



*From the Pastor's Desk*

Dear Parishioners

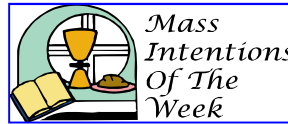
I have a dear old uncle who I take out to lunch every now and then. At this time of the year he is quick to tell me that Christmas is for children. Uncle Pace is Jewish and so over the years I never paid much attention to his remarks about the unimportance of Christmas. However, it does surprise me that after sixty years, or more, in the Finch Family he thinks it is only for kids. We understand he doesn't accept the Messiah has come into the world. No one in the family expected him to get that part. The question comes, what did we do wrong that he only saw it as a joyful time for children? When my Aunt Mary, his wife, was alive, she was the ring leader of joy. All through her house were decorations, the manger scene, pillows stitched with the words "I believe in Angels" or "I believe in Santa" or, even, "I believe Jesus is the reason for the season." When we got together we sang Christmas songs, many of the songs were lead by my uncle. I remember him singing many times, since my childhood to my adulthood, "O Santissima," a hymn dedicated to the Blessed Mother. Yes, Uncle, Christmas is for everyone, young and old alike.

The best part of Christmas for me is the unexpected surprises that come my way. A CD of Christmas hymns, my favorite pie, a box of candy outside my door on the Feast of Saint Nicholas, the dusting of snow, a phone call from someone I hadn't spoken to in a long time, or an advent calendar of Charlie Brown, simply because I mentioned him in a homily. These things bring so much joy to my heart. Another great aspect of Christmas is encountering the expected things: the children's Christmas pageants, the decorations of our crèche in the church, the twinkling of little lights, the special sweet treats and the carols sung at church on Christmas night. Though usually tired, I still find joy in the midnight Mass. For me, recounting the story of the babe born in a manger is fresh and still awe-inspiring. Our choir singing "Silent Night" still takes me back to places of my childhood but also places of my adulthood. Hearing that wonderful hymn being sung at St. Stephen's Cathedral in Vienna or in a little country church in Muhlau, Switzerland on a snowy Christmas Eve refreshed my soul as much as it did when I first heard it in my Grandmother's house one Christmas night in Piscataway, Md. On that particularly cold, snowy, mystical night, we were all gathered in the living room of my grandparents' house. Everyone was there, parents, grandparents, my brother and sisters, aunts, uncles and cousins. Guess who was leading that wonderful "Silent Night?" That's right! It was Uncle Pace. He knew then Christmas wasn't just for children.

Around our parish so many people are hard at work preparing for our many Christmas Masses. May God bless each of you this Christmas. We look forward to praying and singing with you.

