



# The Parish Press

Newsletter of Saint Raphael Parish Family

Milford, Connecticut

May 2026



## First Communion Celebrations May 3 and May 16/17

At our regular Masses on May 3<sup>rd</sup> and on the weekend of May 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>, twenty-three young parishioners will receive Jesus in Holy Communion for the very first time.

Saint Pope John Paul II spoke of First Holy Communion as an "unforgettable meeting with Jesus" and a "great family celebration." That is especially true at Saint Raphael, where, during regularly scheduled weekend Masses the parish family offers a joyful welcome to some of our youngest members as they join us for the first time at the Lord's table.

The most precious gift that Jesus gave us is the Eucharist, Holy Communion. We believe that the whole Christ is truly present in the Eucharist - body, blood, soul and divinity - under the appearances of bread and wine, the glorified Christ who rose from the dead (USCCB).

We are most grateful, First Communicants and your families, for allowing us to share in such a special day. You are an important part of our community of faith and we hope you will come to worship with us often and receive Jesus in Holy Communion - the meal of God's family.



Parish

**Don't Miss Saint Raphael's Annual Tag Sale!**  
**Saturday, May 23<sup>rd</sup>**  
**9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.**  
**Saint Ann Parish Center**

Attention, tag salers and treasure hunters. Come on down to the Saint Ann campus on Saturday, May 23<sup>rd</sup>, and check out this year's tag sale inventory. We have toys, clothes, kitchenware, holiday decor, baby and toddler items, and more. Or help by joining the team as a greeter, table monitor or sorter for this parish fundraiser. Call MaryJo (203-710-0471) to sign on.

**Still have things to donate? It's not too late!**

Drop off new or gently used household/garden items, clean clothes, artwork, sporting goods, electronics, etc. at the Parish Center Monday-Friday, 9 a.m. to noon or on Thursday evenings, 5-7 p.m. Thanks very much.



## This Year's Graduation Recognition Mass and Celebration for the Class of 2026 Sunday, June 7<sup>th</sup> at Saint Gabriel's . . . Please Join Us!

Our annual parish graduation recognition Mass and celebration on Sunday, June 7<sup>th</sup>, is open to all members of the Class of 2026: 8<sup>th</sup> grade, high school and college/post secondary school graduates with their families and friends. Mass will begin at 11 o'clock at Saint Gabriel Church, followed by a lunch reception in the Saint Gabriel Hall. This well-loved parish event alternates every year between our two beautiful churches. We hope that all the graduates, with their families, will be able to join us and allow us to celebrate them and to thank God for His many blessings.

Families, please RSVP to Maria, [atomasetti@snet.net](mailto:atomasetti@snet.net) or 203-988-8598 (voice or text), by **Saturday, May 23<sup>rd</sup> (or earlier!)** to register your graduate and confirm the number of family members and friends who will be in attendance. Please include the name of your graduate's current school and the grad's plans for next year, e.g., high school, college/major, post secondary/technical school, military, work force. We'd also love to have an electronic photo to post on our graduate photo board! We'll soon be planning the lunch menu for this very special occasion, so please let us know if any guests or members of your family have special dietary requirements.

It is our privilege to celebrate your graduates as they step into the future. We hope to see your family on June 7<sup>th</sup>!

## May Crownings on Mother's Day



Since May is the month to honor our mothers it is most appropriate that we honor Mary, Mother of Jesus, our Blessed Mother and the Queen of Heaven and Earth, on Mother's Day, Sunday, May 11<sup>th</sup>.

We will crown Mary with blossoms, in the words of the familiar hymn, after the 9:30 Mass outside Saint Ann Church and before the 11 o'clock Mass at Saint Gabriel's.

Hail Mary, Mother of Mercy and of Love. We praise and honor you this day and every day.



## HomeFront Day: Saturday, May 2<sup>nd</sup>

Volunteers will gather at 7 a.m. on Saturday, May 2<sup>nd</sup> at 853 Mapledale Road in Orange to provide free repairs for a 95-year old homeowner. The work includes inside and outside painting, plumbing, carpentry, landscaping and miscellaneous tasks throughout the day.

Contact volunteer coordinator Elizabeth Simonetti ([elizabethsimonet@mindspring.com](mailto:elizabethsimonet@mindspring.com)) or 203-283-5054 if you can help.

