

GOOD NEWS

Church of the Redeemer's Monthly Newsletter



Pastor's Reflection

By Father Jim Cowles

Welcome to February, a rather exceptional month this year in a couple of ways. On the second day of this month, we celebrated the Feast of the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple. On that same day, thousands gathered in Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania to see if Phil the groundhog would see his shadow, which he did not. Forecasting, with little accuracy, we are told an early Spring awaits us.

It is rare for Valentine's Day and Ash Wednesday to fall on the same day, as they last did in 2018 and 1945. We have two seemingly contrasting holidays sharing the same date. Ash Wednesday, the official start of Lent, requires fasting and abstinence while the most romantic day of the year encourages luxurious indulgences. This certainly does set up a challenging conundrum.

With the National Retail Federation predicting that consumers will spend \$30.7 billion on the holiday, Christians of various denominations will be hearing a message of 'giving up' things, become more prayerful, resist sin, and perhaps focus on some positive behavior during this 40-day spiritual journey.

While it may seem madrigal to start the penitential season on the most romantic day of the year, Ash Wednesday can indeed be a very good opportunity to reflect on the benevolence of love. The cross is the ultimate symbol of Divine Love. This Love is sacrificial as well as life-giving, a kind of love that everyone should aspire to do.

Both days are days of the heart. The overlap of Valentine's Day and Ash Wednesday is a beautiful reminder of the messiness of life as we love others and love God. February 14th this year is a day of hearts and crosses, valentines and ashes. A day to renew our passion for the ONE we love and the ones we love!

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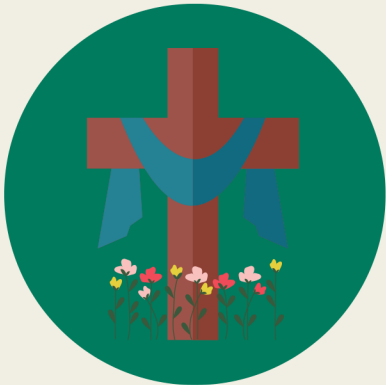


You Have Put On Christ

In the month of January, the following children were baptized.

- Savannah Loving
- Logan Worthington
- Giulianna Keck

Heavenly Father, grant that these children grow in grace and love. May they learn to follow Jesus through the influence of the Holy Spirit. They are true children of yours, and we pray they serve you faithfully all their days. We pray for guidance and strength for the parents and family of these children. May their example, wise counsel, and love lead them to live a life of strength, righteousness, faith, love, joy, and peace. We pray this in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.



In Memoriam

Please pray for the repose of the souls listed below, and for Christ's comforting presence for their families during this time of loss.

- Bruce Ganey

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.



February: Month of the Holy Family

Jesus, Mary and Joseph,
in you we contemplate the splendor of true love;
to you we turn with trust.
Holy Family of Nazareth,
grant that our families too may be places of communion and
prayer, authentic schools of the Gospel and small domestic churches.
Holy Family of Nazareth,
may families never again experience violence, rejection and division;
may all who have been hurt or scandalized find ready comfort and healing.
Holy Family of Nazareth,
make us once more mindful of the sacredness and inviolability of the family,
and its beauty in God's plan.
Jesus, Mary and Joseph,
Graciously hear our prayer.
Amen.





Anointing of the Sick

We will be celebrating the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick after all liturgies on the weekend of February 10/11. If you have a family member in need of the sacrament, or if you would like to be anointed yourself, you are invited to receive God's grace, healing and the support of the community in a special way after these liturgies.



For those who are receiving the Sacrament of Anointing and would like to continue to feel the prayers of our community in a special way once they are home, there will be a basket of Prayer Shawls in the commons – please take one with you! These shawls are made with love and prayer, and blessed by Father Jim, for those in our community who are experiencing difficult times. We hope they bring you peace.

Prayers for those in the RCIA

As we begin Lent this month, please pray for our RCIA candidates as they make their final preparations to come into the Church on Divine Mercy Sunday, April 7.

O God, we thank you for implanting the gift of faith in human hearts. We thank you for sending Jesus, Your Son, as the fullness of your love. May his life and mission lead us to share in your divine life. Today we ask you to bless in a special way all inquirers, catechumens, and candidates, who have generously responded to the invitation of Jesus: "Come, follow me." Help them to persevere in their journey of faith despite any difficulties. Bless those who minister through the RCIA program so that under the guidance of your Holy Spirit, they may lead others to a life of faith in Jesus Christ. Grant that all parishioners will take an active role in bringing new members into the Church. Call us all to a renewal of our faith and inspire us all to be your light in the world.

Through Christ, our Lord. Amen



Catholic Trivia

1. What are the four marks of the Church?
 2. Where and when did we get the Nicene Creed?
 3. When does Lent begin and end?
 4. Why is violet the liturgical color of lent?
- Answers are on page 9!



