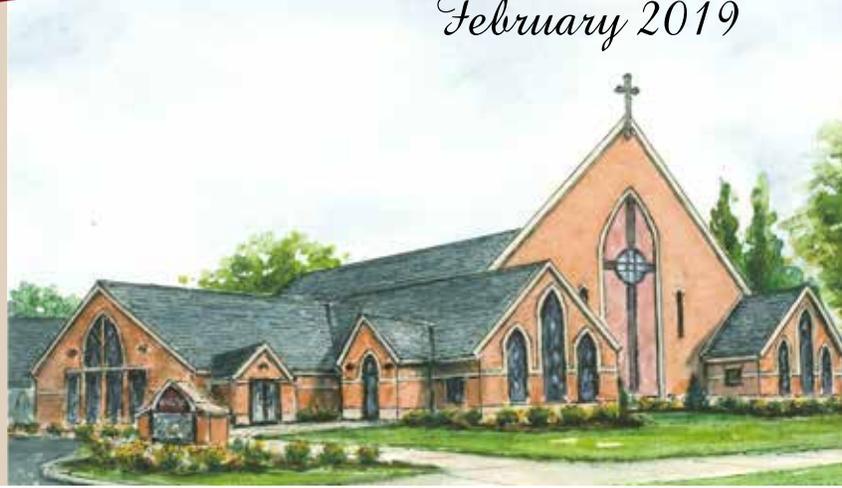


February 2019

Saint Raphael



MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Finding God Everywhere

Ignatian Spiritual Exercises Retreat By Dianne Borowski

I have received many gifts throughout my life. Some I was born with, others have been given to me. Religion was an important part of my family's life when I was young. Eight years of Catholic elementary school, combined with what I learned from my family, resulted in my firm belief that God was a necessary and most important part of my life.

When I was asked to write about the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises Retreat, which is scheduled to begin this February 27th, I was pleased to do it. You see, eight years earlier I made this very same retreat here at St. Raphael parish. I was new to the parish and felt I could use some time getting closer to God. The retreat was held in an upper room connected to the parish school. As I climbed the stairs that first meeting, I had a sudden urge to return down those stairs and vanish. Fortunately, someone was behind me. I needn't have worried, though, as Dr. Andy Kereky, the facilitator of the group, was very kind and reassuring, explaining group guidelines which emphasized anything shared with the group stayed in the group.

The Ignatian Spiritual Exercises Retreat is a perfect opportunity to continue working on one's relationship with God. We are taught as children that God is everywhere at all times, living in us and all creation. Over the years I have lost sight of this



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powerful truth. I would like to be more aware of this concept in my daily life. The Ignatian retreat helps us to do just that. I have learned so much through attending that retreat.

You see, the retreat is structured to emphasize God's part in our lives. Everything you need to know is enclosed in a binder along with two informative books given to you to help keep God the focus of your life. I'm sure keeping God as the focus in one's life seems impossible. It isn't. The retreat teaches how to accomplish this using a minimum amount of time.

In conclusion, all I can say is I found this retreat amazing. The first time I held a rose in my hands (from a retreat reflection) and could feel God's presence surround me, filling me with joy, wonder and love, I knew I would be able to see God's love in others and all His creations. For all who partake of this retreat, my wish for you is to find God's love in abundance and to pass it on.

St. Ignatius of Loyola

The Ignatian Spiritual Exercises Retreat is a 9-week retreat that will be offered in two different time slots for parishioner convenience: Mornings 10:00 – 11:30 am, and Evenings 7:30 – 9:00 pm. All retreats will be held in the parish Community Room beginning on Wednesday, February 27th. For more information and to register, contact Dr. Andy Kereky at akereky@saintraphaelparish.com or 440-871-1100.

A Family That Takes Their Faith Seriously - and Works Hard to Live It

by Mike Manco

We know as parents that children are a gift, and we only get one chance to raise them to be good Catholics. This requires us first to be the best Christians we can possibly be so that we may lead by example. Secondly, we must work at parenting by bringing Christ into our daily lives in every way possible, so it becomes a natural part of our family life. To be anything less cheapens our value as parents. It's not easy to do, but it can be achieved with practice and persistence.

Meet Mike and Colleen Harding and their three wonderful children (ages 8, 10 and 11). Colleen is a cradle Catholic and Mike was originally a Methodist, but had converted before he met Colleen. Both place their priorities as God first, each other second, and their children third. Their common priorities allow them to be on the same page with most decisions they make as parents. When an occasion of difference arises, they discuss it extensively and incorporate prayer into the process. Ultimately, a decision presents itself and they support each other. The goal is to do what is best for the family, in Gods eyes.

