

SPIRIT OF THE MOUNTAIN CLUSTER

December 14-15, 2024

3rd Sunday of Advent (Year C)

Reverend Emmanuel Darfour Appah, Administrator



Saint Mary Catholic Church

109 Beech Ave., PO Box 1724

Coeburn, VA 24230

Saturday Vigil Mass @ 5 PM

Reconciliation Saturday @ 4:30 PM

Tuesday Mass @ 5 PM

Saint Therese Catholic Church

16661 Wise St., PO Box 56

St. Paul, VA 24283

Sunday Mass @ 8:30 AM

Reconciliation Sunday 8:00 AM

Good Shepherd Catholic Church

890 W Main St., PO Box 730

Lebanon, VA 24266-0730

Sunday Mass 11:00 AM

Reconciliation Sunday @ 10:30 AM

Wednesday Mass @ 6 PM

CLUSTER CONTACT INFORMATION

Office Telephone: 1-276-889-1690

Office e-mail: office@spiritofthemountain.org

Website: <https://spiritofthemountain.org/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100078972283533>

SACRAMENTAL EMERGENCY CALL 1-804-631-9027

or eappah@richmonddiocese.org

Reflection for the 3rd Sunday of Advent (Gaudete Sunday) Year C

Theme: Rejoice

On this Third Sunday of Advent, known as Gaudete Sunday, the Church invites us to rejoice as we draw closer to the celebration of Christ's birth. The rose-colored candle on the Advent wreath symbolizes this joy, reminding us that the Lord is near. The Gospel reading from Luke 3:10–18 captures this spirit of anticipation and excitement as John the Baptist continues his mission of preparing the way for the Messiah.

The people, moved by John's call to repentance, ask him, "What should we do?" John responds with practical advice rooted in justice, generosity, and integrity. To the crowd, he says, "Whoever has two cloaks should share with the person who has none, and whoever has food should do likewise." To tax collectors, he instructs them to collect only what is fair, and to soldiers, he demands they avoid extortion and abuse of power. These teachings highlight that true repentance is not just about turning away from sin but also about actively living out our faith in love and service to others.

John's message remains relevant today. As we prepare to welcome Christ into our hearts, we too must ask, "What should we do?" Advent is a time to examine our lives and align our actions with God's will. Are we generous with what we have? Are we fair and just in our dealings with others? Are we witnesses of God's love in the way we treat those around us?

In this Gospel, John also shifts the focus from himself to the One who is to come, saying, "One mightier than I is coming. I am not worthy to loosen the thongs of his sandals." His humility and joyful expectation point us toward Jesus, who will baptize us with the Holy Spirit and fire. This baptism is not just a cleansing but a transformation, igniting within us the light of God's love and purifying our hearts so that we can reflect His glory.

Gaudete Sunday reminds us that joy is not dependent on external circumstances. It is rooted in the knowledge that God is with us. Even amidst life's challenges, we can rejoice because Christ's presence brings hope, peace, and renewal. As we light the rose-colored candle, let it symbolize our trust in God's promises and our commitment to live as bearers of His joy in the world.

In these final weeks of Advent, let us open our hearts to the transformative grace of God. Let us share what we have, act with integrity, and prepare the **way** for the Lord by living lives of love and compassion. As we draw closer to Christmas, may we rejoice in the nearness of our Savior and embrace the joy that only He can bring.

Peace and Joy!

Readings for this Week (December 15-21, 2024)

15 DEC SUN	Zephaniah 3:14-18; Isaiah 12:2-6; Philippians 4:4-7; Luke 3:10-18
16 DEC MON	Numbers 24:2-7, 15-17; Psalm 25; Matthew 21:23-27
17 DEC TUE	Genesis 49:2, 8-10; Psalm 72; Matthew 1:1-17
18 DEC WED	Jeremiah 23:5-8; Psalm 72; Matthew 1:18-25
19 DEC THU	Judges 13:2-7, 24-25; Psalm 71; Luke 1:5-25
20 DEC FRI	Isaiah 7:10-14; Psalm 24; Luke 1:26-38
21 DEC SAT	Song of Songs 2:8-14; Psalm 33; Luke 1:39-45

Next Sunday Readings – 4th Sunday of Advent (December 22, 2024)

Micah 5:1-4; Psalm 80; Hebrews 10:5-10; Luke 1:39-45

Retired Religious Diocesan Collection. Women and men religious offer gratitude. "Sincere thanks to the donors of the Retirement Fund for Religious. I hope we meet, if not

in this world, then in the next,” says Sister Teresa Korycka, 81, of the Sisters Servants of Mary Immaculate. Your gift impacts over 24,000 senior women and men religious, providing them a dignified retirement.