ASH WEDNESDAY SOUP SUPPER



February 14, 2024
Beginning at 6:00 pm

Come join fellow parishioners for an evening of food, fellowship and reflection. Sponsored by the Confirmation class of 2024. Sign-up on the table outside the church offices.





Redeemer continues work with RISC

Redeemer parishioners have been working along side other churches in the Richmond and surrounding areas to make real changes in systems that affect the poorest and

most vulnerable in our community. At the 2023 Nehemiah Action, Redeemer, along with almost 1200 members from local faith communities partnering with RISC came together to make a difference.



RISC is made up of congregations throughout Richmond, Henrico, Hanover and Chesterfield. RISC uses the power of large numbers of faithful people to solve critical community problems – Redeemer is blessed to join with 24 other faith communities to bring about change.

Redeemer's strength has always been in providing for those within our community who are in need of food, clothing, shelter and financial assistance. Through RISC we are continuing to build our justice ministry to look deeper at the reasons people get into a place where they need help. Is there enough affordable housing? Are our schools strong? Are there resources for families to make their homes livable? Are our neighborhoods safe? Our Justice Ministry focuses on ensuring fairness in the larger "systems" that affect our lives.

Since the fall, a number of committed Redeemer parishioners have been meeting to share hard conversations around injustices affecting our community. Through the sharing of our stories, we were able to begin to see common threads of concern specifically around the issues of affordable housing, gun violence, and healthy homes for Greater Richmond. We need your support and passion to make a difference, Redeemer!

This weekend, our Redeemer Justice Ministry Network Members will be commissioned by Fr. Jim and you, our Redeemer community, to go forth and work for Justice. Please pray for our work and join us on March 19th for the Nehemiah Action at St. Paul's Baptist Church on Creighton Road.

Interested in knowing more? Ask any of our Justice Ministry Network Members or team leaders: Fr. Jim, Deacon Chris, Deacon Ron, or Diane.

Lent: Pray, Fast, Give

Each day during Lent, we invite you to reflect on how your Lenten sacrifices can help our elderly here in RVA by supporting programs that provide compassionate, quality care and safe housing for seniors. Redeemer will be joining in prayer and almsgiving with the residents of Saint Francis – Manchester. Be sure to pick up your Lenten Giving Box on Ash Wednesday. With your donations this Lent, you can help us, help others!





The Trail of the Central American Martyrs

By Deacon Chris Colville

Three weeks ago, I was privileged to go on a retreat/pilgrimage experience in Central America, specifically, El Salvador and Guatemala. It wasn't sure what the retreat would be like, having been on many different types of retreats. What we did and what we saw wasn't anything I was prepared to experience.

During the war years, the seventies to late eighties in these countries, the governments in El Salvador and Guatemala saw the Catholic Church as a threat because of the Church's work with the poor. Bishops and priests as well as lay people were targeted simply because they worked for the Church in ministry to the poor. Some people were killed for fear they would give aid to the guerillas or be recruited to fight with them.

I am sure that many of you are familiar with St. Oscar Romero from El Salvador and maybe some of you are familiar with Blessed Stanley Rother from the Oklahoma and Bishop Gerardi in Guatemala. These are only the tip of what I would call the iceberg of the many martyrs of these two countries from the mid-1970's to the late 1990's. We spent ten days learning about these faith-filled people of God and how their lives touched the people of El Salvador and Guatemala. We listened to personal witnesses of people who lived through the war years. Some highlights of the retreat experience follow.

In El Salvador we learned about numerous priests and lay people who gave their lives for the people of God. We celebrated Eucharist at the altar where St Oscar Romero was assassinated and visited, prayed and sang at his tomb in the Cathedral. We visited the chapel erected at the site where three religious sisters and a lay missionary were buried after they had been assassinated.

In Guatemala, we listened to a local church group sing about Blessed Stanley Rother in the room where he fought his attackers and ultimately killed. We celebrated Mass at the altar where his uncoagulated blood remains in a vile in the altar. We visited the Cathedral where the tomb of Bishop Gerardi is located and visited the Parish site where he was killed. This is a mural of Central American martyrs at Bishop Gerardi house, in which he and St. Oscar Romero are prominently portrayed. Bishop Gerardi was declared a martyr by Pope Francis in 2020.

