

REFLECTIONS FROM FATHER CLARK

SOME FURTHER THOUGHTS ON FORGIVENESS

For the last two Sundays, our Gospel theme has been forgiveness. Jesus gave us a process to follow to heal relationships and a parable to show us that our forgiveness must be limitless because God's forgiveness of us is limitless. Another dimension of forgiveness is how justice relates to forgiveness. Forgiveness does not release the forgiven person from the demands of justice. They must own the consequences of their deed as part of the process of forgiveness and healing.

If a family loses a loved one through violence and they find it in their heart to work toward forgiveness, that does not mean that the perpetrator goes free. The guilty person must face the demands of the justice system and serve prison time commensurate to the crime. As Catholics, we do not approve of capital punishment because only God can take a life, and we are limited by many circumstances from having 100% certainty of the guilt of a person. Mercy may be shown by permitting a person who has served a significant portion of their sentence and has demonstrated concrete signs of remorse and conversion to be released on parole. A family may forgive by healing of the anger, vengeance, and hurt, but the guilty one must make satisfaction for the crime.

If someone steals money or commits another crime against a person, that person may forgive them in their heart, but the guilty person is obligated to make restitution and fulfill any other punishment for the crime. When a person does wrong by committing a crime or by taking advantage of another, destroying trust, or damaging a person's good name, part of their process of rehabilitation is to take responsibility for their actions, sincerely repent, and do what they can to undo the wrong. A person must show in concrete ways that they have made a change including accepting and fulfilling any punishment due because of the wrong that was done.

For human beings, it is extremely hard to balance justice and mercy. We tend to be too strict in implementing justice and too lenient in being merciful. Only God is truly merciful and just at the same time. We strive in our life to be mercifully just and justly merciful.

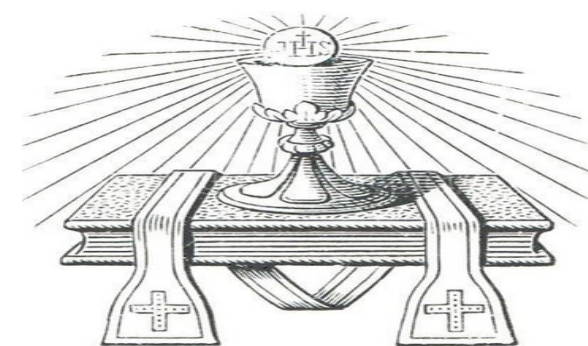
My experience has been that when we are too merciful too quickly, the other person interprets it as "they got away with it." They will not learn the lesson and will do it again until they get caught. And then again, some people never learn. Having to accept the consequences after a first offense gives the person the best opportunity to change and amend their ways. However, if I must choose between the demands of justice and the obligation of mercy, I would rather err on the side of mercy. Some things we must leave up to God. The most important lesson for us is that denying forgiveness punishes us and does little to the person who offended us. As we said last Sunday, by denying forgiveness and holding on to anger, we hand our power over to the one who hurt us. We hand over power over our sleep, our blood pressure, our appetite, and our happiness. Take back your power by forgiving!



Twenty-Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time ~ September 20, 2026

Immaculate Conception Catholic Church
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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
RESIDENCE: Father Fred Kammer, S.J.(504) 343-9195
SECRETARY: Renae Welsh/John Edwards(225) 775-7067
PARISH SCHOOL OF RELIGION:
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ASSISTANT TO COORDINATOR: Stephanie Yearby(214) 881-5663
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MLK/SU CATHOLIC STUDENT CENTER:
Joyce Johnson - Wilfred Johnson(225) 775-8691



Mass Schedule

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

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



Weekly Announcements

THANK YOU, IMMACULATE CONCEPTION!

Words cannot express gratitude to all our parishioners who made our Community Lighthouse Ribbon Cutting such a success. To the Lighthouse Keepers team, you are amazing! Thank you for your dedication, commitment, and generosity. To all our volunteers who staffed the welcome table, greeted our guests, served food, worked behind the scenes in any way, you are awesome! To Nina Gray and our choir who got the ceremony off to a great start with praise and worship you made joyful noise! To all our parishioners who turned out and made our attendance more than two hundred, we love you! Thank you to Together Baton Rouge for guiding us through the process of securing a Lighthouse. Thank you to Councilor Anthony Kenney who contributed\$1,000 and helped us raise another \$11,500 from our other elected officials. Thank you, Bishop Duca, for your support and presence with us on Monday. We were able to show forth the true spirit of Immaculate Conception Church to all. We indeed have a little light, and we are going to let it shine, shine, shine!

