

# Saint Raphael



## MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

### Welcoming Our New Parochial Vicar, Fr. Eric Garris “I Feel So Much at Home Here”

We often ask priests, especially new priests, why they became a priest. Pope Francis has addressed this issue often during his lifetime. Recently, when meeting with a large group of priests in Rome, the pope said, “I always enjoy meeting with you priests who bear the daily burden of parish work. There is a great joy involved in being a priest. There is nothing more beautiful for a man than to be called to the priesthood, to be called to follow Jesus, to be with Him, to bring Him to others, to bring people His word and His forgiveness.”

The pope’s words echo the experiences and the feelings of Fr. Eric Garris, who joined us at St. Raphael in June as Parochial Vicar. Fr. Garris was just ordained in May, so he is in the early stages of his priesthood.

“What drew me to the priesthood was love of the Lord,” he says. “Of course, that is something which developed in me over time. It was not always a part of my life. As a youth, I dreamed about many things I might do in life, but being a priest was not one of them. I was blessed with attending Catholic schools from kindergarten through high school. By the end of high school, God was calling me though, and I entered seminary right out of high school. I attended both college seminary and major seminary – nine years of study and formation.



*Fr. Eric Garris was ordained by Bishop Thomas on May 19.*

When I was ordained a few weeks ago, you might say I had never left Catholic school.”

Father speaks of what happened in his life, how he heard and discovered his calling.

“The truth is, for a long time in my life, Jesus was the answer on a test,” he says. “He was not a real person to me, not someone Whom I felt I knew, Whom I thought was with me, really. In high school, I stumbled on a quote from Pope St. John Paul II which said, ‘When you wonder about the mystery of yourself, look to Christ, who gives you the meaning of life. When you wonder what it means to be a mature person, look to Christ, Who

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## Stewardship’s “Supreme Teacher” *Following Christ’s Example*

Former President and Five-Star General Dwight D. Eisenhower once said, “You don’t lead by hitting people over the head – that’s assault, not leadership.” President Eisenhower’s words are both blunt and humorous, but he makes a great point. Almost any successful endeavor in life requires the benefit of strong leadership. And a truly effective leader does not lead by simply telling others what to do, but by providing a strong example of how to carry oneself on a daily basis.

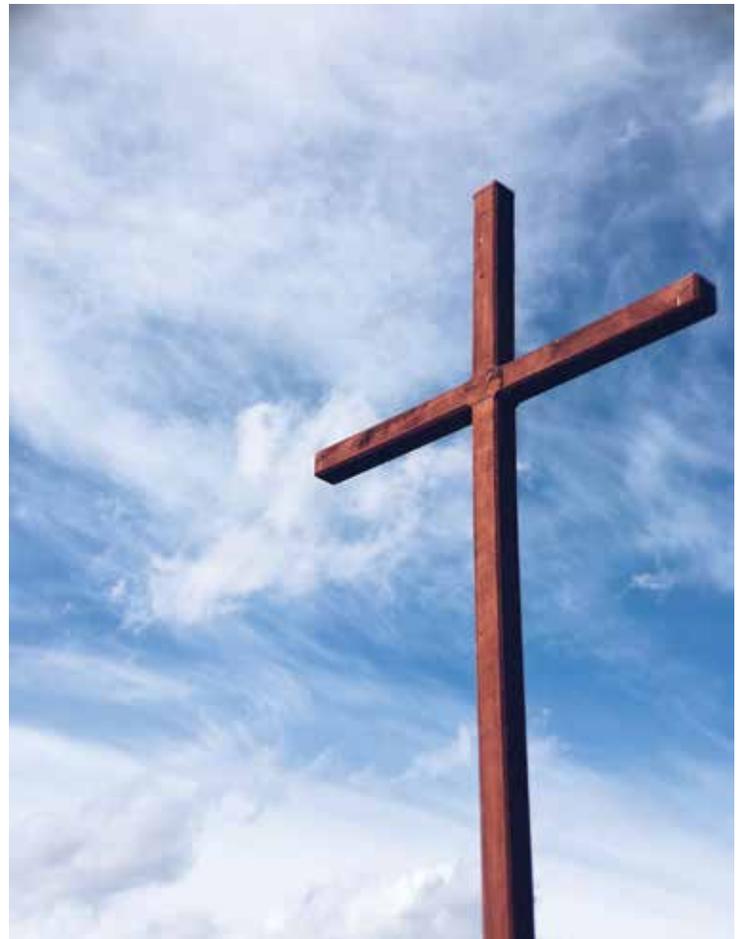
This is no different for us in our lives as Catholic Christians. As individuals who face numerous difficult choices every day, we require a leader who, through word *and* example, can show us the path to living according to God’s will. For us, Jesus is the supreme teacher of every aspect of Christian life, and His life as documented in the Gospels is a model that we should strive to imitate in living as good Christians. And as we have learned, stewardship – the sharing of the gifts that God has given to us – is a big part of Christian life, and one for which Jesus left many examples of successful living.