Sincerely in Christ,

Fr. Bill Finch



- Monday December 22**  
6:30 AM Cindy Collins (d)  
9:00 AM Mae McGowan (d)
- Tuesday December 23**  
6:30 AM Susan Clark (d)  
9:00 AM John McLane (d)
- Wednesday December 24 Christmas Eve**  
6:30 AM Larry & Beatrice Gordon (d)  
9:00 AM Mae McGowan (d)  
**4:00 PM** CH Fr. Finch Costa & Fulbright Families (d)  
**4:00 PM** TR Fr. Benitez Aaron Klem (d)  
**4:00 PM** RP Fr. Reynierse Paul Schuncke, Jr.(d)  
**6:00 PM** CH Msgr. Gatto Tom & Helen Betz (d)  
**6:00 PM** TR Fr. Ehrman Verme & Beaty Families (d)  
**8:00 PM** CH Spanish Fr. Benitez
- 12:00 Midnight** Fr. Finch Members of the Parish
- Thursday December 25 Christmas Day**  
**8:30 AM** Fr. Finch Lopez Family (d)  
**10:00 AM** Fr. Finch Susan Buckingham (d)  
**11:30 AM** Msgr. Gatto Irene & John Schwemberger (d)  
**1:00 PM** Fr. Benitez Michael Cunnane (d)  
**No 6:00 PM Mass**
- Friday December 26**  
6:30 AM Mae McGowan (d)  
9:00 AM Florence "Betty" Smith (d)
- Saturday December 27**  
9:00 AM Daniel F. Sullivan (d)  
5:00 PM Fr. Reynierse James V. Castiglia (d)
- Sunday December 28**  
7:00 AM Fr. Benitez Frederick Nassif (d)  
8:30 AM Fr. Ehrman Juanita Uribe Martinez (d)  
10:00 AM Msgr. Gatto Mae McGowan (d)  
11:30 AM Fr. Finch Rylan Thomas Meka (d)  
1:00 PM Fr. Benitez  
6:00 PM Fr. Reynierse Maria Carla Barzotti (d)
- Schedule for Confession:**  
Tuesday, December 23, 7:30 PM, **Parish Penance Service**  
Saturday, December 27, 3:45-4:30 PM, Fr. Reynierse  
Sunday, December 28, 11:45 AM -12:45 PM, Fr. Benitez,  
Upper Room in Spanish
- RCIA/RICA (Spanish RCIA):** Non-Catholics or Catholics who have not received Eucharist and Confirmation, come and discover more about the Catholic Faith! Contact Michael L. Barnes, 240-864-2543, for details. Any youth interested in becoming Catholic contact Mary Jo Barnes, 301-762-2143, ext. 124.
- Education:**  
**St. Raphael School: Mrs. Teri Dwyer, Principal**  
**St. Elizabeth School: 301-881-1824, Office**

**Parish Support**

Contributions.....	\$34,135.83
Poor Box .....	\$445.00
Renovation .....	\$311.00
Renovation Faith Direct.....	\$1,241.00

To enroll in Faith Direct, direct debit program, visit [www.faithdirect.net](http://www.faithdirect.net) to enroll securely on line or complete an enrollment form. Our parish code is MD34.

If you wish to make a stock donation, please call Lora Schoen, 240-864-2509.

**THE POOR BOX FOR DECEMBER 21  
WILL BE GIVEN TO MOTHER TERESA  
GIFT OF PEACE.**



Eduardo Cortez, Richard Stewart, George McConnell, Dorothy Romano, Wully Corpancho, brother of Luis Corpancho, Michael Keller

Please pray for the soul of Philomena Lizzio.

If you are on the mend and wish your name to be removed from our prayer list, please call the parish office and let us know. Names on this list are only included with permission of the individuals. They will remain on the list for one month, and can be repeated by calling the rectory.

**Ministry to the Sick:** The priests of the parish want very much to make sure that parishioners who are hospitalized or homebound receive pastoral care. We depend on the families and neighbors of parishioners to notify the rectory office so we can bring you the sacraments. If you would like to receive Communion, a visit from Priest/Deacon or are going into the hospital please call the parish office. For immediate needs ask for one of the Priests.

**Prayer Tree Hotline:** Call the parish office.

**Parish Council:** Please feel free to contact a Parish Council member listed here to discuss your views, opinions, or concerns regarding our parish.

Frank Whiteis—301-299-3502  
Jose Carbonell— 301-765-6954

**THIS WEEK IN OUR PARISH**

**Monday, December 22**

No Journeys in Faith  
No Religious Education  
No Choir Rehearsal  
Charismatic Prayer Group, 7:00 PM, Church

**Tuesday, December 23**

No Religious Education  
Mothers with young Children, 9:30 AM, Youth Center  
**Parish Penance Service, 7:30 PM, Church, Duffy Center**  
Contemplative Prayer, 7:30 PM, Anchorhold  
Spanish Ministry, 7:30 PM, Trumpet Room

**Wednesday, December 24**

**Christmas Eve Masses**

4:00 PM—Church, Trumpet Room and Ritchie Park  
6:00 PM—Church and Trumpet Room  
8:00 PM—Church (Spanish)  
12:00 Midnight Mass—Church  
Music Prelude at 11:15 PM

