. The program's theme is from the Gospel words of Jesus to a man with a withered hand: *Stretch out your hand*. And the man is healed. Healing will be the focus of Amy's reflections, so appropriate during Lent when we long for the touch of our Lord's healing love. There will be readings, the inspirational music of Peter and the Saint Ann choir, and time for prayerful reflection. You will want to be there.

You can learn more about Amy, teacher, author, editor, wife and mother, at her website: amyekeh.com. Copies of her latest book, *Stretch Out Your Hand: Reflections on the Healing Ministry of Jesus*, will be available for purchase in the church vestibule.

Ash Wednesday Schedule for Mass and Ashes

8:00 a.m.

12:00 Noon

Saint Gabriel Church

7:00 p.m.

Saint Ann Church

March Stations of the Cross

Friday afternoons

3:00 p.m. at Saint Ann Church

March 7

Stations with

Father Michael Clay

March 14

Stations for Peace

March 21

All of You Drink of This -
The Way of the Cross

March 28

Stations for

Today's Disciples

Stations are live-streamed at the parish website and remain available under

Previous Broadcasts.

Lenten Confessions*

Mondays 6:00-6:30 p.m.

March 10 - Saint Gabriel

March 17 - Saint Ann

March 24 - Saint Gabriel

March 31 - Saint Ann

*in addition to regular

Saturday confessions



Notes from the Knights

Introducing *Men of the Word* Monthly Bible Study Monday, March 3 at 7:00 p.m.

Tinto Council #47 is pleased to present a new initiative, *Men of the Word*, a Bible study for Knights and for all Catholic men. The Study's first session is scheduled for Monday March 3 at 7:00 p.m. in the Saint Ann Parish Library All men who are interested are welcome to attend.

In his apostolic letter *Aperuit Illis* Pope Francis emphasized "the importance of learning how to read, appreciate and pray daily with Sacred Scripture." *Men of the Word* is the Knights' response to that call.

Spring Food Drive on the Drawing Board

Last fall's food drive was so successful, - thanks to the generosity of our parishioners - that the Council will hold another drive this spring in support of the Saint Gabriel Food Pantry. Watch the bulletin and the newsletter for details.

Donate to the Saint Gabriel Food Pantry

Most needed items include boxed cereal, brownie mix, ramen noodles, coffee, pudding, jello.

You may leave your donations in the vestibule of either church.
Thank you.

Help the Victims of the California Wildfires Can and Bottle Drive Saturday, March 29

The destructive wildfires that raged through Southern California in January destroyed or damaged more than 18,000 structures and forced 212,000 Californians to evacuate. 29 people lost their lives. On **Saturday, March 29 from 9:00 a.m. until noon** the parish will have a can/bottle drive in the Saint Ann parking lot to help the victims of this terrible disaster. Cash donations will also be accepted. (Make checks payable to Saint Raphael Parish with Wildfires on the memo line.)

Thank you, Saint Raphael parishioners, for the charitable generosity with which you reach out to people in need. We ask you, too, as you did after Hurricanes Helene and Milton, to continue to pray for hope and healing for all those who have suffered grievous loss.

Pray the Rosary

Every Tuesday at Noon
Saint Ann Children's Chapel
(enter by the side door)

With the Knights of Columbus
Thursday, March 28, 7:00 p.m.
Saint Ann Parish Center

Parish Life Team
Tuesday, March 18, 6:00 p.m.
Saint Ann Parish Center

(Note: April Stations schedule will be published next month.)



Enjoy Coffee And The Weekend of March 8/9

Gather at the Saint Ann Parish. Center or at Saint Gabriel Hall for coffee and conversation (or tea/hot chocolate and conversation!) after Mass the weekend of March 8/9. Sample tasty snacks, courtesy of our parish bakers. The newsletter staff has ordered "non-February like" (*warmer*) weather for the weekend. We'll see how that works out!

As Spring Approaches . . . Observations from a Food Pantry Gardener

Elizabeth Simonetti, the inspiration behind the parish's innovative Food Pantry Garden, submitted the following:

My green thumbs are itchy - are yours? The best part of the winter months is the quiet time to plan and think about this year's garden. And if you're like me, you may already have started seedlings for spring planting.

Just a quick request-- when you start your seedlings, plant a couple of extras for the Food Pantry Garden-- eggplant, peppers, tomatoes in particular. We'll plant them out later in the spring.

To our garden crew and to everyone who supports our project: Thanks for all you do for the Food Pantry and for the Lord.

Saint Isidore, pray for our garden ministry.

This Just In As We Went to Press: Parish Picnic Update!

Behind the scenes planning has begun! The members of our picnic committee - those fabulous folks - are looking for a few good people! The committee is hoping to find:

*Someone knowledgeable in Canva or other design software to create promotional material for Saint Raphael Parish Picnic.

*Someone to plan and oversee the picnic's Children's area.

If you can help, please contact Cathy Coda at cathy.coda@att.net Thank you.

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

**The Nicene Creed:
The Church**

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

or

Sunday, March 30
12:00 noon-2:15 p.m.

Saint Ann Parish Center Hall

Remember:
Session's first half-hour: pizza dinner!

March GIFT Topic: The Church

During GIFT's March sessions we will continue to examine and discuss the important truths expressed in the Nicene Creed, the Profession of Faith that we say and pray at Mass every week. Focus for March: our belief in "one, holy catholic and apostolic Church."

