



The Parish Press

Newsletter of Saint Raphael Parish Family

Milford, Connecticut

July 2025



Don't Miss July's Special Save-the-Date Events!

Celebrate and Thank Deacon George and Monica Sartor Sunday, July 6th, 3:00-5:00 p.m., Saint Ann Parish Center



Smiles and thanks will be the order of the day at the July 6th parish reception in honor of Deacon George and his lovely wife Monica. The parish family appreciates their dedication and their service.

Deacons, in fact, are ordained as a sacramental sign to the Church and to the world of Christ, who came "to serve and not to be served." Their various ministries - proclaiming the Word, preaching, teaching, baptizing, witnessing marriages, presiding at wake services - are signs that they are called to be servants in a servant-Church. Deacons' wives do not have a clearly defined role, but their prayers, support and strength are invaluable as they share the joys, sorrows, challenges, and blessings of a deacon's life.

Thank you, Deacon George and Monica, for serving us so faithfully and so well. May God bless you as you bring your ministry of love and service to Precious Blood Parish.

Saint Raphael Parish Website

<https://saintraphaelmilford.org>

Holy Hour for the End of Human Trafficking Wednesday, July 30th, 7:00 p.m. Saint Ann Church

The Human Trafficking Task Force of the Archdiocese of Hartford invites you to be with us for a Eucharistic Holy Hour to pray for an end to human trafficking. An estimated 27 million women, children and men around the world, including here in Connecticut, are caught in the snares of this crime against humanity, exploited for labor, services and commercial sex.



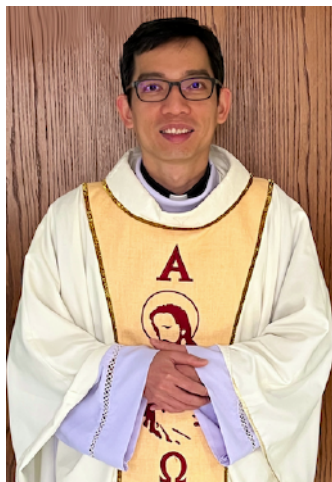
Please be with us at Saint Ann Church on Wednesday evening, July 30th, World Day Against Trafficking in Persons. In the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, with prayer, readings, music and periods of meditation and adoration we will pray for the victims of this unspeakable crime, for their families and for all those who work to support them. The Holy Hour will close with Benediction.

After the service, you will have the opportunity to meet members of the Task Force and to learn how you can get involved in this very important ministry.

Meet Father Joseph Thong, Our Summer Visitor

As the first week of June was drawing to a close Saint Raphael Parish welcomed Father Joseph Thong, who was on summer break from his studies at the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. Our staff reporter caught up with Father recently, and he was kind enough to tell us a bit about himself.

Father was born in a small Vietnamese town that had been a French rubber tree plantation in Bà Rịa-Vũng Tàu province. As a young boy he realized that knowing English was a key factor in being successful. So, although his favorite subjects were math, physics, chemistry, and other natural sciences, in the 6th grade he began to work seriously on learning English. He kept studying English at Vietnam's University of Science, thinking it would be an asset for someone majoring in Computer Science. That "turned out to be very true" during the two plus years he worked as a programmer at Gameloft where he had to communicate with other coworkers worldwide. When he discerned the Lord's call to the priesthood, Father "wanted to become a missionary in a poor country like Sudan," an idea inspired by Korean priest "Father Tae-seok Lee, in the documentary *Don't Cry for Me, Sudan*."



Father Thong was ordained in January 2021 at the Cathedral Church of Ba Ria diocese. (His home parish, Son Hoa, is in that diocese.) "My bishop had asked me to do some advanced studies and right after ordination, during the second wave of Covid-19, I was sent to our Saint Thomas Pre-Seminary to work on an intensive period of studying English". His English continued to improve even as he took courses at the seminary in philosophy and theology.

