

March 22, 2020

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION CHURCH, MILLHOUSEN, IN

Immaculate Conception Parish Community strives to live the Gospel by worshipping God, deepening our understanding of the Catholic Faith, and serving the needs of others.

Bulletin information is due by Wednesday at 10:00 a.m. sisterdonna@millhouseschurch.com

Who could have predicted how much our lives would change in just one week! When we gathered for Sunday liturgy just one week ago, we had a very small crowd, partly because of travel during the spring break. But already a week ago we were under tight restrictions, and knew that more were coming. We didn't know how quickly, nor how it would impact every part of our lives. We knew then that the Archbishop had suspended all obligation to attend Sunday Mass, but little did we know that it was our last opportunity to celebrate liturgy as a parish, until further notice. **That dispensation continues.**

We have been bombarded with information, TV broadcasts, emails, Facebook postings, all sorts of phone calls and text messages. Unless one stays glued to their devices, it is a bit hard to keep up. It all keeps changing day by day, and even hour by hour. We have heard from the President multiple times, the Governor, at least twice, and the Archbishop at least five times. And all of this information has been disseminated to us, but not all of us hear it or read it or understand the impact. But it has turned our world upside down.

I will only very briefly summarize the points that all need to be aware of, from a parish, church perspective. First off, there will be no Masses, no sacraments, no communal penance services, no funerals, no outdoor Masses, no stations, no classes, no meetings or gatherings of 10 or more people, and then only with precautions in place. There may be no distribution of Holy Communion **except** in danger of death. There may be no home visits, again except in danger of death. However, the **Parish Office remains open**, and is to coordinate all parish functions, outreach, communications and support for our parishioners. We have been asked to find priests younger than 60 to handle emergency anointings. Fr. John Meyer has been assisting with this, even though I am sure he is more than 60. We will continue to publish a bulletin each week which you can pick up in the white drive-by box, or may read on-line, as a means of maintaining our usual form of communication. In addition, as important changes come to us, we may continue to use our brief texting service to offer alerts.

Some are greatly concerned about funerals. Our plan, coordinated by directions from the Archdiocese, and directions given to funeral homes by the Governor, is to have no visitations, brief burial services only, as needed, by invitation only, with not more than 10 people total. Later, as the restrictions are lifted, we will have Memorial Masses for each deceased parishioner, to celebrate their life and legacy.

One of our parish priests, a pastor and Dean, died suddenly this week, (unrelated to the Coronavirus) and that is the same plan adopted by the Archdiocese to honor his life and service. Please pray for his family and fellow priests, who are in a state of shock, during this difficult time.

Others are most concerned for our elder members, especially those sick, infirmed, or currently in Nursing Homes, Assisted Living settings, or hospitals. I share your concern, and will update you briefly on each one as I am able, remembering that we need to respect each one's right to privacy. We will update our prayer list weekly and ask you to keep each one in your mind and heart. Family members are encouraged to call the office anytime to add names or remove names, and to give any information you may want posted to the parish. I will also post here a list of those confined to institutions, who are not able to go out nor have visitors in. You may want to send cards or notes to give emotional support. There have been several phone calls from caring parishioners offering to make runs for the elderly or infirmed, to get meds, to deliver groceries, or serve as

needed. I am most grateful for these offers, and will be maintaining a list of possible volunteers should the need arise. Please remember that we are to protect anyone over 60 from unnecessary socialization, and to promote a safeguard for those most vulnerable, the elderly and those already sick with other disease processes.

Remember in Prayer: Pat Schwering, Barb Hoeing, John Kuzman, Roman Johannigman Sr., Marilyn Horan, Martha Fry, Elizabeth Downey, Nell Ann Pfeifer, Velma Ortman, Judy Zapfe, Sherry Weberding, Pauline Schoettmer, Mark Wittkamper, Lori & Joe Bierhaus, and a special intention.

