

CATHOLIC COMMUNITIES OF CHEROKEE AND HOLSTEIN

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION PARISH OUR LADY OF GOOD COUNSEL PARISH

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3 July 2021

Feast of St. Thomas, Apostle

To all parishioners of IC-Cherokee and OLGC-Holstein:

GREETINGS

This is my last weekly update as I move to Mater Dei Parish in Sioux City on Wednesday July 7 and we welcome Fr. Dan Rupp as pastor on that day.

Thank you for two great and challenging years. I have enjoyed by time here despite the COVID pandemic. I have grown in my faith these last two years and I hope you have too. I love the people of these parishes and will continue to pray for you as I do for the people of all the parishes I have served before here.

CURRENT EVENTS

I am mostly packed and have made ready for Fr. Dan's arrival so there will be a smooth transition. I along with about fifteen [15] priests will be on the road moving to new assignments or into retirement on July 7. Please drive carefully on July 7. 😊

Our current protocols are:

1. **Face masks** for vaccinated people are optional.
2. **Face masks are strongly recommended for unvaccinated persons.**
3. The Sign of Peace and the Communion Cup is still to be omitted.
4. We are accepting contributions at the entrance of our church buildings and will resume the normal collection baskets when Mass attendance returns to normal and more of our ushers and our gift presenters return.

All liturgical ministers have been contacted and invited to return to ministry. We are still awaiting responses from most of them.

Later this year we will hold "Welcome Back to Mass" events ["Grand Re-opening" events], sponsored by the Diocese of Sioux City. The Parish Life Teams for IC and OLGC parishes are planning for these events. Please stay tuned.

The **parish office at IC-Cherokee is open to the public** during regular office hours.

Our church buildings are open for regular prayer visits. At IC: Monday-Friday 7:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.; Saturday 8:30 a.m.-6:00 p.m.; Sundays, 8:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m. At OLGC: every day 7:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

We need to have everyone be vaccinated because vaccinations work and are helping to end this pandemic in our country and as Pope Francis announced on January 20th that it is the moral responsibility for everyone to be vaccinated to help end this pandemic. The Moderna and Pfizer vaccines were created morally and are safe to receive. The Johnson & Johnson vaccine did use aborted fetal material. Yet, if you have no choice, it is safe to receive it. A **COVID-19 Vaccine Locator** has been launched by the US Government to assist folks who are struggling in finding vaccination locations. You merely go to the website www.vaccines.gov, enter your zip code, and it gives you a list of locations. It is easy and quick. You may also text your zip code to **438829** for a similar list. Please get the vaccine. Thank you to everyone who have been vaccinated.

PASTORAL PLANNING FOR OUR FUTURE AND FOR EVANGELIZATION

The CCOCH Pastoral Planning Team met this past week and held a ‘brainstorming’ session of ideas of what we would like to see happening in our parishes. These ideas will lead us to a vision and goals to work towards. Their next meeting is August 5.

For more information, please visit the Pastoral Planning page on the website and review many issues of The Lumen, including the March 25th issue that addresses some frequently asked questions, and the bishop’s pastoral letter issued in 2009.

SUNDAY AND HOLY DAY MASSES

It is vitally important for every member of our Church to attend Sunday and Holy Masses in-person. For those who are confined to long-term care facilities and homebound we will continue to offer live broadcast of Masses from Immaculate Conception on the new live streaming camera system and on the Immaculate Conception Parish-Cherokee YouTube page. The live stream is available during live streaming and then twenty-four [24] hours later by clicking the link in the “Live Broadcasts” box on the home page of the parishes’ website where times of live streaming are announced. For the Sunday Mass of June 27, there were 23 views [June 20 = 19].

Estimated attendance last weekend was: 5:00 p.m. = 114, 8:30 a.m. = 112, and 10:30 a.m. = 116. Capacity of our churches were limited last weekend and are now at full capacity, approximately 450 at IC and 233 at OLG.

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

...is available a half hour before every weekend and daily Mass in the regular Reconciliation Room and by appointment. If it has been over a year since your last confession, please make a commitment to celebrate this Sacrament soon before receiving Holy Communion.

