



IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

Catholic Church

A Stewardship Community served by the Oblates of St. Francis de Sales



A People Not a Place
Learning to Live Jesus

OUR VISION

Our parish is the vibrant expression of the presence of the Risen Christ through sacred worship and loving service.

OUR MISSION

We live Jesus Christ by proclaiming the Gospel, by celebrating the Eucharist, by nourishing our Faith and by loving and serving all God's people.

6650 Carolina Beach Road, Wilmington, NC 28412

De Sales Faith
Formation Center
910-791-9857

Church Office
910-791-1003
Fax: 910-791-0081
www.iccwilm.org

Office Hours
Monday – Friday
9:00am – 4:00pm

Parish Staff, Councils & Commission Chairs

<u>Title</u>	<u>Staff Member</u>	<u>Phone Number & Ext.</u>	<u>Email Address</u>
Business Manager	Charlie DaVolio	910-791-1003, Ext. 105	cdavolio@iccwilm.org
Director of Faith Formation	Gina Drost	910-791-1003, Ext. 112	gdrost@iccwilm.org
Secretary/Bulletin Editor/Registration	Tracey Kruger	910-791-1003, Ext. 102	tkruger@iccwilm.org
Youth Minister	Marie Marshall	910-791-1003, Ext. 110	mmarshall@iccwilm.org
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Director of Music	Andrea Reynolds	910-791-1003, Ext. 114	areynolds@iccwilm.org
Office Manager	Claudia Sing	910-791-1003, Ext. 100	csing@iccwilm.org
Treasury Assistants	Johanna Hug & Chris Puritis	910-791-1003, Ext. 107	

Commission Chairs

Fr. John McGee, OSFS (Liturgy)
 Charlie DaVolio (Facilities)
 Gina Drost (Faith Formation)
 Mary Swack (Inreach)
 Position Open (Outreach)

Parish Pastoral Council

Matthew Simms, Chair Julie Bowling, Vice Chair

 Mike LaBruno Caroline Paulhus

 Susan Taylor Angela Zombek

Parish Finance Council

Pete Bartel, Chair
 Stephen Conroy
 Paul Dries, Vice Chair
 Connor Duncan
 Bob Smith
 Andrew Tomlin

Liturgies and Devotions

Weekend - Saturday: 5:00 pm
 Sunday: 8:30 & 10:30 am
Weekday - See "This Week at Immaculate Conception" - Page 3
Devotions - Rosary for World Peace/
 Novena to Our Lady, Monday - 9:30 am
 Chaplet of Divine Mercy to end human trafficking, Thursday - 9:30 am
 Rosary, Devotion to the Sacred Heart, First Friday
Eucharistic Adoration -
 First Friday, 9:45 am - 11:00 am *and*
 Tuesdays, 9:30 am - 10:30 am

Bulletin Deadline

Bulletin requests must be emailed to the Bulletin Editor: tkruger@iccwilm.org, by 12:00 noon on Wednesdays, ten days in advance of the weekend of publication. All articles will run for three weeks, space allowing, and must have name, phone # of contact person, and dates requested to be in the bulletin. Articles must be limited to 100-150 words and include the *who, what, why, where and when*. A summary/result article with facts and figures should be submitted within a week of the event's completion.

New Parishioners

If you are new to Wilmington or to Immaculate Conception, we would like to take this opportunity to welcome you. We are an active and vibrant parish and ask, if you have decided to join us, that you will seriously consider giving of your time, talent, and treasure for the Lord's work. Completion of an Interest Card, Parish Registration Form and

attendance to a Welcome/Orientation/Registration Event is part of active membership and provides you with parish mailings. Please find an Interest Card located in the pamphlet rack in the Gathering Area of the church.

Sacramental Life

Infant Baptism: Celebrated monthly. Registered (minimum 3 months) and participating parishioners may schedule infant baptism after completion of a baptism preparation workshop and reception of godparent documents. Contact Gina Drost, Director of Faith Formation, at 910-791-1003, ext 112, preferably prior to the child's arrival. *Children over 7 are not baptized as "infants." Instead they are prepared to receive all 3 sacraments of initiation at a later date.