Stewardship of Treasure: Our Sunday Collections: March 15, 2020

Needed each weekend to meet budget:	\$2,800.00
Sunday Envelopes (and loose):	\$956.00
Home Missions:	\$35.00

Total Collections: \$991.00

Steeple Notes: There are only five pledges yet uncollected, totaling \$3,200, but it is not the end of March yet, so we still have hope of meeting our goal by end of the month. The construction company is planning to begin set-up of their work site beginning on Monday of this week. Please continue to pray for good weather during their work time with us. Work will always be suspended when safety becomes an issue, especially during high winds or rain. Working outside, and not in close proximity to one another, they are not concerned with illness at this time. The only other concern would be getting the supplies that they need. They are confident. Apparently, no one is stockpiling shingles. Stay tuned for weekly updates.

The **Spring Work Day** is scheduled for Saturday April 4th, beginning at 8:00 am, and the plan is for **cleaning up the cemetery** and removing anything weather worn, or out of place. Please assist the committee by cleaning up the graves of your loved ones. Remember that all flowers or adornments need to be on the gravestone or on a shepherd's crook. Because the work planned is mostly outdoors and all can practice social distancing, this one event has not been cancelled. We trust that anyone who has symptoms, or has been in contact with someone with symptoms, will not join us that day. Again, pray for good weather.

The men are preparing our property for the mowing season. Please come on that day or before, and spend an hour picking up sticks or twigs or debris, or pulling a few weeds. Even though a lot of things in our lives have come to a standstill, the grass is growing and weeds are plentiful, thanks to the abundant rain.

Bids for the mowing season. We are accepting bids for the parish grounds and the St. Denis Cemetery mowing seasons. Because the unemployment rate is climbing steadily, we anticipate a heightened interest from outside contractors for this year. During the past week, Mitch Nobbe has agreed to take on the Immaculate Conception Cemetery mowing. He has served us well in the past and will keep our cemetery in top shape for the summer. The other two areas, the Parish Grounds, and St. Denis Cemetery, are open to internal bids until the end of March, at which time we will open them to the public. Stop by the office and pick up a bid sheet to review the contract. Insurance and equipment provided by the bidder.

The Westport Baptist Church Outreach Center has notified us that the **Family Clothes Closet**, scheduled for March 25-27, has been cancelled.

Please see the Criterion this week for a list of options for viewing daily Mass on-line. In addition, weekly the Criterion lists the readings for Sunday and the weekday Masses. Create a new Sunday ritual: establish a time to gather your family and have your own personal prayer. Read the readings together, and discuss your insights. Then pray the creed together, followed by petitions of your own making. Pray the Our Father together and then have a quiet time for "Spiritual Communion." See bulletin insert.

Prayer for a Pandemic

By Cameron Bellm

*May we who are merely inconvenienced
Remember those whose lives are at stake.*

*May we who have no risk factors
Remember those most vulnerable.*

*May we who have the luxury of working from home
Remember those who must choose between preserving their health or making their rent.*

*May we who have the flexibility to care for our children when their schools close
Remember those who have no options.*

*May we who have to cancel our trips
Remember those that have no place to go.*

*May we who are losing our margin money in the tumult of the economic market
Remember those who have no margin at all.*

*May we who settle in for a quarantine at home
Remember those who have no home.*

*During this time when we cannot physically wrap our arms around each other,
Let us yet find ways to be the loving embrace of God to our neighbors. Amen.*

As we shelter in place during these days, let us know that we too are “the loving embrace of God” to one another!

Parishioners in need of support, March 2020

Aspen Place Health Campus – 2320 N. Montgomery Road, Greensburg, IN 47240

Velma Ortman

St. Andrew Assist. Living – 1400 Lammers Pike, Batesville, IN 47006

Teresa Bruns

Heritage House – 410 Park Road, Greensburg, IN 47240

Barbara Hoeing #86

Judy Zapfe #44

Crownpointe Senior Living Community – 1034 E. Crown Pointe Blvd. Greensburg, IN 47240

Elaine Jacobs #116

Robert Schoettmer #205

Cletus Wesseler #114

Morning Breeze Assisted Living – 950 N. Lakeview Drive, Greensburg, IN 47240

Marilyn Horan #21

Roman Johannigman

Pauline Schoettmer #78

Parishioners at home, but fragile or in need of support:

