

REFLECTIONS FROM FATHER CLARK

A PEOPLE OF HOPE ON A JOURNEY TOWARD JUSTICE

As a shepherd of the Church, I believe I am called to shed the light of the Gospel upon the issues of our day. As the Church, we bring our unrelenting belief in the sanctity of the human person to the forefront of each challenge that faces our society.

When, as a society, we better enable the participation of people in shared civic and social endeavors, we affirm their participation as an expression of their God-given dignity. In light of the Supreme Court's recent decision in Louisiana v. Callais, many Black Americans and other communities of color are deeply concerned about what this moment may mean for the protection of their voices, the fairness of representation and their full participation in our democratic process. These concerns are serious, and they deserve to be heard with respect, moral clarity and pastoral solidarity. I wish to offer a word of hope and the solidarity of the Church in this moment.

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops has long affirmed the importance of the Voting Rights Act (VRA) of 1965. Widely regarded as one of the most consequential legislative achievements of the Civil Rights Movement, the VRA was a concrete response to generations of injustice that denied Black Americans — especially in the South — full participation in our democracy.

Poll taxes, literacy tests, intimidation and violence were deliberately designed to suppress Black participation even after the passage of the 15th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which since 1870 has prohibited the federal government and states from denying a citizen the right to vote based on race or color. These injustices were deeply embedded in the political structures of their time, prompting the need for strong federal protections. The bishops of that era saw in the Voting Rights Act a safeguard aligned with our Catholic values of participation rooted in inherent dignity.

The U.S. bishops have consistently encouraged Catholic citizens to engage in the political process, including through voting. Yet for Black Americans, participation in political life has never been freely given; it has been persistently contested and often resisted. Recognizing this history is essential to understanding why moments of uncertainty surrounding voting and representation carry such weight for communities that have borne the cost of exclusion.

Pope Leo XIV has reminded us that “democracy remains healthy only when rooted in moral truth and a true vision of the human person.” When that foundation is neglected, democracy risks becoming a tool of domination rather than a means of justice. The Church, therefore, continues to advocate for laws and policies in the United States that foster broad participation and reflect a true vision of the human person. This teaching is not abstract. It is rooted in the Gospel and lived out in history, particularly through the long and painful struggle to ensure that all voices are heard and respected.

Our commitment to justice must therefore be steady and courageous. As Bishop Perry has written, Catholic solidarity requires us to uphold the sacred dignity of every person and to speak boldly whenever justice is at stake — especially when the rights of historically marginalized communities are placed at risk. Solidarity is not passive; it calls us to attentiveness, accompaniment and moral resolve.

The struggle for voting rights and full participation has come at an immense cost. It has demanded sacrifice, perseverance and faith. To remember that history is not merely to honor the past; it is to recommit ourselves to the work that remains.

Your voice is valuable, rooted in your inherent dignity, and it continues to matter regardless of changes in law or policy. May the Lord continue to guide us in this sacred work. May his love for the poor and marginalized flow through us, so that we may do justice, love goodness and walk humbly with our God.

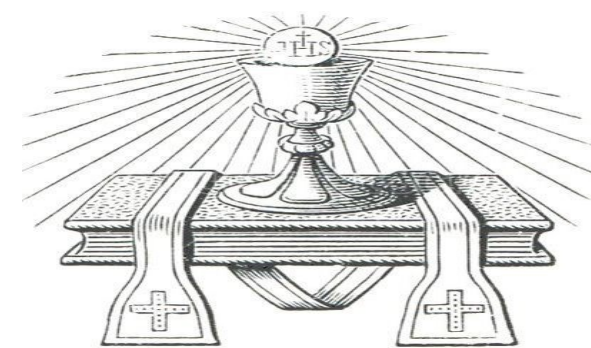
Bishop Daniel E. Garcia of Austin is the chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Subcommittee for Promotion of Racial Justice and Reconciliation.



The Ascension of the Lord ~ May 17, 2026

Immaculate Conception Catholic Church
1565 Curtis Street - Baton Rouge, LA 70807
Office Phone: (225) 775-7067 - Information: (225) 775-7062
Fax: (225) 775-0775 - Email: clarktf2002@yahoo.com
Web Site Address: www.immaculateconceptionbr.org
Immaculate Conception Church is a Black Catholic Church
servicing 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.



Weekly Announcements

THE SOLEMNITY OF THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD

This weekend we celebrate the Ascension of the Lord. Formerly this feast was celebrated on the fortieth day after Easter, which was always a Thursday. Now, it is only celebrated on that day in a few places in our country. Most of the country celebrates it on the seventh Sunday after Easter. You will find the readings for today on pages 84-90 in the missalette.

