

april **20**
2014



**This is the day
the Lord has made;
let us rejoice and be glad.**

Psalm 118:24

Easter **SUNDAY**

EASTER SUNDAY OF THE RESURRECTION OF THE LORD

April 20, 2014

"Three witnesses, Mary, Peter, and John; each responds to the empty tomb."

MASSSES for the WEEK

Monday within the Octave of Easter April 21

7:45 AM *Laura Povinelli, Birthday*

9:15 AM *Thomas Stanton, Birthday*

Tuesday within the Octave of Easter April 22

7:45 AM *Bill Woodward*

9:15 AM *Ralph Nolan*

Wednesday within the Octave of Easter April 23

7:45 AM *Barry Hausman*

Thursday within the Octave of Easter April 24

9:15 AM *Robert Blakeslee, Birthday*

Friday within the Octave of Easter April 25

7:45 AM *Henry & Elizabeth Evers*

9:15 AM *Jerry Buling, Birthday*

Saturday within the Octave of Easter April 26

8:30 AM *Sam Napoli*

1:30 PM *Hanson-Whaley Wedding*

Vigil: Second Sunday of Easter

4:30 PM *Rosemarie Verbiak, Anniversary*

7:00 PM *Carrie & Louis Labbienti*

Second Sunday of Easter April 27

7:30 AM *Daniel Geib*

9:30 AM *Marjorie Ann Schmiedl*

11:00 AM *Maryanne and Laura Povinelli*

12:30 PM *Peter and Julia Kobasuk*

READINGS FOR THE WEEK

Monday: Acts 2:14, 22-33; Ps 16:1-2, 5, 7-11; Mt 28:8-15

Tuesday: Acts 2:36-41; Ps 33:4-5, 18-20, 22; Jn 20:11-18

Wednesday: Acts 3:1-10; Ps 105:1-4, 6-9; Lk 24:13-35

Thursday: Acts 3:11-26; Ps 8:2, 5-9; Lk 24:35-48

Friday: Acts 4:1-12; Ps 118:1-2, 4, 22-27; Jn 21:1-14

Saturday: Acts 4:13-21; Ps 118:1, 14-21; Mk 16:9-15

Sunday: Acts 2:42-47; Ps 118:2-4, 13-15, 22-24;

1 Pt 1:3-9; Jn 20:19-31

Deadline for bulletin is noon on Friday for the following week. Articles can be dropped off in the Parish Office or e-mailed to: tbush@saintraphaelparish.com. If you are interested in placing an advertisement in our bulletin, please contact J.S. Paluch Co. 1-800-945-6629. **PLEASE SUPPORT OUR ADVERTISERS-THEY MAKE THE BULLETIN POSSIBLE!**

ST. RAPHAEL PRAYER MINISTRY

prays daily for specific requests. We pray in our own homes, on our own time and in our own ways. Requests are distributed by phone-chain or e-mail. If you or someone you know is in need of prayer, or to join this ministry, please call Joanne Hout (835-0169) or email Karen Mackin at: kmom41@wowway.com.



For weekend of:

April 26-27

4:30 PM Lindholm-Mark-Castele-Arndt

7:00 PM Benya

7:30 AM Foutz-Puckett-Reynolds-Jonas

9:30 AM Kotowski-Kotowski-Bielek-Bielek

11:00 AM Smith-Leszcz-Bosken

12:30 PM Sanchez-Leszcz-Kelly

Rest in Peace

FRANK GUSICH, brother of Marilyn McDermott (John); CARLOS MEDINA-KNIGHT, infant son of Karina Knight Sepulveda and Carlos Alonso Medina Mendez; ROBERT GOERZ, husband of Elynore; STANLEY CARRAS, husband of Dorothy, father of Tim (Mary Ellen), Rick (Jenny) and Scott; MARY GRACE GANG, mother of Fr. Dennis Gang, TOR, and JACK KRUEGER, brother of Jim (Daneen) and Jody (Dee), died this past week. May they rest in peace.

WEDDING BANNERS

III Brenna Hanson and Jamie Whaley

I Mary Moloney and Dave Sever

The next two scheduled BAPTISM CLASSES

will be held on Sunday, May 4 and June 1 at 2:00 p.m. in the School Library.

