

SPIRIT OF THE MOUNTAIN CLUSTER

February 1-2, 2025

Feast of the Presentation of the Lord (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

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 4th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C

Feast of the Presentation of the Lord

Today, we celebrate the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord, a moment filled with deep symbolism and meaning. In obedience to Jewish law, Mary and Joseph bring the infant Jesus to the Temple in Jerusalem to consecrate Him to the Lord. This act of devotion fulfills the Law of Moses, yet within this ordinary ritual, something extraordinary unfolds, the Messiah enters His Father's house for the first time.

In the Temple, they encounter two faithful servants of God: Simeon and Anna. Simeon, a righteous and devout man, had been waiting for the "consolation of Israel." The Holy Spirit had revealed to him that he would not see death before witnessing the Christ. As soon as he sees Jesus, he takes the child in his arms and proclaims the beautiful canticle, the Nunc Dimittis:

“Now, Master, you may let your servant go in peace, according to your word, for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you prepared in the sight of all the peoples: a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and glory for your people Israel.” (Luke 2:29-32)

These words are powerful. Simeon recognizes in Jesus the fulfillment of God's promise, not just for Israel, but for all people. He proclaims that Christ is the light of the world, a light that will shine on both Jews and Gentiles. Yet, he also foretells the suffering that will come, warning Mary that a "sword" will pierce her heart. This moment foreshadows Jesus' ultimate sacrifice on the cross and Mary's deep sorrow as His mother.

Then, we meet Anna, a prophetess who has spent decades in the Temple, fasting and praying. She too recognizes Jesus as the Redeemer and begins to praise God, speaking about Him to all who were awaiting the salvation of Israel. Her presence reminds us of the power of faithfulness and prayer. Even in old age, she remains watchful, and because of her perseverance, she is granted the grace of encountering Christ.

This feast is also known as Candlemas, emphasizing Jesus as the "light of revelation." It invites us to reflect on how we welcome Christ's light into our lives. Are we like Simeon and Anna, patiently waiting, praying, and remaining faithful, even when God's timing seems slow? Or do we allow darkness, doubt, fear, or complacency, to cloud our vision?

Simeon and Anna's response to Jesus is one of recognition, praise, and witness. They see Christ, rejoice in His presence, and share the good news. Their example challenges us: Do we truly recognize Christ in our daily lives? Do we praise God for His faithfulness? Do we share the light of Christ with others, especially in a world that often feels burdened by darkness?

Finally, we see in Mary and Joseph a model of humility, obedience, and trust. They present Jesus to God, acknowledging that He belongs to the Father. This act reminds us

that all we have, including our very lives, belongs to God. Are we willing to offer our lives to Him in trust, as they did?

As we celebrate this feast, may we open our hearts to Christ's light, embracing Him as our salvation. Like Simeon, may we long for and recognize His presence; like Anna, may we share His message with joy; and like Mary and Joseph, may we offer ourselves in faithful surrender to God's plan.

Peace and Joy!!

Readings for this Week (February 2-8, 2025)

02 FEB SUN	Malachi 3:1-4; Psalm 24; Hebrews 2:14-18; Luke 2:22-40
03 FEB MON	Hebrews 11:32-40; Psalm 31; Mark 5:1-20
04 FEB TUE	Hebrews 12:1-4; Psalm 22; Mark 5:21-43
05 FEB WED	Hebrews 12:4-7, 11-18; Psalm 103; Mark 6:1-6
06 FEB THU	Hebrews 12:18-19, 21-24; Psalm 48; Mark 6:7-13
07 FEB FRI	Hebrews 13:1-8; Psalm 27; Mark 6:14-29
08 FEB SAT	Hebrews 13:15-17, 20-21; Psalm 23; Mark 6:30-34

Next Sunday Readings — February 9, 2025

Isaiah 6:1-2, 3-8; Psalm 138; 1 Corinthians 15:1-11; Luke 5:1-11

RESPECT LIFE Thank you for those who gave generously to the Respect Life collection last weekend. A total of \$235 was forwarded to the Diocese in Richmond for our Cluster's Respect Life collection.

