



SEPTEMBER 2026

ST. RAPHAEL COMMUNITY OF CATHOLIC MOMS

NEWSLETTER

Save The Dates!



CCM

Fellowship Nights

October 6th- Apologetics
with Fr. John Honiotes

November 3rd- Feed my
Starving Children, (off-campus)

December 1st- All About
Advent



Other Events on Campus for Moms & Families

Donut Sundays

September 27th

October 25th

November 22nd

KoC Pancake Breakfast

October 18th

Special Mass of St. Anne

Thursday, October 22nd, 6:00pm

A Mass of healing for loss or difficulties
around birth and pregnancy

St. Cecilia Sing

Sunday, October 25th, 4:00pm

An uplifting night of sacred music with
musicians from across the Joliet Diocese

Book Club

with Well-Read Mom
read more. read well.



October 15th at 7:30pm

Our book for this month's meeting is
So Big by **Edna Ferber**

Many Hands Make for
Lighter Work!

Quick who's who of our '26-'27 committee
chairs so you know who to turn to with
questions, ideas, or anything related to the
various areas of our ministry.

Hospitality Co-Chairs

Nikki Schuiling & Megan Loomis

Service Chair

Meredith Wiers

Playgroup Co-Chairs

Christina Weidman & Alex Jablonski

Book Club Co-Chairs

Ali Patti & Elizabeth Jarr

Greetings & Gratitude Chair

Megan McCatty

Finance Chair

Erin Williams

Marketing & Newsletter Co-Chairs

Ali Patti & Elizabeth Jarr

Chair Coordinator

Elizabeth Jarr



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ST. RAPHAEL COMMUNITY OF CATHOLIC MOMS

SEPTEMBER FELLOWSHIP NIGHT

The Tender Heart of Motherhood



At our September gathering, Father Alex invited us to reflect on the unique gift of a woman's heart. Drawing from St. Edith Stein, he spoke of the particular disposition of the feminine soul—our capacity to be attentive to the inner world of others and our special call to “nourish, shelter, and cherish.” Womanhood is not simply a role we happen to occupy, but a beautiful gift from God, with its own unique strengths and ways of loving. Rather than feeling pressure to become more like men in order to fit into the world around us, we can embrace the beauty of what God has created us to be.

One of those beautiful qualities is tenderness. Father Alex explored the two meanings of tender: gentle, sympathetic, and attentive—and also sore or sensitive to pain. A mother's heart can be tender in both ways. Our own experiences can leave wounds, while motherhood itself brings vulnerability through pregnancy, birth, infertility, loss, and the gradual ache of watching our children grow.

Because of this, Father Alex encouraged us to “engage your own story with holy curiosity.” Rather than burying or minimizing our hurts, we can prayerfully notice them and ask where they come from and how they may be shaping our

reactions and relationships.

In an age of comparison, this invitation to look honestly and compassionately at our own stories can be easy to forget. But allowing God to heal our wounds can bring real freedom and peace. As Father Alex put it: “Hurt people hurt people, but free people free people.”

That same spirit of freedom can shape how we care for one another. Father's reminder to share stories without comparing stories resonated deeply. Strong bonds among women are built

when we can share our joys, struggles, and pain without feeling the need to measure, fix, or one-up one another. Sometimes the most loving thing we can offer another woman is simply to listen, hold space, and let her story matter.

Motherhood itself teaches us this openness through the tension of holding close while learning to let

go. We love our children tenderly and intimately, even as we prepare them to grow, launch, and thrive independently. Like Hannah entrusting Samuel to God, we are ultimately called to remember that our children are gifts from Him and remain under His loving care. Letting go does not mean loving less; it means learning to trust God more.



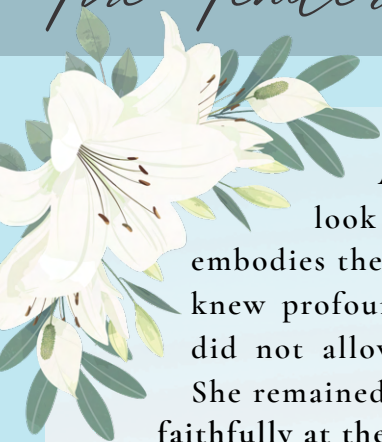


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SEPTEMBER FELLOWSHIP NIGHT

The Tender Heart of Motherhood, Continued



And in all of this, we can look to the Blessed Mother, who embodies the tender heart perfectly. She knew profound joy and sorrow, yet she did not allow suffering to harden her. She remained open to God, pondering faithfully at the foot of the Cross.

Perhaps one of the simplest takeaways from the evening is also one worth repeating on the days when guilt or self-doubt creep in: Your tender heart is a gift. May we embrace the beautiful call God has given us as women—to nourish, shelter, cherish, and love deeply—and allow Him to heal the places where our hearts have become wounded or guarded. A tender heart is not a weakness; it is a beautiful place for God's love to dwell.

