

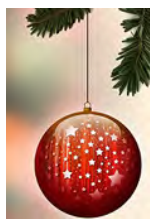


# The Parish Press

Newsletter of Saint Raphael Parish Family

Milford, Connecticut

December 2025



## December Destination: The Christmas Fair! Saint Ann Parish Center Saturday, December 6 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

The doors open at 9 a.m. on Saturday, December 6<sup>th</sup> for our annual parish Christmas Fair, which falls this year on the Feast of Saint Nicholas - how appropriate is that?! Come early: There's lots to see and enjoy, beginning with the warm smiles of the greeters.

Browse among the crafters and artisans, whose unique items make memorable gifts and see what the 3rd part vendors have to offer. Stop by the bakery, that groaning board of tempting taste treats. Snack while you're shopping and take home your favorites for dessert. Have lunch at the Christmas Fair Kitchen, well known for its tasty menu items and reasonable prices.

Don't miss the Raffle Room, where you can take a chance, or an armful of chances, on the wreaths, beautiful baskets and other prizes that are on display. The Nativity Exhibit Room is a popular favorite and the sets are available for purchase during the Fair.

Santa will be with us, of course, and, if you are fortunate enough to come around noon you will see and hear strolling carolers, the talented members of the Jonathan Law Advanced Vocal Ensemble.

The Christmas Fair is a major fund raiser for Saint Raphael Parish. We look forward to seeing you there!

## Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception Monday, December 8

Holy Day Masses

8:00 a.m.

Saint Ann Church

7:00 p.m.

Saint Gabriel Church

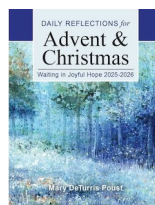


On this Holy Day of Obligation we honor Mary Immaculate, the patroness of the United States of America.

*O Mary, conceived without sin,  
pray for us who have recourse to you.*

## Advent & Christmas Reflections

*Waiting in Joyful Hope*



Be sure to take a copy of Mary DeTurrel Poust's booklet of Advent & Christmas reflections based on lectionary readings from the weekday and Sunday Masses. In *Waiting in Joyful Hope*, available at the doors of both churches, the author invites us to "step outside the frenzy of the weeks ahead to create a little space where you and God can abide in each other's presence."

Please be aware that each church has a limited number of booklets in Spanish.

## Fair Trade Trunk Show at the Christmas Fair

The parish will be hosting a Fair Trade Trunk Show at the Christmas Fair where, through SERRV International, you can purchase fair trade items from around the world. Inventory includes ornaments, nativity sets and tree of life trivets, as well as baskets, scarves and jewelry. Looking for an angel? You can choose between Acacia carved heart angels and soapstone angels from Kenya. Divine chocolate, a long-time parish favorite, will be available, too, as will coffee, loose leaf tea, and organic olive oil from the West Bank. We also have a small supply of discounted items, available from previous trunk shows.

25% of the proceeds from the sale of each full-price item and 100% of the proceeds from the sale of discounted items will be donated to Saint Raphael Parish.

SERRV, a fair trade nonprofit since 1949, has a mission: To empower small-scale global artisans and farmers through long-term trading partnerships. Their name summarizes that mission: **Sustainable Employment Resources Rights Vision**. Fair trade is a commitment to ensuring that people who make and grow products have a place to sell them, that they are paid fair wages, and that their working conditions and communities are healthy. Questions about SERRV or fair trade? Reach out to Maria. Her contact information is at the bottom of page 3.

## Christmas Schedule

### Confessions

Monday, December 22

10:00 a.m. - Saint Gabriel Church

Tuesday, December 23

3:00 p.m. - Saint Ann Church

7:00 p.m. - Saint Ann Church

### Christmas Masses

#### Christmas Eve

Wednesday, December 24

4:00 p.m. - Saint Ann Church

4:00 p.m. - Saint Gabriel Church

8:00 p.m. - Saint Ann Church

#### Christmas Day

Thursday, December 24

9:30 a.m. - Saint Ann Church

11:00 a.m. - Saint Gabriel Church



## Donna's Creation Care Corner

### The Poinsettia: What's in a Name?

But for the Christmas tree, perhaps no plant is more symbolic of Christmas than the Poinsettia. It is named after Dr. Joel Roberts Poinsett, first U.S. ambassador to Mexico and an amateur botanist, who discovered the plant in 1828. But this striking example of the beauty of God's creation has many other names.

