

SPIRIT OF THE MOUNTAIN CLUSTER

March 22/23, 2025

3rd Sunday of Lent (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 March 25 Mass 5 PM

Friday March 28 Stations/Mass 4 PM

Good Shepherd Catholic Church

890 W Main St., PO Box 730

Lebanon, VA 24266-0730

Sunday Mass 11 AM

Reconciliation Sunday 10:30 AM

Wednesday March 26 Mass 6 PM

Friday March 28 Stations/Mass 6 PM

Saint Therese Catholic Church

16661 Wise St., PO Box 56

St. Paul, VA 24283

Sunday Mass 8:30 AM

Reconciliation Sunday 8 AM

CLUSTER CONTACT INFORMATION

Office Telephone: 1-276-889-1690

Office e-mail: office@spiritofthemountain.org

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

Facebook: [https://www.facebook.com/](https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100078972283533)

[profile.php?id=100078972283533](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 Lent Year C

Theme: Second Chance

In our Gospel for this Sunday, Jesus speaks about repentance, using the parable of the barren fig tree. The owner of the vineyard wants to cut it down because it has not borne fruit, but the gardener asks for more time: "Let me dig around it and fertilize it. If it bears fruit next year, fine! If not, then cut it down." This image of the fig tree reflects God's patience and mercy toward us. Even when we fall short, God does not give up on us. He gives us time and the grace we need to grow and bear fruit.

The call to repentance is at the heart of this Gospel. When people tell Jesus about the tragic deaths of the Galileans, they expect Him to explain why such suffering happened. Instead, Jesus shifts the focus: "Unless you repent, you will all perish as they did." He is reminding us that life is fragile and uncertain. Tragedy and suffering can happen at any moment, not necessarily as a punishment for sin but as a reminder that we must always be prepared. Repentance is not about fear; it's about turning back to God and allowing His grace to work in us.

The first reading from Exodus tells the story of Moses encountering God in the burning bush. God reveals Himself as "I AM," showing that He is not distant but present and active in our lives. Just as God called Moses to lead His people to freedom, He calls each of us to respond to His voice and trust in His guidance.

Paul's message to the Corinthians reminds us not to become complacent. He warns that even though the Israelites witnessed God's miracles, many of them still fell away. This is a reminder that faith is not a one-time decision, it requires daily renewal and openness to God's grace.

Lent is a season of second chances. Just like the fig tree, God gives us time to grow, to heal, and to bear fruit. But this time is not endless. We are invited to examine our hearts and ask: Where do I need to repent? What areas of my life are not bearing fruit? God's mercy is abundant, but He also calls us to respond. May we open our hearts to His grace, trust in His patience, and allow Him to transform us into the fruitful disciples He calls us to be.

Peace and Joy !!

Readings for this Week (March 23-29, 2025)

23 MAR SUN Exodus 3:1-8, 13-15; Psalm 103; 1 Corinthians 10:1-6, 10-12; Luke 13:1-9
24 MAR MON 2 Kings 5 :1-15; Psalm 42 ; 43; Luke 4 :24-30
**** **25 MAR TUE** Isaiah 7:10-14; 8:10; Psalm 40; Hebrews 10:4-10; Luke 1:26-38 ****
26 MAR WED Deuteronomy 4:1, 5-9; Psalm 147; Matthew 5:17-19
27 MAR THU Jeremiah 7:23-28; Psalm 95; Luke 11:14-23
28 MAR FRI Hosea 14:2-10; Psalm 81; Mark 12:28-34
29 MAR SAT Hosea 6:1-6; Psalm 51; Luke 18:9-14

**** **Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord** (March 25) celebration recalls the historical event of the Angel Gabriel appearing to the Virgin Mary, as found in Luke 1:26–38. It also celebrates the Church's faith in the underlying reality that took place at that moment in time. We celebrate the Virgin Mary's perfect "Yes" to the plan of the Father. We celebrate her humility, obedience, docility, and especially her motherhood of God and man. This solemnity is also a celebration of the Father in Heaven because it reveals the beginning of the pinnacle of His perfect plan of salvation.

Next Sunday Readings – 4th Sunday of Lent - March 30, 2025

Joshua 5:9-12; Psalm 34; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21; Luke 15:1-3, 11-32

Second Diocesan Collection – CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES. Next week (March 22-23) our cluster will take up The Catholic Relief Services Collection. Funds from this collection provide food to the hungry, support displaced refugees, and bring Christ's love and mercy to vulnerable people here and abroad. Next week, please give generously to the collection and reveal Christ's love to those most in need. Learn more about the collection at www.usccb.org/catholic-relief. Envelopes will be available at the back of the church.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

St. Mary – 4 PM - each Friday and **Good Shepherd -- 6:00 PM – each Friday** during Lent Stations of the Cross will be recited followed by Mass. Since we will be in Lent during the Friday Stations/Masses and the pillars of Lent are **Fasting, Praying and Almsgiving**, we need to make some sacrifices. **It won't be compulsory, but for those who can and want to, the collection basket will be passed during these Friday Lent Masses.**

ALL the Fridays of Lent are days of abstinence.

