

April 5, 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@millhousenchurch.com

Ready or not. Here we are at Palm Sunday already! Are your baby bottles filled? Hoping so. Please set them aside until further notice. We are unable to accept and process them at this time. Your sacrifice is applauded! And the collected funds will indeed benefit young mothers to be. We just have to keep everyone safe at present. Thank you all for your Lenten sacrifice and Almsgiving!!

Palm Sunday: Just about a week ago, Jesus was weeping at the tomb of his friend Lazarus, and then he performed his greatest and maybe last miracle. He raised Lazarus from the dead! Word spread quickly of course, gossip always does, true or not. His followers were turning out in swarms, rejoicing greatly! His enemies were building a case against him, fearful that his power might be too much! That they might have a competitor, that their own positions were in jeopardy. While some were now **sure** that he was the Messiah, others were fearful that he **might be** the Messiah. Tension was building! And arriving at the gates of Jerusalem, he knew it was all coming to a head. The City was abuzz with the preparations for Passover. Jews were coming from the four corners of the earth to attend this festival. He paused at the gates, with mixed emotions, I'm sure. Suddenly feeling the need for support, he asked his disciples to secure a colt that he might ride into town. It was Passover. He had to move on, to secure a place to share the sacrificial meal. In obedience to his father, and for the love of all of us, **he wholeheartedly embraced his role** in the fulfillment of God's plan. He entered Jerusalem amidst the waving palm branches of the mobs, some rejoicing and praising God, and others, threatened and alarmed. Jesus played his role. His time had come. Even though he smiled and waved, he knew that in a few short days, these same people would condemn him. But he also knew that resurrection awaited him. What generous act does God ask of us? If we are willing to open ourselves to what God has in store for us, we may see in a new way, the transforming beauty of the cross. May Palm Sunday give us courage to take up the little crosses of our lives and follow him.

Holy Thursday: The Cenacle, "upper room" where Jesus celebrated the Passover with his disciples is where he washed their feet, modeling his servant role, and where he first celebrated the Eucharist, his sacrificial role, and fifty days later, it is where the promised Holy Spirit first descended upon the men and women at Pentecost. Two thousand years later, we remember Jesus' gestures of generosity and love on that holy night. We are told that the lambs used for the meal of Passover, were painstakingly examined. Only those without blemish were allowed for the sacrifice. The **perfect** ones were led to the slaughter, to be offered on the altar and consumed at the Passover meal. Later that evening, Jesus becomes the **sacrificial lamb**, offering his body and blood for us, so that God would "pass over" us and spare us from eternal death. Not even those closest to Jesus suspected what was in store that week, as they entered Jerusalem and hailed him as their king! They had no idea that this new Passover would free them from sin, and the power of death, to become children of God.

The Seder (Passover) meal was structured around the pouring and blessing of four cups of wine, including a "cup of blessing" shared after the meal was consumed. It involved blessings, prayers, and a ritual washing of hands before each course. Everything done and said at this Seder meal was prescribed and everyone knew the ritual. Imagine the astonishment of the twelve when at the blessing of the bread he added "this is my body which is given for you." After supper they would expect the cup of blessing, but he added, "This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood." What? What did he say? Think how jolting it would be for us! Not only was he changing the words, but he was speaking about a "new Covenant." God had promised a new covenant. But now? Here and now? Jesus identifies himself as the **sacrificial lamb**. He makes himself food and drink for the **new covenant** between God and his family. His greatness is born out of humility and self-

giving. His kingship is born of self-offering. Little did they know that he would lay down his life. He is preparing his disciples to see in his death a victory. And he is preparing them to love. Later on, he tells them to love one another even as I have loved you.” The message is for all of us as well. As the evening ends they all walk out to the garden, and Jesus asks them to “stay with me, remain here with me, watch and pray.” He knows what is to come. He knows how very hard it will be. He wants their support. We too are called to be present, to watch and pray. Our own ritual calls for at least an hour of adoration following the Holy Thursday Mass. We can do that at home. “Watch and pray.”

