

## IMMACULATE CONCEPTION CATHOLIC CHURCH

**Pastor:** Rev. C. Todd Lloyd

**Deacon** Bob McDonner

**Religious Education:**

Rachel Christ

**Music Coordinator:**

Jody Doucet

**Sunday Masses:** 7:00, 9:00, and 11:00 AM

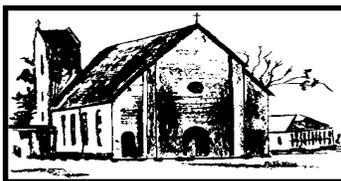
**Sat. Vigil:** 4:00 PM

**Daily Masses:**

**Wed-Fri.** Eucharist 8:00 AM & **Tues.** 6:00pm

**Care of the Sick:** Emergency calls immediately. The Eucharist is brought to the sick weekly. Families of those who are sick are encouraged to notify the Parish Office.

**P.O. Box 158  
Lakeland, LA 70752**



**Parish Office 627-5124  
Religious Education Office 627-5819  
[Immaculateconceptionlakeland.com](http://Immaculateconceptionlakeland.com)**

**Reconciliation:** Saturday Vigil 4:00 PM. Saturday 3:00 PM and Tuesday 5:30pm

**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 except during Lent & Advent. Please contact the Parish Office during early months of pregnancy. Baptism preparation is required.

## Scriptures for the Week

Monday: Acts 2:14, 22-33; Ps 16:1-2a, 5, 7-11;  
Mt 28:8-15  
Tuesday: Acts 2:36-41; Ps 33:4-5, 18-20, 22;  
Jn 20:11-18  
Wednesday: Acts 3:1-10; Ps 105:1-4, 6-9; Lk 24:13-35  
Thursday: Acts 3:11-26; Ps 8:2ab, 5-9; Lk 24:35-48  
Friday: Acts 4:1-12; Ps 118:1-2, 4, 22-27a;  
Jn 21:1-14  
Saturday: Acts 4:13-21; Ps 118:1, 14-15ab, 16-21;  
Mk 16:9-15  
Sunday: Acts 4:32-35; Ps 118:2-4, 13-15, 22-24; I Jn 5:1-6; Jn 20:19-31

## Your Stewardship

Collection	\$6,809.00
Building Fund	\$55.00

## Sick List

Jessica Berthelot, Inez Bueche, John David, Neil Daigle, Deborah Fountain

## -Prayer Request

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

*Lance Corporal Metoyer, Marines; P.F.C.; SPC ; Timothy J. Loucks, Corporal U.S. Marine; Lance Corporal Gary R. Major, Jr., Corporal; Private First Class; Captain Jordan Morirs;; Lieutenant Stephen Burleigh, Jr.; MT2 Jacob Lamotte., Sgt. Greg Silva, Army; Jules Craig Major, Air Force.*

## Sympathy

*The Sympathy Of Immaculate Conception Church Parish Family is extended to:*

Family of Eva Pourciau.  
Family of Joseph Carl Thibodeaux.  
Family of Paul Gregory Chutz.  
Family of James O. Porche.  
Family of Cecil Jarreau.

## This Week at I.C.

5/1 KC Mtg.  
Altar Society Mttg @ 10am.

## Flowers

Flowers on the altar this weekend are in memory of Eola Dayries, Charles Dayries, George Major, Walker Major and Whitney LeJeune from Melodie Fairchild.

The Easter paschal candle is donated in memory of Marshall Honore' and Becky Boudreaux from Phil Fontenot.

## From the Pastor

In Christ,

In 1979 St. John Paul II addressed a crowd of two hundred and fifty thousand Catholics at Victory Square in Warsaw, Poland. Within a decade of that earth shaking event, the USSR crumbled. Its collapse was not due to tanks and missiles; not parliaments and Congresses; certainly not academics or publications. Catholicism slayed the monster. The Holy Catholic Faith won the triumph. The people of Poland started chanting "We Want God!" during the pontiff's visit, and they lived that sentiment out through peaceful disobedience to their Communist dictators. These were simple Catholics who, over decades of brutality, refused to kneel down before their strong atheistic oppressor; but chose instead to kneel down before their Crucified Savior. The Russians tore down crosses and forbid the Poles from practicing their faith, but they could not understand that the Pole carried the Cross in their hearts. The might of Soviet Communism, which relied on fear and intimidation to extend and maintain control, found its bane, not in the military prowess of the west, but in the fearless faith of Polish Catholics who, personified by St. John Paul II, told the world: "*Be not afraid!*"

