



## **SPIRIT OF THE MOUNTAIN CLUSTER**

**March 29/30, 2025**

**4th 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 April 1 Mass 5 PM**

**Friday April 4 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 April 2 Mass 6 PM**

**Friday April 4 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](mailto:office@spiritofthemountain.org)

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

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**SACRAMENTAL EMERGENCY CALL 1-804-631-9027**

or [eappah@richmonddiocese.org](mailto:eappah@richmonddiocese.org)

### **Reflection for 4th Sunday of Lent Year C**

#### **Theme: The Boundless Mercy of God**

The Fourth Sunday of Lent, also known as Laetare Sunday, is a time of joy amid the Lenten season. The Gospel reading today presents one of the most powerful stories of God's mercy, the Parable of the Prodigal Son.

In this parable, Jesus describes a father with two sons. The younger son takes his inheritance, wastes it in reckless living, and finds himself broken and starving. Realizing his mistake, he decides to return home, prepared to beg his father for forgiveness. However, before he even reaches the house, his father sees him from a distance, runs to him, embraces him, and restores him as his beloved son.

This story is a profound image of God's love for us. No matter how far we stray, God is always ready to welcome us back with open arms. He does not hold our past against us but instead rejoices at our return.

On this Laetare Sunday, we are reminded that Lent is not just about penance but also about God's mercy and our reconciliation with Him. Are we willing to return to God, like the prodigal son? Do we trust in His forgiveness, or do we let guilt keep us away?

At the same time, the parable challenges us to examine our hearts. Do we act like the older son, who resents his father's mercy toward his brother? Are we willing to extend the same forgiveness that we seek for ourselves?

As we journey through Lent, let us embrace the boundless mercy of God. Let us return to Him with humble hearts, knowing that He is always waiting to welcome us home.

Peace and Joy !!

### **Readings for this Week (March 30-April 5, 2025)**

30 MAR SUN	Joshua 5:9-12; Psalm 34; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21; Luke 15:1-3, 11-32
31 MAR MON	Isaiah 65:17-21; Psalm 30; John 4 :43-54
01 APR TUE	Ezekiel 47:1-9; Psalm 46; John 5:1-16
02 APR WED	Isaiah 49:8-15; Psalm 145; John 5:17-30
03 APR THU	Exodus 32:7-14; Psalm 106; John 5:31-47
04 APR FRI	Wisdom 2-1, 12-22; Psalm 34; John 7:1-2, 10, 25-30
05 APR SAT	Jeremiah 11-18-20; Psalm 7; John 7:40-53

### **Next Sunday Readings – 5th Sunday of Lent – APRIL 6, 2025**

Isaiah 43:16-21; Psalm 126; Philippians 3:8-14; John 8:1-11

**Second Diocesan Collection – CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES.** This weekend we have this collection to reveal Christ's love to our brothers and sisters in need. This collection makes grants to six Catholic agencies that provide relief and support for struggling communities and work for peace and reconciliation among our marginalized brothers and sisters, both here and around the world. Please prayerfully consider how you can support the collection.

### **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 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! PROTECTING CROPS FROM NATURAL DISASTERS IN BANGLADESH.** Shahadat's village, and much of Bangladesh, is located on flat lowlands. The intense rainy season causes flooding that often destroys farms and crops. Find out how Shahadat learned new farming skills from a Catholic Relief Services program that enabled him to increase the yield of his vegetable crops despite the challenges of climate change. Visit [crsricebowl.org/week-4](http://crsricebowl.org/week-4) to read this week's Story of Hope.

**2025 Annual Diocesan Appeal – Sharing His Love with Others.** Throughout March, you have heard about the Annual Diocesan Appeal. **Below is the status of our Cluster's progress so far.** Our churches are blessed to have donors outside of St. Therese and Good Shepherd to assist in reaching the goal. St. Mary has donations received but not processed so their number should increase significantly once that is done.

	<u><b>St. Therese</b></u>	<u><b>St. Mary</b></u>	<u><b>Good Shepherd</b></u>
2025 Appeal Goal	\$ 630	\$ 1760	\$ 2,230
<b>Number of Donors</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>7</b>
Amount Raised	\$ 2,060	\$ 750	\$ 4,025
<b>% to Goal Raised</b>	<b>327%</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>180%</b>
Amount Collected	\$ 695	\$ 750	\$ 2,075
<b>Recurring Gift Projection</b>	<b>\$ 1,365</b>	<b>\$ 0</b>	<b>\$ 1850</b>

The 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 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 have not yet done so, I hope you will join us in contributing. There is still time to drop your check in the collection basket (paid to the order of The Catholic Diocese of Richmond) placing 2025 Appeal in the memo section of your check or place cash in an envelope, mark for the appeal on the outside of the envelope and drop in the collection basket. You may wish to pick up a pledge card at the back of the church and mail direct to the address on the envelope or visit [richmondcatholicfoundation.org/appeal/](http://richmondcatholicfoundation.org/appeal/). On behalf of Bishop Knestout, myself, and our parish leadership, thank you for supporting the 2025 Annual Diocesan Appeal. REMEMBER, no gift is too small.

Please keep **Father Xavier** and his family in your prayers. His brother, Vincent Wasswa, recently died in an accident. We also pray the perpetual light shines upon Vincent and may his soul rest in peace.

**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 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 was with last week's 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.** 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). You may also contact Angie Bush at (423) 482-2123 or go to [www.40daysforlife.com/bristol](http://www.40daysforlife.com/bristol) for more information.

**Prayer gatherings are at the vigil site**

Thursday, April 3rd 11:00 AM—St. Mary's Knights

Thursday, April 3rd 5:00 PM—First Assembly of God

Saturday, April 5th 11:00 AM—Rosary with Fr. Chris Masla

Thursday, April 11th 11:00 AM—St. Mary's Knights

Sunday, April 13th, 4:00 PM—Closing prayer gathering

**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@richmonddiocese.org](mailto:vocations@richmonddiocese.org).

**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 tasty food and lots of fun and fellowship. More details to follow.

**Catholic Community Foundation of the Diocese of Richmond's topic today is:** How you can use your IRA to make a Qualified Charitable Contribution (QCD) to the parish. The Holy Spirit brought the early Church alive by giving individuals gifts that would sustain the Church. By sharing your gifts, you can keep the church alive for years to come. Don't miss the chance to make an IRA Qualified Charitable Distribution gift this year! If you are 70 ½ or, please consider making an IRA Qualified Charitable Distribution before December 31. You can make a gift up to \$108,000 directly from your IRA to our 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

**March 22 Offertory Collection** \$ 777.00 **Attendance 18**

**Friday March 21 Offertory** \$ 60.00

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

- **April 4, 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 23 Offertory Collection** \$ 191.00 **Attendance 9**

**March 23 Votive Offering** \$ 12.00

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

**April Birthdays:** Therese Fields 925)

- Parish **breakfast** next **Sunday, April 6.**

### GOOD SHEPHERD CATHOLIC CHURCH

**March 23 Offertory** \$ 331.00 **Attendance 26**

**March 23 Votive Candles Offering** \$ 2.00

**March 21 Friday Collection** \$ 60.00

**March 21 Votive Offering** \$ 1.00

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

**April Birthdays:** Karla Castro (2), Giovanni Hernandez (14), Kevin Christian (7), Giovanni Hernandez (14), Dalton Christian (17)

- **April 4, Friday 6 PM, Stations of the Cross** will be recited followed by Mass.
- **THANK YOU** to all who were able to stay and thank you to all who brought food.
- 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 and 30, 2025 – Janice Halsey  
April 6 and 13, 2025 – Dave Britten