Immediate Need:

Could you wake up early on Saturday mornings for Jesus? An hour spent in the Real Presence of Jesus is a tremendous blessing. Giving up sleep to be with Him is a wonderful gift. Jesus longs to spend time with you and to speak to your heart. A second individual is needed from **4:00 to 5:00 a.m. on Saturday mornings**. It is a 'perfect time' because, other than being out of town, nothing conflicts on your schedule. Please call Melissa if interested in volunteering for Eucharistic Adoration: 440-871-1476.

EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION RAPHAEL CENTER CHAPEL



"Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament has His hands full of graces, and He is ready to bestow them on anyone who asks for them." -St. Peter of Alcantara

Adoration takes place in the chapel in the Raphael Center every week from 10:00 a.m. on Friday, through the night until 4:00 p.m. on Saturday.

Introduce your children to this beautiful devotion by bringing them on Friday at 3:30 p.m. for 20 minutes of guided prayers and songs.

Jesus is waiting for you every week. Come and be with Him. (Park by the Parish Office or Post Office.)

A REPORT ON OUR STEWARDSHIP OF TREASURE

Weekly Envelopes-April 6, 2014	\$27,292.50
Online Giving	5,803.00
Total Collection	33,095.50
40 Sundays x \$33,500 budgeted	1,340,000.00
Contributions 7/7/13-4/6/14	<u>1,294,479.63</u>
Offertory under budget	\$-45,520.37

*Thank you for your continuing gift to our parish.
Fr. Tim*

LITTLEST ANGELS BABYSITTING

This weekend (Easter Sunday) is the only Sunday (besides Christmas Day) that we do not offer Child Care for our little ones. Please join us on any of the other Sundays of the year during the 9:30 and 11:00 a.m. Mass in the Zwilling Room (across from the Lunchroom). Supervised child care is offered by a certified teacher with the assistance of student helpers in grades 6 through 12. We care for children, ages 2 through 5 years old, while their parents attend Mass. Parents are asked to sign their children in and out of the room, leave their cell phone number, and put their phone on vibrate during Mass, in case we need to contact them. There is no charge for this ministry, but we ask parents to help donate needed supplies throughout the year. Please see the article below for our Spring donation request.

SPRING DONATION REQUEST Child Care ministry is offered free of charge to the families attending 9:30 or 11:00 a.m. Mass at Saint Raphael Parish. Each season, we ask for a donation of one of the many supplies needed to provide this ministry for preschool-age children. **New items that our babysitting room is in need of:** boxes of Kleenex, wet-wipes for hands, Purel or any anti-bacterial hand sanitizer, anti-bacterial wipes (for washing toys), small Dixie cups, animal crackers and lollipops or suckers. Donations may be dropped off any Sunday in the Zwilling Room between 9 a.m. and Noon. Thank you for supporting this wonderful ministry that cares for toddlers while their parents attend Mass!

2014 Confirmation Pictures are READY!

Attention newly confirmed: If you ordered Confirmation pictures from Thomas and Thomas Photography, they are ready for you to pick them up! (If you paid for the pictures to be mailed to you, you will receive them at your home soon.) Thomas and Thomas is located at 27360 West Oviatt Road in Bay Village and their phone number is 440-835-4707. They are open Tuesdays 10-5, Thursdays 12-7, Fridays, 10-5, and Saturdays 10-2. Please contact them directly with questions.



My Dear Friends in Christ,

Easter is such a blessed season. It is the culmination of Christ's passion and death. May today bring all of us tremendous hope and joy. Jesus is risen from the dead! His conquering spirit over sin and death is extended to all of us. Our hearts are filled with joy as we offer our ALLELUIA to our Lord in praise and thanksgiving. May we continue to be drawn deeply into the mysteries of our faith and the miracle of Easter this year. If you have been away for a while, we welcome you back. We extend an open invitation to be a part of the St. Raphael Parish Community. May the spirit of the resurrection unfold you and may the Lord Jesus give you His peace.


*God bless and keep you,
Fr. Tim*

Wedding Policy During the Construction of the Church

1. **Call St. Raphael Parish for availability of the priest.**
2. **Choose between St. Bernadette, Westlake, St. Joseph, Avon Lake or St. Christopher, Rocky River (or have the wedding in the St. Raphael Parish Activity Center).**
3. **St. Raphael Parish will call as to the agreed upon date of the wedding to schedule it with St. Bernadette, St. Joseph or St. Christopher.**
4. **Weddings are at 1:30 p.m. as we will continue to have confessions at St. Raphael at 3:00 p.m.**
5. **Dr. Andy Kereky will handle rehearsals.**
6. **Bill Toler will handle the music.**

Thank you for your cooperation!

