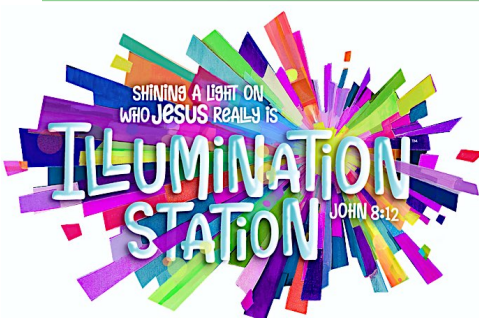




The Parish Press

Newsletter of Saint Raphael Parish Family
Milford, Connecticut

July 2026



Attention, Children Ages 4-11: Summer 2026 VBS Camp Opens Soon!

Monday, July 20th through Friday, July 24th, 9:00 a.m.-12:00 noon*

Registration Deadline: Friday, July 10th

Come light up your summer at Illumination Station (July 20th-July 24th), the brightest week of the year! Learn who Jesus really is - the Light of the World - while you sing and dance, participate in cool crafts and exciting games and explore all the ways that light brightens, reflects and reveals the world around us.

Kick off each day with high-energy fun and catchy songs at the Opening Assembly. Learn a powerful truth about Jesus at daily Spotlight Bible Study, then move on to Kaleidoscope Crafts; Glow-in-the Dark Missions; Mirror Ball Music and Dance; and some Suncatcher Recreation. You will definitely be ready for the Neon Snacks! The day ends on a high note at the Closing Rally.

*We will have an extended day on Friday, July 24th, due to our Closing Celebration, which will be followed by a pizza lunch. We are looking forward to greeting our campers at Illumination Station, our 16th annual VBS camp!

Suggested Donation:
\$25 per child/\$5 per day
Scholarships Available
Register by Friday, July 10th
Information/Registration:
Maria (203-988-8598 (cell)
or
atomasetti@snet.net



Mid-Summer Coffee And July 18th and 19th

Come sip and snack after any Mass the weekend of July 18/19 at Saint Gabriel Hall or the Saint Ann Parish Center. Choose from among a selection of tasty snacks and hot and cold beverages while you visit with those marvelous (and wonderfully generous!) members of the Saint Raphael Parish family. (Check other articles in this issue.)

Wear red, white and blue if you like - a 250th anniversary should not be limited to a one-day celebration! Hope you're having a really good summer.

VBS Camp Adult and Teen Volunteers Needed For Evening Setup and Decorating

The VBS team needs adult and teen volunteers for evening set up and decorating at the Parish Center during the weeks of July 6th or July 13th as we prepare for Illumination Station, this year's exciting VBS camp.

If you can help we would be most grateful. Please contact Maria, as above, for details. Thank you.

End of Fraternal Year News from Deputy Grand Knight Richard Wheeling



Tinto Council #47 addressed some important items at end of the 2025-2026 fraternal year. 1st: Election of officers for the upcoming year: David Sell, Grand Knight; Robert Simon Recorder, taking over from David Maccone who has served us well for many years. Continuing in their current roles: Deacon Dean Macchio, Spiritual Director; John Marmolejo, Chancellor; Tom Onze, Advocate; Melvin Moral, Warden; Chad Twombly, Inside Guard; Frank Lacerenza, Outside Guard; and Jim Lambert, Jim Veeley and Richard Merly, Trustees. (Although I have stepped down as Grand Knight, I will now return to the role of Deputy Grand Knight.)

It has been my great honor to serve Tinto Council #47 as Grand Knight these past three years. and I want to thank all the officers and brother Knights who supported me during my tenure. It was a pleasure, too, as Grand Knight, to serve Saint Raphael Parish in promoting Tinto Council's participation in parish activities.

Finally, a report on June's semi-annual food drive Our extremely generous parishioners filled the Food Pantry shelves again! The June 13/14 count: 281 bags or approximately 4,690.5 lbs of groceries. We anticipate a higher final tally, certain that more bags will turn up on future weekends. Let me shout out a big thank you to our Saint Raphael parishioners. You are the ones who make this event successful time and time again, continuing to serve the needs of those in our community. In closing let me wish all of you a safe and blessed summer. May God continue to bless you and your families always!

We Await the Arrival of Our New Pastor



Father Nathaniel Labarda

Father Labarda was born and raised in the Philippines, ordained on April 24, 1993 at the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Hartford and has served most recently at St. Matthew and St. Gregory the Great in Bristol. We look forward to meeting you, Father Labarda!

