Every couple who plans to be married within the Diocese of Cleveland is required to attend a Pre-Cana day as part of their marriage preparation process. Here at St. Raphael, we pride ourselves in providing a Pre-Cana experience that is relaxed and fun, yet still gives couples a strong foundation on which to build a good, faith-centered marriage.

TJ and Quinn Pillari have been co-chairs of the Pre-Cana team at St. Raphael for the past six years. They work with a team of eight or nine couples each year to plan and present the Pre-Cana program to engaged couples from parishes throughout the diocese. Through this program, they hope to instill an understanding of marriage and all of its facets through teaching, discussion, and sharing of their own experiences in marriage.

“We discuss a variety of topics including communication, challenges of everyday living, prayer as a couple, dealing with finances, and sexuality,” Quinn says. “One strength of our day is that all of our team members provide an authentic, down-to-earth, transparent witness of what it means to live out one’s Catholic faith in every aspect of a marriage. Though some of the topics we discuss can be challenging, they are presented with joy, lightheartedness and often humor. We also pride ourselves on really focusing on hospitality to ensure that all couples feel welcome and at home.”

The Pre-Cana days are offered once a year at St. Raphael, always in March. Couples are allowed to attend Pre-Cana retreats at any parish within the diocese. Each parish offers Pre-Cana at different times throughout the year so that couples can choose to attend at a time that is convenient for their schedules.

At St. Raphael, the Pre-Cana day begins at 8:45 a.m. The team uses a few fun icebreakers to make couples feel comfortable as soon as they arrive. Throughout the day, topics are presented by the team members and the couples then have pockets of time alone to discuss these same topics. Couples are served a catered lunch and an hour break to enjoy in the middle of the day. At 4:30 p.m. the couples attend the vigil Mass, then reconvene to mingle and enjoy snacks and music. The day closes with a catered candlelight dinner served by the Pre-Cana team.

“Many participants have told us that they come to Pre-Cana kind of dreading it or thinking of it as an obligation,” TJ says.
Believe it or not, Father’s Day wasn’t recognized as a national holiday until 1966. History states that two women were the driving forces behind the establishment of Father’s Day as an official holiday.

In 1908, Grace Golden Clayton suggested a day of paternal observance to her Methodist pastor. Ms. Clayton’s request, sparked by a tragic West Virginia mine explosion, sought to honor the fathers who perished beneath the mountains during the blast.

Two years later, a Mrs. Sonora Smart Dodd of Spokane, Wash., inspired by the popularity of Mother’s Day, pushed to establish a similar holiday honoring fathers. Mrs. Dodd was called to remember the selfless actions of her own father, Civil War veteran William Jackson Smart. Mr. Smart lovingly raised Sonora and her five siblings single-handedly after the death of his wife. The holiday was celebrated on June 19, 1910.

Today, Father’s Day is celebrated on the third Sunday of June. A celebration in honor of all fathers, we are called to give thanks to the men who raised us, provided us with protection and support, and patiently watched as we stretched our wings for flight.

Fathers are notorious for their silent wisdom. They are the strong embrace daughters run to when in fear or sorrow, the righteous shoes sons attempt to fill when approaching manhood, the unending catalogue of answers to life’s hardest questions. A parish priest once likened fathers to the human skeleton – fundamental, yet often forgotten. Just as we rarely notice the stabilizing existence of our backbones, without the guidance of fathers and father figures, we would lack the poise and dignity we carry because of their presence.

Consider the importance of Christ’s earthly father, St. Joseph. When contemplating the Holy Family, St. Joseph doesn’t hold the “celebrity” status of Jesus and Mary. Catholics everywhere hold special devotions to Mary, but what about St. Joseph, her most chaste spouse? Sadly, he often stands in the shadows of his wife and child. But isn’t that what fathers are supposed to do? A good dad provides his children with the necessary tools to succeed in life, and then steps aside, hoping and praying that they will lead a life better than his own. A good dad honors his wife and encourages her to shine in the virtue of her own femininity. A good dad follows in the footsteps of St. Joseph.

