



Knights of Columbus

Rappahannock Assembly 1613

Fredericksburg, Virginia

Religious Freedom Day Celebration



January 14, 2018

We invite you to join us!

On Sunday, January 14, 2018 we will, as we have for more than 40 years, once again celebrate Thomas Jefferson's drafting of the **Bill for Establishing Religious Freedom**. You, your parishioners, and other members of spiritual groups in your community are invited to be part of the celebration. This year will mark the 241st anniversary of this important document.

The celebration starts with a parade, departing the Fredericksburg train station at 1:30 PM. Your group is invited to march in the parade, and if possible, carry a banner identifying your affiliation and showing your support for Religious Freedom. We will proceed down Caroline Street, up Amelia Street and down Washington Avenue to the Religious Freedom Monument.

The ceremony will culminate with the laying of a wreath at the monument.

Background:

In the 17th and well into the 18th Century, religious freedom in what would ultimately be the United States of America did not really exist. Even though many early settlers had come to the New World to avoid persecution, there were several instances when those who came after them were not permitted to practice their own religion freely.

In January 1777, a committee met in Fredericksburg Virginia to revise all laws applicable to Virginia. Thomas Jefferson was a member of that committee and as an adjunct to his work he drafted a "**Bill for Establishing Religious Freedom**". As he did on many issues, the future President felt strongly about religion and his notes were very clear that the principle of religious freedom was meant to include every faith and denomination.

Even after Jefferson had completed his work, it took nine long years before the General Assembly passed it. To quote from the Bill: "...all men shall be free to profess... their opinions in matters of religion and that the same shall in no wise diminish, enlarge or affect their civil capacities"

Each year but one since 1974, the Knights of Columbus have honored both the Act and President Jefferson in a ceremony for all faiths at the Monument for Religious Freedom in Fredericksburg on Washington Avenue. They have paid honor to that freedom which ultimately became a basic right of all citizens in every State of this Nation by Amendment I to the Constitution of the United States in the Bill of Rights.



(Fredericksburg Religious Freedom Monument)

Schedule of Events

- 12:45 PM Parade Participants assemble at Fredericksburg Train Station
- 1:15 PM Dignitaries gather at Saint John Bosco Center, Catholic Campus Ministry, University of Mary Washington
- 1:30 PM Parade Begins
- 1:40 PM Dignitaries depart for Religious Freedom Monument
- 1:50 PM Dignitaries arrive at Religious Freedom Monument on Washington Avenue
- 1:55 PM Parade arrives at Religious Freedom Monument
- 2:00 PM Ceremony begins
- 3:00 PM Reception for Knights of Columbus and Invited Guests at Saint John Bosco Center, Catholic Campus Ministry, University of Mary Washington
- 4:00 PM Events conclude