



IMMACULATE CONCEPTION CATHOLIC CHURCH

P.O. Box 158, LAKE LAND, 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, and 11:00 AM

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

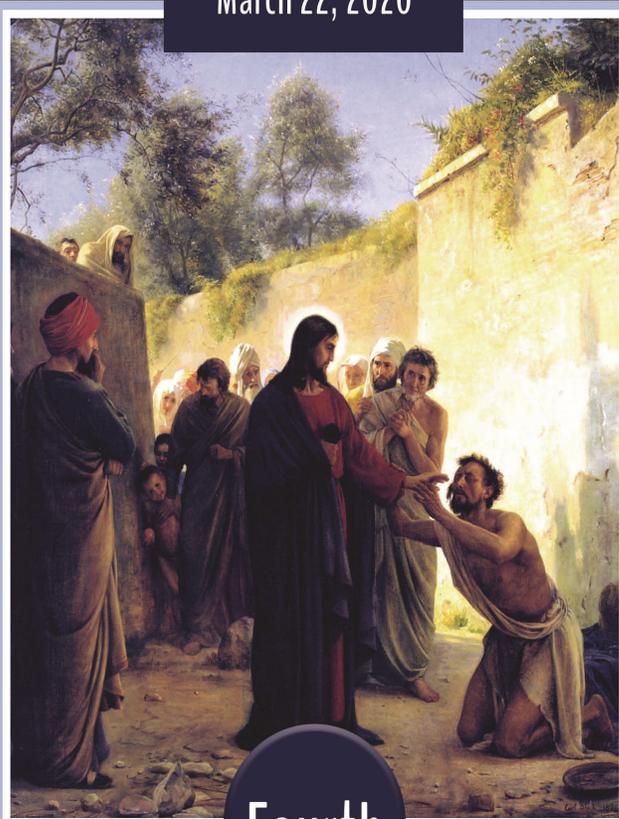
Care of the Sick: For emergencies please call immediately. Eucharist is brought to the sick weekly. Families of those who are sick are encouraged to notify the Parish Office as soon as possible.

Reconciliation: Tues. 5:30 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.

March 22, 2020



Fourth

Sunday of Lent

Jesus said, "I came into this world for judgment, so that those who do not see might see, and those who do see might become blind."

John 9:39

Scriptures for the Week

Monday: Is 65:17-21; Ps 30:2, 4-6, 11-13b; Jn 4:43-54
Tuesday: Ez 47:1-9, 12; Ps 46:2-3, 5-6, 8-9; Jn 5:1-16
Wednesday: Is 7:10-14, 8:10; Ps 40:7-11; Heb 10:4-10;
Lk 1:26-38
Thursday: Ex 32:7-14; Ps 106:19-23; Jn 5:31-47
Friday: Wis 2:1a, 12-22; Ps 34:17-21, 23;
Jn 7:1-2, 10, 25-30
Saturday: Jer 11:18-20; Ps 7:2-3, 9bc-12; Jn 7:40-53
Sunday: Ez 37:12-14; Ps 130:1-8; Rom 8:8-11;
Jn 11:1-45 [3-7, 17, 20-27, 33b-45]

Your Stewardship

| | |
|---------------|-------------|
| Collections | \$ 9,120.74 |
| Building Fund | \$ 150.00 |

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.

Prayer Requests

Aguillard Family, Leslie Aguillard, Trevor Allement, Janelle Amond, Tim Amond, Numa Aucoin, Shirley Blauvelt, Herbert Brown, Kyle Cabalero, Lee Joseph Comeaux, Brittany Costello, Jean David, Brilynn Davis, Ronald Decuir, Landon Dickinson, Shannan Everett, Deborah Fountain, Robert Geier, Jr., Garrett Grafia, Alfred Gremillion, Judy Gremillion, Susie Gremillion, Lyndon Lynn Hernandez, Audrey Jarreau, Earl Jarreau, Sr., Laura Jarreau, Lillie Betty Jarreau, Sharon Jarreau, Tess Jarreau, Reid LaComb, Kevin LeBlanc, Kay Lee, Larry Lee, Troy Menier, Doug Matte, Gail Metz, Sheldon Moses, Linda Olinde, Corey Patin, John Gary Patin, Jr., Abigail Politz, Shelby Porche, Dotti Purpera, Hank Ryan, Hunter Schurba, Lou Sherman, James Thames, Sonny Trabeaux, Ainsley Wolf.