That bold fortitude of Christianity comes from the mystery of Easter: the Resurrection. What could be more encouraging than the faith that says death is not permanent? This effect of the Resurrection can be seen in the life of the apostles. These were men who before the Resurrection were *not* fearless. They ran away when the Lord was arrested. They denied knowing Him as He was put on trial. They stayed far away when He was crucified. They hid in locked rooms after He died. Then something changes in them. They become almost entirely different men, as they face arrest, persecution, torture, and death with excitement. How can this radical change be explained in any other way than their faith in the Resurrection? What could make the first disciples of Christ embrace death for the name of Jesus with courage? Would they really go to those extremes just to spread a lie?

It is thanks to the courage of the first disciples, with the faith in Christ's victory over death, that Christianity spread so rapidly in the first centuries. It is this faith that emboldened the martyrs to sing hymns while they were put to death. That bewildered their persecutors so much that many converted because of that courageous witness. They asked the same question posed above: how can this courage be explained other than by a real belief in the resurrection? The Church Father Tertullian famously said "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church." Nothing is a better evangelizer than commitment to Christ to the point of death. It rouses the hearts of non-believers to at least be curious about Christianity.

On that fateful day in Warsaw St. John Paul asked if Poland was being called to witness Christ to the world like those early martyrs (*martyr* means "witness" in Greek): "Christ demanded of Peter and of the other Apostles that they should be his 'witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth'. Have we not the right, with reference to these words of Christ, to think that *Poland has become nowadays the land of a particularly responsible witness*? The right to think that from here...and from the whole of this historic route that I have so often in my life traversed and that it is to proclaim Christ with singular humility but also with conviction? The right to think that one must come to this very place, to this land, on this route, to read again the witness of his Cross and his Resurrection?"

While many of those courageous Polish people suffered and died, this witness does not always bring the believer to the point of physical death. In our society it is currently unlikely that a Christian would be put to death for their faith. Our fidelity to Jesus demands other types of deaths that require courage. The Church must be a witness to people who are desperately in need of finding the meaning to life.

John Paul told the Polish people on that day that "Man is incapable of understanding himself fully without Christ. He cannot understand who he is, nor what his true dignity is, nor what his vocation is, nor what his final end is. He cannot understand any of this without Christ." The saint said this certainly to point a finger at the error of the secular atheism of the Soviets, and with the hope that the Poles would even help their oppressors to discover that understanding found only in Christ on the Cross.

Many people failing to understand the meaning of life try to live a life without crosses – without inconveniences or challenges or burdens or restrictions or pain or sacrifice or self-denial. We must show them how to embrace the crosses, because we believe that the Cross always leads to the Resurrection. We must tell the world what the Lord inspired the Polish people to tell the world: Be not afraid! Do not be afraid to do what is hard, or what hurts, or causes others to hate you, or what denies your desires, or makes life more difficult. The Church cannot expect to inspire conversion if we are unwilling to embrace martyrdom. A Christian faith without the challenge and pain of the Cross is also one without the Resurrection. Christians – lay people, deacons, priests, bishops – who are unwilling to suffer for the faith and tell others to do the same ought not celebrate Easter, because they do not believe in it. If we are really an Easter People, who rejoice in the faith of the Resurrection, then we will face our crosses with fearless zeal like those faithful martyrs and Polish Catholics. Like them we could show the world that the fullest life comes from embracing the Cross, which always leads to the Resurrection.

*There is no evil to be faced that Christ does not face with us. There is no enemy that Christ has not already conquered. There is no cross to bear that Christ has not already borne for us, and does not now bear with us. And on the far side of every cross we find the newness of life in the Holy Spirit, that new life which will reach its fulfillment in the resurrection. This is our faith. This is our witness before the world.*  
– St. Pope John Paul II

*We do not pretend that life is all beauty. We are aware of darkness and sin, of poverty and pain. But we know Jesus has conquered sin and passed through his own pain to the glory of the Resurrection. And we live in the light of his Paschal Mystery - the mystery of his Death and Resurrection. "We are an Easter People and Alleluia is our song!"* – St. Pope John Paul II

Totus Tuus,  
Fr. Todd Lloyd