

St. Raphael parishioners give generously for those in need

St. Raphael Parish has had a twinning relationship with St. Martin of Tours Parish in Washington for almost a quarter of a century (24 years this Thanksgiving). During November, we hold three drives to help the less fortunate in St. Martin's faith community and the general neighborhood located in Northwest, D.C. Although we had a slow start collecting canned and non-perishable foods and coats, parishioners came through on the final day of our multiple drives.



This year, we collected 348 frozen turkeys and 227 boxes full of canned food items that are traditionally served at a Thanksgiving meal. All of these donations were then transported to 1908 N. Capitol Street where gifts bags of groceries were assembled for families who are able to cook meals but often do not have enough money to purchase all the food. Fr. Mike Kelley, Pastor at St. Martin's stated that his goal was to distribute enough frozen turkeys and groceries for 250 people! Together, we surpassed that goal and then some! Nothing goes to waste; Fr. Kelly distributes all the food he receives, and the community is so ever grateful for the help!

We all have so many blessings for which we praise God in His infinite mercy! It is always amazing how much we receive from parishioners! Learning that we can trust in God's infinite mercy and love during times of great need is key to thanking Him!

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St. Raphael Parish • St. Raphael School

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Parishioners Indah Oei, Anna Derry, Jessica Stecklein, Norma Saad, and Shirley Lee

St. Raphael Sodality Update

It was a busy season for St. Raphael Sodality as the ladies explored their faith formation with multiple speaker events.

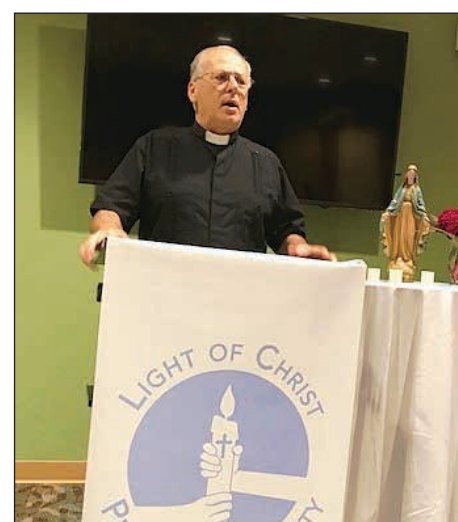
Sodality's annual holiday visit to Raphael House will take place next week on December 13. Sodality has been entertaining the resi-

dents of Raphael House for eight years now. Sodality visit with the residents, deliver individual gift bags that arrive on a toboggan, and sing along with St. Raphael School fifth grade students. It has become a wonderful tradition to share the Christmas spirit with our neighbors.

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Father Wells spoke to Sodality members in November about Mass as the Perfect Prayer. The Sodality executive officers assisted with the liturgy, and the congregation was blessed with music from singer Jessica Stecklein and pianist Addie Edelson. Father Wells' homily focusing on the beauty of Mass, the Perfect Prayer, and his Q&A session afterwards provided the group with a deeper understanding and love of the Mass.



In October the group spent an evening honoring the rosary with their pastor, Father Salah. Approximately 50 parishioners listened as Father spoke about his personal experiences praying the rosary. He educated and entertained the group with his stories, and encouraged them to be open to new experiences while praying the rosary themselves.

An Intergenerational Dialogue ...on the Sunday Gospels of Advent

Prayer, Gospel Reflection, Small Group Dialogue, Refreshments

If you're "older, invite a younger friend; if you're "younger" invite an older friend.

4 Wednesdays – 7:30-9:00 PM
St. Raphael Church - Duffy Center
1513 Dunster Road, Rockville MD 20854

Each Wednesday the discussion will focus on the Gospel for the upcoming Sunday of Advent:

Nov. 29 Mark 13:33-37
Dec. 6 Mark 1:1-8
Dec. 13 John 1:6-8, 19-28
Dec. 20 Luke 1:26-38

What truth in this Gospel reading do I cherish?
What questions do I have about it?
For those who accept it, what difference does it make?



Bishop Robert Barron's Word on Fire Advent Booklets are provided by a Grant from the Archdiocese of Washington No fee.

Facilitators: Suzanne Nelson, AFF Coordinator; and Team

Adults of all faiths are welcome.
Please "sign up" via email to: suzanne.nelson2@gmail.com
... so we know how to plan.



