

August 2018

Saint Raphael



MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

The Raiders Club Before and After School Program *A Safe and Fun Place for Our Children*

As described in our ministries booklet, "The Raiders Club is a before and after school care program for the working families of the St. Raphael school children. The Club meets in the Raphael Center and accepts children in Grades Kindergarten through Sixth. The morning club includes quiet activities and games. The afternoon club includes a snack, homework time and other educational, yet fun activities such as crafts, recreational activities, special events, field trips, computer time, movies and more. The club meets on days when school is in session."

Katie Gerba is the director of the Raiders Club. She says, "Fifteen years ago, St. Raphael completed a study of the needs of the parish. It was in this group that we discussed a before/aftercare program. We all agreed it was a need, but I didn't think we should wait on starting the program. I did research on surrounding programs and brought it to the group/Fr. Tim. Someone in the group asked who was going to be in charge of the program and something urged me to raise my hand. I am so glad I raised my hand that day."

Raiders Club started the following year. It averaged about 25 children the first year and it has grown to an average of 80 a day this past year. There are many families with two working parents and it provides comfort to the parents that their child/children are in a safe, fun environment beyond the school hours. Katie has her masters degree in Education and loves that this program allows her to be creative and plan

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fun activities to do with the children. "I plan a monthly activity calendar with a theme week each month. I bring in outside artists/programs that go with my themes. The location of St. Raphael makes it great to walk frequently to DQ, Malley's, Bay Lanes and Play In Bay. Bowling is a favorite!" says Katie.

Katie's job has been easy because of her wonderful staff of teachers and two parishioners that supervise the Raiders Club with her. "Having the teachers supervise makes everything run smoothly, and it is also a way for teachers to supplement their income," says Katie. "We all help with homework, play games, do crafts and have fun with the kids." The program has structure but fits in the fun so that the children don't feel slighted that their parents work and they can't go home after school. Katie says, "I often hear from other parents that their

children tell them to go to work so they can join Raiders Club. And the children in the program don't want to leave when their parents come to pick them up. That just makes me feel as though I must be doing a good job. I am proud of my program."

Parents pay \$3.50 per hour per child with a 10% discount for parents with more than one child. Raiders Club begins at 7 a.m. and runs from the end of the school day until 6 p.m. Katie keeps the cost down for the parents so that they can afford to attend St. Raphael and provide a Catholic Education. She provides all the snacks, activities, materials needed for the children in Raiders Club.

Katie is proud of the success of the program and appreciates the support of Fr. Tim and Mrs. Miller. Katie says, "I enjoy working Raiders Club. It doesn't seem like a job to me because I have fun with the kids."

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The club meets on days when school is in session. If you have a talent for creative activities that you would like to share with the children in the afternoon program, or if you desire more information, please contact Katie Gerba at 440-871-5153 or raidersclub@saintraphaelparish.com.



A Letter From Our Pastor

As Summer Winds Down, Fall Back into Stewardship

My Dear Friends in Christ,

August has traditionally been regarded as a summer month — a continuation of July with a few differences, namely back-to-school sales that arrive during the month. But now, many schools begin the academic year in August, with the ever-present back-to-school sales falling even earlier in July.

So do we regard August as “still summer” or “the beginning of fall”? While I don’t have an answer to that question, I do know that it’s a time when we should be thinking about how we’re going to serve as Christian disciples and stewards once the fall routines begin.

Even for adults long out of school, the concept of “summer vacation” has a strong hold on us. Sure, some take vacations in the fall to see the leaves, or in winter for skiing or to see family during the Christmas season — but we still think of the summer as *the* time for vacations. Many also have the preconceived notion that “nothing happens” in our parish over the summer. Yes, Mass is still regularly celebrated, and there are weddings and funerals. But otherwise, the parish is a quieter place during the summer months... isn’t it?

Of course, that is certainly not the case. In parishes across America, there are summer programs like Vacation Bible School for the children, and youth groups are attending conferences and sharing in service projects in areas of need. In addition, both our staff and our



volunteers are busy during the summer, as they prepare for all “normally scheduled” activities that resume after Labor Day.

That brings me to my main point — how are *you* preparing to serve as a steward once Labor Day is past? Have you thought of how you can best serve the Lord Jesus with the talent He has entrusted to you? Have you planned how you can arrange your schedule to offer Him more of your time in prayer, worship and study? Have you considered how your budget might be rearranged to share more of the treasure in your care?

Maybe our Lord is inviting you to teach religious education, or to work with the youth, or to visit shut-ins, or to volunteer at a food bank,

or to sing in the choir, or to attend weekday Mass, or... well, you get the idea. While we count down the days and wait for autumn to arrive, we can use our time to evaluate how we can be better disciples, better stewards and better Christians — this fall and throughout the rest of our lives.

