

November 2017

Saint Raphael



MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Holiday Giving Opportunities Through the Social Concerns Ministry *Continuing God's Work in Our Vineyard of St. Raphael*

In his homily reflecting on the State of the Parish this year, Fr. Tim spoke about a one-sentence prayer that he says often: "Make my heart more like Yours, Lord." The work of St. Raphael Parish is about changing hearts to be more like the heart of Jesus. With the holiday season upon us, a time of peace and goodwill, our hearts are especially inspired to help. The Social Concerns Ministry presents parishioners with numerous opportunities to encourage that change of heart and make a difference in someone's life.

The Adopt-A-Family program provides assistance to individuals and families in need from near west side parishes and agencies, as well as from our own parish and local community. Although the holidays are a joyous time for most, others feel the pressure and stress of providing a memorable and magical Christmas for their families, especially their children. Most of these households may already be bogged down with the day-to-day demands of just "getting by." Parishioners are encouraged to submit the names of families in need to one of our priests or to a member of the Pastoral, SRS, or PSR staff, or to any member of the Social Concerns Ministry. The gifts collected are distributed in a way that safeguards the anonymity and dignity of the recipients.

The groundwork for this year's Adopt-A-Family began in September. Gift forms were sent out to agencies and individuals. These forms were returned and gift tags were written out according to needs specified on the forms. Each child receives four gifts of varying price



ranges, while adults receive one gift that is valued at \$30-\$40. In addition, each family receives at least one set of new towels and a bag of toiletries – toothpaste, toothbrushes, soap, shampoo, and deodorant. The parish also collects unwrapped sports balls for West Side Catholic Center and board games for St. Malachi Monday Night Meals. Various parish organizations, families, individuals, and PSR and SRS students purchase the gifts indicated on the tags. The gifts must be returned to Good Shepherd Square by Friday Dec. 8. Volunteers are needed to help organize the gifts the weekend of Dec. 9 and 10, as well as to deliver the gifts

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Dec. 13-16. For more information on Adopt-A-Family, please contact Colleen Maher (colleentmaher@yahoo.com) or Emily Giovannazzo (egiovannazzo@gmail.com).

The St. Raphael Christmas Toy Drive, the annual drive for new or gently used toys, will occur Sunday,

Dec. 10 in Good Shepherd Square. The SRS Student Council and Builder's Club will also join in the effort to collect toys throughout the week prior to the drive. Budget-strapped families often do not have enough money for Christmas extras that can brighten the day of a little one in need. These

donations mean a child has a warm teddy bear to snuggle up with at bedtime, a puzzle to enjoy on a snowy afternoon, or a baseball bat to practice their swing. The toys are distributed to St. Augustine Hunger Center. Monetary donations are also accepted. Volunteers are needed to sort, pack and transport the collected toys. For more information, please contact Tom Fattlar at 440-835-5604.

Finally, you may have noticed a new Social Concerns offertory envelope in the latest envelope packet. Throughout the years, there has been an envelope each month for near west side hunger centers. This will continue. Our parish has been extremely generous over the years and the organizations benefit greatly from the monetary donations. The new Social Concerns envelope will be collected quarterly and be used to defray the costs of the ministry's work within St. Raphael Parish. This includes pie crusts for Thanksgiving, blankets for Blanket Sunday, towels and toiletries for Adopt-A-Family, and Easter baskets to name a few. We have been blessed by donations from parishioners, but the scope of our projects has grown. This money will also provide funds for emergencies for parishioners and local community members. Please help the Social Concerns Ministry continue God's work in our vineyard of St. Raphael. Let us pray that God will continue to inspire us to make our hearts more like His!



A Letter From Our Pastor

Giving Thanks for All That Has Graced Our Lives

My Dear Friends in Christ,

Thanksgiving, 2017! As the years move along, this special day reminds us to pause and be grateful for life, family, friends, and the many freedoms we enjoy which are not available to many in our global human family.

Our rootedness reminds us we are a people called to be of hope and invited to a deeper faith in God and one another. In gathering around the table with family and friends, we pause to give thanks for all that has graced our lives – joys of friendship, laughter and good health, the painful events which promoted deeper growth and gave greater insight to the importance of faith in our own gifts of goodness and talent and that of our family and friends, and knowing we have a God who loves us more than we could ever imagine

“As the chosen of God, then, the holy people whom He loves, you are to be clothed in heartfelt compassion, in generosity and humility, gentleness and patience... and may the peace of Christ reign in your hearts, because it is for this that you were called in one body. Always be thankful” (Col. 3:12, 15).

