

May 24, 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@millhousechurch.com

The Ascension of the Lord

“And now I will no longer be in the world, but they are in the world, while I am coming to you.” And with that, he is gone from our sight. And we become his witnesses, his presence on earth. Awesome responsibility! May our lives glorify God!

Bulletin: While maintaining communication with all of you has been our goal from the very beginning of this historical pandemic, many have drifted away from remembering to go to our website regularly to access the latest information. Our routines have changed. Some don't have on-line access, and have depended on the paper copies. While many people have gone to the white box, only to find it empty. We have never missed printing an issue, but accessing it has not been easy for you. We are hoping the system has improved. All of the back issues of the bulletin are archived and can be found on the website. Some have expressed a desire to read the bulletin on Facebook. Now a link has been created on Facebook to go directly to the bulletin on our website. You might want to try out this new feature. For those who need the printed copy, the vast majority of you, we promise to print enough. If ever you find the box empty, please bring it to my attention immediately. We don't want you to be missing the updates and changes. And there will be lots of changes. Please start today, to read the bulletin each week until we are back in the swing of things. And if you have fallen behind and need to catch up, please start with May 10th and move forward.

Remind: This might be a good time to sign up for the Remind text message option as well. While texting is growing in popularity and habit, we have only about half of our parishioners using this alert system. Those that have signed up are staying informed of breaking news.

Call the office anytime to add or remove names, or to give any information you may want posted to the parish.

Remember in Prayer: Pat Schwering, John Kuzman, Nell Ann Pfeifer, Velma Ortman, Judy Zapfe, Sherry Weberding. Most of our parishioners are doing well, or at least improving. But those in the nursing facilities are still alone and grateful for your prayers and cards and calls. Reach out to them if you have a chance.

We are most grateful for your continued financial support. Thanks to those who mail or drop off checks. We are grateful!

Stewardship of Treasure: Our Sunday Collections: May 17, 2020

Needed each weekend to meet budget:	\$2,800.00
Sunday Envelopes (and loose):	\$545.00
Cemetery Fund:	\$145.00

Total Collections: \$690.00

On-line Giving: For those who may have misplaced the link, the on-line giving site is:

www.archindy.org/Giving Remember to choose Immaculate Conception, Millhausen, from the drop-down menu. It was very easy to access this information on-line to validate your contributions, and each of you should

have already received a statement directly from the Archdiocese for tax purposes. Hang on to that letter because that giving will not be reflected in your giving statement from the parish in January.

Reminder: Special Collection today, May 24: The Catholic Communication Campaign. Envelope in box. And we always accept past due envelopes or even money without envelopes. Any way that is best for you to give is appreciated.

Concerning all meetings or gatherings: if you are 65 or beyond, or in compromised health, please observe the stay-at-home orders. Nothing on our agenda is more important than each one's health and safety. We encourage the use of **face coverings** for all gatherings to protect the other. And we will stay six feet apart. On the one hand, we probably shouldn't be gathering because so many are over 65, but on the other hand, we have some important decisions to make.

**Auction 2020:
2020 Community Consignment Auction UPDATE**

The Auction Committee met on Sunday, May 17 to discuss the 2020 auction plans. After several considerations, very thoughtful dialogue, and keeping in mind the safety and well-being of parishioners and auction attendees, the committee has decided to cancel the auction for this year. We could not, in good conscience, ask area businesses who are experiencing economic hardships, for donations, ask parishioners to work the auction, and hold off on purchasing items needed for the event while waiting for the "ok" from the Archdiocese to resume fundraising events. Too much is at stake. Everyone's safety is upper most in our minds.

We are so grateful for the support, donations, consigners, bidders, auctioneers and volunteers that make our auction a success every year. The committee will be using this time to look at some new ideas and options to add some new fundraising opportunities to our event in 2021. Please reach out to a committee member if you have any ideas or questions.

**Thank you for your understanding!
The Auction Committee**

Dates to Remember:

May 24 – 9:00 am, office meeting room, **Finance Committee.** Project & approve annual budget.

May 31 – 9:00 am, office meeting room, **Parish Council.** Criteria to re-open.

