



IMMACULATE CONCEPTION CATHOLIC CHURCH

P.O. Box 158, LAKELAND, LA 70752

PARISH OFFICE: 627-5124 | RELIGIOUS EDUCATION OFFICE: 627-5819

IMMACULATECONCEPTIONLAKELAND.COM

STAFF

Pastor: Rev. C. Todd Lloyd

Business Manager: Patti Aguiard

Religious Education: Dina Tunstall

Music Coordinator: Jody Doucet

MASS TIMES

Saturday Vigil: 4:00 PM

Sunday Masses: 7:00, 9:00, & 11:00 AM

Daily Masses: Tues. 6:00 PM & Wed.-Sat. 8:00 AM

Care of the Sick: For emergencies please call immediately. Eucharist is brought to the sick weekly. Families of those who are sick are encouraged to notify the Parish Office as soon as possible.

Reconciliation: Tues. 5:00 PM & Sat. 3:00 PM

Marriage: Couples are asked to contact the priest at the beginning of the period of engagement or at least six months prior to the projected date of marriage.

Baptism: Celebrated monthly. Please contact the Parish Office during early months of pregnancy. Baptism preparation is required.

FOURTH SUNDAY

OF Advent

Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord.
May it be done to me
according to your word.

Luke 1:38



DECEMBER 20, 2020

Scriptures for the Week

Monday: Sg 2:8-14 or Zep 3:14-18a; Ps 33:2-3, 11-12, 20-21; Lk 1:39-45

Tuesday: 1 Sm 1:24-28; 1 Sm 2:1, 4-8abcd; Lk 1:46-56

Wednesday: Mal 3:1-4, 23-34; Ps 25:4-5ab, 8-10, 14; Lk 1:57-66

Thursday: 2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16; Ps 89:2-5, 27, 29; Lk 1:67-79

Friday: Vigil: Is 62:1-5; Ps 89:4-5, 16-17, 27, 29;

Acts 13:16-17, 22-25; Mt 1:1-25 [18-25]

Night: Is 9:1-6; Ps 96:1-3, 11-13; Ti 2:11-14;

Lk 2:1-14

Dawn: Is 62:11-12; Ps 97:1, 6, 11-12;

Ti 3:4-7; Lk 2:15-20

Day: Is 52:7-10; Ps 98:1-6; Heb 1:1-6;

Jn 1:1-18 [1-5, 9-14]

Saturday: Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59; Ps 31:3cd-4, 6, 8ab, 16bc, 17; Mt 10:17-22

Sunday: Sir 3:2-6, 12-14 or Gn 15:1-6; 21:1-3; Ps 128:1-5 or Ps 105:1-6, 8-9; Col 3:12-21 [12-17] or Hb 11:8, 11-12, 17-19; Lk 2:22-40 [22, 39-40]



God Bless Our Troops

Please remember all of our troops overseas, especially members of Immaculate Conception Parish Family:

Jordan Todd Aguillard, Air Force; Jules Craig Cifreo, Air Force.; Samuel Edward Guidroz, Navy; Quinton T. Gaspard, P.F.C., Army; Zachary Carl Rollins, Marines.

Prayer Requests

Aguillard Family, Leslie Aguillard, Trevor Allement, Tim Amond, Gary Bello, Joseph Leroy Bizette, Theresa Bizette, Shirley Blauvelt, Kyle Cabalero, Robin Casiano, Doris Castillo, Linda Cheek, Brittany Collins, Lee Joseph Comeaux, Brittany Costello, Jean David, Brilynn Davis, Ronald Decuir, Wanda Decuir, Mary Doris Deculus, Malachi Engen, Shannan Everett, Deborah Fountain, Robert Geier, Jr., Alfred Gremillion, Joe Guarino, Pamela Vicknair Harrington, Lyndon Lynn Hernandez, Roger Hollier, Laura Jarreau, Sharon Jarreau, Tess Jarreau, Reid LaComb, Kevin LeBlanc, Kay Lee, Larry Lee, Janey Lively, Janice Marks, Doug Matte, Rob Melacon, Troy Menier, Gail Metz, Sheldon Moses, Linda Olinde, Christine Patin, Corey Patin, David Patin, John Gary Patin, Jr., Abigail Politz, Shelby Porche, Dotti Purpera, Cody Reed, Michael Roche, Hank Ryan, Hunter Schurba, Lou Sherman, Anna Graves Smith, Timmy Smith, Sr., James Thames, Sonny Trabeaux, Harry Williams, Ainsley Wolf.

This Week at I.C.C.

- 12/22** No Religion Class.
Parish Office Closed.
- 12/23** Parish Office Closed.
- 12/24** Christmas Eve
- 12/25** Merry Christmas!!