**Thursday, December 25**

**Christmas Day Masses**

8:30, 10:00, 11:30 AM, 1:00 PM in Spanish  
No 6:00 PM Mass

**Friday, December 26**

AA, 8:30 PM, Duffy Center/4, 6

**Saturday, December 27**

Charismatic Prayer Group, 6:30 PM, Duffy Center/4,6

**Sunday, December 28**

No Religious Education  
No Coffee/Donuts  
No RCIA  
Children's Liturgy, 10, 11:30 AM, Duffy Center/4,6  
No Youth Ministry



THE CHRISTMAS Story

## Parish Penance Service

December 23, 7:30 PM

## Christmas Masses

Christmas Eve, December 24

4:00 PM—Church, Trumpet Room and Ritchie Park

6:00 PM—Church and Trumpet Room

8:00 PM—Church (Spanish)

12:00 Midnight Mass—Church

Music Prelude at 11:15 PM

Christmas Day, December 25

8:30, 10:00, 11:30 AM, 1:00 PM in Spanish

No 6:00 PM Mass

## St. Raphael's Honor Roll

Please remember the following brave parishioners, relatives and friends of our Parish family who are serving their country in the Armed Forces. We ask the Lord, through the intercession of St. Michael, to keep them safe from harm, and we pray for their families while they are far from home:

*PFC Steven Baer (USA), Scott Brietzke, Lt. Frank Baughan, Cody Bakely, Col. Thomas R. Burklow, M.D., Capt. Peter Calvello, Major Tom Carlson, MAJ Agnieszka Sierocka-Castaneda(USA), Pfc. Austin Cole (USA), Maj. Shawn Creamer, Keith Cupples, BM1, USCG, Pfc. Levi Dicks (USMC), Brian Donaldson, Sgt. Phillip K. Durham, Recruit Thomas P. Fallon, PO Ronald M. Fok, USN, Lt. Conor Fitzpatrick, Major Kevin Gallagher, Petty Officer Benjamin Gregoire, 1st Sgt. Gregg M. Harrington, Capt. Michael D. Herman, Cpt. Jason Robert Hock, LTJG. Jesse Keene, USN, Lt. Col Craig Kozeniesky, Sgt. Michael Kozeniesky, Ensign Nicholas Kutchak, Cpl. Tod Lalone, CDR Michael Leupold, Capt. Fernando Lulli, Greg MacDonald, MAJ Jeffrey Mikita, MAJ Cecilia Mikita, Capt. Hugh Barrett McClean, Maj. Ivan Monclova, Lt Col. Joseph Murray (USMC), Bruce Nechanicky, MIDN, Lt Philip O'Connell, MD, USN, Lisa Pearse, Col Bob Quakenbush, LTC Priscilla Hopkins Quakenbush, LTC Peter M. Reynierse (USA), PVT Ian A. Reynierse, Jr. (USA), Pfc. Mark Ritchey, Pfc. Jeremy Rimes (USA), Pfc. Fabian Rivas, LTC Sam Russell, MM2(SS) Eric Schappner, MIDN, Paul Schappner, USN, Maj. USN, LCDR David T. Schroder, M.D., Lt jg Joseph Sheridan (USN), St. Sgt. David Soberano, Pfc. Thomas Stewart (USMC), Col. Carolyn Sullivan, M.D., Joseph A. Sullivan USN, Sgt. Stephen Tindall, 1st Lt. Luis Tosado, HM3 Amanda William, 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Anthony Zech, USMC, LTJG Kelly Zech, USN*

*If you have a family member or friend who is serving in the military, please submit their name to Elaine, via e-mail: [esalatto@straphaels.org](mailto:esalatto@straphaels.org). We will have this column in the bulletin each week.*

## St. Raphael Nursery School

St. Raphael's Nursery School will hold registration for the 2009-2010 school year on Friday, January 16th. We will begin accepting applications at 7:00 a.m. in the Duffy Community Center. Last year the line formed early! Applications are prioritized according to our Handbook, which places siblings and parishioners at the top of the list. Children must turn 3 by December 31, 2009 and be toilet trained by start of school in September 2009 in order to participate in this year's program.