Thank you, Father Alex!

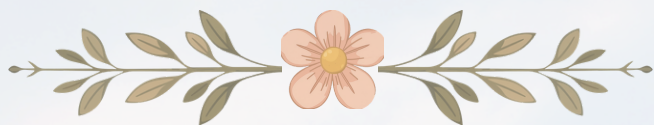




SEPTEMBER 2026

ST. RAPHAEL COMMUNITY OF CATHOLIC MOMS

Book Club



September 17th Meeting Recap

Our Well-Read Mom Book Club kicked off with introductions, fun conversation, and an introspective look at what first awoke in each of us an appreciation for reading. We explored this year's WRM theme "Year of the Woman," through St. Edith Stein's exquisite declaration that "the woman's soul is fashioned as a shelter in which other souls may unfold." This was a particularly beautiful (and providential!) connection to one of the assertions Father Alex centered his Tender Heart of Motherhood talk around earlier this month!



We traced WRM's theme for the year through the story of the Samaritan Woman at the well, Gustav Klimt's evocative artwork, and Karol Wojtyła's 'Song of the Splendor of Water.' By the close of the evening, we were called to keep reading; to endeavor to see the world through the words of gifted writers and the eyes of well-cultivated characters.

And Ali Patti's homemade baked goods made for a sweet addition to the night—recipe [HERE!](#)



Our next meeting will be on October 15th to discuss **So Big** by Edna Ferber

Learn about Well-Read Mom and become a Member [here](#)



RSVP for October's meeting [here](#)

Still interested in joining for this year?

For more details, reach out to Elizabeth Jarr & Ali Patti at straphaelccm@gmail.com with any questions!



SEPTEMBER 2026

ST. RAPHAEL COMMUNITY OF CATHOLIC MOMS

Playgroup

Mondays are better together.
Welcome back to playgroup!

Moms of infants, tots, and preschoolers: Come join us for our weekly playgroup!

9:20-10:20 am

September 21st
September 28th
October 5th

Meet on the lawn outside church
or room 157 if inclement weather



Use the QR to join
our WhatsApp
Group for real time
updates & date
reminders.





SEPTEMBER 2026

ST. RAPHAEL COMMUNITY OF CATHOLIC MOMS

ANCHORS AWEIGH!

Between drop-offs, errands, practices, appointments, and everything else that keeps us driving around town, life can leave us feeling a little aweigh from both our domestic church and our parish home. Wherever the day takes us, we can still stay anchored in our Catholic community.

Below, a couple listening resources to fill your spiritual cup while you're on the go—bringing encouragement, inspiration, and a little piece of our Catholic community along for the ride.

ABIDING TOGETHER



JOIN THE
Abide
Tribe.

Sign up to receive:

- exciting updates on new studies
- show notes with discussion questions and journal prompts
- transcripts for each episode
- links to our one things

FIRST NAME

LAST NAME

EMAIL ADDRESS

KEEP ME UPDATED

Hosted by Sister Miriam, Michelle Benzinger, and Heather Khym, Abiding Together provides a place of connection, rest and encouragement for people who are on the journey of living out their passion and purpose in Jesus Christ.

PRAYERS FOR OUR KIDS WITH HALLOW



Join Emily Wilson — Catholic author, speaker, wife, and mother — for a 14-day prayer challenge to help you and your family step into the school year. The new year stirs up fresh hopes and worries alike, and new routines have a way of surfacing everything you carry for your kids.



Each day, Emily will lead you in a simple prayer for God's blessing on your child during the school day. Even and especially for the times when you don't feel you have the words to pray, this challenge gives you prayers that are specific, intentional, and rooted in hope. Learn more about Emily's ministry here:



COMMUNITY of CATHOLIC MOMS

October Fellowship Night

Tuesday, October 6th
Saints Anne & Joachim Room

Mingling: 7:30pm - 8pm
Guided Discussion: 8p-9p
with Special Guest Fr. John Honiotes



*Let Us Know
You're Coming!*



**Refreshments & light
fare provided.**

**Arrive late.
Leave Early.**
**We're happy to have
you join us!**

**PLEASE RSVP
VIA LINK OR QR**



Apologetics

Ever been stumped by your kids' questions about the faith?

Join us for an evening of "Apologetics for Kids" with Father John Honiotes as we tackle the real, challenging questions our Catholic kids are asking—and the ones we may not always feel prepared to answer.

Apologetics is "*a reasoned defense and explanation of the teachings, beliefs, and practices of the Catholic Church.*" Father John will guide us through the questions that can leave many Catholic moms searching for the right words, helping us understand not only what the Church teaches, but why—and how to communicate those truths to our children with both clarity and charity.

Come ready for a lively, honest, and enlightening evening. Leave with your cup filled—feeling emboldened to live and teach the faith with compassion and confidence!

"Always be prepared to make a defense to anyone who calls you to account for the hope that is in you, yet do it with gentleness and reverence."

1 Pt 3:15