



The Parish Press

Newsletter of Saint Raphael Parish Family
Milford, Connecticut



August 2026



Join us for Coffee And August 15th and 16th Last Weekend for Parish Card & Gift Shop

Come sip and socialize at Saint Gabriel's Hall or the Saint Ann Parish Library after all the Masses on Saturday and Sunday, August 15th and 16th. Enjoy hot and cold beverages, tasty snacks and the chance to chat with some of the nicest folks we know, the members of the Saint Raphael Parish family.

If you can, visit the Parish Card & Gift Shop on its closing weekend. What began as a small booth at the 2011 Christmas Fair - in the long-ago days before we became Saint Raphael Parish - garnered such sterling reviews that it became a regular venue, staging its Grand Opening in January of 2012. Thanks to an excellent crew of volunteers the shop was open after weekend Masses, a great source for cards and religious items. 14 years, a really good run!

Meantime, if you need just the right gift or card for a special person or occasion, contact Nancy Vai, the inspiration behind the shop (nancyvai@yahoo.com). She'll be happy to help you.

Thank you very much to everyone who supported the Card & Gift Shop over the years.

Feast of the Assumption

On August 15th the Church celebrates the Feast of the Assumption, the oldest Marian feast on the Church calendar. First commemorated in the 6th century as the Feast of the Dormition (falling asleep), the Assumption was defined as an article of faith by Pope Pius XII in 1950.

"The Immaculate Virgin, when the course of her earthly life was finished, was taken up body and soul into heavenly glory, and exalted by the Lord as Queen over all things." (*Lumen Gentium* 59). Because the Feast falls on a Saturday in 2026, the Assumption is not a Holy Day of Obligation this year.



A local artist in the Dominican Republic, Aristides Méndez Maldonado, created this beautiful painting of the Assumption of Mary. It reflects the joy Mary feels at being in God's presence and her eagerness to be our advocate in prayer.

Holy Mary, Queen assumed into Heaven, pray for us.

News from the Knights, Submitted by Deputy Grand Knight Richard Wheeling



Let me begin by wishing you a happy summer. We are about six weeks into the season and I hope you're having a good one, blessed with a vacation, some quality time with family and maybe just a bit of time for yourself.

As we had anticipated, the final tally for our June food drive was higher than originally reported. Thanks to your kindness and generosity we stocked the shelves at Saint Gabriel's food pantry with 4,890 lbs of non perishable food items. Amazing! On behalf of the parish and of Knights of Columbus Tinto Council 47, thank you for your constant care and concern for people in need.

July is a fairly quiet month for the council. The regular monthly meetings of both the council and the assembly have been canceled. New and returning officers only will meet at the end of the month to begin planning for the coming year.

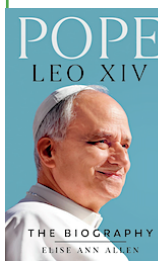
Please indulge me for a moment as I share something brand new for me - a book review and recommendation. One of our members had talked about the new book he was reading. It sounded interesting. I bought a copy and I'm excited about what I've read already of Elise Ann Allen's *Pope Leo XIV: The Biography*.

The biography tells about the Holy Father's life, his assignments, missionary work and a whole lot more. It speaks of Pope Leo's humanity, his faith and his deep desire to serve the poor. He has spoken of the need to treat those we come into contact with as "friends" and encourages all of us to treat them in the same way, bringing all of us into community with one another. There are some wonderful stories of Pope Leo's life as a child and a teenager.

The book makes me hopeful for the future of the Church and of the humanity we share with our fellow brothers and sisters regardless of their race, color or religion. I encourage you to pick up a copy. I think you will find it uplifting. And please pray for our Holy Father as he continues to guide our Church.

Until next month, may Our Lord bless you and keep you safe from harm.

Pope Leo XIV: The Biography



A deeply personal biography of Pope Leo XIV, featuring his first-ever public interview as pope. Elise Ann Allen is a journalist and correspondent for the Catholic news service Crux.

According to its *About Us* page, Crux "offers the very best in smart, wired, and independent coverage of the Vatican and the Catholic Church."



News from the Saint Raphael Pastoral Council

Have you wondered what the Pastoral Council is? What we do? Perhaps you are interested in becoming a member. For answers to these and to any other parish-related questions, please use our new email (below).

saintraphaelmilfordpc@proton.me

The parish wishes to thank Cathy Coda and Leo Dorsey whose terms on the Council expired in May. We deeply appreciate all they have done and are confident they will stay active and involved in parish matters.

Sincere thanks also to Rose Marie Marmolejo who has completed a two-year term as Council Chairperson but will remain on the Council through 2026-2027.

Congratulations to the newest Council members: Emily Ciancimino, John Vargas and Richard Warren and to Frank Lacerenza and Joyce Marlow, returning for a second term. We thank them and all members for their willingness to serve the parish as members of the Pastoral Council.

