

June 2017

Saint Raphael



MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

A Very Fond Farewell to Our Parochial Vicar, Fr. Ryan Cubera

“Some people come into our lives and quickly go. Some people move our souls to dance. They awaken us to a new understanding with the passing whisper of their wisdom. Some people make the sky more beautiful to gaze upon. They stay in our lives for awhile, leave footprints on our hearts, and we are never, ever the same.” – Flavia Weedn

Flavia Weedn was a well-known illustrator, especially of children’s books. But when she stated the above, she might have been talking about Fr. Ryan Cubera and his impact on our lives and the life of our St. Raphael community.

After serving as our Parochial Vicar for the past four years, Fr. Cubera will depart shortly for a new assignment. He is moving straight south of here to Olmsted Falls, where he will serve as Parochial Vicar at St. Mary of the Falls Parish.

As we bid him farewell, there is a bit of heaviness in our hearts, but that is a feeling that is shared in part by him. After being ordained on May 18, 2013, Fr. Cubera was assigned to our parish at the end of June. When he arrived, he stated the following: “I hope I can be the priest that the Lord wants me to be. I want to love God’s people in Jesus, and as Jesus. I want to accept the gift of my baptismal graces and help parishioners allow those graces to take deeper root in their lives, as well.”

We can vouch for the fact that he made every effort to accomplish exactly that. Now as he looks back on his four years here, he shares his gratitude and insight.



“Most of all, I want to offer my gratitude to the people of St. Raphael for what they did for me, and for the ways they opened their lives to me,” he says. “They taught me what it means to be a priest. The way the people and this parish have embraced me has been wonderful. I thank God for the years I have been here.”

Farewells are never easy, and as Catholics, we understand full well that this type of farewell to a priest who has served us is common and the way of the Church. In fact, farewells have an even deeper meaning for us as Catholics. Last year in a homily given at the end of the Easter season, Pope Francis

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said, "The atmosphere in these final days of the Easter season is an atmosphere of farewell. Farewells can be dramatic, but our faith tells us they are never permanent. In the Acts of the Apostles, St. Paul bids farewell, and says, 'If only I may accomplish my course and the ministry which I received from the Lord, which is to testify to the Gospel of the grace of God.'"

Fr. Cubera's priesthood is a testament to that same grace. Because of how things evolved here at St. Raphael, he became deeply involved in RCIA and in marriage preparation, among other things.

"There is something very wonderful about being involved with people coming to the faith, and with young couples preparing for marriage," Fr. Cubera says. "Furthermore, this parish and its people have accepted me in a way I could never have anticipated. Getting to know the people here and their families has been just what I needed. I am a better priest because of them."

The norm in the diocese is for a newly ordained priest to initially receive a four-year assignment. He then is reassigned again as an assistant to another veteran priest. The custom in the Diocese of Cleveland is that a priest is not made a pastor until he has served as a priest for a minimum of six years. Like St. Raphael, St. Mary of the Falls has a K-8 school. There is no doubt in our minds that Fr. Ryan Cubera will become as involved there as he has been here, and will serve as lovingly with the same priestly devotion he has shared with us.

A Hawaiian poet wrote a poem titled *Always for Others*, dedicated to priests. There are two stanzas in that poem we cite as we bid a fond farewell to Fr. Cubera: "God handpicked you from a myriad of souls, Molded you since you were a babe, To prepare you for a journey not for you, But always for others... You hold the Body of Christ, Embrace His name and proclaim it, And a Father and a counselor you have become, Not for you, But always for others." Father, we pray for you, and we thank you for being such a noble part of our lives.

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A Letter From Our Pastor

Time Is Limitless... Or Is It?