† †



ATM inside.

Atonement,

truth and mercy.

† †

† Reconciliation: Saturdays 3 to 4 PM †

† †

**GUILD
PARISH WOMEN WHO MAKE THINGS
HAPPEN**

GUILD SCHOLARSHIPS *The St. Raphael Guild is committed to passing on God's love in everything we do.*

In this spirit, we would like to recognize and reward parish teens who display and share God's love by their daily example and their service to others by awarding three non renewable \$500.00 scholarships. A fourth \$500 scholarship is provided by the Donna Zgrabik Memorial Foundation for the 2014-15 school year. The Guild is pleased to extend an invitation to ALL Parish 8th Graders planning to attend a local Catholic High School in the Fall to submit an application for one of these 4 NON-renewable scholarships. We warmly welcome & encourage all St. Raphael 8th Graders as well as any 8th Grade Parishioner from a neighboring community Middle School to apply. *Applications may be picked up in the School Office or Parish Office.* Please return applications by May 9th. Thank you!

SPRING SALAD LUNCHEON

All Women of the Parish & Friends are cordially invited to the Guild's **Spring Garden Party Salad Luncheon** held on Tues April 29, 2014 - 12Noon at Bay Lodge, Bradley Rd. in Bay Village. Please bring a Salad or a Dessert to Share. Wear your favorite Spring Hat! Enjoy great food, fun people & a *Hat Fashion Show by Studio St. Marie, Rocky River.* RSVP to Julie 440.930.8774 or Pamela 440.871.3646 by April 25.

THE GUILD BOOK CLUB

will meet Thursday evening, April 24th, at 7:30 p.m. in the school library. We will discuss *The Orphan Master's Son* by Adam Johnson. All members of the Guild are welcome. For further information please contact Carol Lawler (440)930-2096 or carol.lawler@oh.rr.com

CONFIRMATION 2015

MANDATORY INFORMATIONAL MEETING

Current Seventh graders and their parents are asked to mark their calendars for our Confirmation 2015 kick-off informational meeting which is scheduled for **Wednesday, May 14th from 7-8:15 pm in the PAC.** This meeting begins our preparations for the Sacrament of Confirmation which will take place in the spring of 2015. **This is a MANDATORY meeting for any 7th grader interested in receiving this Sacrament!** **At least one parent MUST attend with each student.** If you are unable to attend this meeting, please contact Amy Lashutka at (440-871-1100) or at alashutka@saintraphaelparish.com. *If you are a student who will be entering grade 9-12 in the fall of 2014 and you have not received the Sacrament of Confirmation and are interested in doing so, please attend this meeting as well!*

PARISH SCHOOL OF RELIGION CORNER

There will be **no PSR classes held on Monday, April 21st** in observance of the Easter break. **Classes resume on Monday, April 28th.**

Preschool Religion There will be **no Preschool Religion Classes on Easter Sunday April 20th and Sunday April 27th** so that our teachers and Preschool children may attend Mass with their families during Easter break. Please take your child to the Mass of your choice. Preschool classes will resume on Sunday, May 4th.

SACRAMENT NEWS



Family First Communions begin at Masses next weekend (April 26-27th) and will continue through the weekends of the Easter Season until May 25th. If you are at a Mass where children receive their First Communion, please go up and congratulate them and their families. This is a wonderful celebration season for our parish!

SAVE THE DATE!!!!!!

**PILGRIMAGE TO
CATHOLIC MARYLAND**

**Hosted by Fr. Tim Gareau
September 8-10**

**See flyer in display cases
near Church entrances.**

**Call Ann O'Connor(440)895-0964
for information and reservations.**

**Deposit to be in by May 15th
to hold reservation.**

SOCIAL CONCERNS

Families and friends and other groups are needed to help **SERVE A MEAL** at **ST. AUGUSTINE'S**. Next two dates are May 11 and June 15. Please call Fred Bangeman (440)933-6686 for more information.

