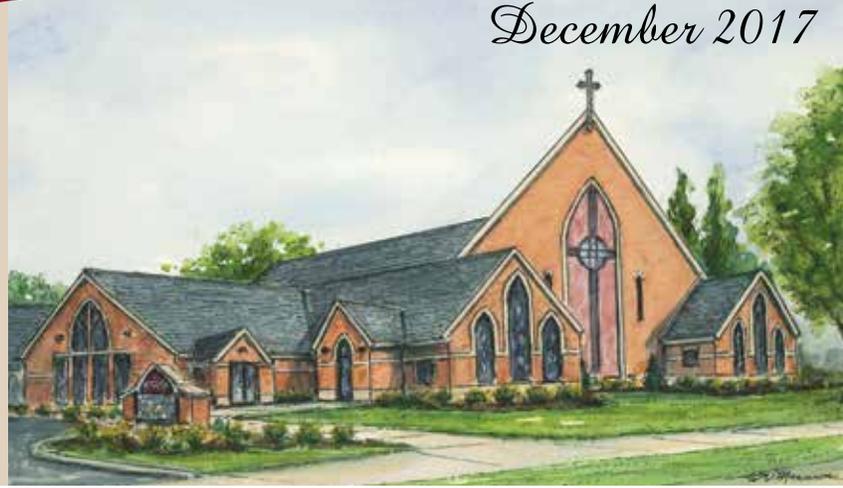


December 2017

# Saint Raphael



MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

## Giving the Gift of a Catholic Education

A Catholic education provides students a deeper understanding and appreciation of Catholic values with a solid foundation to help navigate our increasingly complex world. Pope Francis has stated that young people who are “educated in a Christian way for dialogue will come out of the classroom motivated to build bridges, and therefore, to find new answers to the many challenges of our times.”

St. Raphael School provides a Christ-centered environment with a commitment to academic excellence that allows children to learn and live their faith. The St. Raphael Scholarship Fund was set up many years ago to support our commitment that no child should be denied a Catholic education due to financial difficulty. Recently, we have seen a significant increase in requests for financial assistance and are asking parishioners to consider a donation to the Scholarship Fund.

There are many ways to give. Place cash or a check in



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# Hospitality: The Cornerstone of Stewardship

The dictionary defines "hospitality" as "the quality or disposition of receiving and treating guests and strangers in a warm, friendly, generous way."

A Christian worldview can refer to hospitality as "Christian kindness."

We see the effects of hospitality—or the lack thereof—time and time again throughout the Bible. Christ speaks of hospitality in Matthew's Gospel when He says, "When I was a stranger, you welcomed me" (Matthew 25:35). The Old Testament told of the Israelites, as they wandered the desert for 40 years in search of hospitable environs. Even the Holy Family spent ample time searching for shelter before the birth of Our Lord.

It is safe to say that hospitality is, and most likely has always been, of great importance to people everywhere. Modern hotels and hostels often use the image of a pineapple to advertise their special brand of hospitality. There is no doubt that in ancient times, the distant lights of an inn or tavern struck a chord of hope within weary travelers' hearts.

Indeed, hospitality's meaning has not diminished at all over the years, decades and millennia.

Christians view the presence of hospitality as meaning the difference between calling others "guests" and "strangers." Guests are welcomed with open arms and warm smiles, but strangers aren't. Guests feel the genuine love present in a hearty



welcome, but strangers don't. Guests often return for second or third visits, while strangers don't.

As a parish, do we find ourselves surrounded by guests, or burdened by strangers?

Hospitality is, in many respects, a mindset. The same person may be treated as guest at the church just down the road, but as a stranger here.

Matthew's Gospel tells of Christ as He reveals a profound truth about hospitality: "When I was a stranger, you welcomed me." That is, "I used to be a stranger, but you fixed that when you welcomed me." It's a classic example of before-and-after. All it took was a change of heart.