Jesus’ nature of selfless service, documented many times throughout the New Testament and culminating with His death for our sins, is an underlying aspect of living the stewardship way of life. As the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops points out in its pastoral document *Stewardship: A Disciple’s Response*, “In Jesus’ teaching and life self-emptying is fundamental. Now, it might seem that self-emptying has little to do with stewardship, but in Jesus’ case that is not so. His self-emptying is not sterile self-denial for its own sake; rather, in setting aside self, he is filled with the Father’s will, and he is fulfilled in just this way” (19).

Jesus points out to Peter in Mark’s Gospel that this “self-emptying” requires sacrifice, but ultimately leads to “eternal life in the age to come” (Mk 10:30). But the Christian steward’s ultimate reward is not his or her only benefit from living the stewardship way of life. By sharing of our time, talent, and treasure, and living in imitation of Christ, we can relate more closely to Him in sharing,

in a small way, in His sacrifice. “To be a Christian disciple is a rewarding way of life, a way of companionship with Jesus, and the practice of stewardship as a part of it is itself a source of deep joy. Those who live this way are happy people who have found the meaning and purpose of living” (*Stewardship: A Disciple’s Response*, 21).

The next time you are frustrated or unsure of how to best respond to God’s gifts in stewardship, take a moment to open up the Bible. Jesus may not “hit us over the head” in His leadership, but He does provide numerous examples through His actions and teachings of how to live as one of His disciples.



*A Letter From Our Pastor*

## Summer Vacations Are Coming to an End... Now What?

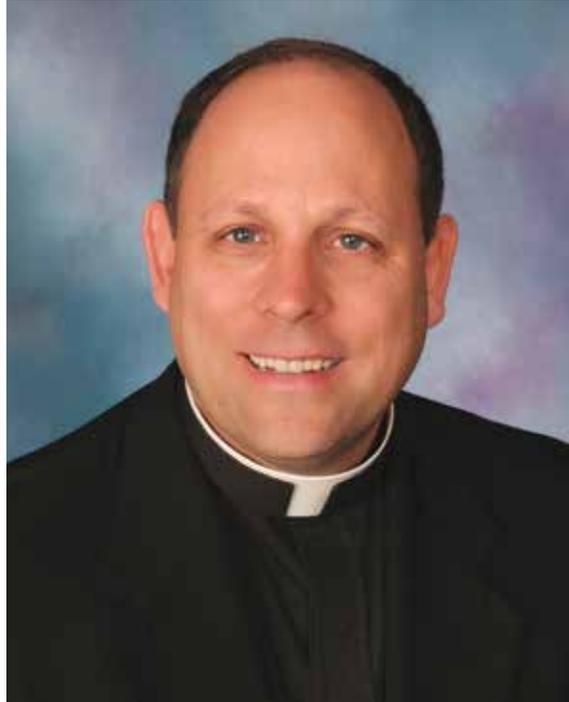
My Dear Friends in Christ,

The month of August really does seem to return us to reality, doesn't it? Summer is coming to an end – maybe not officially on the calendar, but in terms of our lives and the life of the Church, it does. The children may view it as the end of something appealing – the start of summer vacation seems like a long time ago – and their parents may be breathing sighs of relief. For those involved in parish ministries, it might be a time when we say, "Now, it's time to work."