2026-2027 Pastoral Council

Elaine Bataille	Melvin Moral
Emily Ciancimino	Frances O'Neill
John Kirkham	Susan Reed
Frank Lacerenza	Joshua Twidwell
Joyce Marlow	John Vargas
Rose Marie Marmolejo	Richard Warren

Ex-Officio:

Father Nathaniel Labarda, Pastor
Maria Tomasetti, Pastoral Assistant

2026-2027 Pastoral Council Officers

Frank Lacerenza, Chair
Frances O'Neill, Vice-Chair
Joshua Twidwell, Secretary



Chili Cookoff's Coming!

It's a parish first, perfect for a fall Saturday, and we think we have a crew of excellent chilimeisters competing for the top prize.

Mark your calendars (24th of October, after the Vigil Mass) and plan to be with us.

If you have a top-flight recipe and would like to be part of the crew - (*the more the spicier!*) - call Lou Servideo 203-260-4750 or Leo Dorsey 203-876-9708.

If you prefer to sample the wares and then rate the greatest, watch the bulletin and the newsletter for cookoff details.

Parish Life Team Meets Wednesday, August 19th

The Parish Life Team, the folks who brought us New Year's Eve galas, excursions to Goodspeed, trips to Yankee Stadium and more, (and have now branched out into chili cookoffs), will meet on Wednesday, August 19th at 10 a.m. in the Parish Center.

If you have ideas to share or would simply like to be part of this great group, come join us. All are welcome!
Yum!



Donna's Creation Care Corner: There's More to a Sunflower than Meets the Eye



There is definitely more to the sunflower's eye-catching appearance than meets the eye, a lot more. Botanically speaking, this joyful summer blossom is not one flower, but a cluster of 1,000 to 2,000 tiny individual flowers (an inflorescence). The broad, flat base at the top of the stalk is the receptacle that holds all these tiny blooms together in one secure place.

What looks like one single blossom is actually many individual blossoms, and two very different types of flowers share the receptacle. Each disk flower, those in the dark brown center of the sunflower, sits on top of a fruit called an achene (uh-KEEN), which, once it is pollinated, forms the sunflower seed. The ray flowers radiate from the center, welcoming yellow petals meant to attract pollinators.

Perhaps even more intriguing, the sunflower's darkly colored, tightly packed disk flowers grow in an intricate geometrical pattern, two sets of interlocking spirals. One set curves clockwise, the other counter-clockwise. As a sunflower grows, it pushes out new disk florets from its center. To optimize the amount of sunlight and rainfall they receive, they form an offset angle of 137.5 degrees. This Golden Angle prevents the rows of florets from overlapping and eliminates any wasted space. The total number of spirals in each direction (clockwise and counter-clockwise) almost always equals the consecutive numbers in the Fibonacci sequence. (Check with your local math major for details!)

Young sunflowers track the sun in a daily dance called heliotropism, following the path of the sun across the sky as they turn their faces 180 degrees from east to west. Then, without resting at night, the plants slowly turn their faces back to the east so that they can receive the very first light of dawn. Mature sunflowers no longer rotate (dance!) but remain facing east. This position warms the plants quickly, attracting up to five times as many pollinators as other plants.

Consider God's wisdom as you admire His masterwork, the sunflower. Like the Catholic Church, it has many parts, but is one body. As its name implies, the sunflower follows the sun, while Catholics, are called to follow the Son of God, Jesus Christ. Even in the dark of night, the sunflower prepares itself for the dawn, as we, in our darkest hour, must pray and anticipate the light of Christ. The sunflower bears much fruit – one sunflower can produce thousands of seeds – as God calls us to perform many, perhaps even thousands, of works during our lifetimes, all for the glory of His name. Each effort might seem like the tiniest of seeds, but only God can see what that seed will bring forth!

Saint Raphael Parish Faith Formation Programs for People of All Ages



Monthly **GIFT** Program - **Growing In Faith Together**
Theme for 2026/2027 - Living the Moral Life



Scheduled sessions begin in September and will be held
on Sunday afternoons and Tuesday evenings.

First Reconciliation and First Communion:

For families with children in Grade 2 or older

First Communion

Options for *required* meeting for parents/guardians:
Tuesday, September 8th, 6:30-7:30 p.m.

or

Saturday, September 12th, 10:00-11:00 a.m.

Confirmation:

For families with teens in Grade 8 or older

Options for *required* meeting for parents/guardians
and incoming Confirmation candidates:
Tuesday, September 15th, 6:30-8:00 p.m.

or

Thursday, September 17th, 6:30-8:00 p.m.

If you haven't received a mailing by early August, or if you have any questions about our monthly faith formation program (GIFT) or about additional classes for our Sacramental programs (First Reconciliation, First Communion, Confirmation), please contact Maria Tomasetti at tomasetti@snet.net or 203-988-8598 (cell - voice or text).