In Latin it is *Euphorbia pulcherrima*, "the most beautiful." Its native name *cuetlaxóchitl* (kwet-la-sho-shel or "mortal flower that withers") is apt because its thin red bracts, the tiny flowers at its center, can dry up and shrink quickly – especially in the wild. Because of its distinctive red color it is also called Flame-Leaf Flower, Mexican Flame Leaf, and Painted Leaf. And because its natural blooming cycle in its native Mexico coincides with the winter solstice, it is sometimes called the Winter Rose.

Another name is derived from a Mexican legend. Once, a poor girl named Pepita was sad because she had no gift to offer the baby Jesus at Christmas. Her cousin told her that any gift – if given with love – would be acceptable. So Pepita reverently gathered weeds from the roadside to place at the altar. As she devoutly laid her meager bouquet at the nativity scene, the weeds changed miraculously into beautiful, bright red Poinsettias. The transformed weeds were then called the *La Flor de Nochebuena* or the Flower of Christmas Eve.

During the hectic and often stressful activities of the Christmas season, let us all take just a moment to reflect on this simple yet profound story. Because this tale, after all, is not about the mythical origin of a plant, but about the transformative power of love. Merry Christmas!



### A Note from the Grand Knight

As the Knights of Columbus approaches the midpoint of our fraternal year I am reaching out to the men of Saint Raphael parish.

If you are a practicing Catholic I am INVITING and ENCOURAGING you to join Tinto Council #47. Membership is very rewarding, with many opportunities to serve both our parish and our community (like our recent drive to support the Saint Gabriel food pantry). Invest an hour or so a month at each meeting and you will reap rewards you can't really measure

You will also be part of one of the world's largest Catholic organizations, one that is based on CHARITY for those in need. You can join easily through our website. Go to <https://www.kofc.org/en/index.html> and in just a few minutes you can become a member of a Catholic brotherhood that is changing the world. If you have any questions please reach out to me, Richard Wheeling at 203-520-3250 or to John Marmolejo (203-895-7696).



**New! Beginning  
in the  
Spring of 2026**

Nurturing Seedlings: Community for Young Parents is a ministry designed for parents/guardians of children ages birth to five. The ministry was created by the Archdiocese of Hartford as a way to:

\*Give young parents the opportunity to share in community with other young families and enjoy a sense of belonging with the entire parish

\*Help parents to grow in their own faith and prayer life

\*Equip young parents with simple skills to lead their young child/children into a relationship with Jesus from the very beginning.

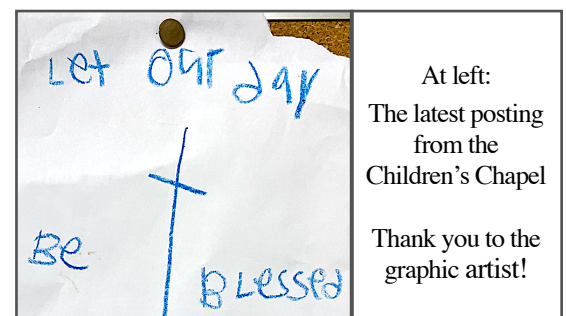
If you are a parent/guardian of a baby, toddler or preschooler and would like to learn more about Nurturing Seedlings: Community for Young Parents, please contact Maria Tomasetti, [atomasetti@snet.net](mailto:atomasetti@snet.net) or 203-988-8598 (cell phone, voice or text).

### More Calendar Notes

Fatima Rosary  
Saturday, December 6, 11:00 a.m.  
Saint Ann Church

Coffee And  
Saturday and Sunday, December 13 and 14  
After all the Masses

*The Chosen*  
Season 5, Episodes 1 & 2  
Sunday, January 18, 2026 2:30-4:30 p.m.