Perhaps this is a time when we get back into the routine of things. However, we all know the truth – that faith and the Church are not seasonal. For that matter, stewardship is not seasonal, and it's not something that is done a few times a year. Rather, stewardship is something we should be thinking about each and every day.

There are many definitions of stewardship, but at its very basis, it means using the gifts God has given us to do the things God asks – calls, expects – us to do. Stewardship is discipleship. We may tend to think of stewardship as a question: "What is mine and what is God's?" The truth is that all that we have and all that we are belongs to and comes from God – absolutely everything!

We may hear that stewardship is using and sharing our time, our talent, and our treasure. In terms of time,



the secret is not learning how to use it or how to get more of it – the secret is knowing how best to use it. Talent and treasure are given to each of us in different amounts. Nevertheless, the bottom line is that we have to trust God before we really share those things. Relying on God and living a God-centered life are fundamental to a relationship with Him – and, for that matter, with one another. Being contented is not the fulfillment of what you may want. Rather, it is the realization of what you already have.

So, we are back to the reality of this time of year. You may have heard the statement that stewardship people are grateful people. Perhaps this is a time to be grateful for the summer that has passed. But it is a time for us to recommit ourselves to doing better, especially as we enter a time of year that provides a return to routine. Importantly, it is also a time filled with celebrations, thanksgiving, hope, and maybe even better stewardship on each of our parts.

May God bless and keep you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Fr. Tim Gareau". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Fr. Tim Gareau,  
Pastor



# Looking Forward to Our Annual “A Time to Get

The month of August is a time of transition. Summer vacation ends and school resumes. We begin to prepare our minds and bodies for shorter days and colder weather, to anticipate spending less time outdoors and more time indoors. But it's also a transition that brings us back together, a time to get reacquainted with our larger parish family, to meet new parishioners and make new friends, to share food and games and music together in the waning days of summer. It's time for our annual parish picnic!

This year's picnic will be held on Sunday, Aug. 20, from 1 to 4 p.m. (after the 12 p.m. Mass) on the church front lawn along Dover Center Road. Several large canopies

will be set up to provide shade from a blistering sun, or shelter from inclement weather – this is a rain or shine event!

Parishioners, non-parishioners and the general public are invited at no cost. Members of the parish staff will be stationed under a Welcome Tent handing out parish literature and answering questions. Representatives from our many ministries will also be on hand to introduce themselves, distribute information about their services

and activities, and to welcome new potential members.

Acoustic guitarist, singer, and harmonica player Chuck Fink will be back this year performing in the Music Tent, which will include tables and chairs for guests to sit and enjoy the entertainment. Chuck specializes in folk/pop/acoustic rock hits and performs an endless array of great songs for all age groups. He is planning a number of songs that young children can enjoy and participate in this year.

*Several active ministries from our parish and school, along with a large number of volunteers, are working together to make this family friendly event a fun time for all. So plan to come, relax with family and friends, and enjoy – let's picnic together!*



*This year's picnic will be held on Sunday, Aug. 20, from 1 to 4 p.m.*

# Parish Picnic – Sunday, Aug. 20 *Reacquainted*”

At the Food Tent, there will be plenty of hamburgers and hot dogs for everyone. Parishioners are invited to bring side dishes, which can be dropped off at the PAC Kitchen the day of the picnic, and our own Bakers Ministry will provide desserts. And, of course, there will also be popcorn, snow cones, and cotton candy! Guests can sit and enjoy their food on the lawn,

or in a large covered Eating Tent.

A variety of adult and children’s games are also being planned for what should be a memorable day. Several active ministries from our parish and school, along with a large number of volunteers, are working together to make this family friendly event a fun time for all. So plan to come, relax with family and friends, and enjoy – let’s picnic together!