## Sip and Snack at Coffee And After all Masses May 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>



Visit the Parish Center or Saint Gabriel Hall after weekend Masses on May 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>. Enjoy the goodies and a hot or cold beverage while you catch up with the members of our parish family.

If you can, make a donation to support the good works of Milford's Boys and Girls Village. Thank you!



**GIFT's Parish Easter Celebration**  
**Tuesday, May 5<sup>th</sup>, between 6 and 8 p.m.**

We invite all parish families and friends, teens, and families with pre-schoolers to GIFT's Easter Season Celebration on Tuesday, May 5<sup>th</sup> at the Saint Ann Parish Center. Come any time between 6 and 8 p.m. and help us celebrate! (And learn more about the Ascension of Jesus and about Pentecost.) Enjoy a pizza dinner (the apostles' favorite!), tasty snacks and an Easter egg hunt. Participate in an Easter Prayer walk. Try your hand at crafts and coloring (for the Resurrection and for Pentecost), puzzles, bingo, and cookie decorating. Be part of a service project to bring Easter joy to our ill and homebound parishioners.

The joy of Easter, the Resurrection of Jesus, cannot be contained within an Easter Sunday Mass, but continues through Pentecost, the fiftieth and last day of the Easter season. Happy Easter!

To help us with planning for this special event, please reach out to Maria, [atomasetti@snet.net](mailto:atomasetti@snet.net) or 203-988-8598 (voice or text). We want to be sure we have enough pizza, snacks, Easter eggs and supplies for everyone! Thank you.

**GIFT Sacramental Confirmation Program**

**Church Tours for Candidates**

Tuesday, May 19<sup>th</sup>  
6:30 - 8:00 p.m.

Saint Gabriel Church  
*or*

Sunday, June 14<sup>th</sup>  
12:30 - 2:00 p.m.  
Saint Ann Church



**Kickoff Meeting for Illumination Station Volunteers**  
**Thursday, May 21<sup>st</sup>, 6:30 p.m., Parish Center Classroom**

Adult and teen (ages 12+) volunteers, mark your calendars, please, and plan to be with us in a Parish Center classroom on Thursday evening, May 21<sup>st</sup> at 6:30 for this year's kickoff meeting.

We are looking for enthusiastic, talented folks to serve as small group leaders and helpers for the camper groups at July's VBS Illumination Station. We also have slots for assistants with: Bible Adventures, arts & crafts, games, music & dance, and the ever-popular cleanup. We will also need help with setup and decorations on approximately five evenings during the first two weeks of July - so that we are ready for the camp's opening on Monday, July 20<sup>th</sup>. Note: We will also schedule a training session for teen volunteers in July.

Please contact Maria (as above) for volunteer roles and additional information. Thank you!

**Congratulations, and Welcome to the Family!**

At the beautiful Easter Vigil liturgy on Saturday, April 4<sup>th</sup> at Saint Ann Church, three OCIA (Order of Christian Initiation of Adults) candidates were fully initiated into the Catholic Church.

Brandy Haydee Caceres was received into the Catholic Church and received the Sacraments of Confirmation and First Eucharist.

Jon Sebastian Chiluisa and Leslie Terres, baptized in the Catholic Church as infants or young children, received the Sacraments of Confirmation and First Eucharist.

Congratulations Brandy, Jon and Leslie. Welcome to the Saint Raphael Parish family!

**Teen Confirmation at Saint Joseph Cathedral on Saturday, April 25<sup>th</sup>**

Congratulations to Jazmin Elizabeth of Hungary Bene, who received the Sacrament of Confirmation on Saturday, April 25<sup>th</sup> at Saint Joseph Cathedral in Hartford. Sealed now with the gift of the Holy Spirit, Jazmin, you are now strengthened for service in the Body of Christ.



**Tinto Council Notes from Grand Knight Rich Wheeling**

Happy Spring to all our parishioners! And as spring arrives the Council has added a couple of events to our calendar. The next Knights of Columbus/parish food drive has been scheduled for the weekends of June 6/7 and June 13/14. Based on your record of incredible, very generous charity we anticipate another successful event. We'll report the results in the July newsletter. (And perhaps include some photos of Knights who have bulked up from toting all the bags of groceries!) Also, information should be coming shortly for the highly anticipated "Beer & Cigar" event scheduled for Saturday May 30<sup>th</sup>.