Stewardship holds hospitality

as an immensely important concept. Remember the "three Ts" of stewardship – Time, Talent, and Treasure? Well, there are also the Four Pillars of Stewardship – Hospitality, Prayer, Formation, and Service. Hospitality is mentioned first. Why? If not for hospitality, none of the other pillars will ever take hold. Hospitality is the cornerstone of stewardship, because it opens the door to a person's heart and allows them to receive joy, grace, and love.

Hospitality must become second nature, if stewardship is to truly take hold within a parish. So, when a stranger visits our parish, welcome them as a guest. Perhaps one day, they'll pay us a second visit.

## A Letter From Our Pastor

# Jesus is at the Heart of this Beautiful Season

My Dear Friends in Christ,

As the glorious time of Christmas draws near, remember that Jesus is at the heart of this beautiful season. God sent His only begotten Son to inspire and encourage us in our spiritual lives. The Incarnation, God taking on flesh in Jesus, touches lives all around us and gives life a fuller meaning and purpose. We experience this presence in the innocence of a newborn; a youngster who discovers his or her gifts and talents; a student returning home for the holidays; the single person who has found they really make a difference; the love of a newly married couple; an older couple at peace with life and each other. The Incarnation, that powerful gift of God made present, is here for all of us. Celebrate Emmanuel, God's presence with us. Know that you will be remembered in our Masses and prayers this Holy Season.

May God bless and keep you,

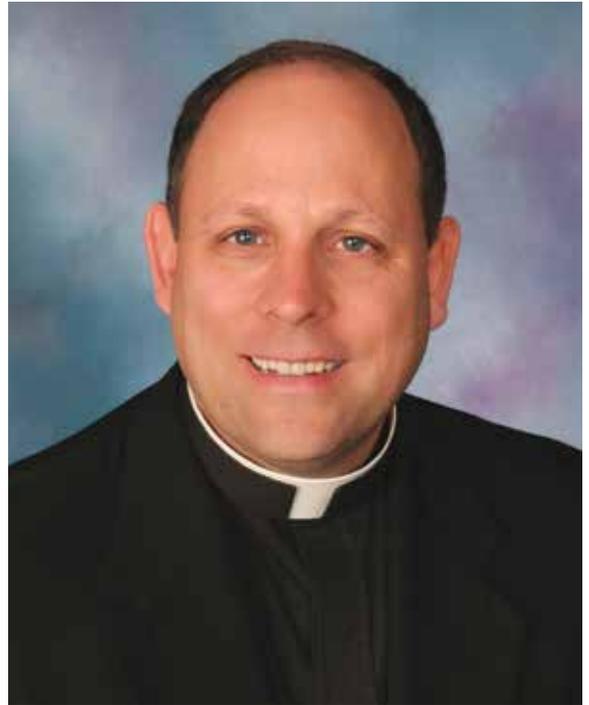


Fr. Tim Gareau,  
Pastor

Keith Benya  
Tish Bush  
Rosie Galizio  
Ellen Grady  
Nick Gresko  
Kelly Helbig  
Andy Kereky  
Kelley Tonegato

Ashley Klug  
Maureen Mayer  
Ann Miller  
Candy Reese  
Marilyn Senn  
Terri Telepak  
Bill Toler

Rev. Eric Garris  
Deacon Mark Cunningham  
Deacon Larry Gregg  
Deacon Tom Senn  
Roger Andrachik  
Susan Andregg  
Peggy Barrett



### CONFESSION SCHEDULE:

Dec. 2 — 3-4 p.m.  
Dec. 9 — 3-4 p.m.  
Dec. 16 — 3-4 p.m.  
Dec. 23 — 2:30-4 p.m.