This Week at I.C.C.

Beginning March 17, 2020
All masses and parish events
will be suspended until further
notice due to the COVID-19
outbreak.

BAPTISMS

We welcome to our Parish Community:

John Robert Frost, child of Jacob Michael Frost & Allison Antie Frost.

Reece Taylor Morgan & Vivian Grace Morgan, children of Taylor Paul Morgan & Ashley Cornett Morgan.

Sympathy

The Sympathy of Immaculate Conception Church Parish Family is extended to:

Family of **Helen Olinde**.

A Special Thank You

Our new United States American Flag was generously donated to our Parish, by Greg Melancon, in memory of his parents Mr. & Mrs. Clifford J. Melancon.

A Vocation View

Fourth Sunday of Lent – March 22, 2020

Jesus gave sight to the blind man. He will also give "insight" on what to do with our lives...if we ask Him. If you think God could be calling you to a Church vocation, call **Fr. Andrew Merrick** at **(225) 336-8778**, amerrick@diobr.org.

From The Pastor's Desk

In Christ,

The history of ancient Israel had some high and glorious moments, but it also had times of desolation. Time and again the Chosen People broke their covenant with God, and reaped the consequences. The Lord never abandoned them, but He did chasten them by removing them from formal worship. Their freedom to offer Him worship was obstructed, either by their own tyrannical leaders who turned to pagan worship, or by foreign powers who removed them from their lands and thus made it physically impossible for them to get to the Temple. The worst instance of this was during the time of the Babylonian Exile. The Temple was destroyed, and many of the Jews were taken to Babylon as a servant class. The first reading from this past Tuesday's Mass was a prayer to God from the Book of Daniel, which bemoans this time where proper worship is not possible. The prayer said, "For we are reduced, O Lord, beyond any other nation, brought low everywhere in the world this day because of our sins. We have in our day no prince, prophet, or leader, no burnt offering, sacrifice, oblation, or incense, no place to offer first fruits, to find favor with you."

This reading was appropriate for our own current situation. We too find ourselves unable to gather together in the church to offer our regular worship to God. We know the physical reality that has caused this to be so – the spread of COVID-19. But perhaps we should also consider the spiritual dimensions at play in this sad time. Is this, like for the Israelites before us, a time of chastening from the Lord? Or, perhaps this is a time of spiritual oppression from the Evil One? Or is this spiritual desolation we experience now something else; such as a communal dark night of the soul – where God removes consolation from us, not so much out chastisement, but rather out of a desire to draw us further into His mystery?

I do not claim to know for sure, and thus offer this merely as a matter for prayer, not faith. But I think that the answer could be all three: God is chastening us for sin; He has unleashed some evil; and this "dark night" is one intended to help us move closer to Him in a more purified way.

With Israel, it was almost always a failure to offer worthy worship to God that brought about their suffering. They either neglected the worship all together, or they defiled their worship through bad

conduct, even by mingling their worship of God with paganism. I think it is safe to say that we have taken for granted the worship of God in the Eucharist. As has been well documented, the belief of many Catholics in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist is gone. Many people receive Holy Communion with grave and unrepented sin on their souls. And we who believe still have perhaps failed to show the real honor due our Lord in the Eucharist. We treat the Mass as a "right" that is our due, and as a time to gather together to celebrate our solidarity in faith, or to be "uplifted" by cheerful music, preaching, and prayer.

The problem is that all of this severely misses the mark of truth. We do not have a right to the Eucharist. It is a radical gift more precious than anything that exists in the universe – that is infinitely beyond us, and therefore ought not be taken for granted, but appreciated and approached with profound reverence. The Mass is not primarily a moment of human solidarity, but is a moment of encounter with the Divine. Only through the transcendent, "vertical", motion between man and God, does the communal, "horizontal", motion take place. We are united to one another only because of our common turning to and union with God. And the Eucharist is not for our enjoyment. It is a re-presentation of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, to God the Father, on our behalf because we are sinners. Perhaps, then, we are being invited by God in this time of exile to consider the great privilege it is to have Mass and to not take it for granted; to consider how our lives should morally conform to Christ if we are going to receive Him in Holy Communion; and refine our understanding of what true worship is.