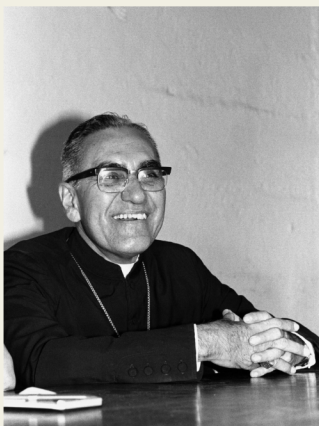
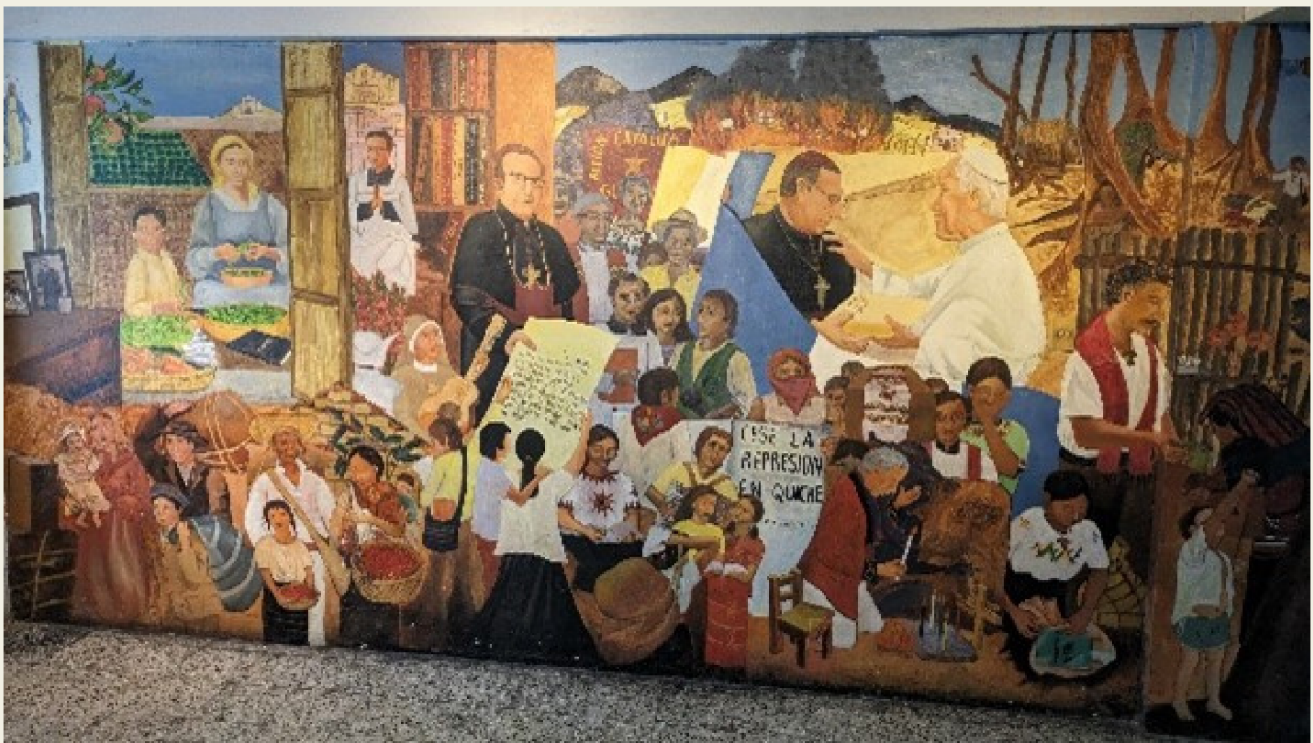
We also witnessed some of the blessings that are happening now in these countries. The office of Justice and Peace in Guatemala City that employs forty-five people, looks into violations of human rights. We also learned about efforts to identify bodies from communal graves and reunite families that had been separated through the diocesan office. The columns at the Cathedral have the names of identified victims engraved upon them. The stories of the people are being told and there is hope.





We heard from ordained and lay missionaries who continue to minister with people. We also heard from young adults who were giving of their time to minister with the people. These were young adults from different parts of the United States, two from Virginia, who were giving of their time to minister with the people. Some for six months others for three years. We learned of a local coffee coop through which the local farmers are paid an above average fair price for their coffee and the local people who process it also earn an above average fair wage. The coffee is processed and shipped to a location in Minnesota from which it is distributed around the country.

There is hope. While we were in Guatemala, a new government was installed. There is faith. The Mass we attended in Santiago Atitlan was filled as were the five other Masses every week. After the Mass there were privileged to visit the homebound who showed great faith even in their ailments. All the retreatants have said the retreat experience was a great blessing and one that will have a lasting impact on our faith and ministry.