FAITH FORMATION-YOUTH

While our in-person 2020-2021 classes have concluded, information for each class level may be found at <https://cherokeecountycatholics.org/faith-formation> under each parish’s program and grade level.

Parents are encouraged to continue being the first educators of their children by attending Mass each Sunday, and if possible on weekdays, and to read Bible stories and utilize good Catholic books and

resources including the abundant selection of material available on our website, on FORMED.ORG, and at other great Catholic websites.

FAITH FORMATION-ADULT

One of the goals of our Diocesan pastoral planning is to create more vibrant parishes. A parish is more than a church building or a group of people who attend Mass on Sundays. A parish is about a group of people who are disciples of Jesus who evangelize their families and communities daily in who they are and what they say and do. Did you know there are many places on our website to learn more about our faith? Using [Formed.org](https://formed.org) is another great resource. Instructions to sign up are found at <https://cherokeecountycatholics.org/adult-faith-formation>

Please learn what the Church teaches about the Gospel of Jesus Christ including love for God and neighbor and become more faithful disciples of Jesus so we may evangelize and create the world in which God intended us to live.

TECHNOLOGY MATTERS

At Immaculate Conception, a live streaming camera system is installed and provides for better video and audio quality during live broadcasts. Four “Digital Ushers” were trained on Friday to operate the system during live broadcasts. Please contact the office to volunteer to be a Digital Usher.

We are using ParishCast to send email messages to all parishioners for which we have a valid email thanks to generous supporters of our parishes. The ‘attachments’ are links to documents and when clicked upon, a new web browser window opens to display the document. This week’s ‘attachments’, including the bulletin, are at the bottom of this message. Using this system also allows us to see who opens and does not open the email message and learn of invalid email addresses. Last Saturday’s message was sent to 361 parishioners with 166 opened, 188 unopened, 34 clicked through, and 7 bounced. This system will be available to send out other announcements including weather cancellations of parish events.

CONTRIBUTIONS/DONATIONS/FINANCES

Thank you to everyone who are offering their donations/contributions via the postal service [please use the appropriate PO Box number when mailing to your parish] or <https://cherokeecountycatholics.org/online-giving>.

YOUTH CONTRIBUTION ENVELOPES are mailed to all our students every other month. It is our hope that these students will return these envelopes each week they come to Mass with a small donation and/or with reporting a good deed done and/or empty to show their support for their parish.

If you wish to see your contribution record before any time of the year, you may visit your parish membership account at <https://siouxcity.parishsoftfamilysuite.com/>. If you have not yet signed up, you may visit <https://siouxcity.parishsoftfamilysuite.com/Register.aspx> [More information please refer to the letter included with last Saturday’s e-newsletter and the one issued a year ago to all parishioners.]

I continue to remain in contact with the Finance Council for each parish including updating them on the current financial status of each parish.

DISINFECTING THE PARISH FACILITIES

...will be done as needed using a handheld electrostatic sprayer.

CURRENT STATUS OF COVID

Regarding COVID, I obtain my data from <https://iowacovid19tracker.org/>, and <https://coronavirus.iowa.gov/>. As of July 2, there are 7 active COVID cases in Cherokee County [4 last week], 6 active cases in Ida County [7 last week], included in the 1,701 active cases in Iowa [1,661 a week ago]. These are reported numbers. Unknown are the untested cases. Most of the increases in number of cases are related to the Delta variant infecting unvaccinated persons. Please be vaccinated if you are not vaccinated or wear a face mask to protect yourself and others. Thank you to everyone who has been vaccinated.

PRAYERS

We continue to pray for the more than 3,965,762+ persons in our world, including 610,820+ persons in our country, including 6,142 in the state of Iowa [including thirty-eight (38) in Cherokee County, thirty-five (35) in Ida County, and two [2] retired diocesan priests – Fr. John Vakulskas (9/28/20) and Msgr. Thomas Donahoe (11/5/20)] who have died with COVID-19 and for people affected by the evils of this world, including racism and abortion.

Again, please be assured of my prayers and support and I thank you for your prayers, support, understanding, and cooperation.

Peace,

Fr. Mark

Bulletin: x, also at <https://cherokeecountycatholics.org/bulletins>

This Message: x, also at <https://cherokeecountycatholics.org/covid-19-info>