

REFLECTIONS FROM FATHER CLARK

"AND JESUS WEPT."

The story of the Raising of Lazarus, like all the stories in the Gospel of John, are rich in symbolism and have many layers of meaning. One of the layers of this story is to teach us about grief and loss. Grief is one of the most painful of human experiences. It is also the most mysterious. It affects us in surprising ways it lingers forever, and it comes and goes like the wind. Our biggest challenge is to accept grief as a necessary part of life. Unfortunately, after the death of a loved one, our friends and even family do not let us grieve. They are uncomfortable with our sadness, and they want to fix it and make it better. With good, but misguided intentions, they tell us that it is time for us to move on, that we need to get over it, or that we need to get back to normal. We cannot because the loss of a loved one leaves a hole in our life. Our grief is a tribute to how important that person was to us. It would be odd indeed if a loved one passes, and we continue as if nothing happened. I remember my mother saying after my father died, "When your husband dies, everything changes."

The story of the Raising of Lazarus tells us some important things about grief. Both Martha and Mary are angry with Jesus that he did not come in time to save Lazarus. They feel that Jesus let them down. When we are grieving, we feel that way, too. At the death of a loved one, we feel that God did not answer our prayer, that he abandoned us, and we ask why. Anger is natural part of grief. Anger does not mean a lack of faith; it is just an honest reaction to loss. Anger and faith can co-exist.

Jesus purposely waited two days before he went to Bethany. It is not that he did not care because he loved Lazarus, Martha, and Mary. His love for them is made abundantly clear. His delay was due to his having another plan, a plan that would reveal the glory of God. In John's Gospel, the glory of God is God's true essence revealed. God is Resurrection and Life. Even though they are hurt, Martha still has trust and hope in Jesus. She believes he can still do something. What that is, she does not know. She presumes resurrection is something in the distant future. Jesus tells her it is now and it is in him: I am the resurrection and the life. The story teaches us that God has a different plan. His plan is to bring our loved through physical death to eternal life. Life is not ended. It is changed. Death is a passage from mortal life to eternal life. The goal of our grieving is to enter a new relationship with our loved one. We are united with them in the communion of saints.

Mary stays at home with family, friends, and townspeople who are sitting with her. There is no indication that this is strange. She is doing what she needs to do. Those around her just sit with her; they accompany her in their grief. We all need time and permission to grieve. Life has changed and we need time to process that change and adapt to it. Adapting to a new reality takes time and requires quiet and reflection. When we grieve, we do not need to rush back to normal activity. Take time to think, pray, reflect, and remember.

Most notable of all is John 11: 35, "And Jesus wept." Even though Jesus knew that he was about to raise Lazarus from the dead, the sight of Martha and Mary's tears caused him to weep. He shared their grief. Even though he knew that something better was coming, he shared the moment of loss with them. We believe wholeheartedly in eternal life, but the transition it requires breaks our hearts. Remember, Jesus weeps with us because he understands.

GOSPEL JOHN 11 1-45

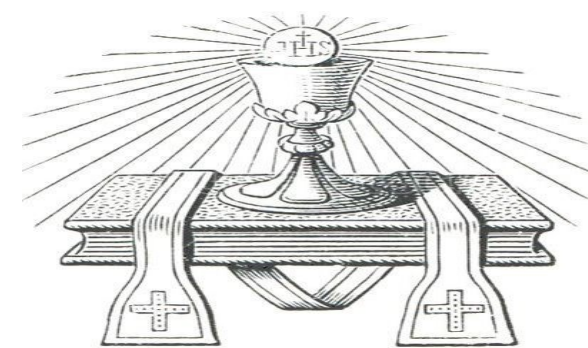
*Jesus told her,
"I am the resurrection and the life;
whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live,
and everyone who lives and believes in me will
never die.*



Fifth Sunday of Lent ~ March 22, 2026

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*Immaculate Conception Church is a Black Catholic Church
serving the family of God and feeding the soul of the Community.*

PASTOR: Father Thomas F. Clark, S.J.(225) 775-7067/(225) 773-2036
IN RESIDENCE: Father Fred Kammer, S.J.(504) 343-9195
SECRETARY: Renae Welsh/John Edwards.....(225) 775-7067
PARISH SCHOOL OF RELIGION:
• **COORDINATOR:** Gloria DeRouen(225) 936-8162
• **ASSISTANT TO COORDINATOR:** Stephanie Yearby(214) 881-5663
RCIA COORDINATOR: Cathy Glover(225) 772-6099
MLK/SU CATHOLIC STUDENT CENTER:
• Joyce Johnson - Wilfred Johnson(225) 775-8691



Mass Schedule

Saturday Vigil Mass: 4:00 PM
Sunday Mass: 8:00 AM and 10:30 AM

Weekday Masses: MLK Chapel
12:10 PM
Mon., Tues., Wed., Thurs., Fri.