It is my pleasure to introduce you to our most recent brother knights, men who have made the decision to join our order: Michael Mangino, who moved to Milford from Queens; John Vargas one of our own Saint Raphael parishioners; and Joseph Fernandez, who lives in West Haven. We are pleased to have them as part of council.

In closing, as always, I invite and encourage any practicing gentlemen from our parish to join our order. My question lately is, *WHY WOULDN'T YOU WANT TO JOIN?* The Knights of Columbus is one of the world's most charitable organizations. Members share their faith and put it in action in their churches and local communities. As a member you get exclusive access to a top quality portfolio of insurance and retirement products. And guided by the principles of Charity, Unity and Fraternity members span generations and build life-long relationships through prayer, faith formation and charitable work. These are just a few reasons why you should join us.

So think about it, pray about it, and join our brotherhood! If you would like to visit a meeting or inquire about joining, please give me a call: Richard Wheeling, Grand Knight at 203-520-3250. I look forward to hearing from you!

**A Special Presentation**  
**Human Life by TPUSA Faith**  
**Saturday May 9<sup>th</sup> 10 a.m. – 12 noon**  
**Saint Ann Parish Center**

The parish's Pro-Life and Human Concerns Committees invite you to a special screening of *Human Life* by TPUSA Faith on Saturday, May 9<sup>th</sup>, from 10 a.m. until 12 noon in the Saint Ann Parish Center. *Human Life* is meant to provide both scientific knowledge and spiritual resources to champion the cause of the pre-born with family and friends, and suggests how to speak with clarity and compassion to educate and influence others about a pro-life position.

Please RSVP to Wally Hauck [wally@wallyhauck.com](mailto:wally@wallyhauck.com) or 203-874-8484 for more information.

**Can & Bottle Drive June 6<sup>th</sup> To Support T2T, Towers 2 Tunnels**

Circle the date, June 6<sup>th</sup> and drop your deposit bottles and cans at the Saint Ann parking lot stations between 10 a.m. and 12 noon. Proceeds will support Towers to Tunnels.

Since 9/11, T2T has been providing mortgage-free homes to Gold Star and fallen first responder families with young children and by building specially-adapted *smart homes* for catastrophically injured veterans and 1st responders. T2T is also committed to eradicating veteran homelessness.

**We're on with October's Chili Cookoff!**

Fall's proposed Chili Cookoff is on the calendar: October 24<sup>th</sup> in the Saint Ann Parish Center after Saturday's Vigil Mass. Six chili-meisters have signed on as contestants, each claiming to make *the best* chili. (Voters will decide!) The Parish Life group would like to have 7 chili chefs, so, specialists, please consider stepping up. In other words, show us what you've got!!

If you're interested or need more information (or chili powder!) you may call Leo Dorsey (203-876-9708) or Lou Servideo (203-260-4750).



**Donna's Creation Care Corner**  
**"Cheer up, cheer up," the Robin Sings**



We weren't sure spring would ever come to Connecticut this year - and the issue was still in doubt as we went to press -- but reassurance came when we saw our first robin and heard his cheerful song. Undoubtedly, many of us believed that the robin, like other snowbirds we know and love, had just returned to Connecticut.

Often, however, robins have not migrated at all. Frequently, they spend the entire winter right here in New England, forming massive flocks of hundreds or even thousands of birds in order to share body heat. For protection against wind, cold, and predators, they shelter in thickets full of closely packed bushes and shrubs, or roost in dense woods or evergreen swamps, far removed from suburban or developed areas.

What determines their migration? Not the temperature, surprisingly, but the availability of food. During winter, they remain here if they find fruits and berries like juniper, holly, hawthorn and sumac. As the weather moderates they reemerge on our lawns, where their diet consists primarily of earthworms and the occasional caterpillar, another source of protein. Why the change? Spring is nesting season, and insect protein is essential for the formation of eggs (nestlings). A single young robin can consume up to 14 feet of earthworms during the two weeks it spends in the nest. And a single pair of American robins can produce as many as 15 or 16 young (3 broods of 3-5 blue eggs) in a single season.

How can we, as stewards of God's magnificent creation, best care for robins and other birds and wildlife that come to dine in our yards? Of major importance, avoid pesticides. Earthworms ingest their poisons and also absorb them from the soil through their skin. When robins - or woodcocks and other ground-foraging birds, even hawks - consume contaminated worms they take in the poisons, too. We can also plant native flowers and trees which attract the protein-laden insects that robins must have to feed their young. A native oak, for example, can support some 950 species of caterpillars, a nonnative tree only one or two.