The second possibility, an unleashing of evil, seems obvious. Nothing happens without God's allowing it. In scripture, and in our theology, sin is always followed by some consequence. Many curses followed the sin of Adam, not the least of which was death. The great flood came after all the world had fallen into evil. In the Second Book of Samuel, as a result of David's sin, God allows a plague to kill many in Judah. And the Babylonian Exile was a result of lawlessness. If the first point is true, that we are being chastened, then the second could be the mode by which God is chastening us. *But*, the Lord's justice is always animated by His mercy. Temporal consequences of sin bring forth the possibility of being set free from sin eternally. There is no greater example of this than the Cross of our Lord. He took

on Himself the results of all sin, and through that sacrifice won for us the opportunity to be saved from sin, and be reconciled with God. No doubt about it, the Cross was evil, as was death, the flood, the plagues, and the exiles. But the Lord outwits evil time and again by using the very suffering caused by it as a means to show mercy. Our suffering now may be a time of Divine justice – which is always an opportunity for Divine Mercy.

Finally, there is the reality of a “dark night of the soul”. Many of the saints, most famously St. John of the Cross, and more recently Mother Teresa, experienced a time where their radical union with Christ brought them to experience a loss of consolation in their faithfulness. It is the Lord sharing His most bitter moment on the Cross with His holy ones. It is Jesus praying Psalm 22 from the Cross – “My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?” – experienced by His members in the Church. The highest form of love is a desire for union with the object of one’s love. Those in radical love with Christ are invited to move closer into that union by being stripped of every consolation. Their relationship with Christ – holy living, virtue, selfless charity, purity, prayer, etc. – is refined and intensified by God removing any experiential benefit of it from them. In other words, the holy ones of God are invited to be holy, even though it does not make them feel good – and even makes them suffer, just as Jesus’ holiness brought Him to the Cross.

This time of exclusion may be a taste, a small taste, of the dark night for us all. Perhaps we are being invited to be faithful without the benefits that we usually experience of that faithfulness. Maybe the Lord is inviting us into closer union with Him. This Lent may be a time of profound blessing where we are given an opportunity to be intimately with Christ in the desert, in Gethsemane, and on the Cross. Our consolation is being stripped for a time so that our faith may be refined and intensified. That our union with Christ might grow, not for some experienced benefit, but purely for the sake of itself – for love.

During the time in exile, the Jews continued to pray to God, though they could not gather for their formal worship. That was not a wasted time for them. They learned to better appreciate their unique relationship with God, were purified of sin, and turned back to God with a greater sincerity. Though they could not go to the Temple of Jerusalem to offer their sacrifices, they offered God their purified heart in prayer. No matter the reason or causes behind our

current situation, this is a time for us to offer a similar sacrifice of prayer, in union with Jesus, and with the words from that prayer from the Book of Daniel: “But with contrite heart and humble spirit let us be received; As though it were burnt offerings of rams and bullocks, or thousands of fat lambs, So let our sacrifice be in your presence today as we follow you unreservedly; for those who trust in you cannot be put to shame. And now we follow you with our whole heart, we fear you and we pray to you. Do not let us be put to shame, but deal with us in your kindness and great mercy. Deliver us by your wonders, and bring glory to your name, O Lord.”

Totus Tuus,
Fr. Todd Lloyd

Prayers During a Time of Pestilence The Blessed Virgin Mary

The star of heaven, she who suckled the Lord, has uprooted the scourge of death which the first parent of mankind planted. That very star is now worthy to encompass the world, whose wars cut down the people with the sore of dreaded death. O glorious star of the sea, save us from the scourge: Hear us, for the son, denying nothing, honors you. Save us, Jesus! For us, the Virgin mother entreats you.

V. Pray for us, O Holy Mother of God.
R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray,
O God of mercy, God of forbearance, God of forgiveness, who was moved to compassion for the affliction of Your people, and who said to the Angel devastating Your people: Hold your hand. For the love of that glorious Star, at whose dearest breast You graciously fed against the poison of our sins; grant by the help of Your grace, the prayers of Your Mother the Blessed Virgin Mary, Saint Bartholomew your beloved Apostle, and Saint Raphael your Archangel, that we may be safely freed from every disease and from an unprovided death, and that we may be mercifully saved from the assault of utter ruin. Through You, Christ Jesus, King of Glory, who lives and reigns, world without end. Amen.