This Father’s Day, as you rush to the hardware store and grab your dad a gift certificate, consider the relationship Christ and St. Joseph shared. Cherish the silent love that fathers hold for their children. Understand the honor that fathers deserve and recognize the blessed nature of their guidance and leadership.
A Letter From Our Pastor

Are We Ordinary, or Are We Extraordinary?

My Dear Friends in Christ,

Our Catholic saints provide us with some superb examples of stewardship, in action and in approaches to our spiritual lives.

I think we sometimes view saints as being distant and different, statues and mythical. However, so many of them were people like you and me — people who looked at life and the world a little differently, closer to the way the Lord might look at the world. Just a few weeks ago two men were canonized, made saints — St. John XXIII and St. John Paul II. Certainly most of us vividly remember the living John Paul II, and many (over the age of 65 to be sure) remember John XXIII.

Someone recently commented to me how much Pope Francis reminds them of St. John XXIII. You can certainly see that if you study the two men. St. John XXIII, born Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli, was the eldest son in a farm family in northern Italy. One of the most apt descriptions of him describes him as an “ordinary” man. You may have heard a description of saints as “ordinary people doing extraordinary things.” That would seem to fit with everything we know about John XXIII. And that is the stewardship point I am trying to make.

We, like many of the saints, have an opportunity to do some outstanding things here at St. Raphael. Most likely we will not be beatified or canonized, but that does not mean we cannot strive to be holy. Stewardship, recognizing that God has gifted us and knowing that God is with us, is one of the ways we can at least move in the direction of holiness.

St. John XXIII died 51 years ago on June 3. Here we are a mere half-century later recognizing and acknowledging that this was a holy man indeed. Yes, he was a simple and ordinary man, but a man who had no pretensions about himself. As a young man in seminary he wrote in his journal, “From the saints I must take the substance of their virtues.”

In the Apostles Creed, we recite that we believe in “the communion of saints.” That phrase means that we accept the fact that we are united, each of us, with all on earth and all in heaven. We are one body in Christ. The saints are as much a part of our lives as we are of their lives. Look around you in our parish. You will see more than a few saints. Think about your family, your friends, your neighbors. There are saints there as well.

I do not feel like a saint very often, and I doubt if you do either. However, that does not mean we cannot try to be a bit more holy, a bit more loving, a bit more caring, and a lot more forgiving. Those are the kinds of things good stewardship leads us to.

Easter has come and gone, but we are still an Easter people. St. John XXIII – that remarkably down-to-earth man – advised his people, and us, “Consult not your fears but your hopes and your dreams. Think not about your frustrations, but about your unfulfilled potential. Concern yourself not with what you tried and failed in, but with what it is still possible for you to do.” Fellow stewards, we have much to do. It is time for us ordinary people to achieve extraordinary accomplishments.

May God bless and keep you,

Fr. Tim Gareau,
Pastor
Children are always welcome at any Mass here at St. Raphael. However, it can sometimes be helpful for parents to have a childcare system available to them. Through the Littlest Angels Ministry, parents can receive that assistance while children are cared for in a constructive and social environment.

Littlest Angels offers supervised childcare and playtime in the Zwilling Room during the 9:30 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. Masses for 2-to-5 year olds. The ministry is supervised by Sarah Telepak, who is a middle-school teacher at a local Christian school.

“I think it’s a great opportunity for the parish because, on one side, it allows the parents to be able to sit and pray and focus and really listen to the homily, because they aren’t worried about what their child is doing,” Sarah says. “It also gives an opportunity for very young children to be exposed to Christ-like play — learning basics from a young age like sharing, following directions, treating each other with kindness, and playing nicely. Some of them may not be able to comprehend completely what is going on, but it’s still being instilled in them.”

The ministry provides an hour full of activities for the children while their parents are in Mass, including playtime, craft time, snack time and movie time. During each session, Sarah is assisted by two regular helpers — Claire Kander, who is a student at Ursuline College, and Sahana Petras, a high school senior. The ministry is also able to take up to four additional volunteer students, in middle school through senior year of high school.

“We encourage our teen volunteers not to just sit in a

“It’s a great ministry — not every parish has it, and it’s one of those things that is beneficial on multiple levels. It involves a lot of groups working together, and that’s the beauty of it, and what makes it work. I have parents who say their children can’t wait to come to church in the morning — and that’s the way it should be! Hopefully this starts a pattern that will continue as they get older.”

