



ST. RAPHAEL

— CATHOLIC CHURCH —

MARCH 8, 2026 | THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT



CONTACT US

2514 Lee Boulevard
Lehigh Acres, FL 33971

Phone (239) 369-1831

Religious Education (239) 369-6424

Fax (239) 369-1039

parishoffice@saintraphaelccla.org

www.saintraphaelcc.org

MASS TIMES

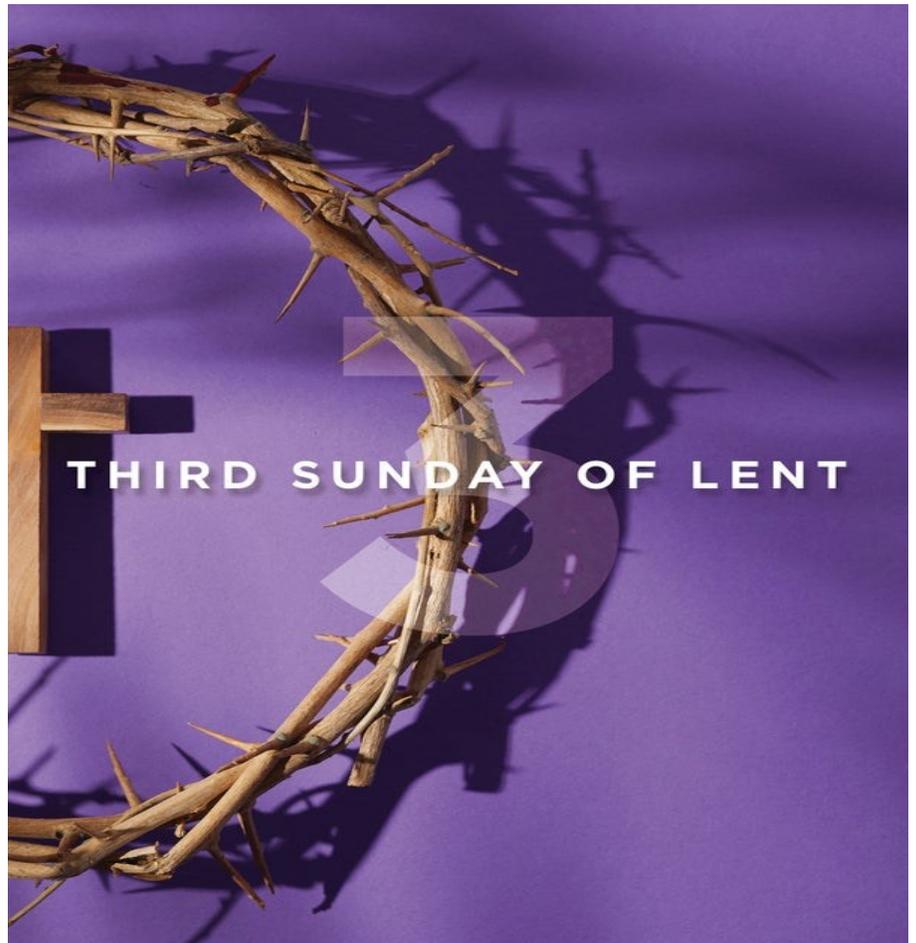
Monday - Friday | 8:00AM (English)
Saturday | 8:00AM, 5:00PM (English)
6:30PM (Español)
Sunday 7:30AM, 9:00AM, 12:30PM
(English)
10:30AM & 5:30PM (Español)

CONFESSIONS

Saturday | 3:30PM-4:45PM
Saturday | 6:00PM-6:30PM (Español)
Sunday | 5:00PM-5:30PM (Español)

PASTORAL STAFF

Rev. Michal Szyszka, *Pastor*
Rev. Rodolfo French, *Parochial Vicar*
Andy Mora,
Coordinator of Religious Education



PRAYER TO ST. RAPHAEL THE ARCHANGEL

Glorious Archangel St. Raphael, great prince of the heavenly court, you are illustrious for your gifts of wisdom and grace. You are a guide of those who journey by land or sea or air, consoler of afflicted, and refuge of sinners.

I beg you, assist me in all my needs and in all the sufferings of this life, as once you helped

the young Tobias on his travels. Because you are the "medicine of God," I humbly pray you to heal the many infirmities of my soul and the ills that afflict my body. I especially ask you the favour (name it) and the great grace of purity to prepare me to be the temple of the Holy Spirit. Amen.