To Be a Godparent/Sponsor: for Baptism or Confirmation; you must be a registered, participating member for at least 6 months prior to requesting letter.

1st Reconciliation & 1st Eucharist: Second grade is our Sacramental year for First Reconciliation and First Eucharist. First grade faith formation is a prerequisite for the second grade Sacramental year. We require four meetings for the parents/guardians of youth receiving these Sacraments.

Confirmation: Confirmation in our Diocese is celebrated in the high school years, and is a two year process. Candidates may enroll in Level I as a freshman with immediate preparation and celebration of the sacrament in Level II the sophomore year. Stewardship opportunities and attendance to a Confirmation retreat are mandatory.

Reconciliation: We celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation/confession, normally, Saturdays from 3:30-4:30 pm in the Church's Reconciliation Room. In addition, the sacrament is available by appointment. Please call the Parish Office to speak to the pastor.

RCIA: Adults seeking Initiation into the Full Communion of the Catholic Church are invited to contact Gina Drost, gdrost@iccwilm.org or 791-1003, ext.112

Matrimony: Only parishioners registered at ICC for at least 6 months may request to be married here. The couple must meet with a priest before setting a date and at least 6 months in advance of an anticipated wedding in order to complete the preparation process. All aspects of marriage planning requires the participation and approval of trained personnel. Contact: Claudia Sing, csing@iccwilm.org., 791-1003, ext. 100.

Anointing of the Sick: Anyone who is seriously ill or who is anticipating surgery or an extended hospital stay or who is weakened because of a prolonged illness or advanced age is encouraged to call the Parish Office to receive the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick.

Funerals: After a funeral director has been contacted but before any arrangements have been made public, the funeral director will contact the Parish Office in order to arrange for funeral time and/or vigil service. All aspects of parish funeral liturgy planning requires the participation and approval of trained parish personnel.

Vocations to Priesthood or Religious Life: Religious vocation as a priest, brother or sister, Fr. Michael Newman, OSFS, mnewman@oblates.us or 419-531-1421, x231. Vocation to diocesan priesthood, please visit the Diocese of Raleigh's Vocations website at dioceseofraleighvocations.org.

This Week at Immaculate Conception

There Are No Altar Flowers During Lent

Sunday, March 29—Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord

8:30 am Liturgy, Walter Zeigler
10:30 am Liturgy, Joyce & Bernie Maguire
2:30–3:30 The Athanasius Center, DFFC

Procession Begins in the Courtyard

Monday, March 30, 2026

No Rosary Novena

Tuesday, March 31, 2026

No Eucharistic Adoration

Wednesday, April 1, 2026

NO LITURGY

Thursday, April 2—Liturgy of the Lord's Supper & Washing of the Feet

7:00 pm Liturgy, Tom & Jean Buico

Church Offices Close at 1:00 PM

Friday, April 3—Passion of the Lord

12:00–2:30 Silent Meditation
3:00 pm Liturgy of the Lord's Passion

Church Offices Closed

Saturday, April 4—Holy Saturday

NO RECONCILIATION TODAY

8:00 pm Liturgy, Joyce Maguire

Easter Vigil Begins in the Courtyard

Sunday, April 5—Easter Sunday of the Resurrection of the Lord

8:30 am Liturgy, Edward & Eleanor McGee
10:30 am Liturgy, Living & Deceased Members of Immaculate Conception

No Faith Formation or Activities

Liturgical Color for April 4 & 5 is White



Stewardship - A Way of Life Following "God's Plan for Giving" Stewardship of Treasure Report

March 21 & 22, 2026

Envelopes	158 (Envelopes)	\$ 6,424.00
e-Giving	50	\$ 2,605.51
Loose Check	45 (Checks)	\$ 3,465.00
Identifiable Contributions		\$12,494.51
Loose Cash		\$ 2,297.00
Total Contributions		\$14,791.51

Offertory/1st Collection:

Annual Budget: July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2026

\$1,165,000.00

Total Collected YTD: July 1– Mar 22, 2026

\$ 890,853.57

Sanctuary Candle



A 14-day Sanctuary Candle will burn in memory of **Lois Sheehy**, and was donated by **Chapter by Chapter 2 Group**.