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. Good Friday (April 18) is a day of fast and abstinence. When in doubt concerning fast and abstinence, the parish priest should be consulted.

JOIN US FOR CRS RICE BOWL'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY! NUTRITIOUS MEALS HELP CHILDREN GROW HEALTHY IN GUATEMALA. In Santa María Chiquimula, Guatemala, over half the community is affected by malnutrition. Amid rising food prices and job loss, Ana Belén and her husband were struggling to provide for their growing family. But they saw a ray of hope through their participation in a Catholic Relief Services' program that helps them ensure their children are healthy and have the nutrition they need to thrive and play.

2025 Annual Diocesan Appeal – Sharing His Love with Others.

- The last couple of weekends you heard about the Annual Diocesan Appeal. It is hoped you have taken time to consider how you can support this year's effort which provides essential ministries throughout our Diocese aimed at empowering the next generation of Catholics, helping those in need, and strengthening our parishes and Catholic communities.
- It is a pleasure to tell you that we are 43% towards St. Mary's parish goal of \$1,760 with \$750 raised; 68% towards St. Therese's parish goal of \$630 with \$470 raised; and 40% towards Good Shepherd's parish goal of \$2,230 with \$1,200 raised.
- If you have not yet had an opportunity to support this year's Appeal (or if you are still praying about your decision), here is something important. That is the Annual Appeal helps fund cornerstone ministries of the Diocese of Richmond that one parish cannot support alone.
- For instance, one parish could not support the room, board, and tuition assistance needs of our seminarians, supply over half a million dollars to parish foodbanks and Catholic organizations across our Diocese or provide for diocesan-wide next generation evangelization and formation initiatives.
- The importance of the Annual Appeal to the life and ministry of our Catholic Church cannot be overstated. The faithful support of the Appeal by so many enables our Diocese to more effectively meet the urgent annual needs of the Church which serve as building blocks to grow the Church's impact for years to come.
- If you would like to contribute, I invite you to use your phone to scan the QR code located in the forms in the envelopes in the pews or go to richmondcatholicfoundation.org/appeal/ where you'll be able to make an ongoing recurring gift or a one-time gift.
- There is also a hard copy pledge card available in the envelope in the pews.

- On behalf of Bishop Knestout, Father Emmanuel, and our parish leadership, thank you for supporting the 2025 Annual Diocesan Appeal. We look forward to updating you on our Appeal progress soon. God bless and **thank** you to all who have already sent their donation.

Encountering the Shroud of Turin. POWER AND LIGHT. Father Chris Masla of Abingdon’s Christ the King Catholic Church has invited all to attend two very special presentations (March 28 and 29, both at 7 PM) on The Shroud of Turin to be held at their church (820 E Main St, Abingdon, VA 24210). A flyer is attached to the bulletin.

SAVE THE DATES: Cluster Holy Week Schedule

- April 24 **Holy Thursday 5:00 PM** Mass of the Lord’s Supper at **St. Mary, Coeburn**
- April 25 **Good Friday 3 PM** Good Friday of the Lord’s Passion at **St. Therese, St. Paul**
- April 26 **Holy Saturday 7:30 PM** Easter Vigil in the Holy Night of Easter at **St. Mary**
- April 27 **Easter Sunday 8:30 AM** The Resurrection of the Lord Mass of Easter Day at **St. Therese, St. Paul**
- April 27 **Easter Sunday 11 AM** The Resurrection of the Lord Mass of Easter Day at **Good Shepherd, Lebanon**

40 Days for Life. This is latest news from our contact, St. Anne Catholic Church, Bristol, VA, Angie Bush. “Dear Bristol 40 Days for Life Prayer Warriors: There is good news and bad news. **The bad news first:** The abortionist came into town and there were over 50 abortions at Bristol Women’s Health (BWH) abortion business the weekend of March 8-9th. The last car left the building around 7:00 pm on Sunday evening. This is business as usual at BWJ. Every couple of weeks, BWH has an abortionist present doing surgical abortions. When present, the parking lot is full the whole weekend. When the abortionist isn’t in town, chemical abortions (the abortion pill) is their “go to” method for killing our most vulnerable.” **Now, the good news, and it is VERY good news:** We have witnessed God’s hand working on the Bristol 40 Days for Life vigil with increase participation this spring: 12 NEW people have signed up to pray near BWH. 20 NEW “at home” prayer warriors. More pre-organized group prayer opportunities with the help of First Assembly of God and Knights of Columbus (see list of prayer times below). All this good news means more prayers against the stronghold abortion. Praise God! This week let’s cling to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and praise Him for all His faithfulness and abundant grace! He is the Light of the World! (John 8:12). And...In His light do we see light. (Psalm 36:9) **Let us bring the Light of Christ to the darkest place in Bristol—BWH on Osborne Street.”**