— Sarah Telepak
“Littlest Angels” of Our Parish

chair and watch the kids play, but to sit on the floor and play with them,” says pastoral associate Terri Telepak. “They are there building blocks with them, helping the girls play with the baby dolls, setting out dinosaur toys or a tea party, and coloring with them. They are an active participant in the play.”

The ministry greatly appreciates the help from the many students who volunteer with Littlest Angels for their service hour requirements. However, they also encourage their volunteers to continue to make service to others a way of life, even after their requirements are completed.

“If you’re part of the family of St. Raphael, everyone pitches in like they do in every big family,” Terri says. “You do that by finding your gifts and talents. This is a great experience for young adolescents.”

“Ultimately, service is something that we don’t see often in daily life,” Sarah adds. “Pope Francis himself is trying to show everyone that this is what Christ is like and what he does. We need to serve in order to set that example. Also, it’s a fantastic opportunity, even if you’re not planning on going into a childcare-related field, to have responsibility and to learn to communicate with others in authority or in case something goes wrong. All these things are important and good skills to have.”

Overall, the ministry is an excellent way to give parents some “alone time” with our Lord in the Mass, while providing an environment of peaceful play and structure for their children.

“It is a great service for our St. Raphael families, especially since we have hundreds of young families in the parish with a lot of little kids,” Terri says. “It’s also an atmosphere where, as a parent, you feel comfortable entrusting your children to these caregivers.”

“It’s a great ministry — not every parish has it, and it’s one of those things that is beneficial on multiple levels,” Sarah says. “It involves a lot of groups working together, and that’s the beauty of it, and what makes it work. I have parents who say their children can’t wait to come to church in the morning — and that’s the way it should be! Hopefully this starts a pattern that will continue as they get older.”

The Littlest Angels Ministry takes place each Sunday throughout the year, with the exception of Christmas and Easter. For more information, please contact the parish office at 440-871-1100 or ttelepak@saintraphaelparish.com.
Celebrating the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus

The Sacred Heart of Jesus is probably the most widely recognized representation of Christ’s divine love and unwavering compassion for all of humanity. Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus has been practiced for centuries, and this devotion continues to play an important role in today’s Catholic faith. As we celebrate the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus on June 27, we have a wonderful opportunity to learn more about this essential Catholic devotion and its role in Church history.

Devotion to the Sacred Heart extends as far back as the 11th or 12th centuries. While there are no definitive texts or histories that verify initial devotees, it is understood that the devotion grew out of the Benedictine and Cistercian monasteries of the time. By the 16th century, documented devotional prayers and exercises had been formulated, and the ascetic writers began making more extensive reference to the Sacred Heart. But it was not until the 17th century that devotion to the Sacred Heart moved beyond being practiced on a private, individual basis. St. Jean Eudes established the first feast of the Sacred Heart, and this was shared with devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. It was then that the devotional feast of the Sacred Heart began to spread to other dioceses and religious communities.

However, the devotion as we know and understand it today largely stems from the visions of Jesus Christ to St. Margaret Mary Alacoque. While these visions were numerous, the most remarkable revelation, known as “the great apparition,” occurred during the octave of Corpus Christi in 1675. As Jesus said to Margaret Mary, “Behold the Heart that has so loved men... instead of gratitude I receive from the greater part (of mankind) only ingratitude.”

Reporting her vision to Fr. Claude de la Colombière, Margaret Mary was then directed to write an account of the apparition. Despite her initial reluctance to do so, as well as her misgivings upon its completion, this written account would soon be published and widely read among both clergy and laymen, thus playing an instrumental role in spreading the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Another book, The Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, was written by Jesuit Father Croiset after Jesus told Margaret Mary to have Fr. Croiset write it. Following Margaret Mary’s death in 1690, Fr. Croiset would compose a short biography of her life that was amended to his book, which served to further increase interest and practice of the devotion.

Over the course of the next century, devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus would continue to spread. By the latter half of the 18th century, a Mass of the Sacred Heart was given papal approval for Poland and Portugal, followed two decades later by Venice, Austria and Spain. Then, in 1856, the Feast of the Sacred Heart was officially established by Pope Pius IX.

