

Hymnal #871 (Vigil)
 #872 (8am)
 #873 (10am)

Christmas: The Nativity of the Lord

Mass Intentions

Sat., December 24
 2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16; Ps 89:2-5, 27, 29; Lk 1:67-79
4 pm ... Christmas Eve Vigil Mass

Sun., December 25 **The Nativity of the Lord**
 Vigil: Is 62:1-5; Ps 89:4-5, 16-17, 27 29; Acts 13:16-17, 22-25; Mt 1:1-25 [18-25] Night: Is 9:1-6; Ps 96:1-3, 11-13; Ti 2:11-14; Lk 2:1-14
8 am ... ☩Edward Heroux by Bridget Heroux
10 am ... Our Parish Family

Mon., December 26 **Saint Stephen**
 Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59; Ps 31:3cd-4, 6, 8ab, 16bc, 17; Mt 10:17-22
9 am ... ☩John & ☩Irene Narkey by Teresa Greene

Tue., December 27 **Saint John**
 1 Jn 1:1-4; Ps 97:1-2, 5-6, 11-12; Jn 20:1a, 2-8
12 pm ... ☩Vicki Wolf by Lillian LaRoche

Wed., December 28 **The Holy Innocents**
 1 Jn 1:5 — 2:2; Ps 124:2-5, 7b-8; Mt 2:13-18
12 pm ... ☩Larry Cote (8th Anniv.) by Jeannine Cote

Thur., December 29 **Saint Thomas Becket**
 1 Jn 2:3-11; Ps 96:1-3, 5b-6; Lk 2:36-40
8:30 am ... Edith B. Clark (living) by Anne Clark

Fri., December 30 **Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph**
 Sir 3:2-6, 12-14 or Col 3:12-21 [12-17]; Ps 128:1-5; Mt 2:13-15, 19-23
6 pm ... ☩Romain & ☩Louise Marcoux by Diane Gallant

Sat., December 31 **Saint Sylvester I**
 1 Jn 2:18-21; Ps 96:1-2, 11-13; Jn 1:1-18
4 pm ... The Solemnity of Mary Vigil Mass

Sun., January 1 **The Solemnity of Mary**
 Nm 6:22-27; Ps 67:2-3, 5, 6, 8; Gal 4:4-7; Lk 2:16-21
8 am ... ☩John Daley by Kathy Gunther
10 am ... Our Parish Family

Weekly Collection

Weekend of December 18, 2016
 Regular Offertory \$2,867.75 Make-Up Offertory 271.00 Loose Offertory 834.00 Online Parish Giving 295.00 **Total**
\$4,267.75
 Stewardship \$ 159.00
 Immaculate Conception \$ 43.00
 Christmas \$ 250.00
 Food Pantry \$4,840.00

Last Year: Weekend of Dec. 13, 2015
 Total Offertory \$7,547.75



Poinsettias in memory of loved ones Special thanks to those who donate flowers in memory and in honor of loved ones. A list of memorials is included in this week's bulletin.



Thank you! We are grateful to everyone who donated to our Christmas Angel Tree appeal this year. Donations received went to **Angie's Place, Liberty House, and The Way Home.**



New Year's Mass Schedule



Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God
Saturday, Dec. 31 Mary Mother of God Vigil Mass at 4 pm
Sunday, Jan. 1, 2017 Mary Mother of God Masses at 8 and 10 am

 **Sanctuary candle** The sanctuary candle burns this week for a special intention.

 **Saint Raphael Food Pantry** On Monday, Dec. 19, the food pantry served 39 families and gave out 62

bags of groceries. We need fruit, peanut butter, and cereal. We can always use brown paper bags and plastic bags, too. Thank you!



Please note that the rectory will be closed on Monday, Dec. 26 and on Monday, January 2, 2017 in observance of the holidays.

Wanted: Sacristans, lectors & ushers

Have you ever considered serving God and your fellow parishioners as a sacristan, lector or usher? Service in these important roles is by appointment, but you can help Saint Raphael expand our roster by volunteering for consideration and indicating when and for how long you might be available. Please contact the office at 603.623.2604 if you are interested and would like more info. Thank you!

Called to *Serve*

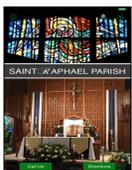
Chris



Holy Communion Distribution Notice—We all know that the flu and cold season raises all sorts of questions with regard to the transmission of germs when the faithful receive the

Precious Blood from the chalice. **Until Holy Thursday of next year, Holy Communion will be distributed only under the form of the Consecrated Host**, per the direction of the Bishop of the diocese of Manchester, NH. For individuals with gluten or other allergy limitations, we do offer gluten-free hosts. Please inform the sacristan at the Mass you attend if you require a gluten-free host. Prior to Holy Thursday, a renewed catechesis on the practice of Holy Communion Under Both Kinds will be made available under the direction of the Office of Worship and Fr. Jason Jalbert.

We have an App! Download our free app for info and updates. Enter "Saint Raphael Parish" to find us in the app store.



