

St. Raphael the Archangel

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

The Newsletter

By Frederick A. Hodes

This is the ninth issue of the St. Raphael Newsletter, whose purpose is to share information about devotion to our patron, St. Raphael the Archangel. Immediately after Vatican II, devotional practices to saints fell out of fashion. In recent years, devotion to and prayers requesting the intercession of the saints (and angels) have become more prevalent. This newsletter hopes to encourage ideas about devotion to the Archangel Raphael.

This issue includes a report on the statue of St. Raphael commissioned by the St. Raphael parish in Naperville, Illinois. Also there is a brief review of a biblical commentary pamphlet on the *Book of Tobit* on page 2.

The Newsletter always seeks prayers invoking the archangel's intercession. This issue includes the prayer from Naperville, IL.

We need your input. Please share with us any devotional items such as pictures of statues, stained glass windows, and other forms of artwork. We especially hope for original compositions of prayers or hymns. The Newsletter also invites parishes to send copies of their Sunday bulletins so we can learn about the various St. Raphael parishes around the United States.

Thanks for Your Past Help

Thanks to everyone who has sent Sunday bulletins, newsletters, and parish newspapers. Several parishes have sent us their Anniversary books. Many items of interest have come our way, including pictures of various St. Raphael Churches. Also, there have been newspaper clippings. Prayers and devotional items along with religious art (of all forms) remain our main focus.

Do all St. Raphael parishes have a web site? Any special features? Send us your web site addresses.

Have any St. Raphael parishes produced new logos – either for the parish or the school?

We are always grateful for your responses. Please continue to help us. Your input this fall will be next year's issue.

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St. Raphael in Baghdad

Four percent of Iraq's population of 25 million are Christian and many of these are Catholic.

At Christmas, because of the unsettled conditions of the country, the traditional Midnight Mass was held in the afternoon. The New York Times News Service/Associated Press carried a photo of a U.S. soldier standing in the back of a Catholic church filled with worshippers for the Christmas Mass. The name of the church – St. Raphael.

Not only is there a St. Raphael Church, but, perhaps more well known, there is a St. Raphael Hospital which is staffed by Dominican nuns.

The hospital, church, and convent complex is located in the heart of Baghdad. It sits very close to the Tigris River, opposite and across the river, from what was Saddam's massive palace complex and today is the allied headquarters, the Green Zone.

The hospital serves all, including the Muslims. In fact, some of Saddam's female relatives received treatment there when they needed hospital care and some of the dictator's grandchildren were born at the facility.

It appears that St. Raphael Hospital was the only private hospital in Baghdad that remained open, offering maternity and general surgery, during the fighting at the fall of the city.

The continued fighting and explosions in the city reverberate through the complex because of its proximity to the Green Zone.

Keep those at St. Raphael church, hospital, and convent in your prayers.

St. Raphael in Alaska

The Northern Alaska newsletter, *The Alaskan Shepherd*, highlighted the activities of the St. Raphael Church in Fairbanks. In the summer of 2002, the youth group, three adults and six teenagers, flew to the village of Nulato, Our Lady of the Snows, to conduct a vacation Bible School. Some twenty-five Athabaskan Indian children participated in the program.

Book of Tobit

For fans of the *Book of Tobit* and for those who want to better understand this somewhat obscure book of the Old Testament, the *Collegeville Bible Commentary #25 Jonah, Tobit, Judith* is an absolute necessity. Authored by Irene Nowell, O.S.B., the pamphlet provides text and commentary that illuminates the tale of Tobit, Tobiah, Sarah, and Raphael ("God heals").

Sr. Nowell clearly presents the themes of the necessity of prayer, the importance of marriage, the gift of healing, and the mission of Raphael as God's messenger and guide for Sarah and Tobiah. The author explores the intricacies of the story, explaining the nuances and leading the reader to a full understanding of the tale of Tobit. A must-read for all St. Raphael the Archangel parishioners.

Review by Carol Hodes

We want to hear from you!

Do you have a parish celebration for the feast of St. Raphael? Send us your bulletin announcement describing the event.

St. Raphael Prayer

The Naperville St. Raphael Parish printed the following prayer in its September 28, 2003 church bulletin on the occasion of the dedication of the statue of St. Raphael.

Dear St. Raphael,
"God's Healer,"

The Lord sent you from heaven to accompany and guide young Tobiah on a long journey.

On the way,
you taught him to use ordinary things to bring healing and sight.

How natural, therefore,
for Christians to pray for your powerful help
as we seek healing
and companionship
on our journey through life.
Blessed Archangel Raphael,
guide and protect us,
heal and keep us safe,
whether we are at home
or far away.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

St. Raphael Statue

The St. Raphael parish in Naperville, Illinois, (a suburb of Chicago) celebrated its fortieth anniversary in 2003 by commissioning a bronze statue of St. Raphael the Archangel, which has been placed outside the church.

Wanner Sculpture Studio cast the statue based on the parish logo drawn by a parishioner. Jordan Wanner did the actual sculpture.

The figure of St. Raphael holds a fish in one hand and a loaf of bread in the other. The fish represents Raphael the healer – as described in the *Book of Tobit*. The loaf of bread symbolizes Raphael as Tobiah's companion and protector on their journey. (See pictures on page four)

Leaflet

In addition to its new statue of St. Raphael, the Naperville parish has issued two copyrighted, glossy leaflets. One is entitled "Welcome to the Faith Community of St. Raphael." The handout describes various areas of the church structure, emphasizing the religious aspects and their intended symbolism.

Another leaflet highlights the art of the church, explaining and interpreting four stained glass windows. Also spotlighted are the organ, built in 1911 for the cathedral in Joliet, and the processional cross and two statues, the Holy Family and the Nativity. Finally, the publication presents the new statue of St. Raphael just installed outside the church building.

Please send St. Raphael prayers, devotions, pictures, sketches of artwork – traditional or modern – so we can share these with the other St. Raphael parishes.

Please send to:

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



St. Raphael Statue

Below are two views of the new St. Raphael the Archangel statue at St. Raphael Parish in Naperville, Illinois.



Jordan Wanner, Sculptor.
Cast by Wanner Studio.