Good Friday: On this day we read from John’s account of the last day in the life of Jesus. John who is the “beloved disciple” is the only apostle who stayed with the women, and stood at the foot of the cross. As you read and relive these events in scripture and ponder their deeper meaning in your own life, I pray that it will reawaken within you a resolve to use your own gifts to meet Jesus in his “distressing disguise” in the crosses and burdens of your own life. I pray that you may comfort and encourage those around you, and lead them closer to him. The day begins and ends in darkness, and in gardens. The first is Gethsemane, a quiet place among olive trees, where Jesus has often gone with his disciples to pray. After the meal he leads them there. He is carrying the weight of the world, but they don’t understand. He is motivated by love. The second garden is Golgotha, “the place of the skull” where crosses are planted instead of trees. In the long hours between the two gardens, Jesus is arrested, falsely accused, and sentenced to death. He walks carrying his cross, and meets many of us along the way. The Via Dolorosa, “the way of suffering” is the path, a little under half a mile through the streets of the Old Jerusalem to the place of crucifixion and burial. Crucifixion was deliberately public and deliberately horrifying. The message was “rebel, and this is your fate.” Today we enter the darkness with Mary, with the beloved disciple, with the women huddled in silent presence, and with Jesus. We hear the words “It is finished.” Completed! He did it for us. And as we face the pain in our own lives, we know, we are just where we are supposed to be. Be patient in suffering. And accept the presence of others.

Holy Saturday: No doubt, those who loved Jesus mourned his death. No doubt, their grief was expressed in prayer as they watched him carried to his final resting place. The gift of prayer consoles us even in the darkest moments of our lives. Prayers of anguish. Prayers of trust and hope. Scripture doesn’t offer us much detail about Holy Saturday. Jesus body was “disposed of” because of the preparation of the Sabbath. He was wrapped carefully with oils and spices and laid in a new tomb. And everyone goes home. The tomb is sealed and guarded. A profound silence begins. It is a time of waiting and rest. My challenge for us is to **observe that silence**. God rested after his creative work. Jesus rested after his redemptive work. The world rests, and waits for the revelation of redemption. What was everyone doing? Surely, they mourned. We can imagine the disciples in a locked room. Their leader was crucified. Would they be next? John and Mary were probably together. Jesus made them family. And the women may have been together too, pacing and preparing for what would come next. They were observing the Sabbath. And mourning. John and Mary must have known the story was not over. But they paused and waited. We too, must do the same!

Have a blessed Triduum! The palms are in refrigeration. Not sure how long they will keep, nor when we will be able to bless them and distribute. But will keep you posted. The Holy oils from last year will continue to be used until the Chrism Mass is rescheduled. There will be no holy water for an indefinite time. The fonts are clean and will remain empty. The Eucharist is available only for those in danger of death. Anointings can be requested, again only for those in danger of death, if the protective equipment is available for the priest, and if the facility allows him to enter. Please call the Parish office for all concerns.

Some remain greatly concerned about funerals. As mandated by the Governor and as directed by the Archdiocese, we are to have **no visitations, brief burial** services only, by invitation only, with not more than 10 people total (and that includes the undertaker and the minister). Some places are allowing no family at all.

Just a private burial and a promise of more to come at a later date. We do need to abide by the law, no matter how large or close the family is. We ask for your cooperation and support in helping us to keep all of this in place for all families. Later, as the restrictions are lifted, we will have Memorial Masses for each deceased parishioner, to celebrate their life and legacy.

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.

Remember in Prayer: Pat Schwering, John Kuzman, Marilyn Horan, Martha Fry, Elizabeth Downey, Nell Ann Pfeifer, Velma Ortman, Judy Zapfe, Sherry Weberding, Pauline Schoettmer, Lori & Joe Bierhaus, and a special intention. New to our prayer list this week is Fr. John Geis and his family. While he welcomes our prayer, he is not up to phone calls, and wishes no contact or delivery of anything. His needs are being addressed by his family. Also, in addition to all of the above, I would like to add a plea for prayers for all members of our parish family who might be working the front lines of this Covid-19 pandemic: especially our nurses, and emergency personnel. They are putting themselves out there for all of us! We need to put our prayers out there for them! Some of us are complaining about the need to stay home. Some of them would love to have that option, to stay home and be safe. Some are denying themselves the care of their own families, so that they can care for our families. Thank them as often as possible!

Stewardship of Treasure: Our Sunday Collections: March 29, 2020

Needed each weekend to meet budget: **\$2,800.00**

Sunday Envelopes (and loose): \$270.00

Catholic Relief Services: \$ 20.00

Total Collections: \$290.00

Note from the Finance Committee: Re: the importance of Sunday Collections during this time of uncertainty: We wanted to reach out to all parishioners about the importance of still sending in your Sunday Envelopes to the parish office, even though we are unable to get together each Sunday for Mass. Just like at our homes, the bills still arrive in the mail and need to be paid! There are three ways to make your contribution, weekly or monthly. You can mail a check to the church at 2081 E. County Road 820 S. Greensburg, IN 47240; you can donate on-line at www.millhousechurch.com; or you can personally deliver your envelope to the parish office. Please note that when donating on-line through our website, a portion of your contribution will be subtracted for on-line fees, therefore your entire donation will not be made to the church. This on-line platform will allow you to select to “give once” or “give multiple times.” If you choose to personally deliver your donation to the parish office, please contact Sister Donna at 812-591-2362 to schedule a drop off time, so that it can be received. It is not recommended to leave contribution envelopes in the mailbox. Thank you in advance for continuing your gift of Stewardship to our parish.