We offer Tuesday/Thursday morning classes for three year olds (Parishioners/siblings should have no problem getting a seat in T/TH 3's). We have a three-day morning three-year-old class but it fills very quickly. We also offer a 3 day afternoon class for 3's. Four year olds have morning, afternoon, and full day options. We also run a five-day class for older fours. All morning or afternoon classes are two and one-half hours in duration and run September through May.

Applications will be available on January 16<sup>th</sup>. If you are a parishioner, please bring your envelope number. There is a non-refundable \$50.00 registration fee. Registration ends at noon.

Questions: 301-762-2143x121 or [tdwyer@straphaels.org](mailto:tdwyer@straphaels.org)

## Kimblewick Road Reminder

The gate will be open on Saturday afternoon, 3:00 PM until Sunday evening, 9:00 PM to accommodate our weekend Mass schedule. The gate will be closed at all other times. Please plan to use the Dunster Road entrance during the week. Kimblewick Road will have parking restrictions at the same time the gate is open. In other words you will be ticketed if you park on Kimblewick on Saturday evening and Sunday. You are free to use the swimming pool on Dunster Road for additional parking.

## Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God Holy day of Obligation

December 31, 7:30 PM, Vigil Mass

January 1, 2009

8:30 AM, 10:00 AM, 11:30 AM, 1:00 PM Spanish

## FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

### Anchorhold

Michael L. Barnes, 240-864-2543



### ADVENT

*A TIME OF PREPARATION  
A TIME OF LISTENING  
A TIME TO BE OPEN*

### Come to Contemplative Prayer

*Prepare for the Coming of the Christ  
Let Your Heart Be Still and Hear the Voice of God  
Let Yourself Be Open to Knowing God  
And to Be Known by God*

WHERE: ANCHORHOLD  
WHEN: TUESDAY EVENING 7:30-9:00 PM  
WEDNESDAY MORNING 9:30-11:15 AM  
SATURDAY MORNING 9:30-11:15 AM

monastery, and began a program of preaching throughout the Catalan region. Worked with cholera victims during the epidemic that struck in 1854. Founded the congregation *La Annunciata* in 1856, a teaching branch of tertiaries; by his death the order had grown to fifty houses, and today there are over 140 in Europe and America. Struck blind during a homily given at Sallent on 2 December 1869; his health was never the same, but he refused to retire. When the Dominicans were allowed to officially return to the region in 1872, they found that Francis has somehow maintained the primary structures, physical and administrative, and instead of starting all over, they reclaimed what was theirs, and took up their work where they had left off.

### Social Concerns

Sandy Shamburek, 240-864-2514

**POOR BOX COLLECTION:** Today's Poor Box Collection will benefit *Mother Teresa Gift of Peace Convent* for facilities run by the Missionaries of Charity in Washington, DC. Your generosity is especially appreciated this year!

**ADVENT GIVING TREE PROGRAM A SUCCESS:** Last weekend, St. Raphael parishioners were able to sort and package your generous contributions to individuals who otherwise would not receive a Christmas gift. A heartfelt thank you is offered to the parish and all volunteers who provided the time and effort to make this program a success.

**EPIPHANY FOOD DRIVE:** As we celebrate this Christmas season, please join parishioners from throughout the Archdiocese of Washington in giving the gift of food to local families in need. Donations to the Epiphany Food Drive will be given to the Capital Area Food Bank, Southern Maryland Food Bank and our parish food pantry, helping families throughout our community who are hungry. Grocery bags will be distributed at all Masses on the weekend of December 27<sup>th</sup>/28<sup>th</sup>. Simply fill the bag with the food requested and return it to the church on January 4<sup>th</sup>. This food drive will replace our parish's monthly Stone Soup Sunday collection. Thank you for sharing your gifts for those in need during this season during the Epiphany Food Drive.

**CLOTHING DRIVE:** St. Raphael's next scheduled clothing drive is scheduled for January 25, 2009. Our focus for this drive will once again be winter coats, hats and gloves to benefit our twin parish, St. Martin's in Washington, DC. Please bring your laundered winter coats, hats and gloves to the Trumpet Room stage on this weekend. Sorting of items will occur on Monday, January 26 between the hours of 9:45 AM and 12:00 noon. All questions can be directed to Eileen Cheng, Clothing Drive Coordinator at (301) 762-6340.

