

July 2018

Saint Raphael



MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Getting to Know Our Transitional Deacon in Residence, David Stavarz

On April 27 of this year, David Stavarz was ordained as a Transitional Deacon. In the Catholic Church Deacons are officially part of the ordained clergy (along with priests and Bishops). There are two kinds of Deacons — Permanent Deacons (those ordained to be a Deacon only) and Transitional Deacons (one who is ordained on his journey to the priesthood, and is thus in “transition”).

Deacon David is in “transition” to the priesthood, as he is scheduled to be ordained a priest in May 2019. He has just completed what is called Second Theology at St. Mary Seminary and Graduate School of Theology in Wickliffe. One of the parts of the program leading to ordination as a priest is spending a Pastoral Year at a parish.

For his Pastoral Year Deacon David is assigned to St. Raphael. He is currently here and will be here full-time until he returns to the seminary for his final year; however, he will be at St. Raphael on the weekends and at other times when he can be.

Deacon David says, “I was a senior in high school when I first sensed a calling to be a priest. A friend of mine was already in seminary studying to be a priest, and he said to me, ‘Why don’t you come for a visit and see what seminary and the priesthood is all about? I think you would be a good priest.’ It was not a bolt of lightning or a sudden revelation, but it did make me think and pray more.”

“The idea of serving others had already entered my mind,” says Deacon David. “I was strongly considering entering the field of nursing, but I did visit the seminary, and I discovered that being a priest really did make sense for me. After I graduated from high school, I entered seminary, and have never regretted that. I definitely felt the calling to the priesthood.”

A native of Akron St. Francis deSales Parish, Deacon David entered Borromeo Seminary, also in Wickliffe. Upon receiving his Bachelor’s degree from there, he entered St. Mary. Reflecting on his assignment to St. Raphael, Deacon David says, “I enjoy meeting people where they are.



Deacon David Stavarz

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The Spirituality of Stewardship

Following in the Footsteps of the Saints

The word “stewardship” has long carried with it the association of a financial obligation to the Church. Many believe that stewardship means “giving my time and money to the Church in support of its work, lest it is unable to survive and thrive.”

Indeed, stewardship does often require sacrifice of some kind. But the reality is that stewardship is not simply a guilt laden obligation, or a “bill.” Nor is stewardship in any way comparable to a tax payment or a charitable networking opportunity at work. Instead, stewardship is a spiritual way of life – an active response to Christ’s invitation to unreservedly “come after me, and I will make you fishers of men” (Mt 4:19).

Stewardship is about how we respond to God’s call to discipleship, and there are many different ways we can respond to His call. We can, in turn, live the stewardship way of life simply by making small choices in our daily lives, under normal, everyday circumstances.

Nowhere in Christian history is there a more archetypal example of the variety of ways we can respond to God’s call, than in the lives of the saints. The saints represent a wide cross-section of

individuals – old and young, rich and poor – living in different times in human history. Some were called to the religious life, focusing their lives on spirituality and material simplicity through prayer, and helping to form the tenets of faith. Others were individuals focused on charitable outreach, dedicating their whole lives to feeding the hungry and clothing the naked. Still, others faced great adversity and challenges to their faith, and ultimately suffered death and martyrdom in loyalty to Christ and His Church.

However, the commonality that all of these individuals share is that they responded to God’s call to discipleship by utilizing the unique talents that God had given them. They did so in ways that were conducive to their individual personalities, and that actively influenced the circumstances presented to them in their respective days and times. Contemplative spirituality, charitable giving, great courage – all of these roads have led to canonization and, ultimately, eternal life with God in His glory. We are all called to do the same.

As the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops states in its

pastoral letter on stewardship, *Stewardship: A Disciple’s Response*, “The challenge, then, is to understand our role – our vocation – and to respond generously to this call from God” (43). When thinking about the spirituality of stewardship, take some time to discern your talents, and how you can best respond to God’s call by naturally and effectively using the gifts He has given you. If you are a gregarious person, this might mean reaching out to a co-worker you don’t know very well, thus helping to create a hospitable work environment. If you are an individual who is often “on the go,” perhaps this means praying the Rosary while you are driving from place to place. If you have recently experienced a financial windfall or unexpected increase in income, this might mean sponsoring a little league team in your community by paying for their uniforms.