St. Raphael School



Eternal Memory, Monsignor Vincent Gatto

By Nina Cardillo

Monsignor Vincent Gatto, who lived in residence at St. Raphael Parish from the time of his retirement in 2005 until 2017, passed away on Oct. 24 at the age of 90. Msgr. Gatto was born on Dec. 5, 1926, in Troy, New York, and received a Catholic education. During his time at St. Raphael, he recounted many stories from the early formation of his faith, particularly reminding us to pray to the forgotten God, the Holy Spirit, who made an impression on him while in grade school. During his U.S. Army service



Msgr. Gatto: 1926-2017

in the Philippines, Msgr. Gatto received a calling to the priesthood and was ordained at the age of 28 on June 4, 1955, at the Cathedral of Saint Matthew the Apostle in Washington, D.C. His first assignment was parochial vicar at the Shrine of the Sacred Heart Parish in Washington, D.C. In 1969, Msgr. Gatto was appointed pastor of Our Lady of Mercy Parish in Potomac and, in 1983, pastor of Holy Cross Parish in Garrett Park, where he served until his retirement. He was named monsignor in 1984.

Family and friends, scores of priests, and countless members of St. Raphael Parish and

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Mary of Nazareth

Student-led service projects benefit local, regional, and international communities

Mary of Nazareth Catholic School's mission is to prepare students for lives of service to God and neighbor. By providing classroom instruction and volunteer opportunities, Mary of Nazareth's Social Concerns Program raises students' awareness of the plight of the poor and encourages students to fulfill their responsibility to help those who lack life's basic necessities. Students also have abundant opportunities to serve their communities through extracurricular clubs and activities. Just this fall, Mary of Nazareth students have aided in collecting monetary and material donations to benefit community members, service members, and individuals affected by natural disaster.

One of the largest social concerns projects this year helped to raise over \$2,500 for hurricane relief in Puerto Rico. Families baked and donated *polvorones*, a traditional Puerto Rican cookie, that were then sold within the local community. All proceeds were donated to Catholic Charities in support of hurricane relief efforts.

Mary of Nazareth's first grade class contributed to school service efforts with their "Candy for



First grade students and parents collected enough leftover Halloween candy for 69 service members who are deployed.

Our Troops" project. Following Halloween, students collected and bagged enough candy for 69 service members who are deployed.

Cub Scout Pack 76 participated once again with the Boy Scouts of America's "Scouting for Food Drive." The drive benefited St. Martin's Food Pantry in Gaithersburg. Thanks to the generosity of our MoN community, cub scouts we were able to deliver 41 boxes – over 1,600 pounds of food – to St. Martin's.

Finally, the Mary of Nazareth Social Concerns Committee held its annual winter coat drive during the holiday season to benefit St. Martin's parish. In total, 150 coats were collected to benefit local parishioners and families.

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crafts, cards or small gifts would be mailed to the parishioner's home. The opportunities would arise in homework assignments, morning meetings or as free choice literacy opportunities.

This partnership should allow students to understand more deeply how to live the virtues they are taught at Mary of Nazareth and in their personal homes. The parents of these children are overwhelmingly supportive. At student conferences the program was introduced and the parents were giving input and ideas about the chapel mass and reception to include older siblings that would perform their gifts and talents of Irish dancing!

This program of corporal mercy will allow young children to become the best stewards. The results will be rewarding for everyone involved. We look forward to sharing throughout the school year how our program evolves.

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ST RAPHAEL SCHOOL

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school all came to honor the life of Msgr. Gatto at the funeral Mass celebrated by Cardinal Donald Wuerl on Oct. 30. Fr. Jim Meyers had the honor of giving the homily, which paid a beautiful and touching tribute to his dear friend. Having been at St. Raphael Parish for the past 12 years and during the establishment of St. Raphael School, Msgr. Gatto was a part of many firsts, myriad traditions, and innumerable Masses. He will be greatly missed and always remembered for his remarkable and faithful service to the Lord.

New on Staff

Originally from Durban, South Africa, Alicia Madlala joins the SRS staff as third grade teacher. Madlala moved to this area with her family in 2009, continuing her higher education and majoring in psychology at the University of Maryland. As a former Catholic school student from first through 12th grades (Holy Family College), and again in graduate school (Marymount University, where she received a Master of Arts in school counseling), Madlala firmly believes in the rewards of a Catholic education.

Daniel Phillips joins the SRS staff as the P.E. teacher and SPARK instructor. Phillips is a native Washingtonian and a graduate of the University of Delaware. He has coached lacrosse at Our Lady of Good Counsel, St. Vincent Pallotti, and St. John's College high schools. He has instructed P.E. classes at Annunciation Catholic School and St. John's College High School and also taught business classes at St. Vincent Pallotti High School.