SUPPORT GROUP FOR WOMEN OF ST. RAPHAEL PARISH WITH CANCER

We are always ready to welcome you. Whether you are just starting treatment or are a several decade survivor, please join our support group. We get together to ask questions, to share information, to pray, to talk and to listen. Some women come once in a while, some come every month. You are always welcome to join us! Our informal gatherings are the first Monday of each month. **See next article for more information re: May 5th.** Should you have any questions, please contact Kris (440) 930-5479, Annette (440)250-9028, or Colleen (440)799-4229.

Do you know someone touched by cancer? A wife, husband, mother, father, sister, brother, relative, friend, neighbor? Are you a cancer patient, survivor, caregiver, concerned about a loved one or someone you know? Come **CELEBRATE HOPE, CELEBRATE LIFE!** There will be a Mass in honor of St. Peregrine, patron saint of those affected by cancer, Monday, May 5, 2014 at 7:00 p.m. Mass will be celebrated by Father Tim. All are welcome to attend. A reception will follow in the Gathering Area after Mass.

St. Peregrine, please pray for all those who invoke your aid.

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY



Reservations are now being accepted for couples married 50 years (married in 1964) to attend the **50th Wedding Anniversary Celebration** at the Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist, Sunday, July 27 at 2:30 p.m. The Most Reverend Richard G. Lennon will be Principal Celebrant. Couples who are celebrating other significant years 55 or over or who missed previous celebrations are welcome to register and attend. Please call Tish Bush in the Parish Office (871-1100) by June 20 for information or to register.

CATHOLIC MEN'S FELLOWSHIP MEETING

will meet on Thursday (April 24) in the Zwilling Room at 7:00 p.m., for the Liturgy of the Hours and our bimonthly (2nd & 4th Thursday of the month) fellowship meeting. We will be discussing this Sunday's Scripture readings. Come and join us for coffee, donuts and fellowship. **This is in ADDITION to our Saturday morning meetings which are held the 1st and 3rd Saturdays of the month at 6:45 a.m. in the Multipurpose Room.**

ATHLETICS

ST. RAPHAEL JUNIOR GOLF PROGRAM -



Registration is now open! Our fantastic junior golf program is back! The program is open to PSR and day school students presently in grades 4 through 8 (must be 10 years old by start of program.) It is six weeks in length June 12 through July 17, and will be held at Bob O' Links Golf Course in Avon on Thursdays from 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Each week students are provided a lesson, followed by nine holes of golf. Registration forms will be online, www.saintraphaelparish.com. Please contact Patti Nugent at (440) 263-6316 or nubried@att.net if you have any questions. Fore!

LEGION OF MARY

Do you have two hours a week for service to our parishioners at the direction of our pastor? If so, the **Legion of Mary** may be right for you! Our Legion meets every Tuesday for one hour from 10:00 am until 11:00 am in the Tobit room. We pray the Rosary, read from our handbook, report on our works, hear a reflection from our spiritual director, and have a short business meeting followed by a closing prayer. During the school year, we perform an hour of service each week – sometimes more – by sending cards to bereaved families or to parents of newly baptized children. We serve in pairs in our visits to local nursing homes or attending wakes or funerals. We also go into the school twice a year to help students make rosaries. If you feel called to serve Jesus through Mary in this ministry, please contact Father Ryan in the parish office (871-1100).

ST. RAPHAEL SCHOOL ADVISORY COUNCIL OPENINGS

St. Raphael School Advisory Council (SAC) is currently looking for new members to serve on our focus group. The Mission of SAC is to support and promote Catholic identity and educational excellence through collaboration and communication with the school administration and staff. SAC does not discuss policies and procedures of the school. Members also act as liaisons between school parents and administration. Meetings are held on the first Monday in September, November, January, March, and May. If interested, please contact Lisa Karnatz (216)509-7587 or Katie Gerba (440)554-8905 with questions. Deadline is May 15th.

For information on the High School Youth Ministry Program or the Confirmation Program contact Amy Lashutka at 440-871-1100, ext. 109 or alashutka@saintraphaelparish.com

There will be no HSYM on Sunday, April 20th. HAPPY EASTER!!!

FOOD and a FLICK Night – 4/27

All high school teens AND 8th GRADERS are invited to our next Food and a Flick Night on Sunday, April 27th. Come join us for dinner and then we will watch and discuss the movie “*The Princess Bride*”. We will meet in the Upper Room from 5:00-8:30pm. Bring \$3 to help with the cost of dinner. Please RSVP by noon on 4/27 so we know how much food to have. Invite your friends!

