

January 2019

Saint Raphael

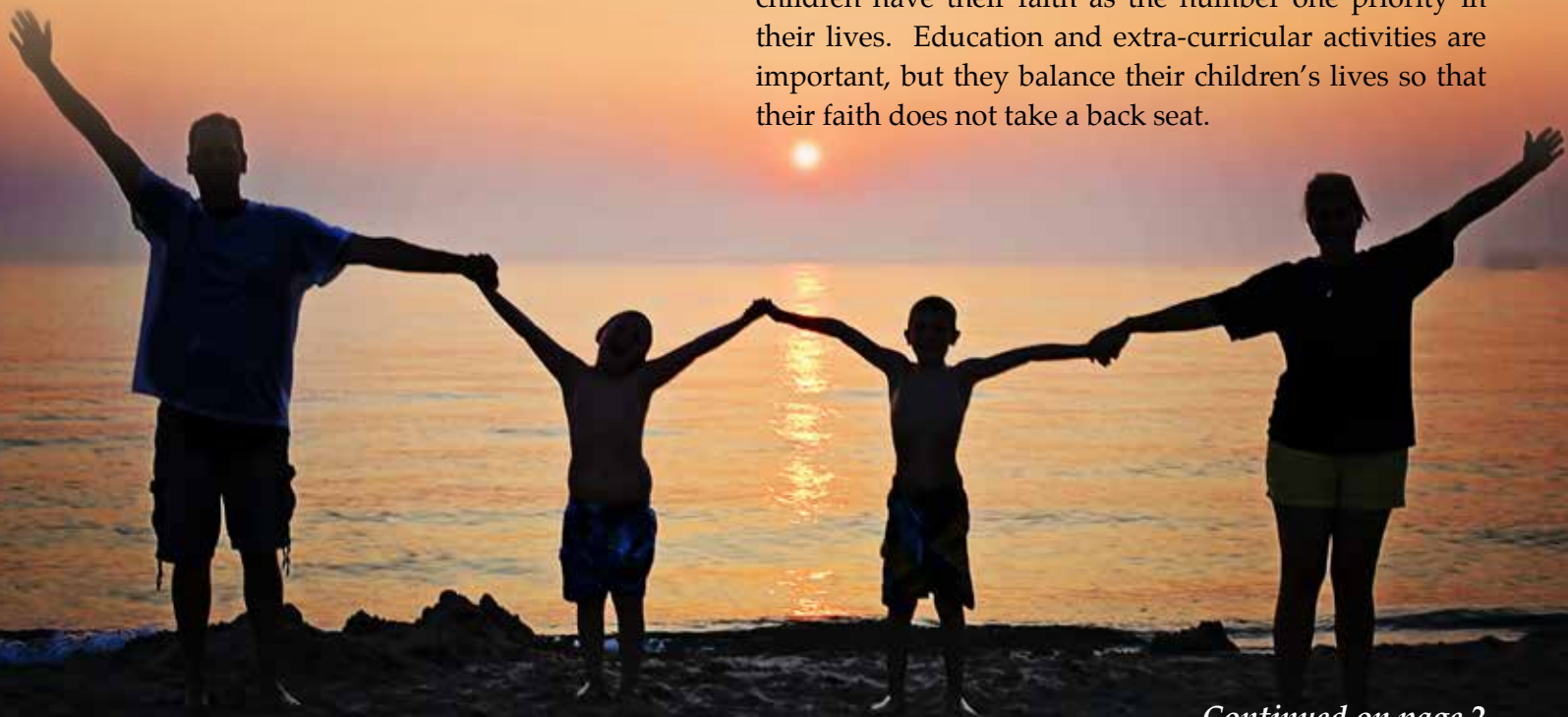


MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Why Young Catholics Leave the Church and What Parents Can Do to Prevent It

Part 2 of a 2-article series by Mike Manco

Our parish has many families that are working to raise their children to love God and know the Catholic faith. I have met and interviewed several of them for this article, trying to understand what they are doing to bring up their children in our faith. Some send their children to St. Raphael school but most use the PSR program. Of the families I interviewed, the common denominator is that both parents work to ensure their children have their faith as the number one priority in their lives. Education and extra-curricular activities are important, but they balance their children's lives so that their faith does not take a back seat.



