



## SPIRIT OF THE MOUNTAIN CLUSTER

February 22-23, 2025

7th Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year C)

Reverend Emmanuel Darfour Appah, Administrator

### **Saint Mary Catholic Church**

109 Beech Ave., PO Box 1724

Coeburn, VA 24230

Saturday Vigil Mass 5 :00 PM

Reconciliation Saturday 4:30 PM

Tuesday Weekday Mass 5:00 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 Weekday Mass 6:00 PM

### **CLUSTER CONTACT INFORMATION**

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Office e-mail: [office@spiritofthemountain.org](mailto: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](mailto:eappah@richmonddiocese.org)

## **Reflection for 7th Sunday in Ordinary Time Year C**

### **Theme: Love your Enemies**

Loving those who love us is easy. But what about those who hurt us, betray us, or treat us unfairly? In this Sunday's Gospel, Jesus gives us one of His most radical teachings: "Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you." These words are challenging because they go against our natural instincts. When someone wrongs me, my first reaction is often to defend myself, seek justice, or even hold a grudge. But Jesus invites us to something deeper, He calls us to love like He loves.

David's encounter with Saul in the first reading reminds us that mercy is not a sign of weakness but of strength. David had the perfect opportunity to take revenge on Saul, who was hunting him down. Instead, he chose mercy, recognizing that vengeance belongs to God alone. Let us ask ourselves, how often do we hold onto resentment when we have been wronged? Are we willing to let go of our desires for revenge and instead choose mercy?

Paul's letter to the Corinthians also reminds us that in Christ, we are called to something greater. Just as we have inherited the brokenness of Adam, we are also meant to bear the image of Christ, the one who loved us even when we were sinners. That means our love must go beyond what feels comfortable. It means forgiving when we would rather hold on to hurt. It means showing kindness even when it is not deserved.

This is not easy, but Jesus does not ask us to do it alone. He teaches us to rely on His grace, to see others through His eyes, and to trust that love is always more powerful than hatred. So today, let us ask ourselves: Who in our lives do we need to forgive? Where is God calling us to show mercy? Lord, soften our hearts and help us love as You love.

Peace and Joy!!

**Readings for this Week (February 23-March 1, 2025)**

23 FEB SUN	1 Samuel 26:2, 7-9, 12-13, 22-23; Psalm 103; 1 Corinthians 15:45-49; Luke 6:27-38
24 FEB MON	Sirach 1:1-10; Psalm 93; Mark 9:14-29
25 FEB TUE	Sirach 2:1-11; Psalm 37; Mark 9:30-37
26 FEB WED	Sirach 4:11-19; Psalm 119; Mark 9:38-40
27 FEB THU	Sirach 5:1-8; Psalm 1; Mark 9:41-50
28 FEB FRI	Sirach 6:5-17; Psalm 119; Mark 10:1-12
01 MAR SAT	Sirach 17:1-15; Psalm 103; Mark 10:13-16

**Next Sunday Readings - 8<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time - March 2, 2025**

Sirach 27:4-7; Psalm 92; 1 Corinthians 15:54-58; Luke 6:39-45

**Welcome to the 2025 Annual Diocesan Appeal – Sharing His Love with Others. A Message from Our Bishop.** When you contribute to the 2025 Annual Diocesan Appeal, you are supporting 21 important ministries of our Catholic Church that help thousands of people across our Diocese with needs such as:

- Groceries as well as heating, rent and shelter assistance to children, families in need, and the elderly across the Diocese.
- Health insurance and long-term care for our priests who have given their lives in service to the Church.
- Assistance to mission parishes such as funds for capital improvements, outreach ministries, and specific ministry costs.

**If you did not receive a mailing from the Diocese to send in your Appeal Contribution you may write a check paid to the order of the CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF RICHMOND.**

Please write 2025 Appeal in the memo section and drop your check in the collection basket. The Cluster office will forward the check to the proper address so you and your church will receive credit for the donation and receive one-half of your contribution will be returned to your church. A full list of ministries supported by the Appeal, please visit [richmondcatholicfoundation.org/appeal](http://richmondcatholicfoundation.org/appeal).

**40 Days for Life. Pizza Anyone?** 40 Days for Life Kick-off & Prayer Gathering. Monday, Feb. 24th. 5:30-7:00 PM. 5:30 pm pizza (RSVP). Praise & Prayer begins at 6:00 PM. Location: First Assembly of God (120 Millard Street, Bristol VA) RSVP Angie for pizza at 423-482-2123 by Feb. 22nd.

From March 5th-April 13th, area Christians from various denominations are praying and fasting for the end of abortion as part of the international 40 Days for Life vigil. Sign up at [www.40daysforlife.com](http://www.40daysforlife.com) or contact Angie Bush at [40daysbristoltn@gmail.com](mailto:40daysbristoltn@gmail.com) or (423) 482-2123 for more information.