HOLY WEEK AND EASTER 2026

PALM SUNDAY

Masses at 4:00 PM, 8:00 AM, 10:30 AM
 (Interfaith Blessing of Palms at Scotlandville Square at 9:30 AM)
 Easter Egg Hunt after 10:30 AM Mass

HOLY THURSDAY

Mass of the Lord's Supper 7:00 PM
 Washing of the Feet
 Procession of the Blessed Sacrament
 Adoration until 10:00 PM

GOOD FRIDAY

Liturgy of the Passion and Death of the Lord 3:00 PM
 The Passion according to John
 Solemn Universal prayer
 Veneration of the Cross
 Holy Communion

HOLY SATURDAY

Easter Vigil 8:00 PM
 Blessing of the Fire
 Liturgy of the Word
 The Christian Initiation of Adults
 First Eucharist of Easter

EASTER SUNDAY

The Mass of the Resurrection
 8:00 and 10:30 AM with Renewal of Baptismal Promises

HOW TO PARTICPATE IN THE HOLY WEEK LITURGY

Palm Sunday: Come to Scotland Square for the Interfaith Blessing of Palms between 8:00 and 10:30 AM Masses.

Holy Thursday: At the Mass of the Lord's Supper, bring a bell to ring during the Glory to God, have your foot washed, spend an hour of adoration with Jesus in the Eucharist following the Mass until 10:00 PM.

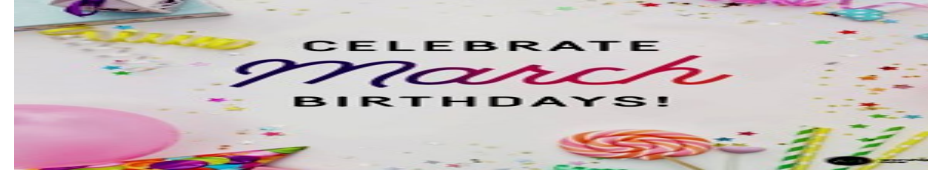
Good Friday: Keep silent before and after the service, refrain from conversations in the church, help pass the cross from the rear of the church, take off your shoes for the Veneration of the Cross.

Easter Vigil: bring a bell to ring during the Glory to God, welcome the new members of the church who will make a profession of faith, and celebrate Confirmation and Eucharist. Bring a small bottle to bring home Holy Water.

Easter Sunday: welcome guests and make them feel at home, renew your baptismal promises as the culmination of your Lenten observances.

THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION (CONFESSION)

We will celebrate the sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession) on Thursday, March 26 from 4:00 PM to 8:00 PM. Fathers Clark, Kammer and Potts (from Saint Gerard) will be available for Confession. Please consider making Confession an important part of your preparation for Easter.



DINAH	RIGGS	3/24
T'SEAN	WALLACE	3/24
TAMARA	COLEMAN	3/25
ANIYAH	HILL	3/25
THOMAS	BENNETT	3/25
LACOSHA	BRUMFIELD	3/26
MARILYN	CRAIG	3/26
BROOKLYNN	SINGLETON	3/26
ANITA	WILLIAMS	3/26
JOSEPHINE	DIKE	3/27
SHANNA	BATISTE	3/28
GLENDA	MCKNIGHT	3/28
VICTOR	MITCHELL	3/28
JAMES	SMITH	3/28
LOIS	AIKENS	3/29
BYRON	DEROUEN	3/29
ARIELLE	LEWIS	3/29



FAMILY MORNING OF RECOLLECTION ON MARCH 28

The **Parish School of Religion** families are invited to a Morning of Reflection on Saturday, March 28 from 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM in the Parish Activity Center. There will be separate activities for adults and youth followed by a family activity and lunch. Please join us for an opportunity to prepare for Holy Week and Easter as a family.

Easter Egg Hunt

The **Junior Daughters** will host an Easter Egg Hunt on **Palm Sunday, March 29**, following the **10:30 AM Mass** on the church grounds. All children and youth are invited to join us for a fun-filled celebration!

KPC Annual Scholarship Award

The **Wilfred B. Ricard Council 116 of the Knights of Peter Claver** is now accepting applications for its **16th Annual Scholarship Award**. This scholarship will be awarded to a **male applicant who is a member of Immaculate Conception Catholic Church**.

Applications may be obtained **online through the church website, picked up at the rear of the church, or requested by email at monsieurjai@gmail.com**. The application deadline is **April 26, 2026**.

**Weekly Mass Readings
 March 22– March 29**

Sunday
Fifth Sunday in Lent

Ezekiel 37: 12-14
 Romans 8: 8-11
 John 11: 1-45

Monday

Daniel 13: 1-9, 15-17, 19-30,
 33-62
 John 8: 1-11

Tuesday

Numbers 21: 4-9
 John 8: 21-30

Wednesday

**Solemnity of the Annunciation
 of the Lord**

Isaiah 7: 10-14, 8: 10
 Hebrew 10: 4-10
 Luke 1: 26-38

Thursday

Genesis 17: 3-9
 John 8: 51-59

Friday

Jeremiah 20: 10-13
 John 10: 31-42

Saturday

Ezekiel 37: 21-28
 John 11: 45-46

Sunday

**Palm Sunday of the Lord's
 Passion**

Matthew 21: 1-11
 Isaiah 50: 4-7
 Philippians 2: 6-11
 Matthew 26: 14-27: 66