BASKET BLESSING ON HOLY SATURDAY, APRIL 4TH AT 11:00 AM

Święconka – Blessing of the Baskets

Święconka (sh-vee-en-soon-kah) is one of the most enduring and beloved Polish traditions. Baskets containing a sampling of Easter foods are brought to church to be blessed on Holy Saturday. The basket is traditionally lined with a white linen or lace napkin and decorated with sprigs of boxwood (*bukszan*), the typical Easter evergreen. Poles take special pride in preparing a decorative and tasteful basket with crisp linens, occasionally embroidered for the occasion, and just enough boxwood and ribbon woven through the handle. Observing the beautiful foods and creations of other parishioners is one of the special joys of the event.

Poświęcenie Pokarmów – Blessing of Food

The Blessing of the Food is a festive occasion. The three-part blessing prayers specifically address the various contents of the basket, with special prayers for the meats, eggs, cakes & breads.

The priest then sprinkles the individual baskets with Holy Water. More traditional Polish churches use a straw brush for dispersing the Water; others use the more modern metal Holy Water sprinkling wand. In some parishes, the baskets are lined up on long tables; in others, parishioners process to the front of the altar carrying their baskets, as if in a Communion line. Older generations of Polish Americans, descended from early 19th century immigrants, tend to bless whole meal quantities, often brought to church halls or cafeterias in large hampers & picnic baskets. Newer Polish immigrants at Polish-language parishes along with Poles in urban Poland present the smaller arrangement of select goods described here.

Basket Contents and Symbolism:

Masło – Butter: This dairy product is often shaped into a lamb (*Baranek Wielkanocny*), reminding us of the goodness of Christ that we should have toward all things.

Chleb – Easter Bread: A round rye loaf topped with a cross, symbolic of Jesus, the Bread of Life.

Chrzan – Horseradish: Symbolic of the Passion of Christ still in our minds, but sweetened with some sugar because of the Resurrection.

Jajka or Pisanki – Eggs: Indicate new life and Christ's Resurrection from the Tomb.

Kielbasa – Sausage: A spicy sausage of pork products, indicative of God's favor and generosity.

Szynka – Ham: Symbolic of great joy and abundance. (In addition to the large ham cooked for the Easter Meal, often a special small ham, called the *Szynka Wielkanocna* is purchased specially for *Święconka* basket.)

Ślonina – Smoked Bacon: A symbol of the over abundance of God's mercy and generosity.

Sól – Salt: So necessary an element in our physical life, that Jesus used its symbolism: "You are the salt of the earth."

Ser – Cheese: Shaped into a ball, it is the symbol of the moderation Christians should have.

A candle – often marked like the Paschal Candle lit during the Easter Vigil, is inserted into the basket to represent Christ, Light of the World. A colorful ribbon and sometimes sprigs of greenery are attached. The linen cover is drawn over the top and is ready for the trek to the blessing.

Please note that these are the traditional items used for the basket blessing but any food items may be used.

MASS INTENTIONS

Saturday March 7, 2026

5:00PM †Stephen & Marie Raucci
Req. Steven & Dorothy Raucci
6:30PM †Felix Juan Andres
Req. Daughter, Carmen Juan Andres

Sunday March 8, 2026

7:30AM Parishioners
9:00AM †Josette Hector
Req. Mr. & Mrs. Armando DiVittore
10:30AM Living & Deceased Members of
Josephine & John Gallucci Family
& Their Lineal Descendants
12:30PM †John R. Carrion, Jr.
Req. Rita Santiago
5:30PM Daniel Carbaugh
Req. Parishioner

Monday March 9, 2026

8:00AM Living & Deceased Members of the
Ryan & Whipple Families
Req. Rosemary Whipple

Tuesday March 10, 2026

8:00AM †Harry & †Theresa Honsaker
Req. Tice Family

Wednesday March 11, 2026

8:00AM Unborn
Req. Parishioner

Thursday March 12, 2026

8:00AM Fr. Michal Szyszka
Req. Alba Pineiro

Friday March 13, 2026

8:00AM †Souls in Purgatory
Req. Parishioner

Saturday March 14, 2026

8:00AM †Robert Eckenfels
Req. Anonymous
5:00PM Jane Kuctha
Req. Theresa & †Charles Caswell
6:30PM †Maria Lucia Vasco & †Louis Angel Gil
Req. Son

Sunday March 15, 2026

7:30AM Tom Williams
Req. Daughter, Donna
9:00AM Parishioners
10:30AM †Felix Juan Andres
Req. Wife, Teresa Jose De Juan
12:30PM †Traci Leiniman
Req. Tammy & Brooke
5:30PM Unborn
Req. Parishioner

SANCTUARY CANDLE

The sanctuary candle has been donated this week for **Edward Rosenstein & James Dulaney** requested by **Dr. Thomas Gaetano Palumbo**.

CHAPEL CANDLE

The chapel candle has been donated this week for **Edward Rosenstein & James Dulaney** requested by **Dr. Thomas Gaetano Palumbo**.