Steeple Notes: As of today, May 22, the steeple has been cleared of all the old shingles and sealed from water entry. Please pray for good weather as we have lost a lot of time due to the wind and rain. Each day the crane remains in place here the most expensive this project becomes. All is going extremely well, and when we get together for the first time, you might take a look at the sample of old shingles Ken has collected. There is no doubt the project was badly needed.

PROVINCE OF INDIANAPOLIS – statement from the Indiana Bishops:

The five Catholic dioceses of the Province of Indianapolis will **begin** resuming public liturgies (e.g. Mass and Sacraments) by 30 May 2020, the Vigil of Pentecost, with restrictions outlined by each diocese and provided to the parishes within their respective jurisdictions. **The dispensation from the obligation to participate at Mass on Sundays is extended throughout the State of Indiana until 15 August 2020.**

Note that the operative word is **begin**. Some will begin early, others will follow. As reported in the bulletin last week, there will be a staggering of openings, as each geographic area is tasked with creating opportunities for the sacraments and liturgies to begin again, in the meantime, working together and sharing our resources. It is hoped that all be able to meet the opening criteria, before the end of the dispensation on August 15th. Each

diocese has created individualized plans. And now each Pastor or Parish Life Coordinator is responsible for creating individual parish plans based on the Archdiocesan guidelines. We have been in continuous dialogue with our neighbors at Greensburg, and we know already that they will be the first to open in this area, and we will follow when we are able. The initial plan (which is subject to change) is for St. Mary's to open for its first public Sunday Mass on the eve of Pentecost, May 30th. All of us are invited to join in that celebration, either in person, or by way of the recorded video. Please remember that this is an invitation, an opportunity, but **all of those over 65 are strongly encouraged to stay at home**. If everyone who **should** stay home **does** stay home, it will be easier to accommodate the six-foot distancing. Small churches may seem to fill to capacity quickly because once people spread out, the capacity becomes so much less. Some churches are resuming partially, that is, with only part of the usual Mass schedule. For instance, make note of the fact that, until further notice, there will be no 12:00 Mass at Osgood. Only the 6:00 pm. That means that part of the Osgood folks may be blending into Napoleon. It will be easier for us to find a space in the larger capacity of St. Mary for the time being. Some churches are having to change times of Masses due to allowing for the sanitizing routine between Masses. Doors will be open only 30 minutes before each Mass, and then closed and locked quickly following Mass to allow for the tasks at hand.

There will be limitations on the size of the crowd. The churches all need to be marked for seating, with six-foot distances between people. The isles may be marked for six-foot segments for communion lines. Ushers will need to be trained on how to seat folks and everyone will need to learn to follow directions for seating. No longer will there be **reserved pews**. We need to continue social distancing, and we need to **strongly encourage everyone over 65 to please continue to stay at home**. Remember that the dispensation is effective until August 15th, and even that could change. Time will tell. Hopefully the numbers will begin to drop. But, please accept the age disability as a very serious consideration. Allow those a little younger, with a more active immune system, to be the first to break out.

Cleaning – on-going: We have begun the cleaning and sanitizing process for our worship space. It is very important for us to create a very safe worship space for all, but especially for our most vulnerable members, the elderly, folks over 65, and those dealing with other major disease processes, whose immune systems are already compromised. Because no volunteers were readily available, we have contracted with an outside cleaning service to do the initial deep clean, and the carpets will be shampooed as well. Following that, weekly sanitizing will be necessary to kill off any virus that **we** might unknowingly carry in. Because many of our church cleaners are already over 65, we are trying not to place a heavy burden on any team. While we will still need the monthly cleaning groups to do the routine vacuuming, they should find the touched surfaces already wiped and safe. If you are over 65 and feel a need to permanently resign from your team, please call your team leader and let her know so additional folks can begin to fill that void. And if you are a team leader and need assistance getting your group together, please make LaDonna aware. If you are **under** 65 and can come forward to vacuum occasionally, Ladonna would love to hear from you.

We need to ensure that every single person who enters our church has, and wears a mask. According to the Gov.'s plan, masks become "optional" on June 14th. But they will not be optional in our churches for quite some time. In the meantime, we need to wear them, not to protect ourselves, but to protect those vulnerable around us. Masks can be homemade, or purchased. We encourage everyone to get one and to wear it when you come. An unidentified donor has given us about 50 homemade masks that are in the entryway. If you need one please pick one up, use it, and then take it home and wash after each use. There will also be a box of disposable masks available if you happen to forget to bring your mask along. **Everyone** will wear masks. Even Father as he comes and goes. The only **exceptions** will be the priest and lector **after** they are in the sanctuary. In order for us to hear and understand the readings, masks will be removed for those with speaking parts. And while these participants are in the sanctuary, they too will need to stay six feet apart, and practice social distancing. As participants leave the sanctuary, masks will go back on.