May God bless and keep you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Fr. Tim Gareau". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Fr. Tim Gareau,
Pastor

The Alpha Program at St. Raphael Is

Upcoming Sessions: Sept. 4

A few years ago, our parish launched what is called the Alpha Course. Deacon Mark Cunningham, Director of Stewardship for St. Raphael, says, "Let me begin with the purpose of Alpha, which is very simply to facilitate an encounter with Christ. Everything else flows from this purpose, including the nature of Alpha, which is breaking bread together, proclaiming the Good News (kerygma: basics of Christianity), and open discussion about faith."

After last year's course, Deacon Mark received a letter from a guest who had attended and participated, but they expressed concern that their "table leader" during discussion was someone who was not Catholic. This bothered them as they felt this was a "Catholic" program and class.

Deacon Mark answered the letter in part by saying, "Alpha is for everyone. It's oriented toward the non-churched, but it also draws practicing Christians — of all denominations — who are seeking renewal of faith. And — an essential element — it draws Christian disciples. Certainly, our Alpha team is comprised of disciples, but some of the guests are disciples, too. Their participation and sharing in group discussion helps show other guests how the Spirit is alive and working in their lives and in the world today. And that same Spirit is present in breaking bread, in the Good News, and in open discussion. Alpha is not learning

about Jesus. Alpha is experiencing Jesus. Alpha is about encountering the Spirit of the Risen Lord."

Father Raniero Cantalamessa, Preacher to the Papal Household in Rome, who has organized Alpha at the Vatican, echoes what Deacon Mark says when Father says, "In my opinion Alpha accomplishes an incredible task, in making people interested in faith and in making faith relevant to the modern person. I especially appreciate the ecumenical spirit of the Alpha Course: there is no pressure on anybody to join a different denomination, but just to join Jesus and to put Jesus at the center."

Alpha is a series of sessions exploring the Christian faith, typically run over eleven weeks. Each talk looks at a different question around faith and is designed to create conversation. Alpha is run all around the globe, and everyone is welcome. The next Alpha here at St. Raphael will occur beginning on Tuesday, Sept. 4 from 6:30-8:30 p.m. and continue on Tuesday evenings at that time through Nov. 13. Dinner is included at each session, and childcare is available for parents bringing young children.

Deacon Mark says, "In the short two years I've been involved with Alpha I've already come across wonderful stories. I've met non-Catholics who followed after Alpha with RCIA and became Catholic. I've met fallen away Catholics who were touched by Alpha, joined a Christian church afterwards, and then



Alpha: An Encounter with Christ through Nov. 13

who were gradually drawn back to their Catholic faith. I've met dry Catholics whose faith has been rekindled on Alpha. Witnessing the Spirit work in people's lives is awesome – and challenging. Not only are many of the guests affected on Alpha, but so too are many of the team members. As disciples we're challenged to reflect on the hardness of our own hearts, to expand our thinking beyond our preconceptions and prejudices, to re-examine our concepts of 'church' and ministry."

"We at St. Raphael have found Alpha to be a wonderfully effective evangelization tool," says Deacon Mark. "Over half the guests who attend our sessions are non-parishioners. Our hope is that they will encounter Christ here, and in response to that encounter, they will pursue a deeper relationship with Him after Alpha. A Christian's life is a journey of on-going conversion, of conforming our lives ever more closely to Jesus. It's also a life of intentional discipleship, of bringing Jesus to others. In all we do, we need to be grateful witnesses, joyful bearers of the Good News!"



If someone desires more information on Alpha, they can call the parish office at 440-871-1100 or email us at alpha@saintraphaelparish.com.



LIVING ACCORDING TO GOD'S WILL

Forming a Conscience and Moral Code

As Christians, it is important that we recognize the difference between right and wrong—both morally and ethically. Sometimes, though, this line can become blurred.

Many situations we encounter in our lives include variables that can leave us internally conflicted and unsure of how to move forward in accordance with God's will.

So, how do we work through these moral conundrums? One way is to develop a solid Christian conscience.

A moral conscience exists in the heart of every individual. As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states, "When he listens to his conscience, the prudent man can hear God speaking. Conscience is a judgment of reason whereby the human person recognizes the moral quality of a concrete act that he is going to perform, is in the process of performing, or has already completed" (1777, 1778).

Think of your conscience as the "angelic" version of yourself sitting on your shoulder, giving you sound advice.

While everyone is blessed with a conscience, each individual has a responsibility to develop this conscience from the time they are young. Parents obviously play an important role in developing their children's consciences. As the primary educators of their children on ethical issues and the Catholic faith, parents have a responsibility to teach virtue to their children and help them to avoid fear, selfishness and pride. As we grow older, we take on the lifelong challenge of

continually forming our own consciences, and establishing a moral code that enables us to make the proper judgments.