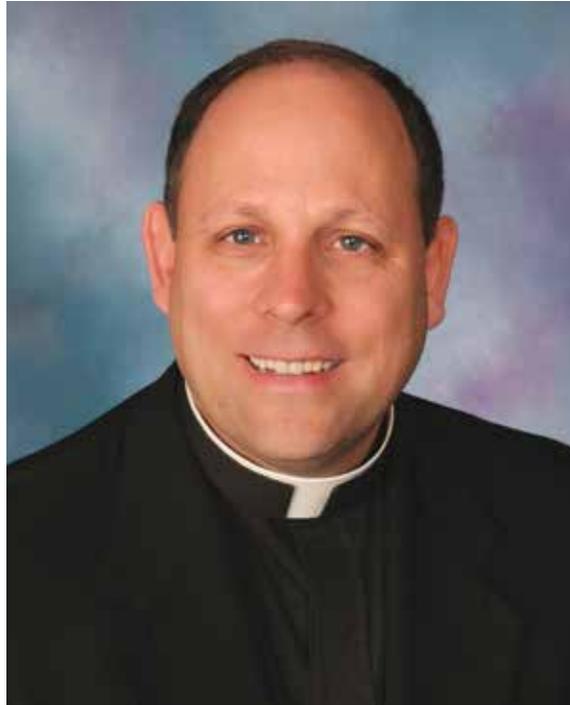
My Dear Friends in Christ,

Some years ago, Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI encouraged Catholics to renew their devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus during the month of June. In thinking about that, it made me realize that we all like to measure time – not necessarily in minutes and hours, but certainly in terms of what happens at particular times of the year. In the Church, we celebrate so many occasions that measure time – Easter, Christmas, Corpus Christi, Pentecost, Ordinary Time, the feast days of our saints, and much more, all of which give us that sense of moving forward.

In our own lives and the lives of our families, we mark birthdays, anniversaries, Baptism days, and more dates than we can possibly remember. These dates commemorate or remind us of a point in time. Time is also one of those gifts from God that we attach to the idea and life of stewardship.

We are fond of saying that time is the one thing given to all of us in equal amounts. However, we all know that is not necessarily true. Does a mother with several children have the same amount of time as a person with no family? Does a company manager who is expected to be available seven days a week have the same amount of time as someone who works a 9-to-5 job?

My point is that time is a valuable commodity, whether we feel like we have a lot or very little. God, on the other hand, is timeless. The Lord sees things in an eternal view, while we tend to look at it in shorter measures. The question is really “What do we do with our time to serve others and to increase our relationship with God?” We have said many times that each of us



needs to set aside time for both of those purposes – to serve and to pray. There is a reason it is called “prayer time.” Prayer should be a part of our lives, as much as eating, sleeping and working.

Another thing that June brings to mind is how life slows down for most of us. Young people are on summer vacation from school. Families and individuals take vacations. Unfortunately, some see it as a time to take a bit of vacation from worship. We can see it in declining Mass attendance and in the reduced number of activities within ministries and organizations.

We all mark time. We all know that it is limited, and can be fleeting. That is why

even countries celebrate special days that mark time – throughout the summer season, Americans celebrate Memorial Day, Independence Day, and Labor Day. How do we mark time as individuals, as families, and as a parish? That may say more about our understanding of stewardship than anything else. Maybe now, as summer is upon us, is the perfect time to concentrate *more* on our spiritual habits, rather than less.

May God bless and keep you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tim Gareau'.

Fr. Tim Gareau,
Pastor

Our Graduating Eighth Students Are Ready to Take the Next

Speaking to Catholic school parents, teachers, and students during one of his visits to the United States, Pope Saint John Paul II stated, "A Catholic school is a place where students live a shared experience of faith in God and where they learn the riches of Catholic culture... Catholic schools must help students to deepen their relationship with God and to discover that all things human have their deepest meaning in the person and teaching of Jesus Christ." Pope Francis is also a great supporter of Catholic education. He recently said, "Let us thank all those who teach in Catholic schools. Educating is an act of love – it is like giving life."

For the past 16 years, Mrs. Ann Miller has served as the Principal at St. Raphael School. Not only does she concur with the strong feelings of the two popes quoted above, but she also has a special perspective of the school and of those graduating this year. Considering the 88 young people who will graduate in June, Mrs. Miller offers her insight and reflection.

"Because I have served as the principal here for the past 16 years, I have had the opportunity to watch these young people, our eighth-graders, grow from being quite small to the young men and women they are today," she says.

Mrs. Miller notes that she is



proud to be the principal of such an outstanding school.

"St. Raphael Catholic School is a Blue Ribbon School of Excellence where we live our faith and learn through a commitment to academic excellence," she says. "At St. Raphael School, we educate and care about the whole child – academically, spiritually, emotionally, and socially. Each child is viewed as a unique individual, but also as a contributing member of a group, which is an important part of the educational process."

As Mrs. Miller puts it, from the moment that students enter St. Raphael, they are on a faith journey.

"We take that part of the student's journey quite seriously, while not ignoring the other aspects of their training and development," she says. "The Class of 2017 is an example of many of the exceptional students we have had. They are a fun-loving group of young people who enjoy one another immensely. Every year of our lives is significant, but for them this year has been especially filled with events and experiences they will treasure forever."

The older students at St. Raphael accept the role and responsibility of working with the younger grades in a variety of ways. They are thus automatically examples and role

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h-Grade Class of 2017

Next Exciting Steps in a Life of Faith

models for the lower grades. However, there are also events that point to their status as eighth-graders – events that culminate during graduation week.