**“How happy I am to see myself imperfect and be in need of God's mercy.”**

**St. Therese of the Child Jesus and the Holy Face, OCD**

### BLESSED FRANCIS COLL



He was one of ten children. His father Peter died when Francis was only four. He was confirmed in 1818 at the age six and entered the seminary at Vichy, France in 1822 at age ten. He was a student with Saint Anthony Mary Claret. Even as a kid he taught grammar and catechism to local children. He joined the Dominicans at Vichy in 1830 at age eighteen. When monastic

orders were suppressed by the government, Francis continued to study covertly. Ordained on 28 March 1836 at Vichy. Parish priest of Arles, France. Reassigned to Moya in 1839, an area devastated by war, awash with starving refugees. He established charitable organizations to feed and house them, and he worked with the poor and displaced for ten years. Helped Saint Anthony Claret found the *Apostolic Fraternity* in 1846. Director of the tertiaries in Vichy. In 1850 he re-opened the suppressed Dominican

**ST. MARTIN'S IN GAITHERSBURG LOOKING FOR FOOD SHARE COORDINATORS:** The food Pantry at St. Martin's is seeking two individuals with experience in the Food Share Program to serve as coordinator of a program being developed between their parish and St. Rose of Lima Parish. If you think you could help with this effort, please contact Chuck Smith, St. Martin's Food Pantry Coordinator at (301) 452-8488.

**GABRIEL HOUSE NEEDS/WISH LIST:** The Silver Spring House manager, Janvier Richards, has identified items that would help make the living conditions more efficient and comfortable. Items range from house hold items to a refrigerator. They are also looking for a volunteer to assist with snow removal when needed. If you would like to volunteer or would like the complete list of items requested, please contact Sandy Shamburek at (240) 864-2514 for details.

**USED VEHICLE NEEDED:** If you have a vehicle you are thinking of selling at a reduced cost, please contact Sandy Shamburek for contact information of a person in need of personal transportation. (240) 864-2514. Thank you.

**Other**

**Christ in the City (for Young Adults):** Christ in the City is a ministry of the Office of Young Adult Ministry that specifically focuses on spiritual growth and provides an opportunity to establish a relationship with Christ truly present in the Eucharist. On the second Thursday of each month, young adults from across the city congregate at St. Patrick Catholic Church, 10<sup>th</sup> and G Streets, NW, Washington, DC to pray and worship. Stop in for a few minutes or join us for the entire service. The evening starts with a 7:00 PM Rosary. From 7:30-8:30 PM., there will be Eucharistic Adoration, Praise and Worship, Confession available and Reflection. Upcoming date: January 8.

**Men's Vocation Retreat**

Archbishop Wuerl is sponsoring a retreat (February 6-8, 2009) for men in their 20's-40's who are considering a call to the priesthood. The retreat will be held at Theological College, Friday evening, February 6 through Sunday, February 8 at noon. The retreat will allow men time away from the daily grind and provide an opportunity for prayer and reflection to examine God's call. If you feel Jesus may be calling you, why not give Him a weekend? It will cost you nothing more than your time. To register or for more information, contact Msgr. Rob Panke, Director of Priest Vocations, at 301-853-4580 or vocations@adw.org.

**Mother Seton Pilgrimage in the Footsteps of St Paul: May 14-23, 2009 with Father Mark Ervin.**

Visit the places where St. Paul lived and preached in Greece and Turkey during this special Jubilee Year of Apostle Paul. Visit Thessaloniki, Philippi, Istanbul, Myconos, Kusadasi (Ephesus), Patmos, Rhodes, Crete, Corinth and Athens. Call 301-983-9417; [www.CruiseMastersTravel.com](http://www.CruiseMastersTravel.com) for more information