God has provided many roads to the Kingdom of Heaven, and in the saints, we see examples of the many roads that have been taken. Choosing the one that is best for us means that we can live stewardship as a spiritual practice and a way of life, and that we may answer His call to discipleship.

A Letter From Our Pastor

What Is the Real Purpose of Our Lives?

My Dear Friends in Christ,

Do you ever think about your purpose in life? Even as a priest, I certainly do. There are days and times of frustration when I think, “What am I really supposed to do? What does God want me to do? Why am I here?” For eons, philosophers have considered these very questions and written about them.

But the truth is that we, as Catholics, already know the answers.

When we consider the many facets of life in our parish community, there are numerous activities and endeavors that go beyond attending Mass. From fundraising efforts, to social outreach/service, childcare and more, there are many ways in which we serve our community.

Yet, as we undertake these important pursuits — both within and outside of the parish — we must always remember that our ultimate goal is salvation. After all, the only reason we exist, the only reason our Church exists, is the same as the reason Jesus joined us and became a part of us here on earth — He came to save humanity.

We use the term the “body of Christ” to describe the Church with Christ as the head. We are all parts of that body, and the parts of the body must move in the same direction as the body itself — it simply won’t function if the parts are moving in different directions. We are all in this together.

When our lives are complete, we do not base



our success or failure on how much money we have, or whether or not we are famous. Nor does our success or failure depend upon the difference between health and sickness, or pleasure and pain, or even being nice or nasty. Rather, it is the difference between being saved and not being saved.

I often think of my family members who have already crossed the bridge of salvation, and as a priest, I deal with that issue with others on a very regular basis. Sometimes, I wonder if they ever fully realized that salvation was the answer to so many of our questions in life.

I am surrounded by memories of those who have gone before, as are almost all of you. We are apt to use the term “the communion of saints” in many ways in our Church. Someday, we will know more about the “communion of saints” and how it all works. In the meantime, we pray for everyone who has gone before us, hoping they have made it home.

Pray for me as I pray for you!

May God bless and keep you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Fr. Tim Gareau'.

Fr. Tim Gareau,
Pastor

GATHERING AS A LARGE FAMILY

Cleveland Indians Watch Party

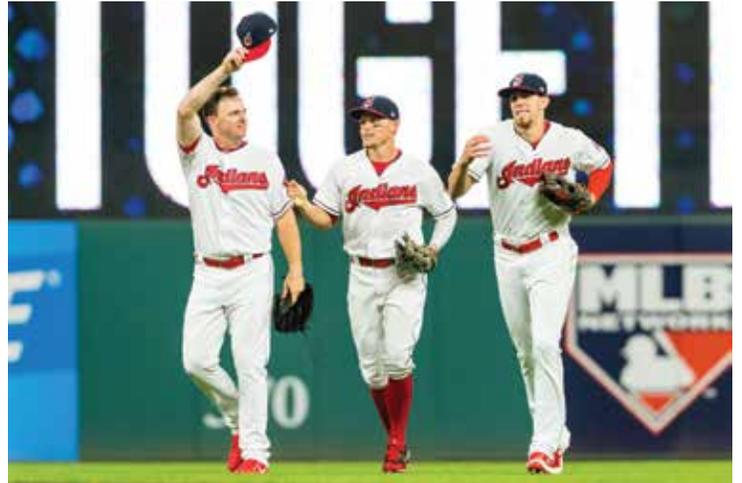
At the World Meeting of Families in 2015 Pope Francis stated, "The most beautiful thing that God made was the family. All of the love that God has in Himself, all of the beauty that God has in Himself, all of the truth God has in Himself, He gives to the family. A family is truly a family when it is able to open its arms and receive all of this love. Our Church is a colossal family with more than a billion members throughout the world." We at St. Raphael are part of that colossal family, but we also share the idea of being a family right here in our parish.