While the specific readings and exercises for the feast day have been changed and replaced over the years, the basic tenets that extend back to the visions of St. Margaret Mary Alacoque remain the same — the acknowledgement of and devotion to Christ’s unending compassion and love for all of us. Indeed, the Catholic Church maintains and continues to build on this wonderful devotion. A key tradition was established as recently as 2002, when St. John Paul II decreed a world day of prayer for the sanctification of priests — World Priest Day — to be observed annually on the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.
The Boy Scout and Cub Scout programs have a longstanding tradition of providing young boys with many important lessons and experiences that they can use throughout their lives.

“One of the great opportunities that Scouts has over a lot of other activities, first, is it’s really set at their own pace,” says Dave Madigan, Scoutmaster of Boy Scout Troop 159. “They can work on advancing at the rate they feel they want to advance. The truth is if they don’t want to advance, they don’t need to advance. If they want to just go camping and have fun, they can just have fun. It needs to be fun and interesting for the boys first, then as they get older they really get the opportunity to learn lifelong leadership skills and really practice them.”

Dave is a lifelong member of St. Raphael Parish. He was baptized at St. Raphael, and has lived here for all his life. Over the years, he has been involved in a number of areas of parish life. He has helped with the Pancake Breakfast and the Lenten Fish Fry, and he also served a three-year term on the Parish Council.

His major area of involvement, however, is with Boy Scout Troop 159, which is sponsored by St. Raphael. He was a member of this very troop in his youth, and he has been an adult leader in the troop for more than 30 years.

“I just happened to be walking by the gym where they were meeting,” Dave says. “I was probably 22 at the time. I stopped in to see if any of the leaders there were involved from the time that I was in the troop, and of course there was. The Scoutmaster at the time invited me on a camporee in one of the local metro parks. I stopped by and saw them, and one thing led to another and that’s how I got back [to being] involved in scouting.”

Dave became the Scoutmaster in 1995. Beyond the local troop level, he also works with other troops in Bay Village and the surrounding area, as well as with the Greater Cleveland Council and on the national level.

Through all their activities, the scouts have a lot of fun while learning skills and gaining practical experience that will benefit them for the rest of their lives.

“A lot of the things we do in the troop are done in small groups called ‘patrols,’” Dave says. “By that process, the kids have to learn to work together, because they’ll spend time cooking their meals together, cleaning up their meals and doing activities together. They’re learning how to cooperate with each other, without really telling them that. The scouts call it ‘participative citizenship.’ You’re really practicing being a good citizen by having to work with your fellow scouts.”

Troop 159 also has a strong faith element, which Dave works to instill in the scouts.

“Since we’re sponsored by a Catholic church, when we go camping, part of the plan is to get to church on the weekend campout,” Dave says. “Most of the time, the goal is to have the guys that are out camping attend church while we’re on the campout. As a boy, I thought that was always a unique opportunity. I like to share that with them.”
Pre-Cana  continued from front cover

“So we are really pleased when, at the end of the day, almost without fail those same couples tell us how much they appreciated the experience. I think the reason the couples have a positive experience is the transparency of the team members in sharing the joys and challenges of marriage, and the opportunity for the engaged couples to discuss certain issues that they may not have previously considered. The couples have a good time, and they come away with some tools that will help them make their marriages stronger.”

For the Pillaris, their role in Pre-Cana has been a great blessing for their own marriage. They have created a special bond with the other couples on the team, and really enjoy getting to know engaged couples in the parish each year. Teaching couples about marriage has also impacted their marriage in countless ways over the years.

“We hear the same talks each year at Pre-Cana, but each year we are at a different place in our lives, so we always take away something new that strengthens our marriage,” TJ says. “Any time you’re in a position where you’re encouraging people to take on certain characteristics in a marriage, it forces you to look at how you’re living those characteristics in your own marriage. It pushes us to continue to renew our commitment to each other and our own family, and to do that well.”

For more information on the Pre-Cana Ministry, please contact the parish office at 440-871-1100.

Liturgy Schedule

**Saturday Vigil:** 4:30 and 7:00 p.m.  |  **Sunday:** 7:30, 9:30, 11:00 a.m., 12:30 p.m.

**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.