



St. Rita News

The new monthly newsletter serving Saint Rita Parish

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Angels for Little Ones at St. Rita's

St. Rita's is one of many parishes in the diocese that has a Gabriel Project, which helps pregnant women by offering assistance at the parish level. It involves a network of churches, crisis pregnancy centers, and other agencies working together to assist the mother with physical, material, spiritual and emotional support. The St. Rita's Gabriel Project has helped five moms since the ministry started in 2011. There are almost 20 parish-based volunteers who most recently helped a woman who had her beautiful baby girl in December.

A Catholic woman from Eastern Europe--who was told by her doctors that for medical reasons she would never be able to have children--found out she was pregnant almost four months into her pregnancy. When she first came to Gabriel Project for help, she felt grateful and blessed for the life she was carrying, but she was also scared about the uphill battle she faced. She was an "at risk" pregnancy, single (the father of the child was not in the picture), had no family in the country and was working two jobs just to pay her rent. Shortly thereafter, she lost one of her jobs making her situation even more precarious. Despite all this, the mom persevered trusting that God would provide.



Baby Rita

"Each of us is the result of a thought of God. Each of us is willed, each of us is loved, each of us is necessary."

— POPE BENEDICT XVI

Through the Gabriel Project, she received free prenatal care at the Tepeyac Clinic. She was assigned a volunteer "angel" from St. Rita's who became a friend and a source of support and prayer. Thanks to the generous donations of St. Rita parishioners, she received boxes of clothes, diapers and other baby supplies. Fortunately, through God's providence, she was able to move in with a friend and her former employer decided to continue paying her for six months--ensuring

that she could spend several months with her new baby without having to worry about money or finding a new job. She named the baby Rita--partly out of gratitude for the help our parish provided and partly due to St. Rita's fame as the patron saint of the impossible. She wrote to her "angel" volunteer to thank her for all the support our parish had provided, saying "I greatly appreciate all your prayers, support, gifts, and especially your friendship. I will never forget."

Her story shows how powerful prayer is and how God follows through on his promise to take care of us, as long as we accept the challenge of staying faithful to Him--no matter what the cost! For more information on St. Rita's Gabriel Project please contact Jane at jane.holman@gmail.com.



Congratulations To Our Confirmandi!

Congratulations to the 39 young men and women from St. Rita School and Parish, who received their Confirmation on Feb. 10!

*Breathe in me, O Holy Spirit, that my thoughts may all be holy.
Act in me, O Holy Spirit, that my work, too, may be holy.
Draw my heart, O Holy Spirit, that I love but what is holy.
Strengthen me, O Holy Spirit, to defend all that is holy.
Guard me, then, O Holy Spirit, that I always may be holy. Amen.*



Win Great Stuff -- And Help St. Rita School!

Father Scalia wants to have breakfast with you -- well, for a price. You and a friend could be part of an eight-person entourage to enjoy a lively discussion with Father at the Del Ray Café, while benefitting St. Rita School. This is only one of many items to bid on during the school's 4th annual online auction; other items include golf lessons, Easter and St. Patrick's Day baskets, Father Gee's Year of Faith reading list, and more. The online auction starts March 4; visit saintrita-school.maestroweb.com

Putting the Works of Mercy Into Action

All St Rita parishioners are part of our Social Outreach to our neighbors, our city, our diocese. We're always looking for more people to help, but here is some of what we're up to...

Feeding the Hungry

The second Sunday of the month, parishioners provide dinner to the residents of Carpenter's Shelter – averaging 50 men, women, & children. In the winter, additional people from the hypothermia shelter are served. Many of us bring the supplies: lasagna, fruit, salad, rolls, lemonade, and dessert. Starting at 5:30pm, three of us prepare and serve dinner, finishing up around 7 pm. Also on the second Sunday, St. Rita provides breakfast at Carpenter's. Starting at 6am, volunteers cook breakfast--first for the hypothermia participants and then, after a break, for the shelter residents finishing at 8:30am.