Continued on page 2

This Issue:

1 Why Young Catholics Leave the Church and What Parents Can Do to Prevent It (Part 2 of a 2-Article Series)

3 Another Year, Another Resolution

4 The Car, The Kit, The Quest!

5 A View on the Conversion of St. Paul the Apostle

6 Reinvesting in Marriage

7 Catholic Schools Week – We Are God’s Masterpiece

From page 1

The following are many of the tasks they practice:

- Attend Mass as a family; they often discuss the readings and homily at dinner that night.**
- Slide God into the conversation whenever possible when making decisions.**
- Be positive and cultivate a glass half full attitude. Try to find the good in a situation.**
- Point out what God gives us every day, and try not to take it for granted.**
- Talk about temptations and sacrifice and how it feels to stay strong and committed to doing what is right in God’s eyes.**
- Talk about what a gift family is to have, and how blessed we are.**
- Teach your children the importance of being kind. Talk about how it feels. Practice random acts of kindness anonymously.**
- Do something charitable as a family on a regular basis. Let the children pick the cause.**
- Teach kids how to earn money and the importance of putting their own money in the basket at Mass.**
- Pray before meals and at bedtime and include prayers for others and special thanks.**
- Teach your children how to pray. How to sit quietly and ask God to help us handle whatever is coming our way. Ask God to use us for the greater good and be open when he speaks to our hearts.**
- Eat a meal together as a family once a day with no electronics.**
- Ask the family “What do you think God sees when he looks at us?” “Is he happy?” “Is he sad?” “What can we do better?”**

You were given the gift of faith by your parents and all those who came before you. You were given the gift of children by God. Please pass on to the next generation those gifts but in a better condition.



Another Year, Another Resolution

By Dianne Borowski

For many of us January is the time to make New Year's resolutions. Every December for the best few years I have set aside an evening during the week after Christmas to reflect upon the goals I would like to accomplish throughout the coming year. I wait until our apartment is quiet, then gather a pen, paper and my thoughts to begin this process. I use a video of a stone fireplace complete with logs and soft background music to help me quiet my thoughts.

This year I sit in my chair with a stack of plain white unlined papers. I glance up at the video and am mesmerized by the flames as they dance before my eyes. After a few minutes I return my attention to the papers before me. The papers symbolize each of the 365 days of the approaching year. I feel a bit anxious as I stare at the pages before me wondering what each day will bring when it arrives. I would like to believe each day will be filled with wonder, happiness and joy but I know this is not realistic. As the years pass I realize I may lose a loved one or friend at any time, I may have serious health issues or be caught in a conflicted relationship with someone close to me. I know life is bittersweet and I must prepare for those unhappy moments which can be life-altering and difficult.

I say a silent prayer. I do not want to fill the days of this year with preconceived ideas of what my life should be. So many times I do just that. I worry about my ability to cope with some undefined, vague problems which might occur and sometimes become so fearful it is almost impossible to live in the present moment.

I really want to live each day as it comes. I believe each day is a miracle, a gift from God to be used wisely. I want to find beauty and peace in my life even if my world is filled with loss, pain or confusion. I want to always see the goodness in those around me. These are my resolutions for 2019. Most of all, I want to learn to accept each day God gives me with an open mind and an open heart. Resolutions are great guidelines but not a substitute for living...



The Kit, The Car, The Quest!

by Joy Horvath

What's 11 feet tall, 100 feet long, and made of wood? A Cub Scout Pinewood Derby Track! Our own Cub Scout Pack 159 has been busy preparing for the annual Pinewood Derby to be held in the Lunchroom on Saturday, February 9. If you've never witnessed the drama, heard the cheers of the crowd, or smiled along with the winners of this event, you have missed a joyful evening.

Thirty-eight boys in grades 1 through 5, along with their parents or mentors, each design and construct miniature race cars from blocks of pinewood, metal axles and plastic wheels, all part of a kit they received in December. In addition, mentors, parents and siblings can submit their own vehicles for the race. Shape, decoration and ornamentation are chosen by the young men themselves, with participants voting on "the coolest" car in each division.

On The Big Night, 50 or more vehicles go head-to-head down the track, with the winners for each age group garnering trophies. In addition, the overall winner is granted custody of the much-desired Open Race Grand Prize Belt for the coming year. The Pinewood Derby has been a national Cub Scout activity for over 60 years, and our Pack 159 has been participating in this race since the 1960's.

Cubmaster John Underation reports that the Pack has also been active with other pursuits this year. The boys have held several campouts, including one combined with touring decommissioned United States Naval vessels at the Buffalo and Erie County Naval & Military Park. Sports are a major interest, with members attending a fishing derby, a bowling party and a toboggan outing. The Pack has participated in our Adopt-a-Family drive, and helped during the Bay Village Leaf Rake Out. If you visited the "Prayers from Maria" sunflower fields, you may have noticed the lemonade stand that our Pack built there.