The Harding's are not comfortable being singled out, but you can't help admiring them. When the Harding's couldn't have children of their own, they became legal guardians to two wonderful girls - only to see them returned to their biological parents after a short time. God gave them the opportunity to reconnect several years later and become their legal parents through adoption, along with a wonderful boy. Today the children are doing great and thriving at St. Raphael School.

Mike and Colleen live a very structured lifestyle. They have a daily routine they try not to deviate from it. This allows them to create security in



what is expected of everyone. Their daily routine includes: a prayer before each meal; one meal a day as a family with no distractions; Mass each week followed by family discussion of the readings for clarity.

The practices they follow come mostly from observing other people who have raised good and kind children. They know their kids are going to mess up and make mistakes, but they want them to be prepared for the consequences of their actions.

Colleen says that they have two important Christian beliefs: "First, we teach our kids that we are never alone, we always have God with us. Second, where we are now is temporary. The goal is not to have a great life here and get everything we want on earth. The goal is to get to heaven. If we live our lives with that goal, we can think more about our actions and whether God would be pleased. It forces us to think outside of ourselves."

They're a good Christian family that I'm sure you'll enjoy meeting!

Lenten Practices

By Susan Orenga

Lent is an important and significant time in the Catholic Church. It begins on Ash Wednesday (March 6th this year) and goes through Holy Thursday (April 18th), leading up to Easter Sunday (April 21st). During this time, we are asked to renew our baptismal vows. Also during this time, many adult catechumens going through the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)* make their final preparations to be baptized. We celebrate their baptisms during the Easter Vigil liturgy.

During Lent we are asked to focus on three things – prayer, service, and self-sacrifice. Most are familiar with self-sacrifice or what we traditionally “give up” for Lent. Christ fasted for 40 days and 40 nights. Many give up vices such as sweets or caffeine. The fasting tradition goes far back in both the Old and New Testaments of the Bible. It is believed that by fasting, or sacrificing, we can reconnect with our true spiritual nature. It can also help remind us of our dependence upon God, as opposed to other worldly resources. “Giving up” also stems from abstaining from sin in order to bring us closer to God. Catholics are asked to

go to Confession during Lent, and the Cleveland Diocese holds an evening dedicated to that (Wednesday, March 20th) across all parishes in the diocese.

“Giving Alms” or service is the second component of Lent. Another form of sacrifice, it can be done through service in the community or by donating money or goods to those less fortunate than us.

Prayer is the third component and can be done through quiet time with God, reading Scriptures daily, attending daily Mass, praying the Rosary, or any other form of prayer.

One Lenten practice learned years ago is to let go of something every day in Lent. This can be something physical (like clothes, household goods, or toys that aren’t being used and can be donated), or things (thoughts behaviors, guilt, etc.) that no longer serve you or that don’t bring you closer to God.

Whether it’s taking a break from social media for 40 days, giving up TV, going to Confession, attending Mass, or spending time with those less fortunate than us, Lent can provide a way to bring you closer to God, by stripping away anything that takes away that focus.

St. Raphael Lenten Activities

Ignatian Spiritual Exercises Retreat

Begins Wednesday, February 27th

Runs 9-weeks in two different time slots:

Mornings 10:00 – 11:30 am,
and Evenings 7:30 – 9:00 pm

Men’s Retreat

Friday, March 1st thru Saturday, March 2nd

At the Jesuit Retreat Center in Parma; this retreat is open to all men

Ash Wednesday Masses

Wednesday, March 6

7:30 am, 9:15 am, 7:00 pm;

Ash Wednesday Prayer Service – 4:30 pm

Lenten Fish Frys

Fridays – March 8th thru April 12th

5:00 – 7:30 pm (Parish Activity Center)

Stations of the Cross

Fridays – March 8th thru April 12th

7:30 pm (Church)

Diocesan Wide Confession

Wednesday, March 20th

5:00 – 8:00 pm (Church)

Women’s Retreat

March 23rd

8:30 am – 4:00 pm

(Parish Activity Center)

This retreat is open to all women

Parish Lenten Mission

Runs Sunday, March 31st thru

Tuesday, April 2nd

7:00 pm – 8:30 pm (Church)

Mission Leader: Fr. Michael Stalla

Apollo’s Fire Concert - Bach’s B Minor Mass & Palm Sunday Mini-festival

Sunday, April 14th

4:30 pm (Church)

Tenebrae

April 17th

8:30 pm (Church)

Our Fish Fry Tradition Continues!

by Maggie Brady

Give a man a fish, and you feed him for a day. But take a man, woman, their children and all their friends to the St. Raphael Lenten Fish Fry, and you'll feed the whole crowd for multiple Fridays!