Prayer gatherings are at the vigil site

Between now and April 13th, 40 Days for Life vigils are happening in 660 cities worldwide. Christians from various churches are praying and fasting for the end of abortion. In Bristol, our goal is to have a prayer chain of people praying 12 hours/day for 40 consecutive days. If you would like to be involved but aren’t sure how to start, consider coming to one of these group prayer gatherings near Bristol Women’s Health abortion business (2603 Osborne St. Bristol, VA)

- Thursday, March 20th 11:00 AM—St. Mary’s Knights**
- Thursday, March 20th 2:00 PM—First Assembly of God**
- Saturday March 22nd 7:00 AM-11:00 AM Christ the King Knights**
- Saturday, March 22nd 11:00 AM —Midpoint prayer gathering**

Contact Angie Bush at (423) 482-2123 or go to www.40daysforlife.com/bristol for more information.

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.

CLUSTER PICNIC - SAVE THE DATE: July 6, 2025, SUNDAY, Noon, is the date set for our **Cluster Picnic**. The picnic will be held in the large shelter at the back of the parking lot at the Lebanon Town Park (45 Gibson St, Lebanon, VA 24266). Please plan on being there for good food and lots of fun and fellowship. More details to follow.

PRAY FOR VOCATIONS: "I AM sent me to you." Could the Lord be calling you to proclaim His name as a priest? Call the Vocations Office, (804) 359-5661, to speak with Fr. Matthew Kiehl, Vicar for Vocations; or write to vocations@richmonddioocese.org.

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@richmonddioocese.org or visit the Diocese's Child Protection/Safe Environment page at <https://richmonddioocese.org/protecting-gods-children/>

SAINT MARY CATHOLIC CHURCH

March 15 Offertory Collection	\$ 465.00	Attendance 13
March 15 Votive Candles Offering	\$ 6.00	
March 15 Donation	\$ 50.00	
Friday March 14 Offertory	\$ 45.00	

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)

- **March 28, Friday 4 PM, Stations of the Cross** will be recited followed by Mass.
- **Refreshments will be served after the Holy Saturday, April 26, 7:30 PM Easter Vigil.**
- **SAVE THE DATE:** Saturday, August 2, Saint Mary's 70th anniversary celebration dinner at Coeburn Civic League after 5 PM Mass at the church.

SAINT THERESE CATHOLIC CHURCH

March 16 Offertory Collection	\$ 140.00	Attendance 7
March 16 Donations	\$ 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

March 16 Offertory	\$ 596.00	Attendance 24
March 16 Votive Candles Offering	\$ 4.00	

March 16 Donations \$ 100.00

March 14 Friday Collection \$ 65.00

March 18 Donation \$ 250.00

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

March Birthdays: Janice Halsey (19), Ann Smith (20), Hunter Smith (21), Camila Mendoza (23), Sebastian Onate (26)

- **March 28, Friday 6 PM, Stations of the Cross** will be recited followed by Mass.
- Parish **potluck meal** after **Sunday Mass**. **Help** needed to set up tables before Mass if you can come early. All are welcome to stay for good food and fellowship.
- Good Shepherd has been awarded **Diocesan Fuel and Hunger grant funds**. **If you have a need for assistance, please contact the church office.**
- **YARD SALE** scheduled for **APRIL 5**. **Help sign-up sheet at the back of the church**. You may put your yard sale **donations** in the classroom **before April 5**.
- **Lector Schedule:**

March 23, 2025	–	Frank Taylor
March 23 and 30, 2025	–	Janice Halsey
April 6 and 13, 2025	–	Dave Britten

Slide 7 3 Left C Scrambled words



SUNDAY GOSPEL ACTIVITIES

Unscramble each word and write it in the blank provided.

1. rlabpea _____	2. susej _____
3. nernsi _____	4. pntere _____
5. itylgu _____	6. rshipe _____
7. uitrf _____	8. treufu _____
9. nogdkmi _____	10. rcfisieac _____

LISTEN closely to the **Gospel Acclamation** and **Gospel** according to Luke and you will hear the following words which are the answers to the puzzle above, in no specific order: Repent future Jesus kingdom fruit Sinner sacrifice perish guilty Parable