## **CLUSTER ASH WEDNESDAY MASS/DISTRIBUTION OF ASHES**

**St. Mary – Tuesday, March 4, 2025, 5 pm**  
**St. Therese – Wednesday, March 5, 2025, 8:30 am**  
**Good Shepherd – Wednesday, March 5, 2025, 6 pm**

**Beginning Tuesday, March 11, Stations of the Cross will be recited during Lent at St. Mary at 4:30 pm before the 5 pm Tuesday Mass.**

**Beginning Wednesday, March 12, Stations of the Cross will be recited during Lent at Good Shepherd at 5:30 pm before the 6 pm Wednesday Mass.**

### **Regulations for Fast and Abstinence During Lent**

Fasting is to be observed by all 18 years of age and older, who have not yet celebrated their 59th birthday. On a fast day one full meal is allowed. Two other meals, sufficient to maintain strength may be taken according to each one's needs, but together they should not equal another full meal. Eating between meals is not permitted, but liquids, including milk and juices are allowed.

Abstinence is observed by all 14 years of age and older. On days of abstinence no meat is allowed. Note that when health or ability to work would be seriously affected, the law does not oblige.

When in doubt concerning fast and abstinence, the parish priest should be consulted.

**Ash Wednesday, March 5 and Good Friday, April 18, are days of fast and abstinence.**

**ALL the Fridays of Lent are days of abstinence.**

### **Ash Wednesday: What's with that dirt on your head?**

Who hasn't gotten that question on Ash Wednesday before? Do you feel silly when people ask you about your ashes? And is it hard to answer their questions? Having ashes on your forehead isn't just some weird Catholic thing: it's a tradition that finds its roots in the Old Testament. "I turned to the Lord God, to seek help, in prayer and petition, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes" (Daniel 9:3). When the ashes are placed on our foreheads in the sign of the Cross, it is a reminder of several things. First, it is a call to repentance: a physical sign that we are sinners in need of forgiveness, which is how the prophets used it in the Old Testament. Second, it is to remind us that God created us from the earth and when we die, we will return to it. But here's the best part: As Pope Benedict XVI has said, "Man is dust and to dust he shall return, but dust is precious in God's eyes because God created man, destining him to immortality." God so loves us that, even when our bodies return to the dust, our souls are meant to live forever with him. The ashes symbolize all of this. Not so silly anymore, is it?

**Food Donations** continue to be collected by the Cluster for the Lebanon Community Food Pantry. If St. Therese or St. Mary parishes have food donations, Father Emmanuel will be happy to transport same to Good Shepherd. Thank you for your continued support.

**PRAY FOR VOCATIONS:** “Love one another as I have loved you.” Are you discerning a call to follow the Lord? Call the Vocations Office, (804) 359-5661, to speak with Fr. Matthew Kiehl, Vicar for Vocations; or write to [vocations@richmonddiocese.org](mailto:vocations@richmonddiocese.org).

**Catholic Community Foundation of the Diocese of Richmond’s topic for February is Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD).** · As Christian stewards, we share the responsibility of making our Church a true community of faith and a vibrant source of service to the larger community. That includes providing financial support for today's needs -- and building a firm financial foundation for tomorrow. If you are 70 ½ years old or older, you can make a Qualified Charitable Distribution up to \$105,000 from your IRA directly to your parish.

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](mailto:vac@richmonddiocese.org) or visit the Diocese’s Child Protection/Safe Environment page at <https://richmonddiocese.org/protecting-gods-children/>

**SAINT MARY CATHOLIC CHURCH**

**February 15 Offertory Collection** **\$ 390.00** **Attendance 10**

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

**March Birthdays:** Rosie Nauss (12), David Nauss (27)

**SAINT THERESE CATHOLIC CHURCH**

**February 16 Offertory Collection** **\$ 190.00** **Attendance 9**

**February 16 Donation** **\$ 500.00**

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

**March Birthdays:** Terry Meade (21), Sydney Laney (25), Debbie Laney (26)

**GOOD SHEPHERD CATHOLIC CHURCH**

**February 16 Offertory** **\$ 598.00** **Attendance 19**

**February 16 Votive Candles Offering** **\$ 7.00**

**February 18 Donation** **\$ 250.00**

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

**March Birthdays:** Janice Halsey (19), Camila Mendoza (23), Sebastian Onate (26)

- **PARISH COUNCIL** will meet this **Sunday, February 23, after Mass.**
- Good Shepherd has been awarded **Diocesan Fuel and Hunger grant funds.** These funds are available through the generous support of the Bishop’s Annual Appeal by our parishioners and other people of the Diocese. **If you have a need for assistance, please contact the church office.**
- **Clean out your closets** and save items no longer needed or wanted (and in decent shape) for our **YARD SALE** scheduled for **APRIL 5.**

**Lector Schedule:** Feb 23 – Dave Britten Mar 2/9 – Giovanni Hernandez