Jim & Francis Cobb

Evelyn Kiefer

Alfred & Bernice Diekhoff

Jim & Marida Koors

Ruth Diekhoff

Carl & Eileen Moorman

Martha Fry

Alvin Pfeifer

Ruth Hamilton

Bernard & Nell Ann Pfeifer

Carol Helton

Sharon Rupp

Ralph Hermesch

Kenneth Sandhage

Evelyn Johannigman

Rosemary Scheidler

Notes about the list:

These are all people that I have an ongoing relationship with and will continue to follow throughout this health crisis. Throughout this past week I have made contact by phone to each parishioner or their family to inquire about needs and have found that all of them are well cared for by family or caregivers. I have learned from them that they most often don't desire anything more than your prayers and support. Cards would be most welcomed at any time. Those in Nursing Homes have staff to meet their needs, but feel isolated from family. Most have no phone and are not able to answer a phone or retrieve messages. Those at home, have family set up to assist with shopping, medications, meals etc. Unless a primary caregiver becomes ill, these folks want no change to their routine. If a change becomes necessary they will let us know, or a family member will let us know. We have established weekly "check-up calls" for most (unless they have daily family contact).

Two have been anointed this week, and one of those has a very short life expectancy. Two are on Hospice and have meds delivered, and nurse visits each week. Two have home health visits and meals on wheels. Those with dementia or memory loss are confused by visits and cannot handle calls. Those families are being supported. They do need your prayers! Some are on the prayer list at their own request. Others at the request of a family member. Some do not want to be on the prayer list because they don't want to encourage calls or visits. They do need our prayers as well.

Nell Ann wants you to know that she has started her chemo treatments and all is going well. Martha is away, staying with her son in Indy much of the time, but she initiates calls almost daily when she feels like talking. She is doing quite well at present.

The one person in a current crisis and in most need of prayer is Mark Wittkemper, and family. Mark has bilateral pneumonia and is currently on a ventilator, but holding his own. He needs our prayers. His children need our support. This is just the beginning, and it will all evolve, but we will do everything possible to keep you all informed. Please call and add your name to our volunteer list if you are able, for future developments.

Spiritual Communion

SPIRITUAL COMMUNION

Our Archbishop has also encouraged us to make a spiritual communion.
What is a spiritual communion?

St. Thomas Aquinas described it as " an ardent desire to receive Jesus in the most holy sacrament and lovingly embrace him" at a time or in circumstances when we cannot receive him in sacramental Communion. Many saints who were masters of the spiritual life would incorporate making a spiritual communion as part of their daily lives especially when their desire for union with God was more than just once a week or if circumstances prohibited them from receiving the Eucharist.

Here is a prayer that you can say to make a spiritual communion.

My Jesus,

I believe that You

are present in the Most Holy Sacrament.

I love You above all things,

and I desire to receive You into my soul.

Since I cannot at this moment

receive You sacramentally,

come at least spiritually into my heart.

I embrace You as if You were already there and unite myself wholly to You.

Never permit me to be separated from You.

Amen.

Prayer for those affected by the Coronavirus

By Kerry Weber

Jesus Christ, you traveled through towns and villages "curing every disease and illness." At your command, the sick were made well. Come to our aid now, in the midst of the global spread of the coronavirus,

that we may experience your healing love.

Heal those who are sick with the virus. May they regain their strength and health through quality medical care.

Heal us from our fear, which prevents nations from working together and neighbors from helping one another.

Heal us from our pride, which can make us claim invulnerability to a disease that knows no borders.

Jesus Christ, healer of all, stay by our side in this time of uncertainty and sorrow.

Be with those who have died from the virus. May they be at rest with you in your eternal peace.

Be with the families of those who are sick or have died. As they worry and grieve, defend them from illness and despair. May they know your peace.

Be with the doctors, nurses, researchers and all medical professional who seek to heal and help those affected and who

put themselves at risk in the process. May they know your protection and peace.

Be with the leaders of all nations. Give them the foresight to act with charity and true concern for the well-being of the people they are meant to serve. Give them the wisdom to invest in long-term solutions that will help prepare for or prevent future outbreaks. May they know your peace, as they work together to achieve it on earth.

Whether we are home or abroad, surrounded by many people suffering from this illness or only a few, Jesus Christ, stay with us as we endure and mourn, persist and prepare. In place of our anxiety, give us your peace.

Jesus Christ, heal us.