

St. Raphael the Archangel

NEWSLETTER FOR PARISHES NAMED FOR ST. RAPHAEL THE ARCHANGEL TO EXCHANGE IDEAS ON ENCOURAGING UNDERSTANDING AND DEVOTION

PURPOSE OF THE NEWSLETTER

The Newsletter

This is our third newsletter to parishes dedicated to St. Raphael the Archangel. The purpose of the newsletter is to encourage thought about and devotion to your parish's patron saint.

We are very grateful to the various parishes for sharing St. Raphael prayers and examples of art work. We have printed several in our first two issues and additional examples in this issue.

Please help us by sending any prayers, copies of art work or descriptions of devotional practices so we can incorporate them in our next newsletter. Also please send any item about your parish that we could use to become familiar with the various St. Raphael parishes across the country - even a Sunday Bulletin would help.

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A Visit to Remember

by Irma C. Godfrey

As one of five participating museums in the United States, the St. Louis Art Museum recently welcomed an exhibit from the Vatican Museums to its Special Exhibition Galleries. "The Invisible Made Visible: Angels from the Vatican" was received with enthusiasm.

From May 5 to August 2, thousands of St. Louisans responded to an invitation to view famous frescoes, paintings, sculptures, religious objects, tapestries, and vestments from Assyrian, Etruscan, Greek, Roman, and Christian traditions. The exhibit was sold out in July as it challenged a record turnout set by a Monet exhibit in 1978.

St. Louisans welcomed expanded hours, introductory videos, and audio tours, plus more than 40 angel-related programs, including panel discussions, previews, lectures, concerts, films, city tours, and "Gourmet in the Galleries."

On its first exposition outside the Vatican, this traveling treasure features nearly 2,500 years of angels in more than 100 works of art. Among many artists, the exhibit includes Raphael, Fra Angelico, Salvador

Dali, Gian Lorenzo Bernini, Baciccia (Giovanni Battista Gaulli) and Guido Reni.

Angels are mentioned in the Scriptures over 300 times. The Council of Nicea in A.D. 325 decreed that faith in angels was part of the dogma of the Christian Church. In 1259, St. Thomas Aquinas (known as The Angelic Doctor) gave a series of lectures on angels at the University of Paris. It is believed that his lectures and writings were the bases for Catholic ideas on angels.

An exceptional 320 page catalogue of the exhibit by Allen Duston, O.P. (Vatican director and curator of the exhibit) and Arnold Nesselrath was published by Art Services International in 1998.

The catalogue includes "The Angels" by Pope John Paul II on the theology of angels. His Holiness explains how angels have been and will be integral to Liturgy and devotion in the Church. Excerpts:

"From the first pages of the Book of Genesis to the last pages of the Book of Revelation, Sacred Scripture testifies to the existence and activity of the spiritual, non-corporeal beings we call 'angels.' They belong to the realm of eternity, where they are God's servants and messengers: the 'mighty ones who do his word, hearkening to the voice of his word' (Ps. 103:20; Cf. Catechism of the Catholic Church, 329). ... May the members of the Church know the angels better and love them more."

Only One Item on St. Raphael

I It came as an unpleasant surprise to see the sparse coverage of St. Raphael at the "Angels from the Vatican" exhibit. As I went from statue to painting there was nothing

dedicated to him. The only representation was a relatively small icon-like portrayal of the "Synaxis of All Saints" - a 17th Century Russian presentation of Christ in Heaven surrounded by the saints and angels. The head-set deliberately identified the angel on the far left as St. Raphael (just one of many in a mob-scene!). The catalogue did not mention St. Raphael while describing this item in detail. The Exhibit Catalogue did list St. Raphael in the Glossary and identified him in the Book of Tobit and commented: "The cult of Raphael developed rather late in the Church, and the images of him before the sixteenth century are rare. Since then, he has been widely depicted as the patron of travelers (reflecting his role in the book of Tobit)."

ST. RAPHAEL ON THE WORLD WIDE WEB

The following is a list of links to St. Raphael related sites on the World Wide Web:

St. Raphael Parish in Raleigh, NC
<http://www.saintraphael.org/>

Cathedral of St. Raphael in Madison, WI
<http://www.madisondiocese.org/madison/straphael/>

Catholic On-Line listing for St. Raphael
<http://www.catholic.org/saints/saints/raphael.html>

St. Raphael Parish in Englewood, Florida
<http://www.BobScott.com/straphael/>

St. Raphael Parish in Hamilton, NJ
http://www.rc.net/trenton/st_raphael/index.html

St. Raphael's Mission in Pickney's Point, Nova Scotia
<http://www.valleyweb.com/dioceseyarmouth/raphael.html>



St. Raphael parish in New Orleans celebrated its 50th Anniversary in 1997. The parish was built in the city's post World War II suburban expansion. The school opened in 1948 and the church was dedicated in 1958. The church's stained glass windows highlight angels with some 120 scattered throughout. The design of the window depicting St. Raphael is reproduced above.

St. Raphael in Santa Barbara, California

The St. Raphael Catholic Church in Santa Barbara, California, celebrated its centennial in 1996. The parish is located in the Goleta Valley part of Santa Barbara. In 1896 the parish was formed as an off-shoot of the existing parish of Our Lady of Sorrows. A small wooden church was built and the small community was served by the Jesuits. In the 1920's the Franciscans again served the parish and a new church was built several blocks from the old site. In 1937 the community was granted formal status as a parish. In 1941 the parish converted its hall into a church and the old church into a hall to meet the increasing number of parishioners. In 1961 the parish built a new church. The parish began its own parochial school in 1963. The parish originally began to serve the Italian-Americans of Goleta. As it grew it served many European backgrounds and today many parishioners are of Hispanic and Asian backgrounds. On September 29, 1996, over 1500 gathered under a giant tent to celebrate this large and vibrant parish's 100th Anniversary.

St. Raphael in Alaska

The *Alaskan Shepherd*, a newsletter of the Northern Alaskan Diocese, spotlighted St. Raphael's parish in Fairbanks. The parish serves the northern outskirts of Fairbanks. The parish began to be formed in 1977 and by 1981 land was donated for a parish site. In 1983 the bishop named the community for St. Raphael the Archangel. The parish used rented space

while it raised funds. Finally construction began in 1990. The Church was dedicated on Mother's Day of 1991. Today the parish numbers some 160 families.

Prayer to St. Raphael

May the Archangel Raphael,
Called God's Healer, bring
consolation and healing to
those who are sick and protect
us from all ills.

May Raphael, the Angelic
Companion, accompany us
during all life's journeys,
preserve us in peace and
tranquillity, and, at the end
of all our travels, bring us
safely to our eternal home.

*St. Raphael Church in Bay Village, Ohio
contributed this prayer. It was composed
by one of their associates.*

Please send St. Raphael prayers, devotions, pictures, sketches of art work - traditional or modern, so we can share these with other St. Raphael parishes. Also describe any parish celebrations for the Feast of St. Raphael. (Send your Bulletin announcement describing the event.)

Please send to us:

St. Raphael the Archangel
6047 Bishops Place
St. Louis, MO 63109
(Attention: Historical Society)