Once the pandemic was "under control" Father took the IELTS, a test administered by the International English Language Testing System and trusted by governments, employers, and thousands of universities around the world. "I took the IELTS test and as a result, got an opportunity to come to the U.S." His weakest skill, he believes, is speaking the language, in part (*continues on page 4*)

More Class of 2025 Graduates and their Plans. Congratulations!

Middle School Graduate, High School

William Hutchison
Hybrid home school and
technical school program
Notre Dame High School
West Haven

Booking Deadline for Newport By Land & Sea Extended to August 1

Date remains the same for our "perfect summer day trip" to Newport, RI: Wednesday, August 20 Per person price is still \$189. **But**, reservation with full payment is now due by Friday, August 1.

For booking information/instructions contact our travel maven Arlene Lacerenza at alacerenza@att.net.

Members of Saint Raphael Pastoral Council 2025-2026

Elaine Bataille
Cathy Coda
Leo Dorsey
John Kirkham
Frank Lacerenza
(Vice-Chairperson)
Joyce Marlow
Rosemary Marmolejo
(Chairperson)
Melvin Moral*
Frances O'Neill
Susan Reed*
Josh Twidwell*
(Secretary)

*New member - Congratulations!

Thank you, outgoing members, John Adams, Terri Deveny and Wally Hauck.

Coffee And July 12th and 13th

Gather with the parish family at Saint Gabriel Hall or the Parish Center after weekend Masses on Saturday and Sunday, July 12th and 13th. Enjoy tasty snacks, hot and cold beverages, and a chance to catch up on the latest parish happenings. Hope to see you there!

High School Grads, Work Plans, Colleges, Intended Majors

Charlie Becker
Jonathan Law High School
James Madison University, Virginia
Business

Jon Elcid Dimaya
Jonathan Law High School
Quinnipiac University
Computer Science

Camille Irby
Academy of Our Lady of Mercy,
Lauralton Hall
Cornell University
Nutritional Sciences

Caitlyn Murphy
Jonathan Law High School
University of North Carolina, Charlotte
Elementary Education

Adrianna Piccirillo
Jonathan Law High School
University of Connecticut
Mechanical Engineering

David Santos
Jonathan Law High School
Housatonic Community College
Computer Programming



Donna's Creation Care Corner Invite Ladybugs into your Garden

Farmers love ladybugs and if they accept your invitation to spend time in your garden you will understand why. These pretty, colorful creatures have voracious appetites for aphids, mealybugs, scale insects, spider mites, insect eggs, and other soft-bodied insects that can harm plants. One ladybug can consume up to 50-60 aphids per day and as many as 5,000 insects in its lifetime!

Ladybugs are colorful for a reason. Their brightly colored and spotted shells are like stop signs, warning their enemies to back off. According to National Geographic Kids their marking tell predators: to "Eat something else! I taste terrible." When threatened, the bugs will secrete an oily, foul-tasting fluid from their knee joints. (Not very ladylike!). They may also play dead.

Ladybugs will happily relocate to your garden if you plant diverse flowers and herbs like dill, fennel, marigolds, sunflowers, yarrow, dahlias, daisies, asters, cosmos, coreopsis, and zinnia. The more diversity, the better. Shallow plates of water for a water source as well as rock piles for shelter also create inviting habitat.

Another extremely important way to attract ladybugs to the garden is to eliminate the use of insecticides, which kill ladybugs just as they kill harmful insects. In fact, ladybug populations in North America are experiencing a decline.

Don't order ladybugs for your yard through the "mail-order-ladybug pipeline," which engages in unethical treatment of one of God's amazing creatures. Many are taken from their natural habitat and stockpiled in cold storage for long periods of time. Fewer than 5% of those released remain in the garden.

Ladybugs are happy in many different habitats, including grasslands, forests, cities, suburbs, and along rivers. They are most active from spring until fall. When the weather turns cold, they look for a warm, secluded place to hibernate, such as in rotting logs, under rocks, or even inside houses. These hibernating colonies can contain thousands of ladybugs.

