

March 27, 2020

Dear Parishioners of Saint Petronille,

Father Gabriel Richard

Deacon Bob Cassey mentioned to me the story of Fr. Gabriel Richard from his Detroit. I thought I would share this wiki citation with you in that Fr. Richard had many accomplishments but the most noble being his assistance to his people during the Cholera epidemic:

“Gabriel Richard was born in La Ville de Saintes, France, and entered the seminary in Angers in 1784 and was ordained on October 15, 1790. In 1792, he emigrated to Baltimore, Maryland. He taught mathematics at St. Mary's Seminary in Baltimore, until being assigned by Bishop Carroll to do missionary work to the Indians in the Northwest Territory. He was first stationed in what is now Kaskaskia, Illinois, and later in Detroit, Michigan. Fr. Richard was a priest of the Society of Saint-Sulpice.

Richard arrived in Detroit on the Feast of Corpus Christi in June 1798^[1] to be the assistant pastor at Ste. Anne's Church. In 1804 he opened a school in Detroit, but this was destroyed by the fire that leveled the city in 1805. This is when Fr. Gabriel Richard wrote the city of Detroit's motto: *Speramus meliora; resurget cineribus*^[2]; In English: "We hope for better things; it will arise from the ashes." Fr. Richard organized the shipment of food aid to the city from neighboring ribbon farms in order to alleviate a food crisis following the loss of the city's supply of livestock and grain.

In 1807, he was invited by a Protestant congregation to act as their clergyman. He did so successfully by concentrating on the elements of Christianity where they agreed. He had the first printing press in Detroit and published a periodical in the French language entitled *Essais du Michigan*, as well as *The Michigan Essay, or Impartial Observer*, in 1809. He was strongly in favor of the War of 1812 and trading with China.

Father Richard ministered among the Indians of the region and was generally admired by them. During the War of 1812, Richard was imprisoned by the British for refusing to swear an oath of allegiance after their capture of Detroit, saying, "I have taken an oath to support the Constitution of the United States and I cannot take another. Do with me as you please." He was released when the Shawnee chief Tecumseh, in spite of his hatred for the Americans, refused to fight for the British while Richard was imprisoned.

Together with Chief Justice Augustus B. Woodward, Richard was a co-founder of the Catholopistemiad of Michigania (which would later be renamed the University of Michigan), authorized by the legislature in 1817. He served as its Vice-President from 1817 to 1821. Following the reorganization of the University in 1821, he was appointed to its Board of Trustees and served until his death.

Father Richard was elected as a nonvoting delegate of the Michigan Territory to the U.S. House of Representatives for the 18th Congress, and was the first Catholic priest to be elected to that body, serving a single term, 1823-1825. He secured the first federal

appropriation for a road across Michigan's lower peninsula; it was developed as Michigan Avenue, connecting Detroit with Chicago...

In 1832, after assisting cholera victims night and day during an epidemic, Fr. Gabriel Richard died of cholera in Detroit. By some accounts, he was said to die of exhaustion. He was buried in a crypt in St. Anne's."

Fish Fry

Reserve 22 is offering carry-out fish fry on Friday with 10% of the proceeds going to Saint Petronille church. When you order, please simply let them know that you are responding to this letter from Saint Petronille so that Saint Petronille can help pay her bills.

Parish Mission Begins Monday

Video of Fr. Eusebius, osb, offering our parish mission will be available beginning Monday on our YouTube Channel:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCvNo_3DRIBPSBkdhbEB3j7Q?reload=9

Aid For Saint Petronille Families

Saint Petronille continues to collect non-perishable food (no fresh fruit, frozen or refrigerated items) and basic supplies by dropping them off at 271 Forest Avenue. This is a great help to the team who do not need to try to pick up at the church and they can quite readily sanitize the items. We are collecting items for all of our families who may be in need in the coming weeks and, perhaps, months. If you would like to sign-up to help, click:

<https://m.signupgenius.com/#!/showSignUp/9040944a9ae2ba7f94-stpetronille>

Thank you for your help!

Operation Fr. Art and Fr. John

Many have asked about Fr. Art and Fr. John. They offered Mass with us this morning. The church is pretty much empty so there is no significant danger in having them present. They will be present most days for the 8 am Mass. Fr. Art had a little spill yesterday in his bathroom. He is ok, but his nephew told us it would be ok if parishioners called him. Since this e-letter is posted on our webpage, I not want to print the number here, but if there are any parishioners who want to give Fr. Art a call, please email balatyc@stpetschurch.org. We are also looking to do a video message from Fr. Art and Fr. John in the near future. Watch our YouTube channel in the near future for Fr. Art and Fr. John Live! (Even though it will be pre-recorded.)

Thank you!

Thank you to all those who gave electronically, mailed in their donations or dropped off their donations in the mail box near the front entrance of our offices. Although our collections were a bit lower than usual, Saint Petronille Parish truly appreciates the generosity and sacrifice of so many in helping the parish to continue to pay our bills.

May Almighty God bless you and keep you.

In Christ,

Fr. Thomas Milota