“We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that. This enables us to do something, and to do it very well. It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way, an opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and do the rest.” – St. Oscar Romeo



**\$15
ADULTS
\$7 under
10YRS**

*Baked Salmon or
Fried Whiting
Boiled Shrimp •
Hush Puppies •
Tater Tots • Cole
Slaw • Beverages*

**KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS
LENTEN**

SEAFOOD Dinner

Dine in or Take out



**FEB 16TH
530P - 730P**

**MUST
PURCHASE
TICKETS**

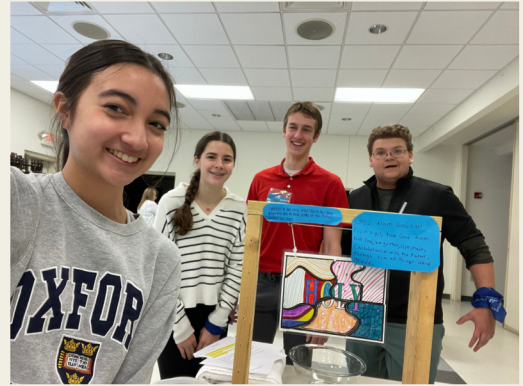
Cash • Check • Card. || Ticket Sales 2.3.24-2.4.24 and 2.10.24-2.11.24
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January Youth RE Update

By Renee Reisenweaver

The 2024 confirmation class is studying what we believe as Catholics by taking a closer look at the Nicene Creed. In a recent lesson on the four marks of the church, Isabella Holmes, Molly Rossi, Alex Brehm and Nathan Weik shared why **HOLY** is one of those marks.



Students in the youth RE program learned how to collaborate and trust in a classmate to complete a three-legged relay. At first, they struggled and even fell at times. With additional practice and the desire to succeed, they could walk easily with one another. This is also true with God. We often fail to trust and allow him to walk with us. To reflect on this, the youth read from the book of Joshua. Even though he was a man of military knowledge and strength, he trusted in God to lead the people of Israel. "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; be not frightened, neither be dismayed; for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go." Joshua 1:9



Catholic Trivia Answers

1. One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic.
2. This may surprise you! What we know today as the "Nicene Creed" comes from the Council of Constantinople (381). The Council Fathers made a few additions to the original Nicene Creed from the Council of Nicaea (325). Specifically, they added articles about the Holy Spirit, baptism, the Church, and the resurrection of the dead.
3. Lent begins on Ash Wednesday and ends at sunset on Holy Thursday. If you count the days up, that's more than 40. Hence, the 40 days of Lent symbolically represent the 40 days Christ spent in the desert prior to his passion.
4. Liturgically, violet is the penitential color. Similar to Advent, the season of Lent is one of preparation and self-denial to make way for the Lord. Another similarity between Lent and Advent is the color change to rose to signify the halfway point of the season: Gaudete Sunday in Advent and Laetare Sunday in Lent.



CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER

Roman Catholic Church

Lent/Easter Schedule

Wednesday, Feb. 14: Ash Wednesday Mass 12:00 pm, Family Service 5:30 pm, Soup Supper 6:00 pm, Mass 7:00 pm

Friday, Feb. 16: Fish Fry 5:30–7:00 pm, Youth Stations of the Cross 7:00 pm

Friday, Feb. 23: Children's Stations of the Cross 7:00 pm

Friday, Mar. 1: Youth Live Stations of the Cross 7:00 pm

Friday, March 8: Fish Fry 5:30–7:00 pm, Overcoming Racism Stations of the Cross 7:00 pm

Wednesday, March 13: Parish Reconciliation Service 7:00 pm

Friday, March 15: Youth Stations of the Cross 7:00 pm

Friday, March 22: Stations of the Cross 7:00 pm

Monday, March 25: Taize Service 7:00 pm

Thursday, March 28: Holy Thursday Mass 7:00 pm

Friday, March 29: Good Friday Liturgy 7:00 PM

Saturday, March 30: Blessing of Baskets 12:00 PM, Easter Vigil 7:30 PM

Sunday, March 31: Easter Sunday Masses 9:00 & 11:00 AM

Days of Fasting & Abstinence: Ash Wednesday and Good Friday are days of fasting (a single full meal) and abstinence from meat. Other Fridays of Lent are days of abstinence from meat. Fasting is required by all Catholics ages 18–59; abstinence for Catholics 14 years and older.

FASTING · PRAYING · ALMSGIVING



CHURCH OF THE
REDEEMER

Roman Catholic Church

**GLORIFYING
THE LORD BY
YOUR LIFE**

Presented by Deacon Ron Reger

FEBRUARY 24, 2024

1:00PM

MULTIPURPOSE ROOM

A reflection on ministries of service including RISC
(*Richmonders Involved to Strengthen our Communities*).





EMMAUS JOURNEY

A Daylong Retreat for Grieving Parents

April 13, 2024

Church of the Redeemer

August 10, 2024

Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, Newport News

A faith based spiritual retreat for
grieving parents who have lost a child
of any age from any cause

For Information contact Diane at
Datkins@ChurchRedeemer.org