Perhaps we should think of our yards as ecosystems, on which many birds and other wildlife depend. As God's stewards we must do our best to ensure that robins, the state bird of Connecticut since 1943, and all birds and wildlife thrive. Then, when spring does arrive, they will make us happy as they burst into their signature song, "Cheerily, cheer up, cheer up, cheerily, cheer up." Listen. Can you hear them now?!

**Love and Best Wishes**



as you begin your married life together . . .

Thomas and Christina (Montesano) Stenberg

. . . who were married on Saturday, April 11<sup>th</sup> at Saint Gabriel Church. Congratulations, Thomas and Christina. May you always share love and laughter.

**A Parish-Wide Celebration of Marriage**  
**Sunday, May 31<sup>st</sup>**

Our newly active Marriage as a Vocation group invites parishioners and friends to a special celebration of marriage on Sunday, May 31<sup>st</sup> after the 11 o'clock Mass at Saint Gabriel's. We welcome all couples: If you are newly married, or have been married for many years; if you are interested in marriage, considering marriage or simply want to learn more about it.

This kick-off gathering at Saint Gabriel Hall will be a wonderful opportunity for you to connect with other couples in the parish, reflect on the joys of marriage, and deepen your relationship through the love of Christ and his Church. Marriage is a calling, a commitment, and, in the words of Pope Francis, a sacramental partnership of love and life.

Please join us and share refreshments (pizza and light beverages). If you have questions or would like more information contact Cindy Sissick [csissick@hotmail.com](mailto:csissick@hotmail.com) or 203-435-5494.



## Notes from May's Busy Parish Calendar



First Communion weekends, an Easter celebration, a *Human Life* presentation, May crownings, and what may be some surprising tidbits about that harbinger of spring, the robin, all with a lovely lead-in from hawthorn blossoms, a May flower that represents hope and new beginnings.

A new parish event, a special celebration of marriage, is scheduled for Sunday, May 31<sup>st</sup> at Saint Gabriel Hall. In a bit of serendipity, May's flower, the hawthorn, is also known as a symbol of lasting relationships. How perfect is that?!

Look for details on these and other parish happenings, last month, this month and yet to come. Pray for peace in our troubled world and for the Holy Father's special intention this month, that everyone might have food.

### ***The Parish Press***

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*Happy Mother's Day!*



### **In Memoriam**

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

Most Rev. Henry J. Mansell, D.D.  
Jean Dorfeuille      Joan S. Barre  
Eleanore Tarkington      Nancy Amann  
Harold "Butch" Torento

May they rest eternally in the fulness of God's presence.

### **Bereavement Support: Sunday, May 17<sup>th</sup>**



The parish Bereavement Support group will meet on Sunday afternoon, May 17<sup>th</sup>, at 2 o'clock in the Saint Ann's Children's Chapel.

If you are grieving the loss of a loved one we invite you to be with us. Sharing the burden of your grief can be a first step toward healing. You may call Joanne (203-877-4020) if you have questions or would like additional information.

### **Information for June's *Parish Press* Due May 13<sup>th</sup>**

Please send your information for the June newsletter - news, notes comments, photos and suggestions - by Wednesday, May 13<sup>th</sup> to [parishpress06460@gmail.com](mailto:parishpress06460@gmail.com) or call Ann Eden (203-874-8744). Thanks. We look forward to hearing from you.



### **We Welcome With Love . . .**

. . . the newest members of the Saint Raphael Parish family,

Michael Millburn      Mavis Allen  
Roman Benton      Daniel Johnson

Michael received the life-giving waters of Baptism in February. Mavis, Roman and Daniel were baptized in March. Warmest blessings, little ones. May you live and grow always in the light of God's love.

### ***Pray the Rosary during Mary's Month of May***

**At 7:30 a.m. - before 8:00 o'clock daily Mass**

Monday and Friday at Saint Ann Church  
Tuesday and Thursday at Saint Gabriel Church

**Tuesday Noon Rosary Resumes May 5<sup>th</sup>**

Saint Ann Children's Chapel  
(Enter by the church door nearest the Chapel.)

**Last Thursday of the Month Evening Rosary**

Pray the Rosary with the Knights of Columbus

May 24<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m.  
Saint Ann Parish Center



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