

St. Raymond de Penafort Catholic Church

Rejoicing in God's love for us. Sharing God's love with all.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is causing the water damage near the choir and altar, and how much will repairs cost?

Contractors identified water intrusion near the chimney as the likely source of damage above the choir and altar. Two assessments indicate that a full chimney rebuild will not be required, and no structural beam damage has been observed. The estimated repair cost is under \$100,000, with scaffolding making up a significant portion due to difficult roof access. This information will be shared openly as assessments continue.

2. Why is the parish prioritizing the reconstruction of Entrance 28?

Entrance 28 is being redesigned to improve ADA access and create a more welcoming, functional narthex. The redesign reroutes the interior ramp through the current altar server room, which will be removed to provide a more open and direct entryway. This approach improves accessibility for parishioners entering from the Lincoln Avenue parking lot and brings additional natural sunlight into the narthex. The project will also include new carpeting, ceiling tile, and lighting. The projected cost is \$700,000–\$750,000, and visuals, floor plans, and updates will be shared throughout the campaign.

3. Why do the exterior windows and doors along Elmhurst Ave need to be replaced now?

The existing windows and doors are original to the church and have become inefficient, drafty, and difficult to operate. Heating and cooling the narthex has become increasingly challenging, and some bell tower windows have begun to leak. New, energy-efficient windows and doors will significantly reduce heat loss in winter and cooling loss in summer, creating a more comfortable environment in the narthex while lowering long-term operating costs. The project is estimated at \$300,000–\$400,000, and updating these elements aligns with the work already planned for Entrance 28, increasing stewardship efficiency.

4. What is the condition of the pews and kneelers, and why is replacement being considered?

While some parishioners may not notice significant wear—especially if they sit in less-used sections—many pews, and especially the kneelers, show substantial deterioration. Kneelers have become noisy, unstable, or heavily worn in high-traffic areas. Restoration is costly due to transportation expenses, and full replacement is only marginally more expensive while offering better long-term value. Replacement would ensure durability, consistent appearance, and improved comfort throughout the church.

5. Why complete all these projects now instead of spreading them out over several years?

Addressing all identified needs at once is more cost-effective, minimizes future disruption, and ensures a cohesive design across the narthex, entranceways, and worship-space updates. Postponing any portion of the work risks escalating costs and further deterioration. A unified effort also helps the parish communicate clearly, steward funds responsibly, and complete the improvements in a coordinated, mission-driven manner.

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6. How will the parish keep parishioners informed as the work progresses?

Because communication clarity was a top concern in the study, St. Raymond will maintain a consistent and predictable communication rhythm through:

- Bulletin and pulpit updates
- Photos and video updates
- Public announcements as milestones are reached

This approach ensures every parishioner can see how campaign funds are being used and follow the visible progress their generosity makes possible.

7. How do these improvements support the future of St. Raymond and the needs expressed by parishioners?

The parish study revealed a desire for deeper communal faith, improved accessibility, and a stronger sense of belonging. These projects directly address those needs: repairing water damage protects our worship space, enhancing the narthex supports community life, replacing windows and doors improves comfort, and updating pews enhances worship. The campaign ensures St. Raymond remains a lively, well-cared-for home for current parishioners and future generations.

8. What is the Generation to Generation: Answer the Call campaign?

The Generation to Generation: Answer the Call campaign is the Archdiocese of Chicago's capital and endowment campaign to ignite parish renewal, support our seminarians and priests, and assist vulnerable communities through student scholarships and the Parish Vitality Fund.

9. Why are we embarking on an independent campaign with the Archdiocese of Chicago now?

The Archdiocese's campaign supports parishes and schools across the Archdiocese of Chicago, with every parish being required to participate. For our parish, we are seizing this moment to dream big above and beyond the visions set by the archdiocese, to reach towards the parish's needs, while still supporting the greater Church of Chicago. The parish can build our own campaign brand, story and objectives, while leveraging the resources and operational structures that the archdiocese has put in place through Generation to Generation.

10. What portion of funds raised will be contributed to the Archdiocesan campaign?

By integrating the Generation to Generation initiative into our own, we support the formation of future priests, strengthen parishes, and provide vital student scholarships. Through this collaboration, St. Raymond de Penafort will contribute up to \$858,000, affirming our commitment to both our parish and the broader Church community.

11. Why is my pledge form and subsequent payments sent to the Archdiocese?

The Archdiocese of Chicago will be handling the processing of gifts/pledges and pledge payments. This will save St. Raymond both money and time.