Because Pack 159 is sponsored by St. Raphael Church, the scouts are additionally encouraged to work on religious

Continued on Page 8



A View on the Conversion of St. Paul the Apostle

by Kathleen Maloney

On January 25 we celebrate the conversion of St. Paul to Christianity. The man who was known as Saul of Tarsus did not have a cozy beginning with our faith. Saul was Jewish – a Pharisee – and he did not like Jesus being called the Son of God. He openly participated in the persecution of those following the new Christian faith called The Way. In Acts 22:20 Paul states, “And when the blood of your witness Stephen was being shed, I myself stood by giving my approval and keeping guard over the cloaks of his murderers.” Then on the road to Damascus, something extraordinary happened. This man, who hated Christians, had an experience of the risen Christ that literally knocked him to the ground. He was also blind for three days until a man named Ananias healed him.

Because of these experiences, and with the help of the Lord, Paul became one of the most successful evangelizers of the Catholic Church. He became as brave a fighter for the Church as he ever was against it. Some 13 letters, or about half of the New Testament, are attributed to Paul (although only 7 letters are undisputed; the others may have been by other authors writing under Paul’s name). He also made three missionary journeys throughout Asia Minor and regions of what is known today as the Middle East. The Church was certainly strengthened and expanded by his faith and work for Jesus.

Some of my favorite teachings from Paul are found in 1 Corinthians:

“If I give away everything I own, and if I hand my body over so that I may boast but do not have love, I gain nothing.” (1 Corinthians 13:3).

This quote inspires me to remember that we must obey both the letter and spirit of the law. We must not merely go through the motions in our relationships, but we must really love another in our hearts and do good for the love of Christ.

Another favorite of mine is:

“Love is patient, love is kind. It is not jealous, [love] is not pompous, it is not inflated, it is not rude, it does not seek its own interests, it is not quick-tempered, it does not brood over injury, it does not rejoice over wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.” (1 Corinthians 13:4-7).

From this I learn how to recognize love. Love is how we bring God into our midst. Love is how we bring the world alive with hope and happiness. Love is how we triumph over evil. Not too shabby.

What we can also learn from Paul and his life is not to harden our hearts against Jesus, because Jesus always wins. And if our Lord can take a man like Paul and use him to further His kingdom, then there is hope for all of us. Thank you St. Paul!



Domenico Morelli (1823-1901), *The Conversion of Saint Paul* (1876)

Reinvesting in Marriage

by Susan Orenge

In Western cultures, 90 percent of adults are married by the age of 50. Unfortunately, 40 to 50 percent of those marriages will end up in divorce. Marriage is a sacrament and a choice couples make every day to be committed to each other. Unfortunately, the statistics show the commitment may not always be there. Over the years, couples state they grow apart, goals change, or outside influences take a priority to marriage. Marriage takes love, work, patience, understanding, compromise, and respect. When any of these pieces are overlooked due to any circumstances, communication can break down, couples begin to feel distant, and bitterness and resentment can grow.

It is important for couples to take the time to reinvest in themselves and each other. Marriage can be a great way to grow as individuals and as partners, but the commitment needs to be there. No matter what other obligations take place in life, marriage vows should remind couples to place each other and God first.

Over the past decade, many of St. Raphael's parishioners have taken the time to reinvest in their marriage and each other through The Marriage Retreat. This year's Retreat begins January

17 with 12 couples who will be looking to grow closer with each other and God. Couples will work privately together to learn more about each other and themselves in a supportive environment. It provides the opportunity to take a good marriage and make it better, by providing the sacred space to listen and foster communication.

St. Raphael's Marriage Retreat, led by Deacon Larry Gregg, has taken place every other year for the past decade. It is a Christian based program, and at the end of the Retreat couples renew their vows and engage in a powerful prayer service. Over seven weeks, couples spend time privately discussing these topics:

- Providing a Strong Foundation
- Art of Communication
- Resolving Conflict
- Power of Forgiveness
- Parents and In-Laws
- Good Sex
- Love in Action

During each session, questions are posed for couples to answer about themselves and their marriage, allowing them to explore different views on these matters in the privacy of a one-on-one discussion.