At left:  
The latest posting  
from the  
Children's Chapel  
  
Thank you to the  
graphic artist!



**Advent/Christmas Celebration Open House Saint Ann Parish Center.  
Tuesday, December 16<sup>th</sup> Come anytime between 6:00 and 8:00 p.m.**

We invite GIFT families, their friends and young parish families with children ages 3 and older to this annual celebration. Join us as we pause to remember the true reason and meaning of the Advent and Christmas seasons.

People of all ages will enjoy pizza and snacks and the evening's various activity centers: Advent wreath and Nativity crafts; a Jesse Tree; O Antiphons; Advent & Christmas puzzles; the always popular Busted Halo Advent video. There will be coloring and an opportunity to create Christmas cards for homebound/ill parishioners as well as for residents of local health care facilities.

Hear the timeless and beautiful Bible story of the birth of Jesus and gather as we close with Christmas carols around the crèche. Please celebrate with us in the Saint Ann Parish Center classrooms and hallway on Tuesday, December 16<sup>th</sup> anytime between 6:00 and 8:00 p.m. We look forward to seeing you.



**First Reconciliation at Saint Gabriel Church  
Saturday, December 13<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 p.m.**

Young people in the Saint Raphael sacramental program will meet Jesus for the first time in the Sacrament of Reconciliation on Saturday, December 13<sup>th</sup> beginning at 1:00 p.m. at Saint Gabriel Church. As they receive this beautiful Sacrament of God's Forgiveness please pray for them, for their families and their catechists.



**Congratulations to All the Confirmandi!**

On Sunday, November 2<sup>nd</sup> following the 9:30 Mass at Saint Ann Church Archbishop Christopher Coyne conferred the Sacrament of Confirmation on *Gabriella Jude Hakins*.

**GIFT Sacramental  
Confirmation**

**Prayer Life  
Including the Mass  
(Candidates only)**

Sunday, December 7<sup>th</sup>  
12:30 - 2:00 p.m.

**or**

Tuesday, December 9<sup>th</sup>  
6:30 - 8:00 p.m.

Parish Center Classroom

Twenty-three parish teens were "sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit" on Sunday, November 16<sup>th</sup> at the Cathedral of Saint Joseph in Hartford when the Most Reverend Juan Miguel Betancourt, Auxiliary Bishop of Hartford, administered the Sacrament of Confirmation. The newly confirmed are:

<i>Sarah Rose of Lima Abate</i>	<i>Grace Therese of Lisieux Hutchison</i>	<i>April Mary Quintero</i>
<i>Marcello Sebastian Armellino</i>	<i>Bryan Noah Ilama</i>	<i>Ana Josephina Riano Hernandez</i>
<i>Leyah Gianna Beretta Molla Cupole</i>	<i>Sabrina Adelaide Ilama</i>	<i>Tristan Michael the Archangel Sevillano</i>
<i>Sophia Our Lady of Guadalupe Empric</i>	<i>Danielle Amelia Kotansky</i>	<i>Alejandra Mary Magdalene Siles Fajardo</i>
<i>Madeline Lucy Faoro</i>	<i>Nathan Joseph Krauss</i>	<i>Ashlyn Rose of Lima Smithauser</i>
<i>Brianna Our Lady of Guadalupe Garcia</i>	<i>Emery Mary Kubik</i>	<i>Melanie Elizabeth of Hungary Tabra</i>
<i>Abigail Francis de Sales Guzas</i>	<i>Kayleen Valentine Monter</i>	<i>Marcos Richard Tepetl</i>
<i>Emma Abigail Heinmiller</i>		<i>Casey Delphina Utzler</i>

**Christmas Giving Program 2025**



Our Christmas Giving Program trees are up, adorned with gift tag ornaments that list an item or a gift card for a family in need, a St. Gabriel Food Pantry patron, or for a local organization that serves people in need. These include: Milford Youth & Family Services, Milford Senior Center, Bridges, Beth-El Center, St. Vincent Special Needs Services, Bridgeport Rescue Mission, The Umbrella Center for Domestic Violence Services and Boys & Girls Village (<https://www.myregistry.com/organization/pamela-nichols-milford-ct/5072697/giftlist>). Details are being finalized with a few additional organizations!