Earlier this year many of the eighth-grade class members took a trip to Washington, D.C. This was a parent-sponsored and run event. Nevertheless, it was another occasion for the class as a group to learn and to become closer. The final weeks of their eighth-grade year are also full of opportunities. On May 9, the class took a trip to the Holocaust Memorial in east Cleveland. This was precipitated by the fact that the students had all read the book *The Hiding Place*, based on the life of Corrie ten Boom, who – along with her family – assisted and hid Jewish families during World War II.

Of course, it is graduation week itself that is the high point of this year for the eighth-graders. On Monday, June 5, they will open the day with their Baccalaureate Mass to be held in the church beginning at 9:15 a.m. Attendance is open to all, with the sixth and seventh-grade classes also participating. Immediately following Mass, all retire to the Parish Activities Center – PAC – for the Honors Assembly and the associated awards. That day is then highlighted by the annual eighth-grade luncheon, which is a special event indeed. Prepared and presented by the parents, it features top-flight food. The theme this year is Under the Big Top and there are games, a DJ and more in the gymnasium, which is decorated appropriately for the occasion.

The final act is the graduation itself, held on Wednesday, June 7, beginning at 7 p.m., again in the PAC. All the graduates will don white robes for the occasion. There is a group photo taken in the church prior to graduation, and at the graduation, the president of the Student Council will reflect on their time at St. Raphael. The students receive their diplomas, but they are also gifted with an angel necklace and a red rose. The red rose is to be given to their parents in gratitude for all their support to allow the graduates to get to this point.

“We take pride in our graduates,” Mrs. Miller says. “Of the 88 graduating this year, we are aware of at least 81 who will continue their education at a Catholic high school.”



For more information on graduation activities or on St. Raphael School, please contact the school office at 440-871-6760.

Keeping in Touch With the Holy Father: There's an App for That!

“Let the Church always be a place of mercy and hope, where everyone is welcomed, loved and forgiven.”

These words from Pope Francis weren't delivered during a homily in St. Peter's or in a speech from St. Peter's Square – nor were they written in a papal bull or apostolic letter. Rather, they were delivered in an instant to millions of Catholics around the world through the pope's very own Twitter account.

The technology of communication has perhaps changed more in the past century than in the previous 20 combined. And with these developments, the Catholic Church – led by our Holy Fathers, from Pope St. John Paul II through Pope Francis – strongly encourages that the faithful adopt and adapt these resources for the all-important task of spreading the Gospel throughout the whole world.

Just as St. Paul used every convenience at his disposal to spread the Gospel throughout the far reaches of the Roman empire,

today's evangelists are using every resource available to them. Examples of Catholic figures using the new media with great success abound.

Only a few months into his pontificate, Pope Francis took the Vatican's social media efforts to a whole new level. In spring 2013, the Vatican released *The Pope App*, which features a live webcam from the Vatican, along with quotes, news, images and videos of all the Holy Father's latest doings.

Following the pope's lead, bishops, priests and apologists are taking the technological gifts at their fingertips and utilizing them to spread the Gospel throughout the world in a variety of ways.

One great example is Bishop Robert Barron of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, whose Word On Fire Ministry has produced wildly popular YouTube videos discussing everything from controversial Church teachings to movie reviews from a Catholic perspective. His website also includes articles, interviews and his weekly homilies. Word On

Fire also released the critically acclaimed *Catholicism* DVD documentary series.

Independent Catholic bloggers and Web-based media are also widely established and provide their audiences and readership with Catholic news and cultural commentary.

Here in America, parishes, Catholic schools, dioceses, and even the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops are utilizing these tools as well, creating first-rate websites, maintaining Twitter and Facebook accounts, and more.

All of these resources are geared toward a wide variety of audiences, from the un-churched and fallen-away Catholics to active parishioners.

Being knowledgeable of the new media tools available to us as Catholics is a great way to be more effective in our universal call to evangelization. Take some time to see what media resources your parish, school and diocese are using, and be sure to pass them along to those in your sphere of influence!

St. Raphael's Vacation Bible School 2017

Fostering the Faith in Our Children

Imagine a world where curious children become hands-on inventors who discover they're lovingly crafted by God. Vacation Bible School sparks creativity with interactive decoration and experiences. This summer's St. Raphael Maker Fun Factory Vacation Bible School transforms our parish into a place buzzing with excitement!