Please Note:

The Church Offices will close at 1:00 PM on Thursday, April 2, and remain closed through Monday, April 13. Offices will reopen to the public on Tuesday, April 14, at 9:00 AM.

Born to Eternal Life

Please remember in your prayers the following people:



Marie Ranalli, parishioner. Condolences may be sent to Marie's husband, John, at 424 Catamaran Dr, Wilmington, NC 28412-1623.

Chrism Mass



The Chrism Mass for the Diocese of Raleigh will take place at the Holy Name of Jesus Cathedral in Raleigh, NC, on Tuesday, March 31, 2026, at 10:30 am. All are welcome to attend.

Note: Attendees are responsible for their transportation to and from the Liturgy.



ChurchArt Online | www.churchart.com

Diocesan Second Collection

Priests Welfare & Retirement

Diocesan Bishops provide financial and housing support for retired diocesan and religious order priests in accordance with the gospel. Many of our priests retire after 40 or 50 years of active ministry, far exceeding the typical years worked in most professions. Because our priests are paid a modest stipend during their active ministry, their corresponding Social Security benefit upon retirement is extremely small compared to workers with similar years of service. This fund provides additional resources for these priests.

Our parish is staffed by the Oblates of St. Francis de Sales, who receive a portion of these funds for their retirement. The cost of this financial support is allocated among all parishes of the diocese. Parishes meet this required goal through 2nd collections, paying any remaining balance from its operating budget. This special collection will be taken up next weekend, **April 4 & 5**. We thank you in advance for your generous support.

Holy Land Collection

Each year on Good Friday, Catholics around the world are invited to support the **Pontifical Good Friday Collection**, which provides essential aid to Christians and preserves the sacred places in the Holy Land. Christians there depend greatly on this worldwide collection, which helps maintain holy sites, support parishes and schools, offer humanitarian assistance, and sustain Christian families facing economic hardship.

The Franciscans of the Custody of the Holy Land—charged for centuries with caring for these places and the ‘living stones’ who call the region home—use the collection to fund social, educational, pastoral, and charitable outreach throughout the area.

This support is especially urgent as many communities continue recovering from conflict, economic instability, and the long absence of pilgrims. The collection is a concrete sign of solidarity with the church in the land where Jesus lived, died, and rose.

For more information, or to donate online, please visit <https://myfranciscan.org/good-friday-2026/>

Stewardship Reflection

*“As they were marching out, they came upon a man of Cyrene, Simon by name; this man they pressed into service to carry his cross.”
(Matthew 27:32)*

The Lord calls us to love God and to love our neighbor. Every day we are presented with opportunities to love our neighbor and help him ‘carry his cross.’ These opportunities aren’t usually big events, they are usually ordinary occurrences like helping someone carry their groceries or holding the door open for them. The key is putting the other person’s needs before our own and not expecting anything in return.

Palm Sunday & Holy Week 2026



Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord

No Confession/Reconciliation on Saturday

(Courtyard Palm Procession)

Saturday, March 28

5:00 pm, Liturgy

Sunday, March 29

8:30 am and 10:30 am, Liturgies

Monday, March 30

No Rosary or Stations of the Cross

Tuesday, March 31

10:30 am, Chrism Liturgy

Holy Name of Jesus Cathedral, Raleigh

The Chrism Liturgy will be celebrated with the diocesan & religious priests of the Raleigh Diocese. Parishioners are encouraged to attend.

Wednesday, April 1

No Liturgy / Activities

Parish offices close at 1:00 pm

The Paschal Triduum

Holy Thursday, April 2

The Evening Liturgy of the Lord's Supper 7:00 pm

Foot Washing - One essential part of the liturgy is the Washing of the Feet, a profound sign of service to one another given to us by Jesus at the Last Supper. We invite and encourage all members of the community to have their feet washed. If you desire to have your feet washed, we encourage you to dress accordingly.