For Catholics, a truly fun fact is the origin of the name *ladybug*. The term was coined by European farmers who prayed to the Virgin Mary when pests began eating their crops. After ladybugs descended and wiped out the invading insects, the farmers named them the "beetle of Our Lady." This title eventually evolved into *ladybug*. So, remember to pray to the Blessed Mother when you are working in your garden. Who knows what miracles will transpire!



Congratulations, Leonardo!

Leonardo Peregrine Riggione-Hartmann received the Sacrament of Confirmation at the Cathedral of Saint Joseph in Hartford on Sunday afternoon, June 8, 2025.

Parish Adult Confirmation Program Begins Late August/Early September

The parish is planning a six-session Adult Confirmation program for late August/early September. It will be open to Catholics ages 18 and older who have received the Sacrament of Holy Communion (Eucharist) but not the Sacrament of Confirmation.

If you are interested, please reach out to Maria Tomasetti, 203-988-8598 (voice or text) or atomasetti@snet.net to express interest, and to receive a copy of our Adult Sacrament Information Form. Program participants will be preparing to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation in November at the Cathedral of Saint Joseph in Hartford.



Interested in Becoming a Catholic? A Formation Program for Adults Begins in September

Are you, or is someone you know, interested in becoming a Catholic? Have you never been baptized? Or are you an adult Catholic who has never received the Sacraments of Eucharist (Holy Communion) and Confirmation? If this is the right time for you to take the next step on your faith journey or if you have questions, you might consider our OCIA program.

*OCIA (Order of Christian Initiation of Adults), formerly RCIA, is the process through which adults and teens join the Catholic Church or complete their initiation into the Catholic Church. Those in the OCIA program are invited to participate in the life of prayer, worship, and personal conversion that characterizes the life of a Catholic Christian. In a series of classes participants will explore and learn more about the teachings and practices of the Catholic Church. For additional information about our OCIA program, which begins in September, please contact Maria Tomasetti, as above



Our Pro-Life Ministry's Initial Project An Unqualified Success!

Our parish pro-life ministry, established in September of 2024, had a mission: create a culture in Saint Raphael Parish that respects the dignity of every human life in every stage. We wanted an initial project that everyone could celebrate, one that would touch the hearts of our parishioners and promote our mission.

Thanks to your incredible generosity, our May 31st/June 1st Diaper Drive succeeded beyond our wildest expectations! On Monday, June 16th we distributed 3,520 diapers to three collaborating organizations, [St. Gianna in New Haven](#), [Hope Pregnancy Center in New Britain](#), and [Helping Hands for Hurting Hearts](#), the Pro-Life ministry at Precious Blood Parish in Milford. Some of their comments:

Our needy mothers are always so grateful to receive diapers from us. They are expensive and babies need so many each and every day." - Barbara from Helping Hands

"Children are happier and healthier when there is an adequate supply of diapers. A lack of diapers may cause parents to leave the diaper on too long resulting in risk of rashes and other health problems. Our being able to provide diapers through your donation relieves some financial worries and provides peace of mind. Diapers and wipes are always on mom and dad's list when they come to St. Gianna's." - Carolyn Falcigno, Executive Director

Sincere thanks to everyone who donated and to the outstanding members of our Pro Life ministry, including Deacon George and Monica Sartor, Steve and Robyn Staurovsky, Kerry Sciuto, Maria Tomasetti, Lisa D'Avignon, Lucille Delorenzo, Sharon Lebowitz, Wally and Lori Hauck.

Saint Paul spoke for us when he wrote to the Thessalonians, *"Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."* (5:18) We pray for continued success in our ministry and for more opportunities to be grateful.