COMMUNITY MEETING AT SAINT PAUL THE APOSTLE ON TUESDAY

There will be a Community Meeting at Saint Paul the Apostle on Tuesday, September 22 at 6:00 PM to discuss what is on the ballot in November, what is new or different this election, what to expect when you vote, when and where you can vote, and where to get trusted election information. Speakers will include Rep. Vanessa LaFluer, Judge Vicky Jones, Rep. Terry Landry, Jr., and Judge Don Johnson.

Art Ministry Announcement:

Come paint, create, and have fun with us!
If you enjoy painting and creating, join the Paint Ministry. No experience needed, Art materials provided, please rsvp.
Morning Session every Tuesday, MLK Catholic Center (SU Campus) 10AM – 12:00 noon
Evening Session 2nd and 4th Tuesdays monthly, ICCC Activity Center 6:00 – 7:45PM
For more information contact Ministry Host:
Stephanie Yearby (214) 881-566

October Church Picnic Announcement:

Silent Auction Donations Needed!
Would you like to help make our Church picnic silent Auction a Success? We are accepting donations of arts & crafts, sports memorabilia, and other unique items for our silent auction. Please contact Stephanie Yearby (214) 881-5663. All Donations are needed before Friday, October 2nd.



LACEY BODLEY	9/20
SHEILA FLOYD	9/20
LORI GREGORY	9/20
LIONEL SMITH	9/20
REAGAN NAVARRE	9/20
DANIELLE CUNNINGHAM	9/21
DAVID DARTEZ	9/21
LARRY EAGLIN	9/21
ASHLEY MARTIN	9/21
RANDI THOMAS	9/21
REMIKA BOWIE	9/22
RONALD JOHNSON	9/22
MARIE MYLES	9/22
GINA CLARK	9/22
SELENA GRANT	9/22
KINGSLEY AIFESEHI	9/23
RANDY BOURGEOIS	9/23
VERONICA DOMINGO	9/23
NINA GRAY	9/23
JELANI KING	9/23
NKOLE KING	9/23
KAREN SIMMS	9/23
WANDA WALKER	9/23
RASHAAD WELLS	9/23
TARA WINDER	9/23
DWAYNE BANKS, JR.	9/24
HARLEY LEWIS	9/24
FRAN SHELMIRE	9/24
JASMINE GRIFFIN	9/25
SHERROD HUTCHIN	9/25
ANGELA LOMBARD	9/25
FAITH PATIN	9/25
AUTUMN STATION	9/25
DONNA WILLIAMS	9/25
WARREN BELEZAIRE	9/26
TROYLAN BREAU, JR.	9/26
DRUSILLA CLARK	9/26
AUNRAE NAVARRE	9/26
NWOKOLO BENITA	9/27
CHERYL HALL	9/27
ASHLYN FLEURY	9/27

SAVE THE DATE:

SU Homecoming Parade: Sunday September 27th
at 1:00 PM (Mass will be expedited)
SU Homecoming Game: Saturday October 3rd
(No Vigil Mass)
Church Picnic: Sunday October 11th at 12:00 PM
KPC BBQ Dinner: Saturday October 17th

Weekly Mass Readings September 20th-September 27th

Sunday

Twenty-Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Isaiah 55: 6-9
Philippians 1: 20c-24, 27a
Matthew 20: 1-16a

Monday

Feast of Saint Matthew, Apostle and Evangelist

Ephesians 4: 1-7, 11-13
Matthew 9: 9-13

Tuesday

Proverbs 21: 1-6, 10-13
Luke 8: 19-21

Wednesday

Memorial of Saint Pius Pietrelcina, Priest

Proverbs 30: 5-9
Luke 9: 1-6

Thursday

Ecclesiastes 1: 2-11
Luke 9: 7-9

Friday

Ecclesiastes 3: 1-11
Luke 9: 18-22

Saturday

Ecclesiastes 11: 9--12:8
Luke 9: 43b-45

Sunday

Twenty-Six Sunday in Ordinary Time

Ezekiel 18: 25-28
Philippians 2: 1-11
Matthew 21: 28-32