### COMMUNAL PENANCE SERVICE:

Dec. 10 at 7 p.m., at Holy Spirit Church  
(Combined with our Cluster Parishes — Holy Spirit, St. Joseph and St. Raphael Parishes)

### MASSES:

#### **Christmas Eve — Sunday, Dec. 24**

4 p.m. Masses Church/PAC  
8 p.m. Mass, 10 p.m. Mass

#### **Christmas Day — Monday, Dec. 25**

8 a.m. Mass, 10 a.m. Mass, 12 p.m. Mass

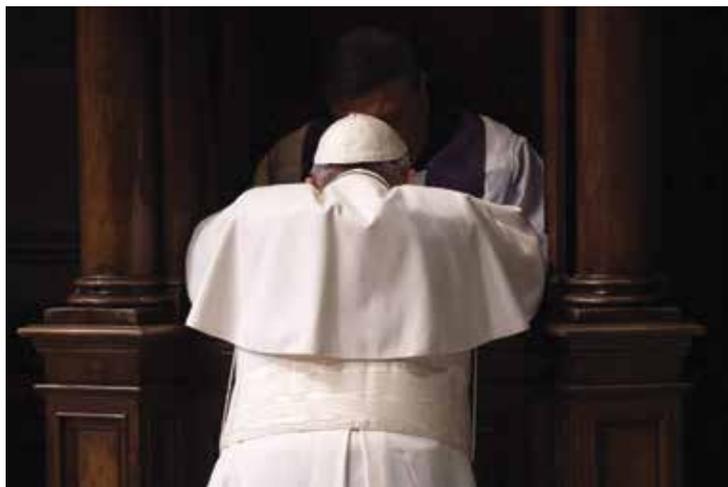
#### **Day after Christmas — Tuesday, Dec. 26**

7:45 a.m. Mass, 9:15 a.m. Mass

#### **Solemnity of Mary — Monday, Jan. 1, 2018**

*Not celebrated as a Holy Day of Obligation in 2018*  
Mass at 9:30 a.m.

# The Communal Penance Service at H *“The Gift of God’s Mercy is Highlighte*



Three years ago, Pope Francis was scheduled to hear confessions at St. Peter Basilica in Rome. A huge crowd had gathered, as some hoped to go to the pope himself for confession. However, he shocked everyone by first going to a confessional, in full view of those in attendance, and kneeling before a priest to make his own confession. And he surprised many in the packed church by confessing his own sins with his back to cameras. At one point, the priest hearing his confession appeared to chuckle. Francis, solemn-faced, then rose and started hearing confessions himself.

Confession is one of the least understood of the sacraments of the Catholic Church. In reconciling us to God, it is a great source of grace, and Catholics are encouraged to take advantage of it often. But it is also the subject of many common misunderstandings, both among non-Catholics and among Catholics themselves. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is one of the seven Sacraments recognized by the Catholic Church. The purpose of confession is to reconcile humans to God. When we sin, we deprive ourselves of God’s grace. And by doing so, we make it even easier to sin some more. The only way out of this downward cycle is to acknowledge our sins, to repent of them, and to ask God’s forgiveness. Then, in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, grace can be restored to our souls, and we can once again resist sin.

Here at St. Raphael we offer many opportunities for confession. Those are outlined elsewhere in this newsletter. However, on Sunday, Dec. 10, there is a special opportunity for confession at a Communal Penance Service. It is called “communal” because it is an effort shared by St. Raphael,



## Holy Spirit Church on Sunday, Dec. 10 *Prayed and Experienced in a Special Way”*

Holy Spirit and St. Joseph in Avon Lake. This year’s service is at Holy Spirit. The coordinator for Holy Spirit is Pat Kassay, the Pastoral Associate at the parish.

“The Communal Penance Service will be held beginning at 7 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 10, in the Chapel of the Holy Family,” Pat says. “It begins with a prayer service at 7 p.m., then a reading from Holy Scripture, a very brief

reflection, and then individual confessions. We know we will have at least six priests present to hear confessions. We will provide each attendee with a booklet to assist with an examination of conscience. When someone has completed their confession, depending upon any penance they may have been given, they are free to leave. Our parishes — St. Raphael, Holy Spirit and St. Joseph — have been doing this for

more than 10 years, once during Advent and once during Lent.”