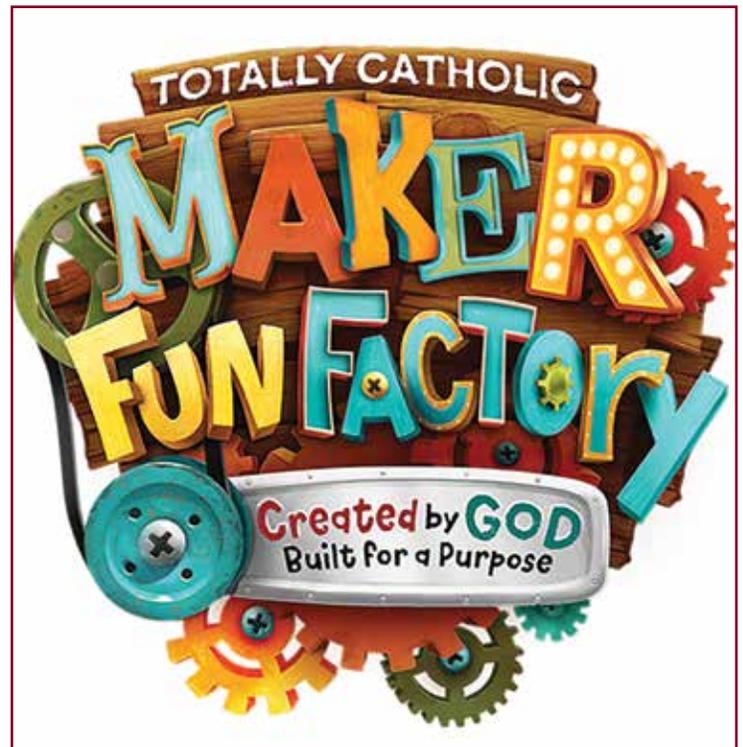
That excitement will be at a fever pitch from Monday, July 17 through Friday, July 21 during our annual VBS program. We begin each day on the parish grounds at 9:30 a.m. and wrap things up promptly at noon, with the exception of the final day when it goes until 12:15 p.m. The Bible School is open to children who are age 4 by June 30 through students who are entering grade 5 this fall of 2017. It is anticipated that as many as 350 children will participate this year.

"Vacation Bible School is much more than just providing the program to the children attending, however," says Miss Terri Telepak, the parish Pastoral Associate who heads up the Bible School. "Students entering grades 6 through 12 are needed as volunteers, as well as many adult and parent volunteers. All together, there will likely be around 500 people involved. We are the largest Catholic VBS in the state of Ohio and some years, we have been the largest Catholic effort in the United States."

Miss Telepak continues, "The past success of our Vacation Bible School (VBS) indicates that this is much more than just a summer baby-sitting service. We are fostering our faith among our children, and they and their families do enjoy it, but they also take something much more permanent with them — a better understanding of our Catholic faith and a greater appreciation for their relationship with the Lord."

With the theme Maker Fun Factory and the sub theme of Created by God: Built for a Purpose each day includes lessons from the Bible, music, story-time, a craft activity, outdoor games, a snack, Saint of the Day, and a prayer service. Each child receives a VBS T-shirt, and a buddy character of the day in addition to a VBS music CD.

Miss Telepak says, "We use the Totally Catholic version of the Bible School, but it's open to all children



from other parishes and Christian churches. Our VBS is centered on Jesus Christ and it includes Catholic content on the Sacraments and prayers from the Mass."

As indicated adult and teen volunteers are needed. One family which is involved on many levels is the Gills. Mom Joanne Gill will serve as an adult leader for the second year. Her daughters Cora and Anna will be leaders from the youth perspective, and son Abraham will be a participant. Oldest daughter Emma has served in the past as a teen leader. Mrs. Gill says, "This is such a great and important way to get young children involved in the Church. Youngsters at that age are so open to learning more about our faith and all that it means. And it is fun! Driving home after the final day last year, Abraham (who was 8 at the time) said, 'Mom, that was so much fun this week. When does it happen again?'"

VBS will happen from July 17 through July 21. Miss Telepak adds, "So many people are involved in so many ways. Many of our families and adults are not able to help us every day, but many may give us one day

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St. Raphael

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St. Raphael's Vacation Bible School 2017 *continued from page 7*

during the week. We always need adults and they are all welcome! There is a registration fee of \$50 per child, and we encourage everyone to complete registration by June 30."

One mother who is a leader commented, "Perhaps one of the biggest reasons why I have always loved VBS is because it is fun. I can laugh and be silly with children of all ages and because we can transform the grounds of our church into a child's adventure. I think it is important to show others, especially children, that loving God is fun and the message of Christ is not all about an adult's world but it is about being a community where loving God and faith includes children."

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For more information, please contact the Parish Office at 440-871-1100.

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.