Again, we encourage you to frequently visit our Archdiocesan web-site for updates and for Sunday liturgy. The Archbishop himself is leading all services during holy week, and all will be live streamed. Please tune in. In addition, Fr John, at St Mary, Greensburg, is taping Sunday Liturgy in advance and offers it for your use. To access it, just go to the St. Mary’s website.

“May God’s blessing, come down upon you as a consoling embrace. Lord, may you bless the world, give health to our bodies and comfort our hearts. You ask us not to be afraid. Yet our faith is weak, and we are fearful. But you, Lord, will not leave us at the mercy of the storm.”



Immaculate Conception Church

Millhousen, IN

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April 5, 2020

Dear Parishioners,

Here at Immaculate Conception, our primary concern is for the health and safety, and for the emotional and spiritual wellbeing of all parishioners. We are praying for all of you, but especially for those who have been so greatly impacted by the current health crisis. The spread of the COVID-19 virus has truly impacted our parish, our community and our entire country. We will continue to communicate with you as often as possible, weekly by the parish bulletin, by postings on our web-site, and Facebook, and more frequently, by Remind when emergencies arise. We ask that you guard against giving into fear during these times of turmoil.

As a faith filled Catholic community, we will respond to the guidance issued from our chief shepherd, Archbishop Thompson, to provide for the spiritual and pastoral needs of our parishioners. Additionally, as members of the broader community, we are committed to participating in the larger response by the city of Greensburg, our County and State. The decision of Archbishop Thompson and all Indiana bishops to dispense Catholics from the obligation of attending Sunday Mass, as well as the canceling or curtailing of all other liturgical events and gatherings, was based on the CDC and state government guidelines.

We will continue, and we ask you as well, to pray for and support those most vulnerable – the elderly, the poor, those with less stable employment, and parents who need to work, but lack appropriate childcare. In a special way, we want to support the elderly, the sick, and those who are homebound, and who may feel isolated and alone. In the spirit of Lent, and Holy Week, I ask that we all work to embrace the works of mercy, and to practice a spirit of gratitude and generosity to others, whether it be using our time to pray, giving to our parish finances, or donating our skills to projects that need our attention. I truly believe that with continued prayer, a commitment to this community, and a focus on Christ as our true leader, we will survive this crisis.

As a parish, we are committed to continuing the good work of the Church and to providing a sense of calmness through our faith. I thank each of you for the many ways you support our mission, and ask that you please continue to financially support our parish. We are dependent upon your weekly gifts to continue meeting our needs in this critical time of crisis.

You may want to use this time to transition to online giving, or mail your weekly donations to the parish. We have been a little hesitant to encourage on-line giving in the past because there has been a fee involved which means a portion of your contribution goes to the bank rather than having all of it go to the parish. However, we were not alone. Many other parishes were sharing the same concern. Today we want to report that there is a way around the fees. The Archdiocesan Office of Stewardship has created a quick link to on-line giving which is available at

www.archindy.org/ParishGiving.

100% of your donation will come directly to the parish, without you or the parish incurring any fees. There is a drop down, listing all parishes by name and number, and after clicking on Immaculate Conception Church, Millhousesen, you may enter all of your identity information, with options for one time or repeated giving. Hopefully, this option will be convenient for many of you and reduce our point of contact. However, if dropping an envelope off is more to your liking, please don't hesitate to call.

Please continue to join in prayer for all those who have died, for the recovery of those who are sick, for the strength of healthcare workers and caregivers, and for a swift end to this health crisis. Be assured of my prayers for all of you, our parishioners, and as we started Lent, remember that we are in this together.

Sincerely, in Christ,

Sister Donna M. Prickel, PLC

Stations of the Cross

In the stations we follow in the footsteps of Jesus during his passion and Death on the cross.



Jesus is condemned to die.



Jesus takes up his cross.



Jesus falls the first time.



Jesus meets his mother.



Simon helps Jesus carry his cross.



Veronica wipes the face of Jesus.



Jesus falls the second time.



Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem.



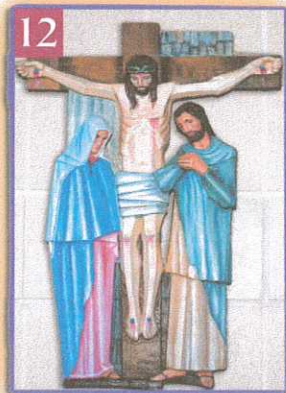
Jesus falls the third time.