From the Diocese... Do you have a **Catholic Living Will?** The Catholic Declaration on Life and Death is a health care advance directive for Florida's Catholics and is approved by the Bishops of Florida. This directive conforms to both Florida law & the teachings of the Church. For a copy of the Catholic Declaration on Life and Death call 941-441-1112 or go to www.flacathconf.org/AdvocacyAreas/Health/EndofLifeHealthCare/CDLD/index.htm



**JOIN THE
ST. RAPHAEL
YOUTH GROUP!
EVERY SUNDAY
AT 2PM**

Project Rachel is a confidential healing ministry for women and men who have been touched by abortion. If you are struggling after an abortion, don't struggle alone. Call 941-412-5860 or e-mail project.rachel@dioceseofvenice.org for help.

The Community Pregnancy Center offers confidential and compassionate care for women facing unintended pregnancies. Services include: pregnancy testing, medical ultrasounds and other community resources. **The mobile onsite clinic** will be at St. Raphael Parish (in the parking lot near Lee Blvd) every Wednesday from 11AM - 3PM. Walk in patients are welcome. Spanish and English speaking staff are available.

The Jay Carano Gift Shop is open from 3:30PM-5PM on Saturday and after the 5PM Mass. On Sundays from 8AM-2PM. We have a large selection of gifts.



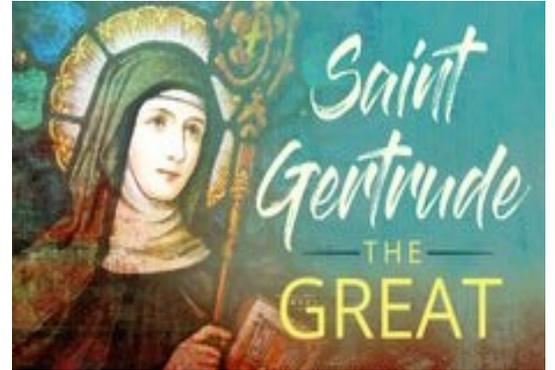
**Every Friday at
St. Raphael Parish Hall**
Doors open at 3PM. Games start promptly at 6PM.
For more information call
Jose (239) 841-3803 or
Bill (315) 569-3009

Prayer and Worship

The Prayer or Blessing Against Storms

Please pray this prayer against storms. Bless yourself with the sign of the Cross when you see the †

Jesus Christ a King of Glory has come in Peace. † God became man, † And the Word was made flesh. † Christ was born of a Virgin. † Christ suffered. † Christ was crucified. † Christ died. † Christ rose from the dead. † Christ ascended into Heaven. † Christ conquers. † Christ reigns. † Christ orders. † May Christ protect us from all storms and lightning. † Christ went through their midst in Peace, † And the Word was made flesh. † Christ is with us in Mary. † Flee you enemy spirits because the Lion of the Generation of Juda, the root David, has won. † Holy God! † Holy Powerful God! † Holy Immortal God! † Have mercy on us. Amen!



Our Lord told St. Gertrude the Great that the following prayer would release 1,000 souls from Purgatory each time it is said:

“Eternal Father, I offer Thee the most precious blood of Thy Divine Son, Jesus, in union with the Masses said throughout the world today, for all the holy souls in Purgatory, for sinners everywhere, for sinners in the universal church, those in my own home and within my family. Amen.” Approval and Recommendation (sqd.) M. Cardinal Pahiarca, Lisbon, Portugal, March 4, 1936

A PRAYER FOR PRIESTS

Lord Jesus, you have chosen your priests from among us and sent them out to proclaim your word and act in your name. For so great a gift to your Church, we give you praise and thanksgiving. We ask you to fill them with the fire of your love, that their ministry may reveal your presence in the Church. Since they are earthen vessels, we pray that your power shines out through their weakness. In their afflictions let them never be crushed, in their doubts never despair, in temptation never be destroyed, and in persecution never abandoned. Inspire them through prayer to live each day

the mystery of your dying and rising. In times of weakness send them your Spirit and help them to praise your Heavenly Father and pray for poor sinners. By your same Holy Spirit put your word on their lips and your love in their hearts, to bring good news to the poor and healing to the brokenhearted. And may the gift of Mary, your Mother, to the disciple whom you loved, be your gift to every priest. Grant that she who formed you in her human image, may form them in your divine image, by the power of your Spirit, to the glory of God the Father, Amen.

- SAINT TERESA OF CALCUTTA VOCATION SOCIETY

A PRAYER FOR GRANDPARENTS

Dear St. Ann you were truly twice blessed to have our blessed mother as your daughter and Jesus our Savior as your grandson. I know that every period of our lives has its responsibilities as well as its joys. Today, it seems that grandparents have either too little use or too much; either we are shunted aside to do nothing, or we are called upon to do everything. Help me to know just where my duties lie in my particular situation and to carry them out as best I can. Take care of my family, my children, and their children. Inspire them all to follow your grandson and lead truly Christian lives. Keep all of us in your loving care, never let us turn away from Jesus, and help us in the end to receive the joy of entering into your grandson's glorious presence forever. Good St. Ann pray for us grandparents. Amen.