**Three to Get Married Marriage Preparation Weekend:**

Upcoming weekends: February 12-15, March 19-22. You're not just planning a wedding, you're preparing for a lifetime! Our marriage preparation course is an intensive preparation experience true to the teachings of the Catholic Church. Convenient one-weekend schedule. Registration required. \$275 per couple. FOCCUS Inventory included! 301-365-0612 / email [register@bethesdacfd.org](mailto:register@bethesdacfd.org). The CFD is located at Our Lady of Bethesda Retreat Center, 7007 Bradley Blvd., Bethesda MD. [www.bethesdacfd.org](http://www.bethesdacfd.org)

**Prime Time Single Catholics of Northern Virginia:**

Thursday, December 25- 3:00 PM, Christmas Day Dinner (Leesburg), Contact Mary at 703-771-0961.

Wednesday, December 31- 7:00 PM, New Year's Eve Party, K of C, Arlington. Contact Karol at 703-820-0795.

Thursday, January 1, 3:00 PM—New Year's Day Potluck (Vienna). Contact Katherine at 703-938-4695.

For more information about PTSC, please contact Joan Donahue, at 703-866-5936.

**Readings for the Week of December 21, 2008**

Sunday	Fourth Sunday of Advent 2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16; Ps 89; Rom 16:25-27; Lk 1:26-38
Monday	1 Sm 1:24-28; 1 Sm 2:1, 4-8; Lk 1:46-56
Tuesday	Saint John of Kanty, priest Mal 3:1-4, 23-24; Ps 25; Lk 1:57-66
Wednesday	Morning: 2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16; Ps 89; Lk 1:67-79 Vigil: Is 62:1-5 ; Ps 89; Acts 13:16-17, 22-25; Mt 1:1-25 or 1:18-25
Thursday	The Nativity of the Lord (Christmas) Midnight: Is 9:1-6; Ps 96; Ti 2:11-14; Lk 2:1-14 Dawn: Is 62:11-12; Ps 97; Ti 3:4-7; Lk 2:15-20 Day: Is 52:7-10; Ps 98; Heb 1:1-6; Jn 1:1-18 or 1:1-5, 9-14
Friday	Saint Stephen, first martyr Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59; Ps 31; Mt 10:17-22
Saturday	Saint John, apostle, evangelist 1 Jn 1:1-4; Ps 97; Jn 20:1a, 2-8
Sunday	The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph Sir 3:2-7, 12-14 or Gn 15:1-6; 21:1-3; Ps 128; Col 3:12-21 or 3:12-17 or Heb 11:8, 11-12, 17-19; Lk 2:22-40 or 2:22, 39-40

**FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

**Youth Ministry**

Apolonio Latar, 240-864-2519  
APLATAR@straphaels.org



There will be no LifeNight until January 4th, 2009.

There will be no Current Issues discussion until January 5th, 2009.

*Forever I Will Sing  
The Goodness Of The Lord.*

**THE HOLY FAMILY OF  
JESUS, MARY, AND JOSEPH**

**DECEMBER 28, 2008**

**READINGS:**

SIRACH 3:2-6, 12-14  
COLOSSIANS 3:12-21  
LUKE 2:22-40

One of the gifts that flow from Jesus becoming Man in the Incarnation is that of the family. We are each called to be a member of a group that helps one another, is concerned for one another, loves one another, forgives one another and protects one another and we call this a family. The family is made holy by the blessing of the Trinity.

“Let us too stand in the Temple and hold God’s Son and embrace Him; and that we may deserve leave to withdraw and start on our way towards a better land, let us pray to God, the all-powerful, and to the little Jesus himself, whom we so much want to speak to hold in our arms.”  
(Origen- Third century)

Let us see how we exist in our own family.

God, our Father,  
You are the guardian and guide of our lives.  
your word is joy,  
your will is life,  
your commands bring peace.

Watch over and guide us  
as you did your Son’s earthly family

Through the celebration of this feast  
help us to respond to your word and will,  
that we may grow together as people of faith  
And enjoy the peace of your Kingdom.

Keep our families safe and protected from all harm. Let our love for the members of our families be unconditional as is the love that Jesus has for each of us.

