



Jacob's Creek Family Retreat

July 25 – 28, 2024

“Charity: The First of the Church”

Dear Friends,

This year's Jacob's Creek Family Retreat will be running from July 25 through 28 (Thursday to Sunday).

Every year we have a theme that helps us focus on specific teachings from the Lord's Word and on how we can actively make them a part of our lives. Our theme for 2024 is: Charity: The First of the Church.

The Lord clearly teaches that, “Charity is the first of the church.” (Arcana Coelestia 1091) When there is no charity, there is no church! (see Doctrine of Faith 69) Of course, when asked which commandment is the first of all, the Lord famously said, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God from thy whole heart...and thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” (Mark 12:29-31) In many ways this is a simple teaching. Yet we struggle as to what is the most charitable thing to do at times. There are various aspects to the doctrine of “Charity” that must be understood if we want to practice charity well and truly make charity the first of our church! This year at Jacob's Creek Family Retreat we will focus on teachings that help us better understand what genuine charity IS and HOW we can better practice genuine charity in our day-to-day lives. Some of the topics to be explored:

- ✓ Charity and truth: Which comes first?
- ✓ “Charity itself” versus “Benefactions of charity.”
- ✓ The first of charity being to shun evils as sins.
- ✓ Discriminate charity & charitably dealing with evil.
- ✓ Practicing charity towards an individual vs society vs one's country vs the entire human race.
- ✓ Is it charitable to go on vacation & play video games? (Spoiler alert: The answer may be “Yes!”)

This year's pastoral staff will include myself, Reverend Coleman Glenn and others to be announced soon. This year's retreat directors are Jamie and Julie Uber. (Note that Andrea and Bradley Cranch are taking a year off to focus on their sons' weddings!) With the help of MANY other dedicated volunteers as well, this promises to be another great year! We urge you to register early, because we are capping attendance at 150. If you know of friends who would enjoy Jacob's Creek, please invite them. We look forward to welcoming one and all!

Rev. Matthew Genzlinger
(Jacob's Creek Family Retreat Pastor)

CHARITY: THE FIRST OF THE CHURCH

“Love to the Lord cannot possibly be separated from love toward the neighbor; for the Lord's love is toward the universal human race, which He wills to save eternally and to adjoin wholly to Himself, so that not one of them may perish. He therefore who has love to the Lord, has the Lord's love, and thereby can do no otherwise than love his neighbor.” (AC 2023)

“Faith leads to charity, because it teaches what charity is, and charity receives its quality from the truths of faith.” (AC 4060)

“What avails faith...but that the person may become such as faith teaches? And the primary thing that faith teaches is charity. This is the end of all it has in view, and if this be not attained, what is all knowledge or doctrine but a mere empty nothing?” (AC 344)