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES FOR TEENS:

1) **Littlest Angels Babysitting:** We are in need of teen volunteers to assist with babysitting in the **Littlest Angels Room** (Zwilling Room) on Sunday mornings. Students may help during the 9:30 or 11:00 Masses and do not need to sign up ahead of time – just show up 15 minutes before the Mass begins. (Please remember that you still need to go to Mass before or after you help!)

2) **Raiders Club Volunteers:** Teens in grades 8-12 are needed to assist with activities during the after-care program, Monday through Friday, from 3:25pm (or whenever you can get there after school) until 5:30pm. Please contact Mrs. Katie Gerba at raid-ersclub@saintraphaelparish.com for more information and to sign up to help. **YOU CANNOT JUST SHOW UP FOR THIS PROJECT!**

News Around Town 

RETROVAILLE WEEKEND – April 25-27th

Someone once said “marriages may be made in heaven, but they sure take a lot of work on earth.” Have you become so distracted by outside pressures that you have neglected your spouse? Retrouvaille can help you put your troubled marriage back on track. The next Cleveland Retrouvaille weekend will be held on April 25-27th, 2014.

A registration fee of \$150 is required to confirm your reservation.

For more information concerning the program, or to register, please call Diane or Al Miskinis *in complete confidence* at (330) 665-3506 or (from a 216 or 440 area code) 1-800-470-2230. For more information or to register online, go to www.helpourmarriage.org.



VILLAGE PROJECT

Come to the **PROJECT PEDAL FUND RAISER FOR THE VILLAGE PROJECT** on June 14, 2014 at 9:00 a.m. at Bay High School stadium. This is a multi-generational bike ride. Activities for all ages. For more information go to: www.ourvillageproject.com or call (440)348-9401.

SEEDS OF LITERACY

Seeds of Literacy, a nonprofit organization offering free, one-to-one tutoring in adult basic education and GED preparation, has an urgent need for more tutors. Founded in 1997, we are the only nationally accredited adult literacy provider in Cuyahoga County. Volunteer tutors work individually with students on reading, writing, and math skills, offer encouragement and support, and help students develop confidence and positive attitudes about learning. Our next tutor training session will be held on Saturday, April 26th from 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. Lunch will be provided. Trainings are held at Seeds of Literacy, 3104 W. 25th Street (corner of W. 25th & Clark Ave.), Cleveland, OH 44109. To register or for more information, please contact Alexandria Marshall (216)661-7950 or at alexandriamarshall@seedsofliteracy.org.

BISHOP LENNON

is scheduling a 2014 Lecture Series at the Cathedral. There will be two sessions each month on a specific topic. The presentations will be at 12:30 p.m. The first series will be held Wednesday, April 30 on the topic: “*Formation of Priests*”. The second series will be held on Thursday, May 8 and Wednesday, May 14 on the topic: “*Sacrament of Penance*”. The third series will be held on Tuesday, June 17 and Wednesday, June 25 on the topic: “*Holy Eucharist*”. All are welcome to attend.

REVERSE RAFFLE - SAVE THE DATE - MAY 2

St. Paul Shrine, the Capuchin Franciscan Church in mid town Cleveland, will hold a Reverse Raffle on May 2, 2014 at Brennan’s Party Center. Only 200 tickets will be sold. The \$150 ticket admits two people and includes an open bar, hors d’oeuvres, dinner and a chance to win as much as \$2500. All proceeds are used to benefit the Poor Clare Sisters of Perpetual Adoration.

For tickets call:

Fr. Bill Wiethorn, OFM Cap.	(216)431-8854
Michael O’Malley	(216)990-6828
Jim Konchan	(216)533-1818
Jerry McCabe	(440)331-3658
Sister Regina	(216)361-0783

THIS WEEK'S ACTIVITIES

Monday, April 21

**EASTER BREAK SRS/PSR
OFFICE CLOSED**

Tuesday, April 22

10:00am
5:30pm
7:00pm

EASTER BREAK SRS
Legion of Mary (TOB)
Liturgy of the Hours (C)
Worship Training (PAC)

Liturgy of the Hours, Evening Prayer is offered every Tuesday evening at 5:30 p.m. in the church. All are welcome.

