

THE RICHARD REPORT

The Newsletter of the Fr. Gabriel Richard Guild

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Dear Guild Members:

How can we be devoted to a cause if we don't know its founder? The Catholic Church, with more than 1.3 billion members, is more significant than ever – 30 percent bigger than it was 20 years ago – because we know our founder, Jesus Christ.

So it is with Father Gabriel Richard:

- During the French Revolution that tore at the fabric of Europe, he emigrated to the Michigan frontier, bringing together French, British, Americans, and Native Americans.
- When Detroit burned to the ground in 1805, Father Richard wrote our great city's new motto about rising from the ashes, rallying Detroiters to stay. Detroit has lived that motto through crashes and comebacks ever since.
- When Detroit was at the epicenter of the War of 1812, he faced down his captors, praying for his enemies, again bringing people together.
- He was the first Michigan Man and founder of the University of Michigan. Think of that when we sing about Michigan being "leaders and best."
- When you think of how divided our political climate is, remember that 2023 will mark 200 years since this humble French immigrant was elected to represent the Michigan territory in Congress. How much influence did he have? Michigan Avenue, stretching from Detroit to Chicago, began as a highway he helped fund during his term in Congress.
- When you think of how we made it through our latest pandemic, please think of how Father Richard ministered to the sick during the great cholera epidemic.

Father Mike Schmitz notes we die twice on earth: The first death is when we stop breathing, and the end is the last time someone speaks our name. Two hundred years after Father Gabriel Richard was elected to Congress, his name and reputation continue to grow as we pray for his recognition as a saint.

One of Father Richard's younger peers, Lewis Cass, is fading fast. Like Hillary Clinton, Cass (1782-1866) was a nationally known leader, a Democratic nominee for president (1848) and U.S. Secretary of State. He was governor of the Michigan Territory (for 18 years), Michigan's U.S. senator (for eight years), and U.S. Secretary of War. Detroit's Cass Corridor was named in his honor – but the Corridor's name was changed to Midtown in the 1990s.

And the Michigan Legislature this month voted to replace Cass' statue in the U.S. Capitol with a statue of the late Detroit Mayor Coleman Young. Why does Father Richard's memory continue to grow? Father Richard was widely known as a man of great holiness, accepting every gift God gave him and then passing those gifts on to all he knew. Father Gabriel Richard, pray for us!

Joe Serwach
Vice President, Fr. Gabriel Richard Guild



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Guild Sponsors a Fr. Gabriel Richard Ofrenda at Basilica's Day of the Dead Celebration

While it was founded by the French in 1701, the Basilica of Ste. Anne de Detroit is now home to many people of Latin American descent, and therefore celebrates many traditions of Latin American culture.

One important tradition is Dia de los Muertos, or Day of the Dead, which is celebrated on November 2. The celebration honors the memories of loved ones who have passed away.

Part of the celebration is the building of ofrendas. An ofrenda is a kind of altar where one places photos of deceased loved ones along with special items of importance to the deceased person, such as their favorite foods, drinks, perfumes, flowers -- anything that brings back their memory. The parish hosted 11 ofrendas in the Fr. Gabriel Richard Chapel within the basilica. In the chapel were 11 ofrendas made by parishioners, including one one made especially for Fr. Gabriel Richard by Guild members.

In conjunction with the ofrenda, the Guild sponsored a "fun facts game" where the goal was to name as many objects as possible on the ofrenda that related to the life of Fr. Richard. The winner of the game was Guadalupe Espitia (pictured bottom left), who is in the Las Flores del Corazon Abierto teen girls group at the Basilica of Ste. Anne de Detroit.

The objects she named were:

- 1) **"out of ashes" flower cup** to represent Fr. Richard's quote, "*Speramus meliora; resurget cineribus*," which translates to "We hope for better things; it shall arise from the ashes."
- 2) **chalice** to represent his life as a priest along with the
- 3) **bread** and
- 4) **wine** to represent the body and blood of Christ;
- 5) **lamp** to guide the way of the faith
- 6) **chains** to represent Fr. Richard breaking down the social and racial barriers through education
- 7) **block M flag** to show Fr. Richard founded the University of Michigan
- 8) **fish** to represent Fr. Richard as a fisher of men for faith.



Join the Guild

The purpose of the Fr. Gabriel Richard Guild is to:

- keep alive the inspiring memory of Fr. Richard;
- bring knowledge of his exemplary life to others;
- archive information about his life and work;
- provide prayer, support, and office services to the Cause.

Membership is just \$10 per year.

Visit ste-anne.org to join.

Please tell a friend.

 @fgrguild



The Words of Fr. Richard

God knows how many other projects, large and small, schools and missions I am thinking about for the Indians, for the deaf, for the children of poor parents... However, the means are lacking in a new country, where we must create things from nothing. My spirit, my imagination and especially my heart are full of projects which remain sterile. I have built so many Spanish castles in America during my past thirty four years! I cannot stop thinking that happier days will soon enlighten Michigan, and that the sun of justice will shine its benevolent beams on its poor Indians. Along our lakes there are forty or fifty dispersed tribes, speaking different tongues, who have not yet entered the pasture of the good shepherd. Such an immense expanse of country where the name of Jesus Christ has not yet been pronounced. There are some that are not unworthy of being told the word of God.

*Fr. Gabriel Richard
December 22, 1825*

School Art Contest



The Fr. Gabriel Richard Guild is holding an art contest for Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Detroit. Students are invited to submit artistic renderings of Fr. Richard depicting his image, an event from his life, or a general aspect of his life.

The winning students in each age group will each receive a \$1,000 cash prize. The winning students' schools will also receive a \$1,000 cash prize. Prizes are courtesy of contest sponsor Concorde Financial. Artwork will be displayed at the Annual Exhibit on Fr. Gabriel Richard at the Basilica of Ste. Anne de Detroit in September 2023. Email fgr.guild@steannedetroit.org for more information.

2023 Meeting Dates

All Guild members are invited to join the Fr. Gabriel Richard Guild quarterly Zoom meetings! Learn all about our new initiatives, upcoming events and ways to get involved.

Zoom links and reminders are emailed to all members a few days before each meeting.

Contact fgr.guild@steannedetroit.org for more information.

Schedule

- March 1 at 7 p.m.
- June 7 at 7 p.m.
- September 6 at 7 p.m.
- December 6 at 7 p.m.

Ste. Anne Pastor Visits Sulpicians to Research Fr. Richard

In October, 2022, Msgr. Chuck Kosanke, pastor and rector of the Basilica of Ste. Anne de Detroit, had the opportunity to spend a full day in the archives of the Society of the Priests of Saint Sulpice and the Archdiocese of Baltimore doing research on our esteemed 19th century pastor. Fr. Gabriel Richard was a member of the Sulpicians and came to Detroit from France via Baltimore. This research is part of gathering information for his canonization process, which consists of six phases. We are currently in phase one.

Msgr. Chuck poured over letters and documents. One of his many exciting discoveries was a book written in French called *Le Martyr de la Charité* by Fr. Guérin in 1850. The significance of this discovery is that it is yet another document near the time of Fr. Gabriel Richard's death (1832) by someone who knew his life and ministry. The book has nine chapters and 107 pages. The final chapter reveals more information of the circumstances of his death due to ministering to his parishioners with cholera. Msgr. Chuck gives high praise to the archivist, Dr. Tricia Pyne, who guided him through his research in Baltimore.