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*For more information on our upcoming Parish Picnic, please contact Deacon Mark Cunningham or the parish office staff at 440-871-1100.*

## Welcoming Our New Parochial Vicar *continued from front cover*

is the fullness of humanity. And when you wonder about your role in the future of the world.’ I began to search for Jesus and to get to know Him, especially in the Eucharist. I wanted to know the meaning of life.”

A native of Willoughby Hills, Ohio, Father Garris grew up as a member of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel in Wickliffe. Coincidentally, Wickliffe is also the location of St. Mary Seminary.

“They had lots of room and land at the seminary,” Fr. Garris says. “It was where I played tee ball as a boy. I had no idea what it was or what went on there. As a seminarian, I learned all of that, but even more, I grew as a Catholic and a follower of Jesus. I attended and graduated from Lake Catholic High School in Mentor.”

Father received his undergraduate degree, a

B.A. in Philosophy and Catholic studies, and two advanced degrees, a Master of Divinity and an M.A. in Pastoral Theology. He is 27 years of age, and is proud to serve as “the youngest priest in the Diocese of Cleveland.”

“I love being at St. Raphael,” he says. “I feel so much at home here. The people are wonderful. They have made me feel so welcome. Sometimes, they ask me what I will be doing. I basically respond ‘I priest.’ My priesthood is not so much about what I do, but who I am. I am a priest. I will be responsible for working with the school, with the scouts, the servers, RCIA, the worship commission, and the Raphael Brewing Company. We are also starting a men’s basketball league called the Raphael Hoopsters. It starts on Aug. 6 from 8 p.m. until 10 p.m.”

*The contact information for Fr. Eric Garris is to call the parish office at 440-871-1100, or email him at [egarris@saintraphaelparish.com](mailto:egarris@saintraphaelparish.com).*

# The Assumption of Mary: A Time to Celebrate!

Can a pile of bones really be that exciting? Every year, tens of thousands of pilgrims visit St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, eager to glimpse the spot in which the alleged bones of St. Peter, our first pope, remain to this day.

The relics of saints have been venerated throughout the ages in every corner of the world – yet, the bones of the very first Christian, the Mystical Rose, are nowhere to be found.

When it comes to the day, manner or year of the Blessed Virgin Mary's death, nothing is certain. No account is given in Scripture. The Church turns instead to Tradition for an answer.

Since the birth of the Church, no Marian relics have ever been venerated – nor can they ever be – because her

body was *assumed*, or taken up, into heaven. There exist, therefore, no remains of the Blessed Virgin's body on this earth. She lives, right now, body and soul, in heavenly glory.

Although the particular dogma of the Assumption cannot be found in the writings of Scripture, if we look at many other writings by the early Christians, it is clear that the Church has always held this dogma to be true. Even more, though there is no statement of fact in the Bible itself that Mary was assumed body and soul, the truths that we do know about Mary from Scripture simply serve to back up the reality that she was assumed into heaven. She gave herself wholly to the Lord and followed His will for her life, perfectly, to the end.

The Assumption of Mary reveals that the promises of the Lord – including the resurrection of the body – were fulfilled in Mary. She shared most intimately in the life, death and resurrection of her Son, and was free from original sin and its effects – including corruption of the body at death.

Therefore, it was no surprise when, in 1950, Pope Pius XII declared infallibly the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary as a dogma of the Catholic faith with these words: "The Immaculate Mother of God, the ever Virgin Mary, having completed the course of her earthly life, was assumed body and soul into heavenly glory" (*Munificentissimus Deus*, 44).

The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin is observed on the liturgical calendar as a solemnity – of higher importance than a feast. On Aug. 15, this wonderful celebration is accompanied by great hope in the resurrection of the body and everlasting union with God in heaven.

In the words of Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI during his homily Mass on the Solemnity of the Assumption of Mary in 2006: "Mary is 'blessed' because – totally, in body and soul and forever – she became the Lord's dwelling place. If this is true, Mary does not merely invite our admiration and veneration, but she guides us, shows us the way of life, shows us how we can become blessed, how to find the path of happiness."