Merciful Lord, your heart is full of loving kindness. Our hearts are full of praise to you. You are worthy of our full devotion. Lord, today we lift up our Church to you. We pray for the sick, for the grieving, for the lonely, for the broken, for the confused, and for *all* those who are needy this day. We pray that you would bring your strength, your healing, your comfort, your wisdom, your restoration, your protection, and your provision. Thank you for giving us a church family to belong to and to love. Amen.

PRAYER FOR MARRIAGE & FAMILY

Lord God, we pray for the institution of marriage and the family which is on the verge of ruin in the world today. The strong waves of the evil one are hitting hard the foundations of marriage and many unions are breaking up very fast. God, we need You to send down the Holy Spirit so that He can teach us Your values and tenets that can guide us to strengthen our marriages. Inspire us with Your knowledge that it is You who gave us the institution of marriage and that You require us to respect it and remain solidly in it. Dear God, we know that we are sinners and we sometimes give in to sin and evil temptations that ruin our marriages. Give us the strength and support to resist all temptations that ruin our marriage. May our children grow up in families that are steady and strong so that they can learn Your good values and become productive people in Your vineyard. Amen.



Spring 2026 at FT MYERS



From Ash Wednesday, Feb 18 through March 29, a peaceful prayer vigil will be held each day Tuesday-Saturday at the abortion facility of Planned Parenthood, 6418 Commerce Park Dr Drive, Ft Myers. There is plenty of parking along the curb on Commerce Park Dr and plenty of sidewalk to support your prayer.

CAMPAIGN DAYS Tuesday- Saturday
CAMPAIGN HOURS 11AM - 4:30PM ; 8AM - 4PM on Sat
TO SCHEDULE AN HOUR TO PRAY, CONTACT Anne at athomas8088@gmail.com OR Bob at rgrcons1@gmail.com OR VISIT www.40daysforlife.com/fortmyers

EASTER SCHEDULE

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

Stations of the Cross are held every Friday during Lent 7:00PM in English & 8:00PM in Spanish

BILINGUAL LENTEN PENANCE SERVICE

Monday, March 30th 5:30PM

HOLY WEEK

Holy Thursday, April 2nd

Mass of The Lord's Supper – 7:00PM (Bilingual)

Good Friday, April 3rd

Sacred Liturgy 3:00PM
The Live Passion of the Lord – 5:30PM

Holy Saturday, April 4th

Blessing of the Food – 11:00AM (English & Polish)

Easter Vigil Mass - 8:15PM Bilingual

EASTER SUNDAY – APRIL 5th

Masses: 7:30AM, 9:00AM & 12:30PM in English
10:30AM & 5:30PM Mass in Spanish

The **Catholic Faith Appeal (CFA)** contributes to the pastoral, education, and charitable support of those in need in the Diocese of Venice. Our parish also benefits from the CFA if we exceed our goal of \$145,000.00. **Join those in our parish family who have made a gift to the 2026 CFA.** Your gift will make a difference in the lives of those who are assisted by the programs and ministries funded through the CFA.

To make a gift, visit <https://dioceseofvenice.org/ways-to-give/cfa/> or complete a pledge envelope located at the back of the church and submit it either to the Parish office or the offertory basket. **Thank you for your prayerful consideration.**

Registration is the official way we join a parish community. Many people think that because they attend a particular parish they automatically belong. At times, young adults who have moved away for years think they are still signed up under their parents. But membership requires signing up, formally enrolling yourself in a parish. Registration is a commitment to a community, a way to be included in the religious, social, and ministerial activities of your parish. Registration shows you belong. It is also necessary for certain benefits, like scheduling sacraments, obtaining sponsor certificates, and getting donation statements for taxes. Most importantly, it lets the parish count on you, to call on you to assist in its mission. Registering in your parish is a statement of faith & confidence in the life and work of your parish.



February 21st & 22nd \$14,186.00
Attendance: 2,761

The Sunday Mass on Television is an outreach of the Diocese of Venice Department of Communications and is supported by the donations of viewers. This outreach serves those who, for reasons outside of their control, are unable to attend Sunday Mass in one of the parishes of the Diocese. For many homebound individuals, this outreach reminds them that they are loved by their brothers and sisters in Christ throughout the Diocese of Venice, and that they remain a vibrant and loved part of our faith community.

For those who are interested in viewing the televised Mass you may find it on WFTX-TV FOX 4– Sundays at 10:30AM.