News from the Knights



The results of our June Food Drive in support of the Saint Gabriel Food Pantry were, in a word, OVERWHELMING! We received 328 bags of non-perishable food items, or, we estimated, some 4,000 lbs. of food, approximately a 36% increase from last fall's drive. What a tremendous outpouring of charity by our parishioners and friends! Tinto Council #47 sends heartfelt thanks to everyone who contributed. Because of your kindness the Food Pantry shelves were overflowing

We were a busy group on Food Drive weekend, June 7/8. Several Council members volunteered in support of Connecticut Special Olympics- Olympic Town in Hamden. Olympic Towns give athletes, partners, coaches and family members a place to relax and have fun in between their sporting events. Here they find entertainment, safety, educational exhibits, food, drinks, different crafts, games and activities. (Almost all are free of charge, thanks to the generosity of our donors.



Reminder: On Thursday, August 14th at 7 p.m. in the Parish Center the Council will present *The Immortal Chaplains*, the true story of four World War II Army Chaplains who made the ultimate sacrifice so others might live. Please save the date for this unforgettable presentation.

**Special Events, Meet Father Thong,.
Great Follow-ups. Welcome to July!**

Be sure to mark your calendars for July's save-the-date special events, both celebratory and prayerful. Read about Father Thong and his intense study of the English language.



That glowing orb at left is a ruby, July's birthstone and, in ancient India, the "king of precious stones."

The follow-up reports on the Diaper Drive and the K of C's Food Drive are sure to make you smile and you'll learn how to roll out the red carpet for God's amazing creature, the ladybug. You'll see additions to our Class of 2025 graduates, and an updated list of Pastoral Council members.

Happy 249th birthday, USA. May God bless us with peace in the year ahead.

The Parish Press

A Publication of Saint Raphael Parish

Milford, Connecticut

Editor: Ann K. Eden

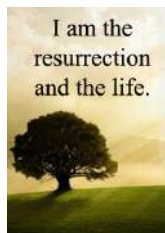
Production Staff: Lou Eden, Nancy Vai

Printing: Graphic Image, Milford, CT

SAINT RAPHAEL PARISH

Saint Ann Church Saint Gabriel Church
501 Naugatuck Avenue
Milford, CT 06460-5048

NON PROFIT
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
MILFORD, CT
PERMIT NO.362



In Memoriam

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

Joyce Glennon Dennis Alfred Vai

Robert Page Eric Mason, Sr.

Robin "Tim" Tummins

Grady Joe Johnson

Brother Benjamin Sunday, CSC

Elizabeth "Betty" Prezioso

Henrietta Platt

May God bring them to his eternal banquet, rejoicing with the saints forever.

Bereavement Support Meeting: Sunday, July 13th



The parish Bereavement Support group will meet on Sunday July 13th at 2:00 p.m. in the Saint Ann's Children's Chapel. If you are struggling because of the loss of a loved one we invite you to be with us.

Share your story and ease your pain, even for an hour. Let us help you remember that life can be beautiful. You may call Joanne (203-877-4020) for additional information.

Information for August's Parish Press due July 11th

Send your notes, photos, comments and suggestions to parishpress06460@gmail.com. Or call Ann Eden (203-874-8744) by Friday, July 11th. Thank you.

(*Father Thong story continues*) because in the year of intensive learning before coming to the U.S. the focus is more on academics and the IELTS test itself than on conversation. For Father, the keys to studying, "besides God's grace, are patience and self-discipline."

A year ago, Father completed his first two-year program, Master of Theological Studies (MTS) in Biblical Theology at Saint John's University, MN. He then began to pursue the Licentiate in Canon Law (JCL) at the Catholic University of America, a 3-year program. "If God wills," he will be in the U.S. for two more years. "Biblical Studies is my favorite as both my priestly vocation and my ministry are rooted in Scripture. But there are three main reasons for my decision to pursue a JCL: to continue to improve my English; to challenge myself in a very distinguished area; and last but not least, to provide the expertise in legal matters that my diocese needs."

In his free time Father enjoys playing badminton, listening to classical music, practicing piano and doing computer programming. What has he enjoyed most about Saint Raphael Parish? "The community's warm welcome; visiting Yale, the dream university of my childhood; the parish food-drive." Thank you for being with us, Father Thong. May your future be rich with God's blessings.