We will learn more about the four Marks of the Church (one, holy, catholic and apostolic) that are identified in the Nicene Creed and look at Images of the Church (People of God, Body of Christ, Sacrament). We will discuss the Mission of the Church and her various Ministries, how the Church of today lives the mission of Jesus and the early Church. We will also review practical ways we can all live our Baptismal call.

GIFT Sacramental

Program Dates

First Communion

Learning Session #2

Saturday, March 1

10:00 a.m -noon

Parish Center classrooms

Required for children with parent or guardian

Confirmation

The Bible
(with excerpts from
The Chosen

Sunday, March 2

12:30-2:00 p.m.

or

Tuesday, March 4

6:30-8:00 p.m.

Candidates only

Parish Center Classroom

For additional information about GIFT, the Saint Raphael Parish faith formation program, or about the March session contact Maria Tomasetti, atomasetti@snet.net or 203-988-8598 (voice or text).



**50th Anniversary of CRS Rice Bowl
Bringing Lent to Life**

50 years ago Catholics in Allentown, PA organized to bring help to families facing famine in Africa, help that came in the form of a small cardboard box, the beginning of Catholic Relief Services Operation Rice Bowl.

50 years later the program has become a Lenten tradition for the Saint Raphael Parish family and for millions of Catholics in the U.S. who continue to respond to Jesus' invitation to share bread for life with our most vulnerable sisters and brothers, so that all may live with dignity. Our CRS Rice Bowl donations help provide life-saving support to more than 200 million people in more than 120 countries around the world. 75% of what we donate supports Catholic Relief Services global programming, while 25% stays in the Archdiocese of Hartford for local efforts to alleviate hunger and poverty.

Cardboard Rice Bowls with Lenten calendars are available at the doors of both churches and at this month's GIFT sessions. You can see your Lenten alms at work at [Lenten Stories | CRS Rice Bowl](#), where you'll find inspiring Rice Bowl Stories of Hope from Nigeria, Guatemala and Bangladesh. Thank you, as always, for your kindness and generosity in feeding the hungry.



Summer 2025 VBS Camp: True North! *Trusting Jesus in a Wild World*

Monday, July 21 through Friday, July 25

Registration Opens March 1

A Note to Campers Ages 4-11: *Save your space now!*

This summer's VBS campers will have the ultimate Alaskan adventure as they trek the tundra during July. Within a setting of glowing northern lights, majestic mountains, glistening glaciers and racing rivers they'll encounter a wild world where it might be easy to lose their way. But the campers will be tracking Jesus, a faithful friend we can trust completely. Jesus will always point us in the right direction. He is our *True North!*

Campers will share Wild Bible Adventures, with buddies like Earnest the Eagle (seen flying nearby), Ponder the sea otter, Claudia, the King Crab, Kody the Bear and Bruce the Moose, who will help them remember Bible points from the Gospel of Matthew. The Imagination Station, a "sciency spot," is a favorite Activity Center.. Campers will also enjoy Glacier Games, Tundra Treats, True North's catchy music and more.



Monday through Friday sessions run from 9:00 am to 12:00 noon, but will be extended on Friday due to Compass Closing followed by pizza lunch. Suggested donation is \$25 per child (\$5 per day), and camp scholarships are available.

Our VBS camp will need adult and teen volunteers (age 12 and older). A volunteer kick-off meeting will be scheduled for late May. P For further information, a registration form or to sign on as a volunteer, please contact Maria Tomasetti, as above. Thank you!

Lenten Opportunities This Month

Ash Wednesday falls during the first week of March and we encourage you to look for all the Lenten opportunities that are mentioned in this issue. According to a page one article, Lent is a season of hope. The word appears in this newsletter at least ten times, along with information about and schedules for Confessions, Stations of the Cross, Evenings of Prayer, CRS Rice Bowls, the parish Lenten Supper and more.



Celebrate Mardi Gras on the 4th (perhaps with King Cake?), Saint Patrick on the 17th (with some wearin' o' the green?), and Saint Joseph on the 19th, a good and faithful man, Christ's foster father and loving spouse of our Blessed Mother. On the 20th welcome the long-awaited arrival of Spring.

Happy March!

The Parish Press

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In Memoriam



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

Richard Lanese

Neal Collins

Theodore Boynton, Jr.

May God welcome them to everlasting peace and joy

Love and Best Wishes

as you begin your married life together . . .



Steven and Mary (Jaser) Ortiz

. . . who were married on Friday, February 14 (Valentine's Day!) at Saint Gabriel Church. Congratulations, Steven and Mary! May you always share love and laughter.

Parish Lenten Supper March 28

Come share a Lenten meal with the parish family on Friday evening, March 28 at 6:00 p.m. in the 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)

Lenten Reflection

Deacon George Sartor

Make your reservations after Masses the weekends of
March 15/16 and March 22/23

Bereavement Support: Sunday, March 2

If you are grieving the death of a loved one please consider meeting with our Bereavement Support group. You may find consolation in sharing your fears and concerns with others who have known the pain of loss. The group will meet on Sunday afternoon March 2 at 2 o'clock in the Saint Ann's Children's Chapel. Please call Joanne (203-877-4020) for additional information.



April Newsletter Information Due March 14

Got news, notes, comments, photos or suggestions for the April newsletter? Call Ann Eden (203-874-8744) or send them to parishpress06460@gmail.com by Friday, March 14.. Thank you!