Christmas Mass Schedule

Christmas Eve

Thursday, December 24th

Vigil Mass 4pm & 6pm

Christmas Day

Friday, December 25th

Mass 8am & 10am

New Year's Eve

Thursday, December 31st

Vigil Mass 4pm

New Year's Day

Friday, January 1st

Mass 8am



From

**Fr. Todd & Staff at
Immaculate Conception Church**

From The Pastor's Desk

In Christ,

One of the staples of the Christmas season decorations is the nativity scene. This traditional reminder of the humble setting for Jesus' birthday goes back to St. Francis of Assisi who, in 1223, built the first nativity scene in a cave near Greccio, Italy. It was a simple manger with hay and two live animals, an ass and an ox. Francis invited the town's people to visit the nativity scene while he preached about the birth of our Savior. It is recorded that the hay used in that first nativity scene had taken on a miraculous ability to cure the local cattle of diseases and pestilences.

The nativity scene has grown a lot since then to include the Holy Family, shepherds, the Magi, angels, and other animals (I know of one church's nativity scene that even has a cat). But two things always remain – the ass and ox. This might seem somewhat surprising because the gospel account of Christ's birth does not mention either of these animals. This is something that Pope Benedict XVI reflected on and explains in a reflection called *The Ox, the Ass, and Us* in the book *The Blessing of Christmas*. Here is some of what he had to say:

The ox and ass are not simply products of the pious imagination: the Church's faith in the unity of the Old and New Testaments has given them their role as an accompaniment of the Christmas event. We read in Isaiah: "The ox knows its owner, and the ass its master's crib; but Israel does not know, my people does not understand." (1:3) The Fathers of the Church saw in these words a prophecy that pointed ahead to the new people of God, the Church consisting of both Jews and Gentiles.

Before God, all men, Jews and Gentiles, were like the ox and ass, without reason or knowledge. But the child in the crib has opened their eyes so that they now recognize the voice of their Master, the voice of their Lord. It is striking to note in the mediaeval pictures of Christmas how the artists give the two animals almost human faces and how they stand before the mystery of the child and bow down in awareness and reverence.

But after all, this was only logical, since the two animals were considered the prophetic symbol for the mystery of the Church – our own mystery, since we are but oxen and asses vis-à-vis the Eternal God, oxen and asses whose eyes are opened on Christmas night, so that they can recognize their Lord in the crib. Who recognized him, and who failed to recognize him? But do we really recognize him?

When we place the ox and ass beside the crib, we must remember the whole passage in Isaiah, which is not only good news – in the sense of the promise of a future knowledge – but also a judgment pronounced on contemporary blindness. The ox and ass have knowledge, "but Israel does not know, my people does not understand."

Who is the ox and ass today, and who is "my people" without understanding? How can we recognize the ox and the ass? How can we recognize "my people"? And why does the lack of reason recognize, while reason is blind?

In order to discover the answer, we must return with the Fathers of the Church to the first Christmas. Who recognized him? And who failed to recognize him? And why was this so?

The one who failed to recognize him was Herod, who did not even understand when they told him about the child: instead, he was blinded all the more deeply by his lust for power and the accompanying paranoia. Those who failed to recognize him were "all Jerusalem with him." Those who failed to recognize him were the "people in soft garments" – those with a high social position. Those who failed to recognize him were the learned masters who were experts in the Bible, the specialists in biblical interpretation who admittedly knew the correct passage in Scripture but still failed to understand anything.

Those who recognized him were the "ox and the ass" (in comparison to these men of prestige): the shepherds, the Magi, Mary and Joseph. But could things have been otherwise? Those with a high social position are not in the stable where the child Jesus lies: that is where the ox and the ass have their home.

And what about us? Are we so far away from the stable because our garments are much too soft and we are much too clever? Do we get entangled to such an extent in learned exegesis of the Scriptures, in demonstrations of the inauthenticity or the historical accuracy of individual passages, that we become blind to the child himself and perceive nothing of him?

Are we so much "in Jerusalem," in the palace, at home in ourselves and in our arrogance and our paranoia, that we cannot hear at night the voice of the angels and then set out to adore the child?

Many people in our time are unable to believe and see the reality of the Christ Child. The humility of the Son of God can be too subtle to see if one is not able to humble themselves. The Christ Child is not found by seeking a life where there is no struggle, suffering, danger, or imperfection. The ass and the ox represent those humble people who do not need a life of privilege, ease and comfort, but who can find rest in the messiness of a stable. This Christmas, in the midst a troubled time, those beasts invite us from the nativity scene to be a people who can see Emmanuel in the Child born in Bethlehem, who came to open the eyes of the ox and the ass.

Totus Tuus,
Fr. Todd Lloyd

Information Page

Church: Immaculate Conception Church
12364 Hwy 416
Lakeland, Louisiana 70757

Mailing Address: PO Box 158
Lakeland, Louisiana 70757

Office Phone: (225) 627-5124

Contact Person: Suzanne M.

Contact Email Address: igbay@aol.com

Transmission Time:

Sunday Date of Publication: December 20, 2020

Number of Pages Sent: 4

Special Instructions: Until further notice, please send us only **250** printed bulletins. Thank you.