Please take a gift tag (or two!) and return the gift, with tag attached, the weekends of December 6/7 or 13/14. Make returns by December 14, if you can. (We want to be sure everyone receives their gifts before Christmas!)

**Want to serve/volunteer in this social outreach ministry?** We will need help from older children and teens on December 7 and December 13/14 - **before weekend Masses** - to carry gifts from Saint Ann Church to the Parish Center for check-in and sorting, and from Saint Gabriel Church to our delivery vehicles. On those same dates we'll need adults and high school teens to help with gift check-in and sorting in the Parish Center. We are also asking for assistance with gift deliveries beginning on Monday, December 15, followed by several make-up delivery dates prior to Christmas. (You might feel like Santa, *ho, ho, ho!!*) Thanks very much.

**Questions?** Please contact Kathleen Buchanan, 203-606-6476; Rose Marie Marmolejo, 203-378-5508; or Maria Tomasetti, [atomasetti@snet.net](mailto:atomasetti@snet.net) or 203-988-8598 (cell - voice or text).



**Advent, Christmas , Giving 2025, New Program  
for Young Parents, Lots More**



We are now in the season of Advent, preparing for the coming of Our Savior and reflecting on his return at the end of time.

From our very busy December calendar: the Christmas Fair, a Holy Day, Coffee And, the Fatima Rosary a Christmas concert and a New Year's Eve party with DJ "Peter Z".

Read about the return of *The Chosen* to the Saint Ann "theatre" in January and enjoy another drawing posted in the Children's Chapel.

There's more - check inside for details.

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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**SAINT RAPHAEL PARISH**

Saint Ann Church Saint Gabriel Church  
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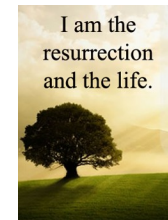
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*Let there be peace on earth.  
Merry Christmas!*

**In Memoriam**

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

Alejandro Baires	James McGarry
Martha Sharpe	Lucille Dlugos
David Adams	John McSweeney
Mary Joan Marus	



May they find the fullness of joy, peace and glory in God's everlasting kingdom.

**Bereavement Support Sunday, December 14<sup>th</sup>**



The parish Bereavement Support group will meet in the Saint Ann Children's Chapel on Sunday afternoon, December 14<sup>th</sup>, at 2 o'clock.

If you are finding it difficult to cope with the death of someone you love, please consider meeting with us. You may find comfort in sharing your story and your memories with others who have known the pain and loneliness of loss. For additional information please call Joanne (203-877-4020). May God bless you always.

**Info for January's Newsletter Due December 6<sup>th</sup>**

What's happening in 2026 that you would like to share with the parish family? Submit your news (photos, too!) for January's newsletter to [parishpress06460@gmail.com](mailto:parishpress06460@gmail.com) or call Ann Eden (203-874-8744) by Saturday, December 6<sup>th</sup>. Thank you.

**We Welcome With Love . . .**

. . . the members of our parish family who were baptized in October:

Mackenzie Marzullo  
Emilia Roach Millie Usinger  
and

Siena Vargas Emilio Canela Lillian Gerez  
Myla Feliciano Christian Leopold

who received the life-giving waters of Baptism in November. May they live always in the joy of God's love.



**Ring in the New Year Party  
December 31, 2025**

**7:00 p.m.-1:00 a.m**  
**Saint Ann Hall**

*Buffet Supper by Lasse's*  
*DJ "Peter Z" will spin the Golden Oldies!*  
*\$50 per person. RSVP by December 21*  
*203-260-4750 (Lou) or 203-874-3848 (Arlene)*

**Saint Ann Choir Concert**

**Saint Ann Church**  
**Sunday, December 28, 4:00 p.m.**

The choir's annual and beautiful gift to the parish.