Thomas Quinlan, the Director of Religious Education in the Diocese of Joliet, Illinois, said much the same at a Family Life conference. He said, "In any

family system, there should be mutuality. In other words, both giving and receiving are at the core of the relational dynamics. A family of takers wouldn't really be much of a family. We may think of our parish in terms of what it has to offer us, but we also must recognize the times to gather, to relate to one another, and to have fun."

On Saturday, July 28, our parish family is invited to come together for a similar experience. The St. Raphael Stewardship Committee is planning a summer Cleveland Indians Watch Party, which will begin at 5:30 p.m., immediately following the 4:30 Saturday Vigil.

While the Indians play the Detroit Tigers at Comerica Field in Detroit beginning at 6:10 p.m., the



FAMILY FOR AN EVENING OF FUN

Party — Saturday, July 28

party in Cleveland will be held on the parish grounds. Guests are asked to bring their own chairs or blankets since the event will be held outdoors. We will move to the Parish Activity Center (PAC) in the case of inclement weather. Hot dogs, popcorn, sno-cones, beverages and beer will be available for purchase, but guests are welcome to bring their own food to enjoy during the game.

According to Stewardship Committee Chair Jenni Dixon this event represents another opportunity to bring the parish community, and our larger community, together. Jenni says, "Events like these are only possible because of the extraordinary support and dedication of our volunteers, many of who are members of other parish ministries." We are also grateful for the support of the Cleveland Indians

who gave generously donated give-aways for all of the children that evening."

Capping off the evening will be a visit from the Prayers from Maria ice cream truck. All proceeds from ice cream sold will benefit that non-profit organization.

"The events of the Stewardship Committee plans are meant to be a celebration of our faith and our parish community," says Jenni. "Father Tim is deeply committed to strengthening our parish family, and we are privileged to be part of that effort."

Although some challenge baseball as America's pastime, it remains one of the more family-friendly things we can do. Most of us have heard the saying "as American as baseball, hot dogs, and apple pie." Perhaps there will be no apple pie at the Watch Party, but guests can bring their own.

For more information or to volunteer, contact Jennifer Dixon at jenniferjdixon@gmail.com or call the parish office at 440-871-1100.

Getting to Know Our Transitional Deacon in Residence, David Stavarz *continued from front cover*

It is the interchange with the people of a parish, of the Community of God, which means so much to me. I also believe in reaching out to those on the fringe. The prospect of being a priest very much excites me."

As indicated Deacon David will be in residence full time throughout this summer, but will continue in contact and involvement with the parish, especially on the weekends this fall, winter, and spring leading up to his ordination.

Deacon David says, "We are blessed with more vocations here in the Diocese of Cleveland than in many other dioceses and archdioceses. This spring we ordained four new priests, and there are eight of us scheduled to be ordained in 2019."

Most Catholics recognize that Deacons cannot celebrate Mass. However, there is much that they

are ordained to do: Deacons can baptize, witness marriages, perform funeral and burial services outside of Mass, distribute Holy Communion, preach the homily, and are obligated to pray the Divine Office each day.

Deacon David is particularly looking forward to preaching at St. Raphael. He says, "I believe the plan is for me to preach at one Mass every other Sunday, and to also give the homily a couple times a week. This is so helpful to me in my development. I also will be involved with Youth Ministry, including going to camp with our group, will do some census work, and perform other services within my duties as assigned by Father."

It is possible to contact Deacon David Stavarz at his parish email address, dstavarz@saintraphaelparish.com.



WHAT DOES “Red, White, and Blue” MEAN TO YOU?

Although our nation’s real independence began at the end of the Revolutionary War on Sept. 3, 1783, President John Adams originally thought that the anniversary would be marked on July 2, the day in 1776 when the Second Continental Congress voted to approve a resolution of independence from Great Britain. Ultimately, Americans chose to commemorate the birthday of the United States on July 4, the day on which the Declaration of Independence was adopted and approved.

What does this mean for us as Roman Catholics? The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* reminds us, “The love and service of one’s country follow from the duty of gratitude and belong to the order of charity” (2239).

As a parish community, we are called by God to respond to this duty to the best of our ability. So, where do we start?