New Backpacks and School Supplies Needed! **Help Us Support Milford Youth and Family Services Back to School Backpack Program** **Donation Deadline: Sunday, August 16th**



Our summer tradition continues! As we have every August, Saint Raphael Parish will be collecting new backpacks and school supplies for Milford K-12 students from families in need. Milford Youth & Family Services has requested the items listed below, broken down by grade level.

Elementary School: • Pencils • Erasers • Pencil Sharpeners • Pencil Cases • Colored Markers/Pencils Crayons • Glue Sticks • Youth Scissors • Pocket Folders • Spiral or Composition one subject notebooks, wide ruled

Middle and High School: • Pocket Folders • Pencils • Pencil Sharpeners • Pencil Cases • Mechanical Pencils • One subject notebooks, college ruled • Index Cards, 3"x5" • Highlighters • Colored Markers/Pencils • Erasers •

For everyone: small packets of tissues, backpacks for any grade level

Please bring school supplies and backpacks when you come to weekend Masses through August 16th or bring them to the parish office during regular business hours (Monday and Wednesday 9-5; Tuesday, Thursday and Friday 9-1). Thank you as always, for your generous support! Please contact Maria, atomasetti@snet.net or 203-988-8598 (cell) with any questions.

Celebrate Saint Raphael September 29th

Come celebrate Saint Raphael, our patron, on Tuesday, September 29th. It is the Feast of the Archangels, a day Raphael shares with Michael and Gabriel.

Join us if you can at Saint Gabriel Church for the 8:00 a.m. Mass of the Archangels which honors Michael as the defender against evil, Gabriel as the messenger of God, and Raphael, whose name means *God heals*.

As you leave after Mass you will receive the celebratory and traditional "breakfast to go" bag, treats for your taste buds that we hope you will enjoy.

Saint Raphael, pray for us.

September Adult Confirmation Program

Our Adult Confirmation preparation program, which includes six or seven class sessions, will begin in mid- September. The program, is open to Catholics ages 18 or older who have received the Sacrament of Holy Communion (Eucharist) but who have not received the Sacrament of Confirmation.



Please contact Maria, as above, to express interest and receive a copy of our Adult Sacrament Information Form. Participants in this program will be preparing to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation in **November** at the Cathedral of Saint Joseph in Hartford.



August, Already?! What's Happening At Saint Raphael's?

We have a new pastor, Father Nathan, who has the best and brightest smile of all the priests in the Archdiocese. Plans are afoot for an official welcome. Watch for additional information.

It's August, new backpack and school supplies season. Please check inside for lists of things students need most to get their academic year off to a good start.

Admire the painting Assumption of Mary and learn why her feast is not a Holy Day of Obligation this year. Tinto Council 47's Deputy Grand Knight shares a book recommendation.

Have a peaceful, beautiful August. Thank God for all the wonders of creation.

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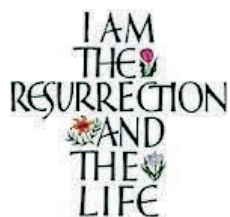
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In Memoriam

Saint Raphael's mourns the recent loss of . . .

Anthony Cacciabauda

Leo Mahoney

Richard J. Lonergan, Sr.

Frances D'Auria

May they rest forever with the saints
and the angels in the arms of our loving God.

Bereavement Support: Sunday, August 9th



If you have suffered a grievous loss and are struggling to find ways to cope, please consider meeting with our parish Bereavement Support group. The journey from grief to healing can be difficult and painful. Let us offer what help we can in the quiet of the Saint Ann Children's Chapel on Sunday afternoon, August 9th at 2 o'clock. If you have questions or would like additional information you may call Joanne (203-877-4020).

Submit Parish Press Info by August 12th

Got news for September's issue of *The Parish Press*? Spread it, share it, let the parish family know what's happening!

Send your items, photos, notes and comments to parishpress06460@gmail.com or call Ann Eden (203-874-8744).



It was a busy morning outside the Parish Center on Monday July 20th as 56 eager young people arrived for the summer's exciting VBS adventure, Illumination Station.

Catchy songs were heard in the parking lot before the campers moved on to the cool craft of the day, making a kaleidoscope. Camp got off to a great start!

Saint Raphael Parish Website

<https://saintraphaelmilford.org>

You have probably noticed our new website, designed by the Archdiocese of Hartford. Not all of our pages had migrated on to the new site as we went to press. Please bear with us as we work to learn the new design.

If you have web experience and think you might be able to help, please call Monica in the parish office (203-874-0634).

Save the Date for the Parish Picnic! Sunday, September 13th, Noon to 3

It's official, straight from the computer of Cathy Coda, picnic planner extraordinaire: Saint Raphael Parish will be picnicking on the Saint Ann grounds on Sunday, September 13th from noon until 3 o'clock. Hope to see you there!