Food Donations continued to be collected by Good Shepherd for the Lebanon Community Food Pantry. A basket is at the back of the church. Items needed are canned fruit, vegetables, soup, and meat. Father Emmanuel is happy to transport items from St. Mary and St. Therese.

PRAY FOR VOCATIONS: Do you rejoice in the Lord? Is He asking you to consider a vocation as a priest? Call the Vocations Office, (804) 359-5661, to speak with Fr. Matthew Kiehl, Vicar for Vocations; or write to vocations@richmonddiocese.org.

Catholic Community Foundation of the Diocese of Richmond’s topic for December is **Yearend Giving**. This is the season we give thanks to God for all He has done for us this past year and throughout our lives. It is also a good time to begin considering how we might give back some of our wealth or assets to Him with a special year-end gift. Gifting is a great way to thank God for these blessing. Take advantage of the charitable tax deduction for gifts made before December 31 (benefits of income tax deductions, capital gains savings, and other financial benefits), and consider the variety of gift options available to you. Your gift to your parish can make a great difference. There are a variety of ways you can contribute a gift. The easiest and most direct methods are donations of cash, stock, and IRA Charitable Rollover. For more information on how you can help make a difference by contributing a year-end gift to our parish, please contact the parish office.

UPCOMING EVENT:

Diocesan Work Camp. June 21-27, 2025. Bristol, VA. Are you looking for an immersive experience of Christian service, prayer, and community for your teens? Join us at Diocesan Work Camp for a week that will give direct assistance to the local community and transform your youth ministry culture! Each day starts with daily Mass before heading out to work sites; each night has programming and prayer. A unique benefit of Diocesan Work Camp is that your parish gets to build friendships with other parishes in our own state. Save the date; more information will be available soon!

The Spirit of the Mountain Cluster and our Catholic Diocese of Richmond Bishop Knestout encourages anyone aware of sexual abuse of minors on the part of clergy or staff of our diocese to notify civil authorities, call the Attorney General’s Clergy Abuse Hotline at 1-833-454-9064 and reach out to the Diocesan Victim Assistance Coordinator at 1-877-887-9603, or email vac@richmonddiocese.org or visit the Diocese’s Child Protection/Safe Environment page at <https://richmonddiocese.org/protecting-gods-children/>

SAINT MARY CATHOLIC CHURCH

December 7 Offertory	\$ 440.00	Attendance 11
December 7 Donation	\$ 250.00	
December 7 Retired Religious Collection	\$ 50.00	

PRAYERS REQUESTED FOR: Alton Lawson, Jr., Sister Stacey Hanrahan, Lillie Peters, Billy Hunsaker, Charles Bennett, and Bobby Kyle.

December Birthdays: Mike O'Donnell (16), Josh Lawson (27), Carol Saboites Burnett (29).

- Saint Mary will have Christmas Eve refreshments after their 5 PM Mass. Please plan to come, and please invite a friend to come and celebrate with us.

SAINT THERESE CATHOLIC CHURCH

December 8 Offertory	\$ 160.00	Attendance 8
December 8 Donations	\$ 150.00	
December 8 Retired Religious Collection	\$ 24.00	

MASS INTENTION: Memorial Mass for repose of the soul of + William Keith + requested by his wife, Joanne Keith

PRAYERS REQUESTED FOR: Tim Long, Jackie White, Helen Moretz, James F. White, Brayn Whited, JoAnn Detta, and Rodney Altizer.

December Birthdays: Chinchito Hernandez (18)

GOOD SHEPHERD CATHOLIC CHURCH

December 8 Offertory	\$ 200.00	Attendance 11
December 8 Votive Candles Offering	\$ 5.00	
December 8 Retired Religious Collection	\$ 94.00	

PRAYERS REQUESTED FOR: Valerie Christian, James White, Bob Dorton, JoAnn Detta, Jackie White, Phyllis Dotson, and Sherry Hubbard.

December Birthdays: Dave Spoharski (2), Jeff Halsey (11); James White (13); Ana Giles/Brittany Trebing (14)

- **December 22** all in attendance are welcome to stay after Mass to **change linens and set up the manager, Christmas flowers and change the wreaths**. Afterwards refreshments will be served. **Bring your favorite finger foods to share.**
- **Christmas Card** from our **snowbirds Bill and Clara French** wishing their church family a Merry Christmas and "May peace, hope and joy be yours this Christmas and throughout the New Year!"

Lector Schedule:

December 22/25/29 – Dave Britten