The Second Vatican Council document, *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, states that “In their patriotism and in their fidelity to their civic duties, Catholics will feel themselves bound to promote the true common good: they will make the weight of their convictions so influential that, as a result, civil authority will be justly exercised and laws will accord with moral precepts and the common good” (14).

By living our lay vocation and permeating the secular world with

Catholic values, we genuinely honor God and neighbor. As “lamps shining before men,” we need to let our moral convictions – no matter the courage it may take – shine forth to be a guiding light for the world, often left vulnerable in the darkness.

Our commitment to a rightly ordered Catholic patriotism begins with our commitment to the formation of our Christian conscience. We must enrich ourselves with the Church’s teachings on the value of human life, the sacred institution of family, Catholic social and moral teachings, Catholic civil duties, and anything that further pertains to the living out of our Catholic faith in our nation today.

Once we have done this, we will be able to act upon it. As St. Teresa of Calcutta once said, “Today, more than ever, we need to pray for the light to know the will of God, for the love to accept the will of God, for the way to do the will of God.”

This year, let us give our hearts to carrying out this mission of an authentic Catholic patriotism under God. Our nation was founded under God. Let us not allow this precious heritage, this source of true life and liberty, to be lost. Its preservation relies on each one of us.

Save the Date for Our Annual Parish Picnic on Saturday, Aug. 11

The St. Raphael parish picnic is a social time for the people of the parish to come together to celebrate its vibrancy. It is from 5:30 until 8:30 p.m., and includes a picnic, activities, and friends. It is held toward the end of summer vacations as we begin to regroup for all the fall activities. Teen or Adult Volunteers are needed for a variety of tasks. See below for information on how to get involved.

This year's picnic is being guided by Stacey Nye. She says, "The parish picnic has been an annual event here at St. Raphael for many, many years. I am a lifelong member of St. Raphael, and I remember the picnic from my teenage years, and that was longer ago than I want to admit. We are trying some different things this year. The biggest change is that we are moving the picnic from Sunday afternoon to Saturday evening to avoid possible summer heat."

This year's picnic will be held on Saturday, August 11, from 5:30 p.m. until 8:30 p.m. (after the 4:30 p.m. Mass) in the church parking lot. Several large canopies will be set up to provide shelter from inclement weather – this is a rain or shine event!

Parishioners, non-parishioners, and the general

public are invited at no cost. Our parish community is working very hard to be a stewardship parish, and to have the people of our parish embrace stewardship as a way of life. With Jesus Christ as the foundation and capstone of our faith, we build four pillars of stewardship: hospitality, prayer, formation, and service, "When I was a stranger, you welcomed me" (Mt. 25:35). Jesus teaches that whenever we welcome one of the least of our brothers and sisters, we welcome Christ Himself. Parishioners of a stewardship parish seek to see the face of Christ in one another. We must seek out and welcome new members to the parish family. A stewardship parish is a welcoming parish.

Stacey says, "Obviously, the day and the time frame has changed, but the plan for the picnic is very similar to years past. As usual we will have hot dogs and hamburgers; Parishioners are invited to bring side dishes, salads, and desserts to share, which can be dropped off at the PAC Kitchen the day of the picnic. Please mark your dish or bring it in a disposable dish. And, of course, there will also be popcorn, snow cones, and cotton candy! Guests can sit and enjoy their food in a large covered Eating Tent. One major

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St. Raphael

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Save the Date for Our Annual Parish Picnic on Saturday, Aug. 11 *continued from page 7*

modification this year is that we will have a beer tent for those of age, with beer available for purchase. And, of course, there will also be popcorn, snow cones, and cotton candy! Guests can sit and enjoy their food on the lawn, or in a large covered Eating Tent. One major modification this year is that we will have a beer tent for those of age, with beer available for purchase."

"As in the past," says Stacey, "there will be games, clowns, balloon sculptures, and a DJ with music. One of the most popular games, cornhole [bean bags], will be back as well. This is a great way to bring the whole parish together socially. We began planning for this in April, and we are sure it is going to be another great success."

Teen or Adult volunteers (this can be service hours for the teens) can contact Stacey Nye at 440-655-3353 or 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.