Lent begins with Ash Wednesday on March 6th this year, and our parish tradition of serving up a weekly meatless feast will be back, too. Parishioner Liz Sfeir of Well Done Catering (www.welldone-catering.com) has been helping create this event for a decade, and she says that about 700 people are fed each Friday night. Together with volunteers, she will be serving up a menu that includes:

Baked Haddock
Fried Lake Perch
Pierogi (a great option for vegetarians)
Mac n Cheese
and Fried Shrimp

Plus, all dinners come with french fries, cole slaw, dessert and iced tea. Liz's personal favorite is the perch - a hand-breaded entrée.

Have you ever wondered: Why do Catholics abstain from meat on Lenten Fridays, and why is fish allowed? Contrary to urban legend, it has nothing to do with a long-ago pope propping up the fishing industry. Historical records show references to Christians abstaining from meat on Fridays, all the way back in the first century. The penitential practice helped the faithful commemorate the death of Jesus on a Friday afternoon. Fish are cold-blooded, so they stayed on the menu - besides, Jesus cooked fish for the

disciples after the Resurrection, and miraculously multiplied fish (and bread) for a multitude to eat.

Over the centuries, this tradition of Friday abstinence went through many changes. In some periods, it included not just meat but also oil and dairy products - a guideline still followed by our Eastern Catholic brothers and sisters.

As many senior family members and friends can remember, until the mid-20th century, Roman Catholics abstained from meat on all Fridays of the year, not just in Lent. Contrary to popular belief, in 1966 the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops actually expanded opportunities for Friday penance, allowing the faithful to substitute other meaningful sacrifices instead of only forgoing meat. Universally, meatless Fridays remain part of Canon Law. In fact, on the USCCB website, users can sign up for text message or email reminders to voluntarily stick to a pescatarian diet, every Friday of the year.

On Ash Wednesday and the Fridays of Lent, however, the specific discipline of abstinence from meat remains obligatory for Americans over the age of 14. (For serious reasons, such as pregnancy or other significant health concerns, Catholics can make reasonable modifications to this practice.)

At St. Raphael Parish, the Fish Fry makes Lenten Fridays an opportunity to experience the gift of community alongside the graces that come with a penitential spirit. Please join us!



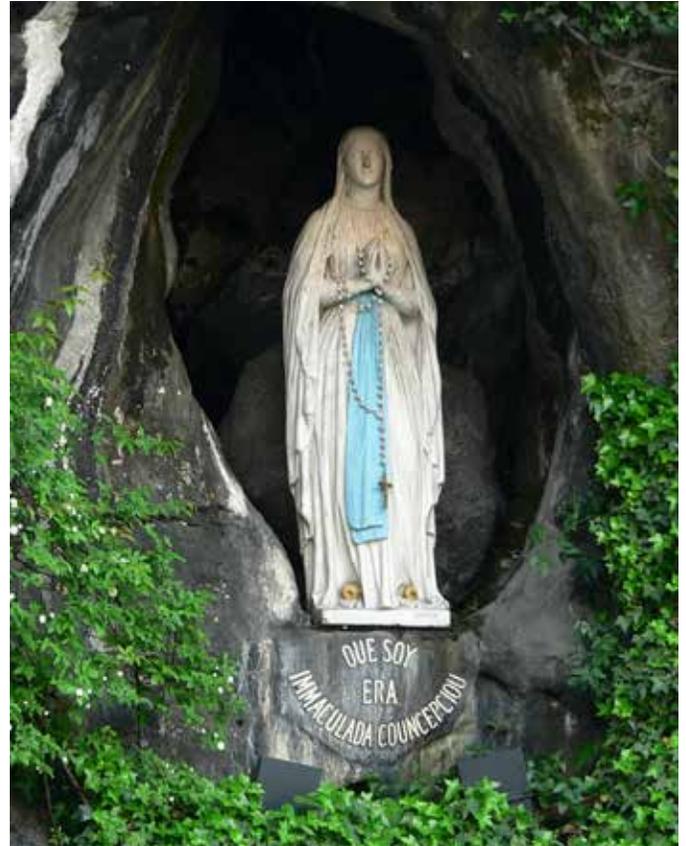
A Little Time With Our Lady of Lourdes

by Kathleen Maloney

February to me is a month filled with long, cold winter days with Valentine's and Presidents' days being nice breaks from the misery. Yet, as Catholics we know that every day should be filled with hope and excitement because we know the love of God. We are reminded of this through the many holy days celebrated through the year. One of them is on February 11 – the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes. Lourdes is a small town in southeastern France where the Blessed Mother appeared to a young girl named Bernadette Soubirous in 1858.