Alongside Catholics throughout the country, be sure to celebrate the Solemnity of the Assumption on Aug. 15. This is a declared Holy Day of Obligation in the Church and a great liturgical feast. Mark your calendars!



## The Alpha Course Returns to St. Raphael “A Wonderful Way to Get the Basics of Christianity”

*Is There More to Life Than This?* Over 200 people have now experienced the Alpha Course at St. Raphael, between our fall and winter series last year. These guests were drawn from within and outside our parish, from Bay Village and from surrounding communities. It's an incredible experience, and it resumes this year with another fall series beginning after the Labor Day weekend. Maybe it's time for YOU to come and see what Alpha's all about! It's for people of no faith, people of other faiths, non-practicing and minimally practicing Christians – but it's also for practicing Christians who are seeking a renewal of their faith, who have a desire to share their faith with others, or who are just curious about life's big questions. Alpha is appropriate for children from seventh grade and above. *Free childcare is provided for younger children.*

Alpha is a series of sessions introducing and exploring the basics of Christian faith. Each session begins with a

meal, includes a half-hour video, and ends with small-group conversation. We start with food, because it's a great way to encourage community and get to know one another. The videos are designed to engage and inspire conversation. They explore the big issues around faith and unpack the basics of Christianity, addressing questions such as: *Who is Jesus?* and *How can we have faith?* The small-group conversations are probably the most important part of Alpha. They give everyone the chance to share thoughts and ideas on the evening's topic and simply to discuss it in a small group. There is no obligation to say anything. And there is nothing that cannot be said. It is an opportunity to hear from others and contribute one's own perspective in an honest, friendly and open environment.

Alpha is not a catechism class. There is no preaching, and there is no pressure on guests to

*continued on back cover*

*Alpha is not a catechism class. There is no preaching, and there is no pressure on guests to become a Christian, to become a Catholic, to join the parish, to get more involved in parish life, etc. Rather, Alpha is a safe place to learn about Christianity, to encounter the person of Jesus, to discover God present in our world today. Alpha is an experience.*



*An invitation to come and experience the Fall Alpha course is extended to everyone —to all in the communities surrounding our parish, and to everyone's family and friends!*

# St. Raphael

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## The Alpha Course Returns to St. Raphael *continued from page 7*

become a Christian, to become a Catholic, to join the parish, to get more involved in parish life, etc. Rather, Alpha is a safe place to learn about Christianity, to encounter the person of Jesus, to discover God present in our world today. Alpha is an *experience*. Everyone is welcome at Alpha. There is no commitment or obligation on the part of guests to participate in all the sessions.

An invitation to come and experience the Fall Alpha course is extended to everyone reading this article, to everyone in the communities surrounding our parish, and to everyone's family and friends!

*Fall Alpha begins on Tuesday, Sept. 5, and runs 11 weeks through Tuesday, Nov. 14. Sessions are every Tuesday evening from 6:30-8:30 p.m. in our St. Raphael Community Rooms. There is no cost to attend. Pre-registration is encouraged (to help us estimate food requirements) but not required. Pre-registration is available through the parish website at [www.saintraphaelparish.com](http://www.saintraphaelparish.com), through an email to [alpha@saintraphaelparish.com](mailto:alpha@saintraphaelparish.com), or by a phone call to Deacon Mark Cunningham in the Parish Office at 440-871-1100. If you miss the first session and decide to try a later one, that's fine – you're always welcome at Alpha, whenever you come!*

### *Liturgy Schedule*

**Saturday Vigil:** 4:30 p.m. | **Sunday:** 8:00 a.m., 10:00 a.m., noon

**Weekday Mass:** M, T, W, F, 7:45 a.m. | M, T, Th, F, 9:15 a.m. | Saturday, 8:30 a.m.

**Confessions:** Saturdays 3:00 - 4:00 p.m. | **Eucharistic Adoration:** Friday 10:00 a.m. - Saturday 4:00 p.m.