Jesus is stripped of his garments.



Jesus is nailed to the cross.



Jesus dies on the cross.



Jesus is taken down from the cross.



Jesus is laid in the tomb.

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Reflections on the Stations of the Cross

First Station ~ Jesus is condemned to die

Jesus, it is hard to imagine how you stayed quiet when so many people wanted to hurt you. Be with me when I feel afraid. Remind me to trust in God's love for me.

Second Station ~ Jesus takes up his cross

Jesus, the cross was such a heavy load for you to bear. Yet you took it on your shoulders and carried it bravely. Give me courage when I have to face something difficult in my life.

Third Station ~ Jesus falls the first time

Jesus, the weight of the cross caused you to fall down. Lift me up when I make mistakes that cause hurt to others or to myself. Help me to trust in your forgiving heart.

Fourth Station ~ Jesus meets his mother

Jesus, you saw the sadness in Mary's face when you met her on the road. How painful it was to see you suffering. Fill my heart with kindness when I meet someone who is sad.

Fifth Station ~ Simon helps Jesus carry his cross

Jesus, Simon's help in carrying the cross must have been such a relief. Remind me how important it is to be helpful when others need my assistance.

Sixth Station ~ Veronica wipes the face of Jesus

Jesus, did you expect a strange woman to come forward to wipe your bleeding face? It was a simple thing to do and yet it provided so much comfort. Show me small ways I can soothe the pain of others.

Seventh Station ~ Jesus falls a second time

Jesus, once again you fell to the ground. Even with Simon's help, it was a struggle to get up and continue your journey. Strengthen me when I am tempted to give up and remind me to rely on your love when I need to keep going.

Eighth Station ~ Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem

Jesus, even in your anguish you stopped to offer encouragement to the grieving women. Help me to be a comfort to others.

Reflections on the Stations of the Cross

Ninth Station ~ Jesus falls the third time

Jesus, this fall must have been the hardest. You were tired and in great pain yet you struggled to your feet and resumed your journey. Inspire me to keep going when the way grows long and weary.

Tenth Station ~ Jesus is stripped of his garments

Jesus, how humiliating it was to be stripped of your clothes in front of a large crowd. Remind me to show respect to others and to do nothing that robs them of their dignity.

Eleventh Station ~ Jesus is nailed to the cross

Jesus, I can't imagine the agony of having nails driven through my hands and feet. Yet, in the midst of your pain you forgave those who did this terrible deed. Grant me the courage to forgive when I am wounded by others.

Twelfth Station ~ Jesus dies on the cross

Jesus, with a great sigh you gave up your spirit. Show me how to surrender in small ways so that each day I make an offering of my life to you.

Thirteenth Station ~ Jesus is taken down from the cross

Jesus, it was heartbreaking for Mary to hold your lifeless body in her arms. Comfort me when I grieve over the loss of someone I love.

Fourteenth Station ~ Jesus is laid in the tomb

Jesus, how dark and lonely it must have been to walk away from the tomb and yet your friends would know great hope in the days ahead. Remind me of the light that emerges from darkness because of your great love. May my faith in you grow stronger each day.

Background on the Stations of the Cross

The origin of the Stations of the Cross stretches back to the Crusades when, as a result of the conquering of the Holy Land, Christians began making pilgrimages to the sacred sites where Jesus lived, suffered, died, and rose from the dead. Today, the Stations are depicted in many ways, including paintings, sculpture, and stained glass.

The meditations for this prayer practice vary as the tragic walk from condemnation to the cross unfolds. As pilgrims on a journey of faith, we use the Stations of the Cross to reflect on the ways we suffer humiliation, rejection, suffering, and death. This makes the Stations more than a historic re-creation of Jesus' walk to Golgotha. The prayers draw us into considering how Jesus accompanies those who suffer in today's world. The injustice of being arrested and falsely accused, the pain of enduring mockery, torture, and being forced to carry the means of one's own death, the grace of small acts of compassion in the midst of an agonizing climb, and the surrender of heart and soul to God's infinite mercy all draw us into a story that is as contemporary as it is ancient.

The Stations of the Cross are one of many spiritual practices that we can reflect on as we make our way through Lent. Following in the footsteps of Jesus, we can seek ways to find and extend mercy to those who shoulder heavy loads. We can fast from destructive, cynical, or critical thoughts and behaviors, and embrace ones laced with gratitude, humility, and compassion. And we can pray for understanding and generous hearts so that we emerge from Lent, living as disciples of Jesus Christ.