Advent is considered to be a season of penance. That is why the vestments of the priests are purple or violet during this season. It is a season of penance and preparation, a time when we recognize our distance from God, when we anticipate and rejoice — but there is also a penitential nature, as well. Going to confession is a perfect way to acknowledge and express that.

*Holy Spirit is located at 410 Lear Road, Avon Lake, 44012.*

*For directions go to the parish website at [www.holyspiritavonlake.org](http://www.holyspiritavonlake.org).*

*For more information on the Communal Penance Service, contact our St. Raphael parish office at 440-871-1100, or Pat Kassay at Holy Spirit, 440-933-3777.*

## Giving the Gift of a Catholic Education *continued from front cover*

an envelope labeled “Scholarship Fund” in the collection basket or make a gift online by visiting the parish website, [www.saintraphaelparish.com](http://www.saintraphaelparish.com). Another simple way to give, which does not cost you anything, is to purchase gift cards through our Cards4Kids program. St. Raphael sells cards for use at various grocery stores (Heinen’s and Giant Eagle), restaurants (Applebee’s, Bob Evans, and Panera), businesses (Home Depot, Barnes & Noble, Gap, Banana Republic, Old Navy) and others. **One-hundred percent of the profits from the sales of the**

**cards will go to the St. Raphael Scholarship Fund.** Cards4Kids will now be sold in Good Shepherd Square on Sundays after the 8:00 Mass, before and after the 10:00 Mass and before the 12:00 Mass. You can also purchase gift cards at the parish office during normal business hours.

Please consider using the gift cards and/or making a gift to the Scholarship Fund to help us honor our commitment to provide tuition assistance to families with financial difficulties that desire a Catholic education for their children.

*St. Raphael School provides a Christ-centered environment with a commitment to academic excellence that allows children to learn and live their faith. The St. Raphael Scholarship Fund was set up many years ago to support our commitment that no child should be denied a Catholic education due to financial difficulty.*

# The Blessings of the Catholic Mass

It is ironic that today, with all of the freedom of religion that we enjoy in the United States, many of us wonder why we must go to Mass on Sunday.

However, if we really understood what the Mass is and how we participate in the celebration, we would instead be asking why we are, as sinful human beings, blessed with the opportunity to participate in the holy Mass. If we simply understood and recognized that God's infinite goodness allows us to do so, we would be eager to go to Mass on Sunday and every other day of the week.

It is true, however, that all Catholics are obliged to "Keep holy the Lord's Day" by sharing in the Mass. But why are we obliged?

The Eucharistic Liturgy is the center of our faith. It is "the summit toward which all activity of the Church is directed" and it is "the font from which all her power flows" (*Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* 10). It does not exhaust the activity of the Church, but is most certainly her greatest work.

The sacrifice of Christ on the cross is literally re-presented to the Father during Mass, and Christ allows us to

join with Him in offering that sacrifice. Imagine our Lord and Savior dying on the cross for us right up the street. Imagine knowing that Mary is sitting at the foot of the cross with St. John, witnessing her Son giving Himself to the Father for the sake of all of us. Would we not run to be there? Would we not desire to share in His sacrifice, just as Mary did?

Believe it or not, the sacrifice of Calvary is really, truly happening at our parish, every time the Mass is offered.

Our participation in Mass gives us the strength and the graces we need to live our lives as Christ's disciples. So, what does this mean for us?

This means we have a front row seat to the sacrifice of Calvary. Given such a gift, how can we not accept it?

We also have a chance to join in Jesus' sacrifice by offering our own prayers and petitions. As an example, what better gift could we give deceased loved ones than the offering of prayers for their souls in purgatory?

Most importantly, we have the opportunity to *receive* the Eucharist, followed by quiet time, when we offer sincere thanks and allow God's graces

to fill us. Think of all you are missing when you do not properly prepare yourself to receive the Holy Eucharist.

We ought to joyfully head to Church each Sunday, eager to give God glory in the greatest way we can! Attending and actively participating in Mass every Sunday is our obligation as Catholics. But we should not allow the fact that our attendance is "required" to stop us from going. Nor should we allow our laziness to overshadow the amazing privilege and the many blessings that lay before us in the Mass.