At the time of the apparitions, Bernadette was only 14 years old, poor and uneducated and did not realize who the beautiful lady was. Our Blessed Mother treated her with great kindness and respect, asking her to pray the rosary and to pray for sinners. When Bernadette asked the lady her name, she was told she was speaking with the Immaculate Conception.

Because of the recognized miracles which have occurred at Lourdes, millions of people travel each year to see the site, to pray, and ask for healing. For myself, I don't have the inclination to travel so far to get



St. Bernadette Soubirous

in touch with Our Lady. Praying the rosary and meditating on the mysteries makes me feel very close to the mother of Jesus. And when I look up into the sky during my prayers, something reminds me that Jesus and heavenly realities are in my heart, and not somewhere "up there" or "out there."

Bringing heaven into our hearts, I believe, is not difficult. We can create spaces in our lives and homes for prayer, reflection, and for quiet time to contemplate the love of God and to thank Him for the blessings and graces He bestows upon us every day. For example, praying a novena early in the morning for a special intention, or reading a psalm or proverb before going to bed in the evening, or taking time in a quiet corner to read about an angel or saint of the day. If you are thinking you don't have time for these things, just ask the Lord to provide it, and watch what happens! Just taking a little time to pray takes us out of the hurried craziness of our world and brings us closer to God and His love. Not a bad trade-off.

St. Raphael Men's Retreat – How God Speaks to Us

by Joy Horvath

Imagine... It's Friday evening, and several dozen men are on their way through the traffic, from home or work, anticipating a warm welcome in a sacred space, a hearty meal with old friends and new, a time to reflect and contemplate with like-minded men and inspiring speakers. How relaxing it would be to join them, to turn away from your daily obligations for one night and day, and to consider your own relationship to Jesus.

The St. Raphael Men's Retreat, sponsored by the Men's Fellowship Ministry, will take place Friday evening, March 1st through Saturday, March 2, 2019, at the newly renovated and expanded Jesuit Retreat Center in Parma. This retreat is open to ALL men of the parish. Our Spiritual Director will be our Pastor, Fr. Tim Gareau. The presenters will be Trapper Jack (Philip Keller), and Fr. Ned Weist.

Trapper Jack Elliott, aka Philip Keller, is a familiar voice and personality in Cleveland. For 25 years, he hosted the morning show on a popular local FM station, where he was known for his wholesome family-friendly banter. During his 30+ year radio career, he was named to the Ohio Broadcasters Hall of Fame and the Cleveland Association of Broadcasters Hall of Fame, and was named Radio Personality of the Year.

In 2013, he found himself changing direction, away from commenting on the latest celebrity drama and sports wins and losses in the radio booth, and toward focusing on his faith. For the past five years, he has

been producing and hosting podcasts centered on the everyday miracles around us. He especially enjoys interviewing people who have experienced miraculous healings. Legally blind from a degenerative retinal disease, Philip thanks God for the blessing of his blindness, since it led him back to his Catholic faith after being away for 15 years. His faith testimony will be a powerful witness to the wonders around us.



Philip Keller ("Trapper Jack")



Fr. Ned Weist

Fr. Ned Weist is a familiar face at the St. Raphael Church altar. A native West Sider, he grew up in St. Christopher's Parish in Rocky River, and now, six years into retirement, resides in Westlake. In his fifty years of service to the Church, he has observed how the Kingdom of God is present with and among us, though we may not notice it. He will speak of his experiences with those "aha!" moments, when God connects with us in unexpected ways. Fr. Weist emphasizes that, indeed, "God is Here, Now" if we but listen and observe the world around us.

The Men's Retreat will be an inspirational start for your Lenten Journey, which begins on Ash Wednesday, March 6th, 2019. If you are a Catholic man striving to deepen your relationship with God and searching for Christian fellowship, this retreat is for you.

For additional retreat information, or to inquire about joining the Men's Fellowship Ministry, call Carl Feldkircher 440-892-7812, or Deacon Larry Gregg 440-871-1100.

St. Raphael

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Join Us on Saturday, March 2nd for the St. Raphael's annual Mardi Gras Family Fest

St. Raphael's annual Mardi Gras Family Fest will take place this year on **Saturday, March 2nd from 10:00am-2:00pm**. This event offers tons of family fun to all members of the community and includes games and prizes for children of all ages, as well as an exciting raffle full of items donated by area businesses and parish and school families. If you are able to donate (monetary contributions, sports tickets, gift certificates, or prize items), please contact

us at: srshomeandschoolmardigras@gmail.com. We appreciate any donations so that we can make this event as successful as in years past.

Raffle tickets for raffle items will be sold after Masses on Sunday-February 17th, Saturday-February 23rd, and Sunday-February 24th. We look forward to celebrating another year of Mardi Gras with you!

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.