There will be no servers. There will be no sacristan. Father will help himself from a new side credence table. There will be no Entrance procession, there will be no Recessional. There will be no Offertory procession.

There will be no sharing of a sign of peace. Rather than let it to chance, the rite has been deleted at present. And we will not hold hands during the “Our Father.” These are hard habits to break. But we will do it together, and some may need the reminders from others. If we act out of respect and care and concern for each other, we can break the old habits.

All hymn books have already been removed. That means we cannot follow the readings in our books either. We will have to listen carefully to the readings, and the Lectors will have to project their voices and speak clearly and slowly so all can hear and understand them. This is why Father and the Lectors will not be wearing masks, the masks would muffle the words. There will be **no singing**. Even if there is some organ music provided it will be without voices. When we sing, (and when we talk behind masks), we project our voices, we breathe deeper, and we excrete more virus and bacteria. The masks are designed to hold the virus and bacteria, and create the needed barrier between us and everyone else. For years we have said “sing, participate.” Now we are saying “don’t sing, speak quietly.”

We need volunteers to mark and measure and figure out seating according to the new guidelines. We need volunteers to learn the new ushering responsibilities, to assist everyone to find a seat and be safe.

Please consider what your new role might look like and watch for a meeting in the next couple of weeks to get acquainted with the role changes and responsibilities of ushers. There will **not** be a Ministry schedule until education has been accomplished. Please come forward and help us get started (but only those under 65, and in good health.) Ushers will no longer be taking up the collection. For their safety, all envelopes will be dropped in a basket as each one enters the church. The stand that used to serve as a holy water font has become our new collection basket. Please place your envelopes into the basket when you arrive. No one will be coming pew to pew to collect.

And we saved the best news for last: just today we received the following message from the office of worship: “On or after Tuesday, May 26, the distribution of Holy Communion outside of Mass may begin. The decision about beginning this is left to the judgment of the pastor, administrator or parish life coordinator. If allowed, the guidelines for the distribution of Holy Communion during Mass are to be observed (such as, the use of masks and the sanitation of hands before and after Holy Communion is distributed.) Holy Communion may be distributed inside a sacred space, outside, or **even at the home**, as long as it can be done safely and with the utmost precaution. Holy Communion may now even be offered to those who are not attending public Mass for their safety and/or for the common good. The distribution of Holy Communion is to be done in a reverent way, and people are encouraged to prayerfully prepare themselves beforehand. With the permission of the pastor, administrator or parish life coordinator, Holy Communion may even be distributed to individuals at or in their residence and preferably by members of their household who are already extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion and who use a pyx to do so. The archbishop has given permission to pastors or Parish Life Coordinators to designate and train a Catholic in good standing to serve as an extraordinary minister of Holy Communion in individual cases. See the Rite of Deputing a Minister to Distribute Holy Communion on a Single Occasion in Appendix III of the Roman Missal.”

This is the best news that we could hope for! If you are currently a Eucharistic minister in our parish and are healthy, and less than 65, and willing to continue in this capacity, please call Sister Donna to offer your services and to attend a meeting for Eucharistic Ministers. Your role too will be changing, and taking the Eucharist to those at home will be the primary responsibility moving forward. We will provide training for all individuals who wish to continue in this ministry but with the changes. And if you are not currently a Eucharistic Minister but have a member of your household who is staying home to protect themselves or others, and you would like to minister to their needs, please call and offer your service. We have very few pyxes. If you have one and would like to share it with the parish, please bring it in to us. We won’t order more until we know how many are needed. If you are 65 or older, or staying home to protect yourself or others, and would like to receive Holy Communion in your home, please call to make your request known.

We will talk more about the changes to the ritual of receiving Holy Communion next week. So please pick up a bulletin. And our **tentative plans** are to reopen our Church on June 14th, but all depends on volunteers and preparedness. Please step forward to assist.