Christmas in Syria: A peacemaker's role for embattled Christians

For the past few days, Aleppo city has been **breathing sighs of relief**. Since the rebels reached an agreement with the regime forces and its allies to evacuate all civilians and militants from their last stronghold in east Aleppo city, there finally can be some peace. From the very start of the **Syrian civil war**, Aleppo has paid the greatest price on the humanitarian, social, economic and environmental level. Many people had to evacuate their houses and shops due to violence. So many lives were lost, leaving countless numbers of widows and orphans. Trees and park benches are chopped by those desperate for heating, given the scarcity of fuel and gas and exorbitant prices. **Once a city of five million inhabitants, only 1.5 million people remain.**

This particularly cold winter many families are left homeless, finding shelter in the streets, in abandoned factories and construction sites. Humanitarian agencies are not managing to coordinate their activities, which has resulted in chaos. Most of the evacuated children have not been able to go to school for the last three years, which spells disaster for the next generation of adults. **Disease is spreading freely** among women and children, many of them left without a father who has been evacuated from eastern Aleppo.

No Christian here ever thought of leaving Aleppo were it not for the hell in which people have been living. **The humanitarian conditions are horrific.** The city has been without electricity for the past six months! Even when the power lines are operating normally, only one or two hours of service at best is provided. Water is cut off routinely and many parts of Aleppo have been without water for 40 days. The old historic churches in the old city area are destroyed beyond



FATHER HILAL, A JESUIT PRIEST, WITH SOME OF HIS YOUNGEST CHARGES. / ACN PHOTO

repair.

Aleppo was home to 120,000 Christians before the war; now only 30,000 remain. The war, the violence, the horrible humanitarian conditions, and the fear for their lives and the lives of their children forced families to take the tough decision to flee to Lebanon or beyond.

Clergy and men and women religious who have remained are continuing their ministry to those who are still here. **Jesuit Relief Services here serves 10,000 hot meals every day** to people of all faiths and backgrounds; we also hand-out baskets each day with both food and non-food items. We also provide **medical and social services.** All

the Churches in the city work in harmony to help Christians and Muslims alike.

Despite these harsh conditions, Christmas still comes with its message of hope—hope for peace that has been so elusive for

five years. Bells will be ringing in the churches that are still standing, announcing glad tidings: Emmanuel, God is with us. **My Christmas Mass homily** will have as its theme: “Mercy: the hand that opens the doors so that the spirit of love may come in.”

My reflections will touch upon something few in the West realize: **Christians in Aleppo have always played a major part in mediation between warring factions.** They need to continue to play that vital role, especially now, when the country has taken a step toward a new chapter of peace and reconstruction. **Syrian Christians will follow the lead of Pope Francis**, who insists that that there is a three-part solution to the Syrian crisis: **forgiveness, dialogue, and reconciliation.** Bringing that about is the calling of every Christian in Syria today.

Father Hilal, S.J., is the representative in Syria for the international Catholic charity Aid to the Church in Need (ACN). Since the beginning of the Syrian civil war in 2011, ACN has spent approximately \$20M in support of the persecuted and suffering Church in the country. Aid to the Church in Need is an international Catholic charity under the guidance of the Holy See, providing assistance to the suffering and persecuted Church in more than 140 countries. Article courtesy of Zenit.



ALEPPO, ONCE A CITY OF 5 MILLION AND SYRIA'S SECOND LARGEST, IN HAPPIER TIMES.

In Sympathy Please pray for the repose of the souls of †**Robert “Bob” Breault** who died Dec. 8 and whose funeral Masses was celebrated last week by P. Jerome.



Pew hymnals In an effort to assist parishioners, we will leave four hymnals in each of the pews. These hymnals are labeled to remain at opposite ends of the pews. Please remember to return hymnals taken from the carte at the back of the church. Thank you!



NEW and IMPROVED Social Committee at Saint Raphael! Under the leadership of **Alicia and Corey Gillooly**, we are seeking volunteers ready to have fun and make new friends! This committee will consist of lay volunteers who plan, organize and run social events which benefit the entire parish. Some of these events will include a our upcoming Christmas Fair on Dec. 3 and other events. More to come! Our mission will be to foster a sense of community and to encourage the growth and participation of the entire congregation in social activities! Please call Kerri Stanley at 623-2604 If you would like to be involved!

Altar Servers Needed! There will be an **informational meeting on Sunday, Oct. 16 at 11 am** for anyone interested in becoming an altar server, adults included. in the church. Training and refresher training will be provided as well. Questions? Please contact Eric Bernazzani, director of altar serving, at eric.bernazzani@yahoo.com.



In Sympathy Please pray for the repose of the soul of †**Alma Gendron**, who died on Oct. 29 and whose funeral Mass was celebrated last week by P. Jerome.



Book Discussion Group Please join the book discussion group as it completes its examination of the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. We'll be reading *A Lesson Before Dying* by Ernest J. Gaines. We'll meet on **Thursday, Dec. 15**, upstairs in the church conference room. Books will be available at the parish office for \$9.00. Please join us! \$15. Please come early to enjoy some refreshments!