We enter the final days of the Easter season. Next Sunday is Pentecost, the final day of the Easter season, when we celebrate the descent of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles and the birth of the Church. We pray for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit on your troubled world, nation, and state.

PARISH COUNCIL OF MINISTRIES MEETING ON MAY 19

There will be a meeting of the parish Council of Ministries on Tuesday, May 19, at 6:30 PM in the Parish Activity Center. All chairpersons of parish ministries and organization are asked to attend. An agenda and the minutes of the last meeting are being sent out.

HONORING OUR GRADUATES ON NEXT SUNDAY, MAY 24



Next Sunday we will be honoring our graduates from high school, college, and graduate school for Summer and Fall, 2025, and Spring, 2026. Please call the Parish office at 225.775.7067 or Andrea Toles with information about your graduate so they can be included in the recognition.

AARP Smart Driver Course



The AARP Smart Driver Course will be held on **Saturday, May 23** at 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. in the Church Activity Center. The cost is \$20.00 for AARP members and \$25.00 for non-members. Payment may be made by cash or check at the door. For more information, please contact **Ms. Bea Leonard at 225-355-5027.**

SOLEMNITY OF THE BODY AND BLOOD OF THE LORD

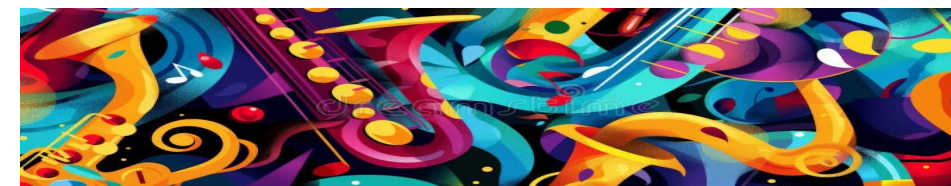
On Sunday, June 7, we celebrate the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of the Lord (Corpus Christi). Following the 10:30 AM Mass, there will be Eucharistic Adoration until 2:00 PM. Father Clark asks that representatives of our parish ministries and organizations commit to 30 minutes of adoration during that time. Everyone is welcome and encouraged to spend some quiet, prayerful time with the Lord in the Eucharist.

VISIT FROM THE MISSIONARY PRIEST

On Sunday, June 7, we will welcome our annual missionary guest priest, who will share information about his missionary work and ask for our prayers and financial support. This year, we are pleased to welcome **Father Solomon Nwokocho from the Diocese of Gallup, New Mexico.**



PAUL	BROUSSARD	5/17
MARION	DAVIS	5/17
KEITH	JACKSON	5/17
SHAWN	JONES	5/17
RHONDA	LEWIS	5/17
ISIAH	MILLER, JR.	5/17
SHELDON	DYER, JR.	5/18
EMMANUEL	BOUDREAUX	5/18
ANITRA	WILSON	5/19
LASHOUNDA	JACKSON	5/19
TAFARI	BEARD	5/20
TARA	HANEY	5/20
COURTNEY	GUNN	5/20
KRISTA	MACKIE	5/20
NATESSA	DENU	5/21
CHALONDA	THOMAS	5/21
LOUIS	JOSEPH	5/22
TYRIN	MOSEY	5/22
CHAILA	ROBERSON	5/22
KEYSHELL	DYER	5/23
MARVELL	BAUDY	5/24
JERMAYNE	BRADFORD	5/24
KEITH	COLEMAN, JR.	5/24
MARIE	CORREA	5/24
BLAINE	EDWARDS	5/24
BRYCE	EDWARDS	5/24
JOHN	HENDERSON	5/24
AUDREE	VAUGHN	5/24



Join us on Saturday, June 13, 2026, from 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM at the MLK Center for **"Jazz on the Bluff"** as we celebrate Juneteenth with live music, dancing, fellowship, and light refreshments.

Tickets can be purchased after all Masses beginning May 16, while supplies last.

Tickets are **\$20.00 per person**, and light refreshments will be served. Come dressed in your favorite Juneteenth T-shirt or festive attire and celebrate with us in style! on this exciting event—we look forward to seeing you there!

Weekly Mass Readings May 17th– May 24th

Sunday

Ascension

Acts 1: 1-11
Ephesians 1: 17-23
Matthew 28: 16-20

Monday

Seventh Week of Easter

Acts 19: 1-8
John 16: 29-33

Tuesday

Acts 20: 17-27
John 17: 1-11a

Wednesday

Acts 20: 28-38
John 17: 11b-19

Thursday

Acts 22: 30; 23: 6-11
John 17: 20-26

Friday

Acts 25: 13b-21
John 21: 15-19

Saturday

Acts 28: 16-20, 30-31
John 21: 20-25

Sunday

Pentecost Sunday

Acts 2: 1-11
1 Corinthians 12: 3b-7, 12-13
John 20: 19-23