

Dear Friends in Christ,

I give thanks to God for all of you! This past week 35 of you called the office and either spoke with me personally or left a message simply to check in, asking how I am doing and if I need anything. I am moved by your love, which deepens the sadness of not seeing you all now on this third weekend of no public mass. Please know all is well and I, along with our Deacons are praying daily that you all are continuing to be safe as we go through this pandemic. Allow me to share the latest guidelines from the Archdiocese received this past Monday evening;

1. Baptisms are to be deferred, except in case of emergency. In these extreme instances, the faithful should contact a priest immediately.
2. Funeral Masses or services in the church or funeral home will no longer be conducted until further notice. Limiting the funerals to ten people has proven not to be feasible and caused problems for many priests. Burial prayers may be said in an open-air setting in a cemetery, as long as proper distancing of the ten people allowed by state regulation is maintained. They may not be held in a mortuary chapel. The family is to be assured that a memorial Mass will be offered as soon as possible after restrictions are lifted.
3. Weddings are postponed until further notice.
4. If a pastor chooses to keep the parish church open for prayer:
 - Definite hours must be announced. (Here, the Church is open daily from 7 am to 5 pm).
 - No public ceremonies such as the Mass or group devotions may take place.
 - The church must be cleaned and sanitized frequently in accord with the guidelines to prevent infection.
5. Parishes should suspend all office activity. (Just that you know, Margie is working from home, by answering her phone when I call asking questions...where is this? or how do I do this??) Be certain that I can be reached at the Parish Office in case of an urgent need for the sacrament of the anointing of the sick and viaticum.
6. Parishioners who are in hospitals will be attended to by the Catholic chaplain on staff.

I am looking to the immediate future. Sadly, I see the postponement of this year's Reception of First Holy Communion by our second graders...along with the Confirmation of our eighth graders as well. I will certainly have more information on these matters for next weekend's bulletin.

I am also aware of this being the third weekend with no formal collection, where you with your amazing generosity continue to support Immaculate. Realizing that these may be financially difficult times for some of you, I wish to offer my sincerest appreciation to those of you who have been trying to keep up with your financial support of our beautiful parish. The past two Sundays, our average collection of \$6,500.00 was not collected. March 15th, those parishioners dropped off or mailed envelopes totaling \$1,027.00 and on the 22nd we received \$1,325.00. Add another month to this, including our Easter Collection which after Christmas is the second largest collection, and you can see how I am starting to be concerned.

Please consider mailing, or if you plan to visit the Church for private pray, you can drop off your contribution at the Parish Office, leaving it in the white box to the left of the outside door as you come in. You may consider using the We Share program whereby you may have your payments sent automatically to the parish according to the schedule and in the amount you have designated. Simply visit our parish website IMMACULATESP.ORG and on the upper right side is a link where you may join.

Please know, as I wrote last week, that your safety and well-being is the utmost priority. Secondly, a distant second, is the obvious need to mention the financial situation we are presently experiencing.

May God watch over us and protect us. May Christ continue to strengthen us. May Mary our Mother intercede for us during this unprecedented in our church history.

-Rev. Herbert T. DeGaris

**FROM THE DEACON'S BENCH
THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK**

No one is to pursue what he judges better for himself, but instead what he judges better for someone else.

Rule of St. Benedict Chapter 72

SCHOOL OF RELIGION

"My Time With Jesus" Religious Education

ALL PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES HAVE BEEN TAKEN in an effort to protect the children of Religious Education during this time of the spread of the Corona Virus. This includes disinfecting the school building.

Families are encouraged to continue to share our beautiful faith and to pray for all our needs at this time.

The Church has dedicated March to the special veneration of St. Joseph. Due to St. Joseph's leadership of the Holy Family, he has been declared the protector and patron of the Universal Church.

St. Joseph is the model father for all fathers. He fulfilled all his obligations. He accepted his vocations – being a faithful spouse and father. St. Joseph was responsible for the Religious Education of Jesus including teaching Him sacred scriptures. Today, fathers can follow the model of St. Joseph by attending Mass, praying, keeping sacramentals and traditions of our beautiful faith alive for their family. Pray to St. Joseph and for all the fathers in your life.

We are one family caring for each other.

**50th WEDDING ANNIVERSARY
CELEBRATION**

Couples celebrating their 50th Wedding Anniversary anytime during 2020 are invited to attend the Golden Wedding Jubilee Mass with Cardinal Dolan at St. Patrick's Sunday, June 7th at 2:30 p.m. Pre-registration is required. Please contact the Rectory for registration. The closing date to register for the Mass is Monday, May 18th 2020 at 5:00 p.m.

**FOOD PANTRY NEWS
UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE,**

THE FOOD PANTRY WILL BE CLOSED.

We are asking at this present time that No perishable items be donated. At this immediate time, there will not be the annual collection of hams for Easter.

REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS

All those who are ill at home, in the hospital and in nursing homes, especially: John Capria, Billy Keenan, Michael Fay, Ruth Ann Melia , and Nora Malloy.

Our recently deceased: Christine Campisi and Peter W. Derasmo.

We will announce at the Mass on Sunday for a period of one month the intentions of those who are sick and then we will print them for one month. After that we ask that you please contact us to make sure that they are placed on the list again for another cycle. It is the only way we know if someone has recovered. We thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

MASSES FOR THE WEEK

SATURDAY, MARCH 28TH

5:30 Joseph Hagen (req. by family)

SUNDAY, MARCH 29TH

7:30 *For the People of the Parish*

9:30 Vincent Crapanzano

(req. by Winnie & Herb Haering)

11:30 Joseph Felice (req. by family)

MONDAY, MARCH 30TH

7:30 Theresa Eccher (req. by Bea & Marty Sasin)

TUESDAY, MARCH 31ST

7:30 Donald Rist (req. by family)

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1ST

7:30 Helen Fleckenstein

(req. by Madelaine & Joseph Cavegn)

THURSDAY, APRIL 2ND

7:30 Culastia Curschellas

(req. by Joe & Norma Rodriguez)

FRIDAY, APRIL 3RD

7:30 Mary Gaynor (req. by family)

SATURDAY, APRIL 4TH

8:30 Donald Cicchetti (req. by family)

5:30 Vigil Al Matera (req. by family)

SUNDAY, APRIL 5TH PALM SUNDAY

7:30 For All Souls In Purgatory

(req. by Ughette & Religious Education Family)

9:30 *For the People of the Parish*

11:30 Joseph Hagen (req. by family)

CALENDAR RAFFLE WINNERS

<u>Date</u>	<u>Prize</u>	<u>Ticket</u>	<u>Winner</u>
3/23	\$ 25	1155	Conor Torpey
3/24	\$ 25	701	Kayleigh Mahoney
3/25	\$ 25	1377	Paula Klein
3/26	\$ 50	261	The Cooney Family
3/27	\$ 25	1271	Imajeau Hubbard
3/28	\$ 75	1177	Rob Varano
3/29	\$ 25	1052	Dina Wassmer

Congratulations to all the winners. Once the Parish Office reopens, your prizes will be mailed to you.

NEWS OF INTEREST

Please keep informed of the latest information from the Archdiocese by joining our Parish Facebook page at *Immaculate Conception Roman Catholic Church*, our website at *immaculatesp.org* or through our text message system known as *Flocknote*. Simple instructions to join *Flocknote* is available on the Home Page of our website.

As we continue to struggle through this time of COVID-19, as a people of faith we know God is indeed watching over us. Please make an act of Spiritual Communion reception to keep that faith strong and on the forefront of our minds and hearts. That prayer, a prayer in time of need and a beautiful prayer by our Holy Father to the Virgin Mary of Protection are listed below.

An Act of 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.

A Prayer in Time of Need

Loving Father, our life and our hope, come to our aid in this difficult and uncertain time. Look with mercy on all who suffer from the coronavirus. Bless them and their families with Your healing, consolation and peace. Guide and be with all who care for them. Give wisdom and insight to those working to stop the spread of this disease, and help them find a way to cure it. Console our anxious hearts, strengthen our faith, and give us the grace to

trust in Your goodness. Restore communities affected by the virus to wholeness and health, and in Your loving mercy, give Your help and protection to all.

Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Prayer to the Virgin Mary for Protection (from Pope Francis and adjusted for our use)

O Mary, you shine continuously on our journey as a sign of salvation and hope.

We entrust ourselves to you, Health of the Sick. At the foot of the Cross you participated in Jesus' pain, with steadfast faith.

You, Our Lady of New York, know what we need. We are certain that you will provide, so that, as you did at Cana of Galilee, joy and feasting might return after this moment of trial.

Help us, Mother of Divine Love, to conform ourselves to the Father's will and to do what Jesus tells us: He who took our sufferings upon Himself, and bore our sorrows to bring us, through the Cross, to the joy of the Resurrection.

We seek refuge under your protection, O Holy Mother of God.

Do not despise our pleas – we who are put to the test – and deliver us from every danger,

O glorious and blessed Virgin. Amen.

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Next weekend's bulletin will contain a special schedule of Holy Week Services. These services will be streamed live on our Parish Facebook Page.

I can already share with you;

On Palm Sunday, we will have blessed palm that can be picked up from a table outside the main entrance of the church.

The church will be decorated to celebrate the joy of Easter as we do each year. Special Easter Holy Water will be available to bring to your homes.

A more detailed explanation of Holy Week, Easter Saturday and Easter Sunday will be shared with you in my letter to you all next week.

- Fr. Herb