Middle School Grads High Schools

Jose de la Cruz Jimenez

Keira Dowling

Natale Paternoster

Nicole (Nikki) Sequera

West Shore

Jonathan Law

Eli Ekeh

West Shore

Platt Tech

Franco Savastano

Harborside

Joseph A. Foran

High School Grads, Work Plans, Colleges, Intended Majors

Eva Kubik

Amity Regional

Sacred Heart University

Biology

Isaac Rodrigues

Platt Tech - Electrical Trade

Post grad: Participation in a summer
internship at Sikorsky

Plans to begin work at Sikorsky
in the fall



Jaden Mondejar

Jonathan Law

University of New Haven

Computer Science,

Concentration in Cybersecurity

Christian Tabra

Engineering and Science

Magnet High School, West Haven

University of Connecticut

Cristian Vasquez

Central High School, Bridgeport

University of Connecticut

Biological Sciences

D-Day Can & Bottle Drive A Resounding Success!

When you have to call up the reserves because you have more bags of deposit cans and bottles than you have vehicles to take them to the recycling center - as happened on Saturday, June 6th - your event definitely qualifies as a resounding success!

Thanks to the kindness of the Saint Raphael Parish family our D-Day Can & Bottle Drive raised \$400 in support of T2T, the Tunnel to Towers Foundation.

Sincere thanks to Lou Servideo, organizer-in-chief; to start-to-finish return specialists Joe and Mike; to our excellent drivers; and to all the parishioners who contributed so generously. Great job, everyone!

Chilimeister Competitors Wanted for October's



Put your best recipe to the test in our first-ever chili cookoff on Saturday, October 24th after the Vigil Mass. Sign on with Leo Dorsey 203-876-9708 or LouServideo 203-260-4750. Thanks, and good luck!

Donna's Creation Care Corner: An Unforgettable Summer Visitor

Milford is blessed with beautiful beaches, over 17 miles of coastline, and a very special summer visitor. The American Oystercatcher, with its black head, contrasting white belly, and round yellow eyes rimmed with orange is the most easily recognized of all shorebirds. Its stand-out feature, however, is its bright red and orange bill, long, and somewhat pointed, like a surgical instrument.

Its unique bill, however, is less fashion statement than very effective tool which the oystercatcher uses as it forages for the oysters (no surprise!), clams and other mollusks. that comprise its specialized diet. The bird wedges its bill between a bivalve's two shells, severs the muscle that holds the two halves together and pulls out the contents. The oystercatcher can also use its bill as a probe to find mollusks buried in the sand or as a hammer to crack shells open.

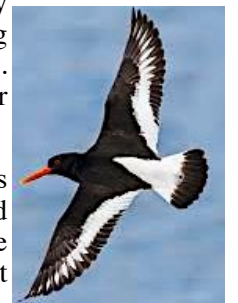
The American Oystercatcher is listed as a threatened species under Connecticut's Endangered Species Act. Breeding pairs have increased from about 46 to nearly 80, but they remain threatened due to habitat loss, human beach disturbances, coastal flooding, pets, and predation from foxes, raccoons, and domestic or feral cats.

As stewards of God's creation, how can we help God's amazing oystercatcher? *Give all shorebirds lots of space when you visit the beach. While you're relaxing, they are breeding, nesting, laying eggs and raising young. Like all new parents, they experience much stress. (Also, leave your dog at home. Even leashed dogs appear as threats to shorebirds.) **Limit or, better, avoid the use of lawn-care products. As filter feeders, mollusks continuously pull in volumes of water and inadvertently ingest and often store water-borne contaminants, including insecticides and herbicides that drain into Long Island Sound. Because they consume massive quantities of bivalves over their lifespan, these toxins and microplastics, build up in the birds' tissues.

According to Irish folklore, the oystercatcher once hid the infant Jesus in sand and seaweed during a time of danger. As a reward, the bird received its pied black-and-white feathers, which appear in the shape of a cross when the bird is in flight. So, let us reciprocate and protect this endangered shorebird just as it once protected the Christ Child.



American Oystercatcher at work





Saint Raphael Parish Faith Formation Programs for People of All Ages Watch Your Mailbox for 2026-2027 Program and Registration Information



Monthly GIFT Program - Growing In Faith Together

Theme for 2026/2027 - Living the Moral Life

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

Adults of all ages, including those with no children and teens, are invited to participate in our monthly GIFT program opening activities and adult break-out sessions. Registration forms for GIFT's monthly program will be available at both Saint Ann and Saint Gabriel churches in early August. Not sure? Please consider coming to a session or two as our guest.

First Reconciliation and First Communion
For families with children in Grade 2 or older.
There will be a required meeting
for parents/guardians in early September.

Confirmation
For families with teens in Grade 8 or older.
According to a change from the Archdiocese of Hartford, teens in Grade 8 or older are now eligible to prepare for the Sacrament of Confirmation.

If you do not receive a mailing by early August or have any questions about our Faith Formation program (GIFT) or additional classes for First Reconciliation, First Communion and Confirmation, please contact Maria Tomasetti at atomasetti@snet.net (cell).



Interested in Becoming A Catholic? A Formation Program for Adults Begins in September

Are you, or is someone you know, interested in becoming a Catholic? Have you never been baptized? Or are you an adult Catholic who has never received the Sacraments of Eucharist (Holy Communion) or Confirmation? If this is the right time for you to take the next step on your faith journey or if you have questions, you might consider our OCIA program.