One valuable tool in forming a conscience is the practice of introspection. "It is important for every person to be sufficiently present to himself in order to hear and follow the voice of his conscience" (CCC 1779). In contemporary society, where there are so many distractions and routines, it is extremely important that we take the time to look inward and truly listen to what our inner voice is telling us.

Another way to ensure we are developing a good moral code is by conforming to the mind of Christ. God the Father gave us Christ, physically present on this earth and recorded in Sacred Scripture, as the ultimate example of what to do and how to behave according to God's will. As Donald Cardinal Wuerl aptly states in *The Teaching of Christ*, "To conform to the mind of Christ is to conform to the mind of the Father" (p. 244). In other words, when we act in loving imitation of Christ, we are certain to make practical judgments of conscience.

The next time you are faced with a moral dilemma, take some quiet time to look inward, weigh the positive and negative outcomes, and listen to the voice of your conscience. Read the Gospels for examples of Christ's teachings. By making this a regular practice, you will find that the voice of your conscience will come in louder and more clearly than you may have initially expected.

St. Raphael 2018 Parish Census Keeping Our Information Up-to-Date

The passing years bring many changes to our families and to our communities. The same is true within our St. Raphael parish family. We've certainly witnessed exciting new building and facility construction on our church campus in recent years. We've also experienced healthy growth in families joining our faith community, along with the normal cycles of births, children growing up and leaving home, and deaths. And, as should be expected in such a large parish, every month sees families leaving for various reasons and new families joining our community. Such is the nature of a modern strong and vibrant urban parish.

These changes present an on-going challenge for our parish staff. In addition to accurately recording and archiving the sacramental records prescribed by Canon Law, our parish also maintains records of all registered parishioners. These records contain information such as family member names and ages, contact information including addresses and phone numbers, and financial contributions made in support of our parish and its ministries. Parishioner contact information, in particular, is very difficult to keep accurate in our ever changing times. The explosion of personal email addresses and cell phones has added another whole dimension to the way we communicate. And the ease and frequency with which that information can and does change has further complicated the difficulty of keeping up-to-date contact records.

There are both practical and pastoral reasons for needing accurate parishioner contact records. On the practical side, it's important for such things as communicating information about upcoming parish events and activities and for mailing the newsletter and financial contribution statements. On the pastoral side, it's necessary for such things as welcoming new parishioners, reaching out to those experiencing family or personal difficulties or tragedies, and identifying those who need help in times of emergency – such as when our area lost power for several days during a recent winter. These are all important reasons for keeping parishioner contact information up-to-date. At the same time, *all this information is treated confidentially, and access is restricted to key parish staff personnel.*

This summer a small parish staff task force has taken on a project to ensure all parishioner contact information in our records is up-to-date. Key aspects of this effort include: revising our records to include email addresses and cell phone numbers, letting parishioners know what data we currently have in our records, providing the means for parishioner feedback to verify or correct that information, and implementing methods to more easily maintain up-to-date records as time goes on.

All parish households are invited to be on the lookout for a special mailing coming in September that will include a record of the contact information we currently have

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St. Raphael

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Would you like to stay connected to the Parish using E-Mail? Then please share it with us. Just go to our Parish Website, www.saintraphaelparish.com, and enter the information under "Staying Connected Thru E-Mail". Information will not be shared and you can remove it at any time. Contact Mark Cunningham in the Parish office with questions at (440) 871-1100.

St. Raphael 2018 Parish Census Keeping Our Information Up-to-Date *continued from page 7*

for your family. Instructions will be included on how to correct or update that information. One of the task force's goals is to receive and process the bulk of that feedback by Jan. 1, 2019. Concurrently, beginning Sept. 1, a revised paper parishioner registration form will be implemented, and a new electronic registration form will be made available on the parish website.

The size of our thriving parish is fast approaching 4,000 families. Keeping up-to-date contact info for everyone is an important challenge in order to serve our families both

practically and pastorally. Be on the lookout for the special mailing in September and the opportunity to update your family's information. There will be announcements in the bulletin and other special communications to promote this census project over the next few months. The task force is also exploring a capability to allow families to electronically access and revise their own contact information, starting in the near future. Other methods and procedures are also being developed to ensure periodic re-verification of parishioner information as an ongoing process.

Please contact the Parish Office at 440-871-1100 with questions or for more information.

Liturgy Schedule

Saturday Vigil: 4:30 p.m. | **Sunday:** 8:00 a.m., 10:00 a.m., noon

Weekday Mass: M, T, W, F, 7:45 a.m. | M, T, Th, F, 9:15 a.m. | Saturday, 8:30 a.m.

Confessions: Saturdays 3:00 - 4:00 p.m. | **Eucharistic Adoration:** Friday 10:00 a.m. - Saturday 4:00 p.m.