Wednesday, April 23

EASTER BREAK SRS

Thursday, April 24

10:00am-Noon
6:30-8:30pm
7:00pm
7:30pm

EASTER BREAK SRS
Worship Training (PAC)
Echoes of Faith (ARCH, MPR, RC Chapel)
Catholic Men's Fellowship (ZR)
Guild Book Club (LIB)

Friday, April 25

10:00am Fri-4:00pm Sat
5:00pm

EASTER BREAK SRS
Eucharistic Adoration (RC Chapel)
Wedding Rehearsal (C)

Saturday, April 26

1:30pm

Eucharistic Adoration until 4:00pm (RC Chapel)
Wedding (C)

Sunday, April 27

9:30pm
2:00pm
6:30-8:30pm
6:30-8:30pm
7:30pm

DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY
NO PRESCHOOL RELIGION
Babysitting (ZR)
Baptisms (C)
HSYM (PO Upper Room)
Conquest (LRm) (7:30-8:30pm ZR)
Men's Basketball (LRm)

**C-Church
S-School**

**ARCH-Archangel Room (formerly RC L.R.)
LIB- Library (located in school)
LRm- Lunchroom (formerly G-Gym, CAF-Cafeteria)
LRm-K-Kitchen (off Lunch Room)
Multi-Purpose Room (formerly RC D.R.)
PAC-Parish Activity Center
PAC-K-Parish Activity Center-Kitchen
PO-Parish Office**

RC-Raphael Center

***CHER- Cherubim Room
*GAB-Gabriel Room
*HM-Humility of Mary Room
*MICH-St. Michael Room
*SER-Seraphim Room
*TOB-Tobit Room
* Rooms located upstairs in Raphael Center)
ZR-Zwilling Room**



ST. RAPHAEL SCHOOL NEWS



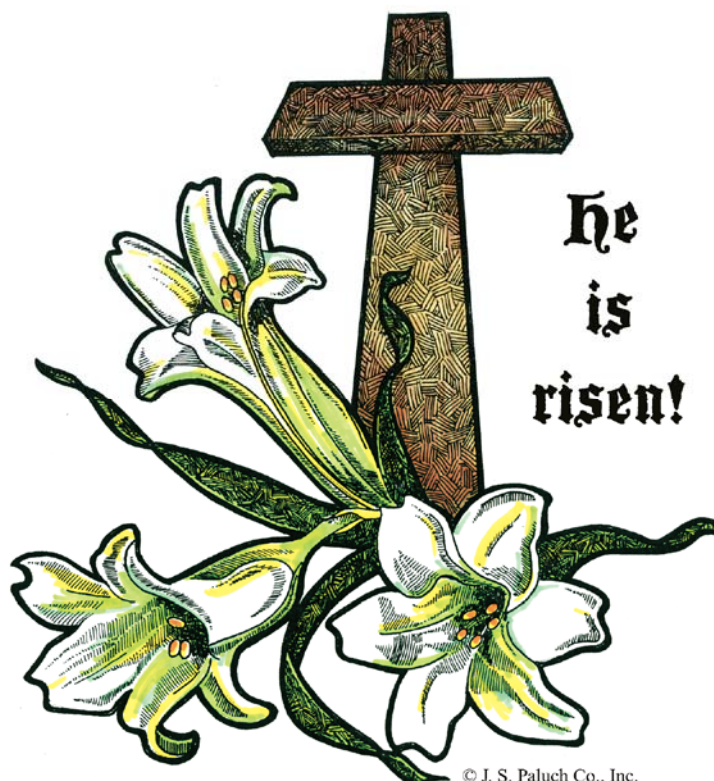
Mr. Matt Wirfel is proud to report that we had 49 students perform in the two talent shows presented on April 9 & 10. There were also another 12 students who worked the stage and sound crew. Many different talents were on display for the student body, faculty and guests. The acts included singing, dancing, piano solos, comedy, rock band, juggling, art shows and music video. This was truly an example of our students serving as the *Hands of Christ*.

Mrs. Andrea Ruda is excited to report that seventh grader Emily Pallaki had her science fair abstract, *The Effect of Lenses on Solar Energy* published in *The Ohio Journal of Science* after she presented it to the Ohio Academy of Science at Walsh University at its annual meeting on April 5th.