"Like many males, I was not interested in attending a 'touchy-feely' typical marriage encounter where I would be expected to 'open up' and discuss details of my wonderful marriage", stated a male participant of a recent Retreat. "To the men reading this, your wife would want to go anyway so you might as well go and enjoy it. I did and I think you will as well."

Continued on Page 8

"It is so easy to get wrapped up in the day to day stresses and responsibilities of life that we often overlook the most important person in our life, our spouse. The Marriage Retreat was a perfect opportunity for us to address this issue by spending a few hours each week together focusing on us and relevant issues in our marriage. Each week there was a pertinent topic that facilitated private conversations with only each other on topics that we so often take for granted. The presentations on the topics were enjoyable and easily promoted our further private conversations. Deacon Larry and his wife, Cathy did a wonderful job of making the attendees feel comfortable and welcome. For us, The Marriage Retreat was time well spent!"

– Bill and Nancy Kies

Catholic Schools Week – We Are God’s Masterpiece

by Maggie Brady

In his 1979 message to the National Catholic Educational Association of the United States, Pope St. John Paul II said, “In order that the Catholic school and the Catholic teachers may truly make their irreplaceable contribution to the Church and to the world, the goal of Catholic education itself must be crystal clear. Beloved sons and daughters of the Catholic Church, brothers and sisters in the faith: Catholic education is above all a question of communicating Christ, of helping to form Christ in the lives of others.”

At St. Raphael School, that goal will be celebrated in a special way during the upcoming Catholic Schools Week, under the school's theme, "We Are God's Masterpiece."

Mrs. Ann Miller, the principal for more than 18 years, says the celebration unofficially kicks off on Friday, January 25th. On that date, around 45 judges from a variety of professions will converge on the school to judge the St. Raphael science fair. Students with superior-rated projects will be able to advance to regional and state-level fairs. Last year, the exceptional results of the science fair contributed to St. Raphael earning the Governor's Thomas Edison Award for Excellence in STEM Education.

In fact, at St. Raphael School, the concept of STEM education has been transformed into STREAM: Science, Technology, Religion, Engineering, Arts and Math. This comprehensive approach helps the school achieve its mission of educating the whole child while preparing them for success in a 21st century world. "It's about learning how to collaborate and think outside of the box," says Mrs Miller. Students will get a further chance to show off their STREAM skills on Wednesday of Catholic Schools Week, when parents will be invited to visit their children's classrooms and see the projects they've been working on.



STREAM will also get a mention on Tuesday, January 29th, as the 7th and 8th graders in the Builder's Club help host a parish appreciation pancake breakfast. There's a lot to appreciate: During this year's post-Thanksgiving "#WeGiveCatholic" fundraising event, our faith community donated more than \$93,000 to help St. Raphael build a STREAM Innovation Center.

“Catholic education is above all a question of communicating Christ, of helping to form Christ in the lives of others.”

- Pope St. John Paul II

What makes St. Raphael School really special, though, is love. "We have a great, great faculty and staff who truly care about our kids," Mrs Miller says. "It's a wonderful family community. There's a lot of caring for each other around here."

Additional events in the works for the week include an open house, a prayer service and spirit rally, a student-parent Mass, and more.

Catholic Schools Week will give us an opportunity to celebrate the priceless treasure that is Catholic education in our parish. Along with the nearly 700 students and more than 50 school staff members, let's thank God for the gift of St. Raphael School!

St. Raphael

CHURCH

525 Dover Center Road
Bay Village, OH 44140

NON-PROFIT ORG
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Cleveland, OH
44101
Permit No. 703

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.

From page 4

awards. Working with their parents, a scout can earn the "Light of Christ" or "Parvuli Dei" emblem, depending on their age. Several Pack members are working on these awards.

The Cub Scout Program is open to all boys and girls in grades 1 through 5, although there are no girl members at this time. Current membership includes boys from Bay Village, Avon Lake, Rocky River and Westlake, from both St. Raphael School and surrounding schools. Cubmaster John Underation notes that new members are always welcome at any time. For more information, contact the Cubmaster at junderation@sbcglobal.net.

From page 6

Past participants of the Retreat have stated they have found the Retreat as an opportunity to spend some quiet reflective time with their spouse in a non-threatening environment. It provides a warm, faith filled environment, with the opportunity to grow and remind couples that marriage is a constant discovery of learning about each other and themselves.

Please pray for those who are taking time over the winter to reinvest in their marriage, and for all the married couples in our Parish community. For more information or to register, please contact Deacon Larry Gregg at 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.