

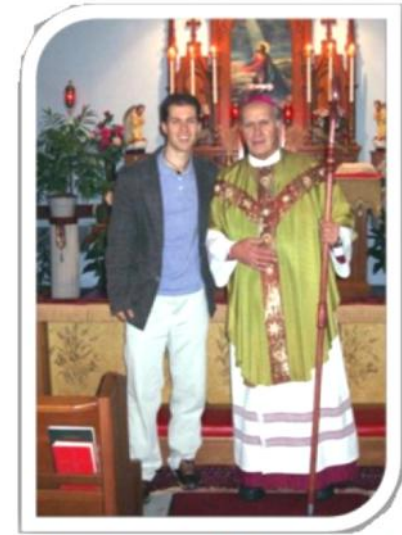
The Old Catholic Church of BC

Churches have declared themselves to be Old Catholic in various times and places. The first group of Churches to proclaim themselves Old Catholic appeared in the Netherlands in the 18th Century when the Dutch Catholics extended sympathy and hospitality to French Catholics who were denied religious liberty in France.

Their defense of religious liberty brought them condemnation from Rome, and since 1725, the Archbishopric of Utrecht has remained independent of Rome.

Old Catholics have always held that under Christ, one finds perfect freedom. Rather than disavow their historic principles, they have maintained separate existence from Rome since the 18th Century.

Other Churches joined them in 1870 when the first Vatican Council proclaimed the doctrine of Papal Infallibility. Since only Christ is infallible, many Churches in Austria, Germany, Bavaria, and Switzerland, realizing their position was closer to Utrecht than to Rome, proclaimed themselves Old Catholic.



Mr. Samuel Thomas with Bishop Gérard LaPlante
inside St. Raphael's Old Catholic Church

The Old Catholic Church of British Columbia, with its Church of Saint Raphael's, established in 1921, is an independent communion which derives its Apostolic Succession from the Old Catholic Church in Holland, thus assuring the Catholic validity of its rites, sacraments and clerical orders.

We have the seven sacraments. We do not receive any grants or funds from municipal, provincial or federal governments. We are duly registered with the federal government (Ottawa) and in the provinces of BC and Quebec.

Since our existence we have provided room and board for hundreds of people in need, helped them to find work, and put them back on their feet to be self sufficient emotionally and financially. Our clergy are not paid. We hold secular jobs for a livelihood. Celibacy is optional.

The majority of our people attending the church are very different ethnically, socially, religiously.

All are welcome. Members of the Old Catholic Church are joyful Christians happily sharing their glorious Faith with others; a love for Christ, and a warm commitment and devotion to Jesus Christ is the criterion for membership in the Old Catholic Church.

+Rt. Rev. Gérard LaPlante, Bishop
+Rt. Rev. Jürgen Schmode, Bishop-Coadjutor

May the peace of Christ always be with you!"

The Little Church Saint Raphael's Old Catholic Church

Number 3



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The Little Church

Saint Raphael's Old Catholic Church

My name is Saint Raphael and my doors are always open
I am named after a great angel who heals the earth
And protects travelers of its lands and shores
Raphael means "God Heals" and as a church
I am told that is my calling—
To offer a space of healing
A place of rest and a room for prayer
All you kneeling folk make my walls tremble

My name is Saint Raphael and my doors are always open
Sundays are my favourite, they make my bell tower cry
Sometimes with joy, sometimes with suffering
The men in robes repair my body over long years
They paint my face white and blue
To keep out the dampness, I've been given a stronger roof
All you kneeling folk make my walls tremble

My name is Saint Raphael and you are always welcome
I see them climb my steps and feel their spirits grow
Casting their cloaks of heartache
For that hour of humility and remembrance
Where the men in robes do reverence
To a man they call Jesus
All you kneeling folk make my walls tremble

My name is Saint Raphael and my heart is always open
For your light footsteps in my hall
For your collective gaze, for your common hope
That love and faith transcend fear and hate
For the organist who makes my foundations vibrate
For your sincere search for solace and grace
All you kneeling folk make my walls tremble

My name is Saint Raphael and my heart is always open
When you are gone and the days turn still
I find another joy from the birds by the window sill
Their songs bring me comfort
And the trees whisper their thoughts as well
The clouds forever changing
The stars speak in silent spells
O stars, sky and earth, you make my walls humble

My name is Saint Raphael and my doors are always open
On the days my house is empty
I often long for your return
But solitude is my friend too
And I wish the same for you
For the quiet restores my health
And gives me pause to thank
The great life that surrounds us
And builds my house with strength
All you kneeling folk make my walls tremble
With love and gratitude you make my walls tremble.