Mrs. Carla Licastro, Mr. Roger Brooks and Mrs. Debbie Kamola report that our 4th grade classes recently visited the *Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland*. Students received a presentation about the bank and were able to visit the Learning Center and Money Museum. The boys and girls were also able to explore the many exhibits and learn more about the history and value of money. Each student designed his/her own dollar bill and brought home a bag of shredded money and a booklet for home budgeting. Mr. Kyle Barberic has asked for a copy of that booklet but his old pal Mr. Brooks seems unwilling to oblige.

Mother's Day is coming and what a better gift than a child's artwork printed on a card, coffee mug, apron, or even jewelry!! Artsonia has beautiful items that could be purchased with your child's artwork! Please log on to www.artsonia.com with your child's screen name and password to view artwork and/or purchase a Mother's Day gift. If you need any help, please email Mrs. Beirne at sbeirne@saintraphaelparish.com. 20% of all purchases go towards purchasing more great materials and gadgets for your child's art class!!

Mrs. Miller and Mr. Andrachik, on behalf of the faculty and staff at Saint Raphael School would like to wish all of our Parish Families a Blessed Easter. We thank you for your prayers and support and will continue to keep you in our intentions.



Easter Sunday

FIRST READING: Acts 10:34a, 37–43

RESPONSORIAL PSALM: Psalm 118:1–2, 16–17, 22–23

SECOND READING: Colossians 3:1–4 or 1 Corinthians 5:6b–8

GOSPEL: John 20:1–9

Alleluia!

Alleluia! is back. We can sing it every Sunday until the earth journeys around the sun again. We are focused today on a new kind of light, the light of Christ, the Morning Star that will not ever set. Though our earth spins like a top through twenty-four-hour cycles of day and night, the Church insists that this day that the Lord has made will not end.

‡ Comment

The great step from chaos to creation opens the book of Genesis and the Hebrew Testament: “In the beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth ...” On this Easter day, we hear of a new beginning on earth when we learn that Mary Magdalene arrived at the tomb in the darkness of a new “first day,” the day of the Resurrection.

Out of the terrible darkness comes a new day on the face of the earth. Mary discovers the open tomb and reports this amazing fact to Peter and John. Her message discloses alarming news, but not good news, at least not yet. So, alarmed and confused, Peter and John run to the place of burial to see for themselves. John arrives at the tomb first, then waits for Peter. After Peter enters, John too enters into the empty tomb. Nothing is ominous about the details he records, but plenty is mysterious.

It is not at all clear to Peter and John that Jesus “had to rise from the dead.” Before this new day has expired, however, Peter and John and the other disciples will all have encountered their risen Lord. Nevertheless, it will take all the years Peter has left in his life to understand the meaning of the resurrection of Jesus.

That is what the New Testament readings help us ponder today. The first reading from the Acts of the Apostles is a case in point. Peter is summoned to the household of Cornelius, a Roman soldier and a good and upright man. The speech Peter delivers at Cornelius’ house is a well-honed one. It gives evidence of a strong and clear grasp of the sweep of the Scriptures. God’s saving power in Jesus’ death and resurrection is for the whole earth and for all time, and everyone who believes in the risen Christ will be forgiven their sins.

Paul explains to the Colossians in the second reading that there is nothing scholarly or philosophical about Jesus’ message. It is clear and simple. We have died with Christ. We will appear with him in glory.

In the alternate second reading, Paul reminds the Christians of Corinth that their baptism into Jesus’ death and resurrection has brought them into a new life. Paul uses a homespun image. His readers know that in preparation for Passover, Jewish households rid themselves of the old yeast used for leavening their life-sustaining bread. Paul uses this old yeast as an image of the old corrupting ways that must be cast aside to make way for the new bread of sincerity and truth.

‡ Reflection

We have a new day, a new life, a new bread. We can name those few privileged days that are truly new beginnings. We can remember how deeply moved we were or how high we were, depending on how we are affected by unmistakable joy.

Easter is the first day of the rest of the life of the Church. It is a day for high celebration and quiet meditation. The repeated refrain of the responsorial psalm can be our refrain too: “This is the day the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad.” The first day of the new creation began when Christ, the Morning Star who knows no setting, rose from the dead and shed peaceful light on all humankind. There is no end to this first day of the rest of our lives. The rest of our lives must bear witness to this.