The pope and the bishops direct us to participate in the Eucharistic Liturgy every Sunday because they know there is no better way to keep holy the Lord's day — giving God thanks for all He has done for us in the most powerful way possible. They know that, through the Mass, we gain the graces necessary to live our lives in this world.

Our ability to participate in the Mass is a wonderful gift, not a great burden. May Christ enlighten our minds and hearts to clearly see the wonders of the celebration, and give us great enthusiasm and eagerness to participate.

*Imagine our Lord and Savior dying on the cross for us right up the street. Imagine knowing that Mary is sitting at the foot of the cross with St. John, witnessing her Son giving Himself to the Father for the sake of all of us. Would we not run to be there? Would we not desire to share in His sacrifice, just as Mary did?*



## Sounds of the Christmas Season at St. Raphael “A Sense of Warmth”

Three days, close to each other, each signal that the music of the season is upon us. The Feast of St. Cecilia, patron of musicians, is celebrated on Nov. 22. On the very next day, Thanksgiving is the cue for some radio stations to begin playing non-stop Christmas music. And on Dec. 3, we arrive at the First Sunday of Advent.

The music of this time of year brings us a sense of warmth during cold months. It might make us nostalgic as we remember holiday seasons in years past. The music of this season also helps us celebrate. The liturgical Season of Advent is a time of waiting, where we enter deeply into the mysteries of Jesus' Incarnation, His Second Coming, and the ways in which He is born in our hearts each and every day. Advent also reminds us to “wait” for the Christmas Season.

So, while you won't hear beloved Christmas music as we celebrate the liturgies of Advent, there are several opportunities to immerse yourself in the music of Christmas at the parish during this time.

On Tuesday, Dec. 5 and Wednesday, Dec. 6, Saint Raphael School will hold its annual Christmas Concerts at 7 p.m. in the Parish Activity Center. Tuesday's concert features Kindergarten, second and fourth grades, and the Cadet Band. Wednesday's concert will showcase first and third grades and the Concert Band.

For the past two years, St. Raphael has been honored to be a concert venue for *Apollo's Fire*, Cleveland's Baroque Orchestra under the direction of Jeannette Sorrell. Last year, audiences were treated to a sparkling rendition of Handel's *Messiah*. This year, *Apollo's Fire* presents a brand new concert titled “Christmas on Sugarloaf Mountain: An

*continued on back cover*



*Apollo's Fire returns for a Christmas presentation on Dec. 10.*



*School students singing.*

*As the days grow shorter and we approach the celebration of the Birth of Christ, allow the Advent liturgies to prepare your hearts, and allow these musical opportunities to warm your spirits!*

# St. Raphael

CHURCH

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## Sounds of the Christmas Season at St. Raphael

*continued from page 7*

Irish-Appalachian Celebration," Dec. 2-3 and 8-10 throughout the greater Cleveland area. The concert will be presented at St. Raphael on Sunday, Dec. 10 at 4 p.m. In this new program created by Jeannette, the beloved troupe from the Sugarloaf Mountain summer program joins a wider cast with chorus, children's voices, and additional instruments to celebrate the Celtic roots of an Appalachian Christmas. From the mystical Gregorian chant of old Scotland to folk carols and shape-note hymns at a toe-tapping Christmas gathering in Appalachia... the people of the mountains welcome Christmas with love.

Last but not least, our parish choir, Seraphim, will

present a traditional Lessons and Carols service at 6 p.m. in the church on Sunday, Dec. 17. This concert service dates back to 1880 in Cornwall, England, and is most famously performed each year by the King's College Choir in Cambridge. The concert service features nine readings for Christmas, each followed by beautiful music of the season.

As the days grow shorter and we approach the celebration of the Birth of Christ, allow the Advent liturgies to prepare your hearts, and allow these musical opportunities to warm your spirits!

For more information on any of these, contact the parish office at 440-871-1100.

### *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.