On this special day, it is my prayerful hope that you and your family celebrate the gift of life you are, and that you bring to one another. We are connected to one another. No one of us called ourselves into being – we have been gifted by a loving God Who has called us to manifest His love in the service we give to one another.

I thank God each day that you are a member of our St. Raphael Parish Family – persons of deep faith, filled with much hope and compassion. You are among the blessings I celebrate!

May God bless and keep you,



Fr. Tim Gareau,
Pastor



Celebrating Our Parish Community

“Together We Will Continue to Strengthen Our Community”

All members of the parish are cordially invited to attend the first in a series of gatherings celebrating our parish community, while also benefitting St. Raphael Parish. Our first event will be on Friday, Dec. 1, from 5 until 7:30 p.m. in the Parish Activity Center. Specific details are included later in this article.

The four traditional pillars of good stewardship are Prayer, Hospitality, Formation, and Service. Our Lord Jesus Christ taught us that whenever we welcome one another, we welcome Christ Himself. We seek to see the face of Christ in all those around us. An important aspect of doing that is building a strong sense of community and togetherness, not

just within our parish, but also in the community that surrounds us.

As the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops stated in a report, “The parish is where the Church lives. Parishes are communities of faith, of action, and of hope. They are where the Gospel is proclaimed and celebrated, where believers are formed and sent to renew the earth. Parishes are the home of the Christian community; they are the heart of our Church. Parishes are the place where God’s people meet Jesus in word and sacrament and come in touch with the source of the Church’s life” (*Communities of Salt and Light*, 1),

Of course, our St. Raphael Parish community is rooted in the Eucharist as the “source and

summit of the Christian life” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1324). In that regard, we are constantly growing as a parish family, closer to one another and to God through study of Scripture, the reception of the sacraments, and serving of our local community. However, it is also important that we continue to develop our closeness as a community.

Jennifer Dixon recognizes the importance of activities that build this sense of community. In that regard, she met with Fr. Tim Gareau, our pastor, with an idea she had. The result was the formation of a committee and a plan to make our sense of community even stronger. The idea of celebration is very important to Father, and this

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We believe these gatherings will allow us to celebrate who we are, what we are as a parish, a family, and recognize the important contributions each of us makes to St. Raphael. Together we will continue to strengthen our sense of community.” – Jennifer Dixon



Community Dinners and Activities Strengthen Our Sense of Community”

seemed another ideal way to do it. As a result, under the leadership of Jennifer, and a task force of dedicated St. Raphael volunteers, we will be holding four social activities over the next year. Although fundraising is a part of it, the major part is actually what we call “friend-raising.”

“I am a member of the Parish Council,” Jennifer says. “This is really a group idea and effort, and I am merely the coordinator.”

“We are working to identify ways to bring our parish community together, trying to find multiple ways to bring our community together in more than our celebration of the Eucharist,” she continues. “We believe these gatherings will allow us to celebrate who we are, what we are as a parish, a family, and recognize the important contributions each of us makes to St. Raphael. Together we will continue to strengthen our sense of community.”

As mentioned, the first of these events will occur on Friday, Dec. 1.

We are presenting an outstanding pasta dinner, which will be prepared by parishioners Liz and Dave Sfeir, who own and operate Well Done Catering. Well Done uses as their motto a quote from Benjamin Franklin, “Well done is better than well said,” and they are known for their creative and succulent dishes.

People may either dine-in or take home pasta with homemade sauce and meat sauce or marinara, meatballs, tossed green salad, and fresh-baked bread with butter. Lemonade and iced tea are included with the meal, and red and white wine and soda are available for purchase. Advance tickets will be sold during the month of November after select Masses in Shepherd’s Square. The cost is \$16 per person,

\$10 for senior citizens and children ages 2-10.

Future plans call for quarterly gatherings. Keep an eye on the bulletin for more details.

Pope Francis has fondly recalled the statements of Pope St. John Paul II – particularly in the document *Familiaris Consortio* – when he stated, “A community is more than the sum total of persons that belong to it. It is the place where one learns to love; it is the natural center of human life. It is made up of faces, of people who love, dialogue, make self-sacrifices for one another and defend life” (*Address of Pope Francis to Participants in the Plenary Assembly of the Pontifical Council for the Family*). We at St. Raphael strive to be that kind of a community.

If you would like more information about these upcoming events, please contact the parish office at 440-871-1100.



Formation

Transformed Through Christ

“Jesus not only calls people to him but also forms them and sends them out in his service.”