The fourth Sunday of the month, parishioners provide dinner at Christ House for an average of 60 people, primarily men. Christ House is the only soup kitchen in Alexandria as well as a transitional housing program for 12 men. Each of three teams provides, cooks and serves four times a year. Team One serves the legendary St. Rita beef stew; Team Two a meal similar to that at Carpenter's; and the Young Adults of Team Three provide a variety of menus.

St Rita Church is one of the original participants in the Bag Lunch program coordinated by the Old Presbyterian Meeting House as well.

The on-going collection of food in the church vestibules is taken to the Catholic Charities pantry at Christ House for distribution to those in need and to the ALIVE! pantry.

ALIVE! brings food to the homes of elderly, handicapped, and families with small children Monday -Friday; the only program in the City serving the home bound with groceries. The "ALIVE! Last Saturday of the Month" Food Distribution program takes place at three sites in Alexandria including 200 families at the nearby Cora Kelly Rec Center.

Dropped in the Sunday collection basket or the Poor Box, grocery gift cards are always welcomed by families making decisions to buy food or pay the rent and/or utilities.

In October 2012, St. Rita Parish donated 1,434 pounds of food to the Catholic Charities' annual Fall Harvest food drive. Each Spring, we bring food to the Loaves and Fishes pantry in Front Royal, an impoverished area of western Virginia. This year, we'll collect and deliver food in May.

Sheltering the Homeless

The second Sunday of the month, St. Rita parishioners

Get Involved!

Don't miss out on these opportunities for hands-on helping. Read the bulletin and sign up to be on the Social Outreach email list; contact Susanne Arnold at susannearnold@verizon.net

serve as receptionists at Carpenter's Shelter. Volunteers must first go through the Carpenter's orientation program.

Each October, St Rita School and parish participate in the annual Fannie Mae Help the Homeless Walk to raise funds for the ALIVE! House transitional housing program. Four families, almost always a mother and children, can live at ALIVE! House for up to two years while they learn how to sustain themselves in permanent housing. Right now, March 1-19, St. Rita parishioners are donating household supplies for the annual Shower for the Shelter in honor of the Sisters of St. Joseph. The annual ALIVE! House Sidewalk Sale on Saturday, May 18th, is another opportunity for us to raise funds for this shelter and pass on some of our junk!

Inactive for the last couple of years, the St Rita Habitat for Humanity group is waiting for the opportunity – a project in Alexandria – to participate in providing housing for low-income families. Also, the ALIVE! Affordable Housing Committee would welcome members from St. Rita Church.

Donations of furniture and housewares are always welcomed by ALIVE!. Teams of St. Rita volunteers take their turn going out with the ALIVE! box trucks two Saturdays a year. They pick up donated furniture and deliver it to those having a roof over their heads, but no furniture on the floor. Volunteers are also often needed on other Saturdays; it's a good community service project for teens. To donate furniture call ALIVE! 703-837-9300 and press 3; to donate housewares call ALIVE! and press 5.

Clothing the Naked

Our third year of collecting and distributing winter clothing starts in September. In partnership with Grace Episcopal Church, clothing will be collected for several weekends before being distributed to our Arlandria neighbors. Last year 127 families came and chose clothing to keep them warm all winter. We'll need volunteers and winter clothing. If you're moving, don't take it with you, leave it with us! Summer clothing can be brought to Catholic Charities Thrift shop at 125 S. West Street where people in need of clothing can get a voucher for free goods.

■ LIVING OUR FAITH



Baptisms at St. Rita

- + Maren Isabella Hart, Feb. 2
- + Karsten William Gross, Feb. 9
- + John Raymond Bradley, Feb. 9
- + Lawrence Edward Wetsel IV, Feb. 23

Weddings at St. Rita

- + Ronald Dean Schochen Maier & Rebecca Carolina, Feb. 1

Funerals at St. Rita

- + Funeral Mass for Anna Shaw, Feb. 15
- + Funeral Mass for Richard Indelicato, Feb. 23

Do you have ideas for future items in the parish newsletter, or would you like to submit a feature for publication? All submissions can be directed to our editors: Catherine Feil (catherine.feil@gmail.com, or 703.671.0402) or Erin Church (erinmchurch@gmail.com). *Thank you!*