CLUSTER FINANCE COUNCIL Meeting next **Sunday, February 9** for all parish finance councils at St. Therese Catholic Church in St. Paul at 9:15.

Welcome to the 2025 Annual Diocesan Appeal – Sharing His Love with Others. Over the past couple of weekends, you have been hearing about the 2025 Annual Diocesan Appeal.

With a goal of \$4,676,409, the 2025 Appeal will provide critical funding to many diverse and impactful ministries (list attached to bulletin) that affect the lives of thousands of people in our Diocese.

In early February, many of you will receive a letter from Bishop Knestout asking for your support of the 2025 Appeal. It is our sincere hope that you will answer our Bishop's request and make a generous commitment to this effort.

REMEMBER half of the funds you give are returned to the parish. Also, Cluster plans for the funds are:

- **Saint Mary** - build a retaining wall behind the new parish hall/confessional and do landscaping around the same area.
- **St. Therese** - build up checking account balance.
- **Good Shepherd** - purchase and install leaf guards for the church building.

The following 2025 Appeal parish targets are:

Good Shepherd \$2,230 St. Mary \$1,760 St. Therese \$630

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.

February **Word Among Us** booklets are available at the back of the church. Spanish editions are also available at St. Therese and Good Shepherd.

PRAY FOR VOCATIONS: “Before you were born, I consecrated you.” Do you think that you may be called by the Lord to serve Him 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 February is Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD). If you’re over 70 ½, making a Qualified Charitable Distribution to our parish from your IRA will support the good works we do in our parish community. To make a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) from your IRA, contact your IRA administrator or parish staff with questions. Maggie F. Keenan, Director of Planned Giving, Catholic Community Foundation of the Diocese of Richmond (804) 622-5221, mkeen@richmonddiocese.org.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

40 Days for Life. 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 or contact Angie Bush at 40daysbristoltn@gmail.com or (423) 482-2123 for more information.

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.

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

SAINT MARY CATHOLIC CHURCH

January 25 Offertory Collection	\$ 750.00	Attendance 18
January 25 Respect Life Collection	\$ 160.00	
January 25 Donations	\$ 50.00	

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

February Birthdays: Beverly Hall (5), Terry Bates (7)

- Please pray for the family of parishioner Joshua Lawson. Josh's grandmother (Linda Elleen McCowan Greene) died Wednesday, January 29. The family will receive friends at 12 Noon Saturday, February 1, at Estes Funeral Home in Coeburn. Father Emmanuel will officiate at the 1 PM service. The service will also be for Josh's mother, Romona who also recently passed away November 13, 2024. Eternal rest grant to them, O Lord; and Let light perpetual shine upon them. May their souls rest in peace. Josh's address is 6655 Carter Stanley Highway, Coeburn, VA 24230 if you wish to send him a card.
- There will be a **Pastoral/Finance Council meeting** after this Saturday's (February 1) Vigil Mass—all are encouraged to deal with discuss church business.

SAINT THERESE CATHOLIC CHURCH

January 26 Offertory Collection	\$ 90.00	Attendance 7
January 26 Respect Life Collection	\$ 12.00	
January 26 Donations	\$1,705.00	

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

February Birthdays: Joann Detta (18).

- The **Diocesan Christmas Catholic Charities Collection** will be this **Sunday, February 2.**
- **February 2** is the date for our next **parish breakfast.**
- We are grateful for the **Job Corps** group help in fixing and painting our church walls. Also, a big THANKS to the parishioners for pitching in preparing the church for the job and providing snacks and meals for the workers

GOOD SHEPHERD CATHOLIC CHURCH

January 26 Offertory	\$ 484.00	Attendance 20
January 26 Votive Candles Offering	\$ 11.00	

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

February Birthdays: Bev Britten (14).

- **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:**
February 2 and 9 – Janice Halsey
February 16 and 23 – Dave Britten