From Stewardship: A Disciple’s Response

This month, we are emphasizing the third pillar of parish stewardship — formation. Formation is the process of studying Christ’s teachings and incorporating them deeply into our lives. It is a lifelong effort by which we “put on Christ” (Rom 13:14) and are “transformed by the renewal of our minds” (Rom 12:2).

Above all, our formation should include studying Scripture and Church teaching. It should also include discussion with other Catholics and honest self-assessment. Its goal is to “discern the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect” (Rom 12:2).

Because formation helps us understand God’s will, it therefore leads naturally to good stewardship. When our minds are transformed through Christ, we become like Him — as Christ gave His life for us, so

we give our lives to others.

Formation is not just an individual task. Instead, it is a communal responsibility that, when applied, will further help St. Raphael to grow as a stewardship parish. Each one of us has an inherent need to give — to move from “selfishness to selflessness,” as the Diocese of Wichita’s document *The Pillars of Parish Stewardship* aptly states. Formation is a process of spiritual growth, and it leads to a deeper understanding of loving others as God loves us.

Naturally, then, our Catholic formation should not end upon celebrating the Sacrament of Confirmation, or turning 18 years old. Formation is a formidable task that we as Catholics should participate in for the duration of our lives. It involves “education of the

mind and conversion of the heart” (*The Pillars of Parish Stewardship*), and helps us to lead the stewardship way of life rather than just understand it.

This Advent, why not make formation a part of your penitential renewal to Christ? Start off by reading 10 minutes of Sacred Scripture a day, or by studying a chapter of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* on a daily basis. Read a biography of your favorite saint for an example of an individual who lived as a disciple of Christ, and use this person as a role model when tending to your daily tasks. Keep an eye on our weekly parish bulletin for faith formation opportunities at the parish. Before long, your commitment to formation will lead you to naturally live the Catholic faith and understand stewardship in ways that you never imagined before.



The Home and School Association Shopping Gala, Nov. 28 *A Great Way to Help Our St. Raphael School*

The Home and School Association – or H & S – was established several years ago for the express purposes of developing better communications between teachers and parents so that children in the school reap the greatest benefits in terms of religious, mental, social, and physical education. In addition, the H & S Association provides support to the school and its administration wherever it is needed. Finally, it provides a means for people to become involved in the parish community through the school.

Each year, one of the major undertakings of the H & S Association is their annual Shopping Gala. This year, it is scheduled to occur from 4:30 until 9 p.m. on Tuesday, Nov. 28, in the Parish Activities Center (PAC).

“Our Annual Home and School Shopping Gala is a great way to help our St. Raphael School while also helping local businesses,” says H & S Board member Sara Seybold, who is coordinating the Gala. “It is an easy way for people to do all their Christmas shopping in a short time, conveniently, with lots of

choices and selections.”

“This year, we will have some 50 booths which will offer everything from food items, to Cleveland-themed items, to jewelry, to skin care, to things for children,” she continues. “This is our ninth annual Gala, and each year it seems to grow and get better. This is my first year as the coordinator, but I have been involved with it since my children began school here four years ago.”

As Sara points out, people can get in and out in 30 minutes or so, or they are welcome to stay for the whole event.

“In addition to the shopping, we have a café which offers a light meal – including chicken salad croissants, pizza, and broccoli and cheddar soup, and more,” Sara says. “There is also a bake sale which is presented by the parents who have prepared some wonderful items. In addition, there is a Chinese raffle with lots of prizes.”

Fundraising for our St. Raphael School is important from a number of perspectives. Keep in

St. Raphael

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The Home and School Association Shopping Gala

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mind that part of the word "fund" is "fun." Our H & S Association recognizes this, and they offer many opportunities for people to participate and support their efforts. After the annual Mardi Gras event, the Shopping Gala is the largest fundraiser that H & S sponsors. The funds raised allow the ability to provide funds for the basic operation costs of the school such as materials, technological upgrades, and the future. Perhaps most important, it helps to provide a Catholic education at a reasonable cost.

According to the National Catholic Educational Association, Catholic schools raise nearly \$2 billion annually.

The vendors at the Gala pay for the right to have a booth, and there is a small admission charge for those who choose to come and participate.

"This is an important parish and community activity," Sara says. "Imagine being able to complete your Christmas shopping 26 days before Christmas. That is what the Gala gives you the opportunity to do."

For more information, please send an email to srshomeandschoolshoppinggala@gmail.com or call Sara Seybold at 440-835-0312. We hope to see you there!

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.