OCIA (Order of Christian Initiation of Adults), formerly RCIA, is the process through which adults and teens join the Catholic Church or complete their initiation into the Catholic Church. Those in the OCIA program are invited to participate in the life of prayer, worship, and personal conversion that characterizes the life of a Catholic Christian. In a series of classes participants will explore and learn more about the teachings and practices of the Catholic Church.

For information about our OCIA program, which begins in September, please contact Maria, as above.

A Sacramental Pentecost Sunday

Zachary Christopher Kuba, who was baptized in the Catholic Church as an infant, received the Sacraments of Confirmation and First Eucharist at the 9:30 a.m. Mass on May 24th, Pentecost Sunday, as his family looked on proudly. Zachary, whose Confirmation name is Matthew, has now completed his initiation into the Catholic Church.

Congratulations, Zachary, and welcome to Lord's table. Sealed now with the gift of the Holy Spirit you have been strengthened for service to the Body of Christ. May God bless you always.

Adult Confirmation Program Begins in September

The parish is planning an Adult Confirmation preparation program beginning this September. The program, which includes six or seven class sessions, is open to Catholics age 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.

At Saint Raphael Parish We Are Celebrating Marriage (And More Celebrations are Coming Up!)



The invitations went out in early May to couples who were newly-married, preparing for marriage, married for many years, even to those who were married in the last century! Our Marriage as a Vocation ministry wrote simply: "Join us for a parish-wide Celebration of Marriage. Meet with other parish couples. Reflect on the joys of marriage as a calling, a commitment and a sacramental partnership." Two special notes were added: A) "Enjoy refreshments." and B) "There will be activities for children." (A: pizza and soft drinks; B: coloring sheets, jump rope and hula hoops [Some parents demonstrated their skills!] and more.)

Among the very positive post-celebration comments: "It was a blessing to gather together after Mass and share in fellowship, prayer, and meaningful conversation with other couples. From the welcoming atmosphere, thoughtful discussions, and shared meal, to the inclusion of prayer cards and opportunities for connection, it was a really special event. Thank you."

What a joyous celebration! As we continue Saint Raphael's commitment to married couples and to those preparing for sacramental marriage we are making plans for another celebratory and prayerful event on Sunday, October 11th at Saint Ann Parish Center. Watch the bulletin and the newsletter for details.



**God Bless America
As We Celebrate 250
Years of Independence**

On July 4th the United States celebrates its 250th anniversary, marking two and a half centuries since the adoption of the Declaration of Independence.

The Declaration's eloquent language refers to our "unalienable" right to the pursuit of happiness, but makes no reference to religious freedom, a basic pillar of America's identity.

It is the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, ratified in 1791 as part of the Bill of Rights, that protects fundamental freedoms, the first of which is Freedom of Religion.

Let us thank God today and every day for the many blessings God has bestowed on us and on our beautiful country.

The Parish Press

A Publication of Saint Raphael Parish
Milford, Connecticut

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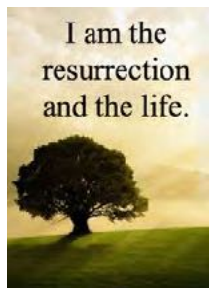
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*America! America!
God shed His grace on thee,
And crown thy good with brotherhood
From sea to shining sea!*



In Memoriam

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

Robert Abed Gloria Renner
Carol Nichols
Dennis Russell, Jr.
John "Jack" Rabuse
Christopher Neeley, Jr.
John "Skip" Kenworthy

May they be at peace forever in the loving presence of our merciful God.

Bereavement Support: Sunday, July 12th



The parish Bereavement Support group will meet on Sunday afternoon, July 12th at 2 o'clock in the Saint Ann Children's Chapel. Please consider joining us if you are finding it difficult to cope with the loss of someone you love. Let others who have known the heartache of loss help you on your journey toward healing. For additional information you may call Joanne (203-877-4020),

Submit Parish Press Info by July 17th

News, notes, comments and photos for the August issue of *The Parish Press* are due in our editorial offices by Friday, July 17th. Please send them to parishpress06460@gmail.com or call Ann Eden (203-874-8744). Thank you!

We Welcome With Love . . .

. . . the newest members of our parish family:

Cecilia Patino Murphy McGuire
Brody Baillargeon Maebel Monahan

who were baptized in April, and

Everly Montalvo

who received the life-giving waters of Baptism in May.

God bless you, little ones. May your lives always be a reflection of God's loving kindness.



Love and Best Wishes . . .



.as you begin your married life together . . .

Jacob and Ashley (Mowka) Barilla

who exchanged marriage vows on Sunday, May 31st at Saint Gabriel Church. God's warmest blessings upon you, Jacob and Ashley. May you grow in love and loyalty through a long and happy marriage.

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203-874-0634

Saint Raphael Parish Website
<https://saintraphaelmilford.org>