Angels on the Run

Almost 400 St. Raphael Angels were up and running at the sixth annual Angels on the Run Oct. 21, competing in a 5K race, a 1-mile run, and a cherub dash for kindergartners and preschoolers. School and parish families and friends came out to raise funds for SRS and be a part of the school tradition and community fun. Made possible by the many volunteers, sponsors, runners, and those who came out to cheer, this event was a winner from start to finish.



At the SRS Thanksgiving Feast, students give thanks for their many blessings – including friendship. Photo by Malu Powell

Knights in Shining Armor

Knights, serfs, kings, and queens appearing right out of Camelot were the disguised SRS fourth-graders who celebrated the conclusion of the Medieval Times Signature Unit. Their studies began at the fall of the Roman Empire and delved into the lifestyles of their characters, explored stories such as the legend of St. George and the dragon, interwove Gregorian chants, and researched castles and trebuchets through hands-on projects. The students enjoyed an authentic Medieval banquet and presented uniquely designed family shields before a court of proud parents and teacher, Michelle Roche. This noble gathering was indeed a feast fit for a king.

The Rest is Gravy

During this season of thanks, the students and staff enjoy many traditions at St. Raphael School and Nursery School. In gratitude, SRS joined together for a school Mass and a modest Thanksgiving meal. Preparing baskets of traditional foods for the Thanksgiving holiday allowed SRS families to extend blessings to the devoted maintenance staff, who are the unsung angels behind the scenes of all school and parish events. St. Raphael Nursery School students prepared baskets of fruit, which were brought before the altar for a prayer and then delivered to Stepping Stones Shelter. For the many blessings we receive and are able to share, we recognize that every good and perfect gift comes from God.

On the Way

Dec. 12: Mother Teresa Luncheon welcomes homeless guests from Washington, D.C., shelters for a hot meal and a festive gathering.

Dec. 18-20: SRS and SRNS Christmas Pageants celebrate the birth of our Savior.

Jan. 8: SRS and SRNS Double Open House invites interested parents to learn more about our schools and tour our campus. SRNS is at 9:15 a.m., and SRS is at 10:45 a.m.

Jan. 28-Feb. 2: Catholic Schools Week recognizes the value of Catholic education and those who make it possible.

For more information, visit our school website at www.straphael-schoolmd.org.

LAND HO

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difficult to find food. Then, one day they met new friends called Native Americans. The Native Americans taught the pilgrims how to fish, plant corn, build houses, and live in their new home. Kindergartener Nina Rubio stated, "They all got along because the Native Americans taught the pilgrims how to do all different kinds of things."

At the end of the play, they decided to have a feast that lasted for three days. They wanted to celebrate all of the things that they were thankful for. It was known as the first Thanksgiving! Kindergarten student, Jack Reilly said, "I liked when we had the feast because the pilgrims and Native Americans all got to eat together."

After the play, the students gathered on the stage to sing a Thanksgiving song to God thanking Him for all of the wonderful things He has given us. They did an excellent job. All of their hard work paid off! The audience was filled with parents, grandparents, teachers, and siblings cheering on the kindergartners. After the play, there was a small reception with refreshments and coffee. It was a wonderful way to kick-off the Thanksgiving holiday with a little history and a lot of fun!

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45 YEARS

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Parish Center downstairs, for a potluck lunch and crafts and activities for the children. With parishioners numbering approximately 1,500 families, Fr. Dillon said the parish's diversity has grown over its tenure. In 2013, an archdiocesan survey reported that a third of parishioners were non-Caucasian.

Recently, the parish established a Neighbor-to-Neighbor Team, which is actively promoting the parish to people moving into the Derwood area. Their efforts included mailing out 1,800 postcards inviting new neighbors to the parish's Advent and Christmas Masses, as well as to other seasonal activities. "I think this will help us to grow as a parish community," Fr. Dillon said.

Carpenter said the parish's growing diversity has been one of its most appealing attributes over the 45 years she has worshiped at St. Francis. "When it first opened, we all looked the same," she said. "I think the diversity is marvelous. That's one of the parts that I've enjoyed about the parish changing."

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It pays to
advertise in
Our Parish Times

MENTORSHIPS

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Mary's are perfect role models for these young children. They attend mass daily. These adults pray the rosary on a regular basis. They are a vital part of the community. What a better resource for teaching than to look within one of our own parishes? Saint Mary's has stepped up to support their Catholic School in hopes of being the inspiration of a wider partnership with other founding parishes within our diocese in the coming years.

Meeting with Fr. Kevin, we began talking about the program incorporating widows with students in my class. We collaborated ideas like letter writing, praying daily for one another, a reception in the spring with a chapel mass. The students will be welcomed to write to any or all of the older parishioners that joined. Weekly letters,