Adoration - Following the Holy Thursday Liturgy, all parishioners are invited to participate in Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament until 8:45 pm. Adoration is both a private devotion and a communal one. Adoration takes place in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel.



Good Friday, April 3

Silent Meditation

12:00 pm - 2:30 pm

Liturgy of the Lord's Passion

3:00 pm

Easter Vigil (Holy Saturday), April 4

The Vigil in the Holy Night begins at 8:00 pm
(outside in the courtyard)

No Confession/Reconciliation or 5:00 pm Liturgy on Holy Saturday



Easter Sunday

Easter Sunday, April 5

Liturgies: 8:30 am and 10:30 am

We encourage everyone to arrive early for the Liturgies

EverTide Event

EverTide Presents “I AM”

EverTide offers a worship experience of prayer and reflection, combining scripture and music in a sacred setting. In this hour-long event, **EverTide** leaders weave contemplative Christian music with readings from God’s Word, creating time for stillness, listening, and renewal.

The event will be led by John and Andrea Reynolds, and will take place from 2:30—3:30 PM on Sunday, April 26, here at ICC. For more information, please contact John at EvertideEvents@gmail.com.



2026 Bishop’s Annual Appeal

\$77,783.10 Received of ICC Goal of \$150,556



As you prayerfully discern giving to this year’s Bishop’s Annual Appeal, you may be wondering where your gift actually goes.

The Bishop’s Annual Appeal funds many ministries that allow us to serve our communities, not just our parish community, but our larger catholic family.

- 34% Christian Formation & Education
- 26% Catholic Charities
- 14% Parish Support & Ministry Services
- 11% Catholic Communications
- 8% Seminarians & Vocations
- 6% Marriage, Family, & Respect Life

Your support is very much appreciated, not just here at ICC, but throughout the Diocese.



2026 COLLEGIATE SCHOLARSHIP



sponsored by
Cape Fear
Deanery



Knights of Columbus

KofC2017.org/scholarship

The **Cape Fear Deanery Parishes and Knights of Columbus** are excited to offer the **2026 Collegiate Scholarship** for graduating high school students! If you are a **registered parishioner** in the Cape Fear Deanery, this is your chance to earn up to **\$4,000** to support your college journey. Submit your application, including a biography, essay, and high school transcript, by **Thursday, April 30, 2026, at 11:59 PM**. Don’t miss this opportunity—visit Kofc2017.org/scholarship or email scholarship@Kofc2017.org to **apply today!**



Obituary of Denise McGee

sister of Fr. John McGee, OSFS

Denise Ann McGee, age 68, formerly of Philadelphia, passed away on March 12, 2026, in Doylestown, PA. Denise is survived by her brothers John, Edward (wife Ann), and Thomas, as well as her niece Melissa Moreira (husband Alex), nephew, Eddie McGee (husband Michael Gibbons), and four great nieces and nephews. Denise is predeceased by her parents, Edward and Eleanor (nee Becker) McGee.

Denise was a joyful and outgoing presence in the lives of all who had the privilege of knowing her. Her journey on this earth was one marked by love, compassion, humor, and unwavering faith in God. Her passing left a void in the hearts of her family, friends, and many others whose lives she touched. Known for her vibrant sense of humor and warm, welcoming personality, Denise was an animal lover who enjoyed travel but took special delight in planning time with her nieces and nephews. She will be remembered fondly as an outgoing, thoughtful, and spirited presence during her time at Immaculate Conception Church in Wilmington, NC. Her dedication to her faith and her desire to make all feel welcome epitomized her cheerful and generous personality.

Those who knew Denise will remember her infectious smile, overwhelming laughter, and unwavering commitment to hospitality and kindness toward everyone she encountered. She had a gift for making others smile and laugh, leaving a lasting impact on all who crossed her path. While Denise left before anyone was ready to say good-bye, we recall the words of St. Francis de Sales, "Let God gather to Himself what He has planted in His garden – He takes nothing out of season."

The family of Denise McGee will receive friends on Tuesday, March 24, from 10:00 – 10:45 AM at Resurrection of Our Lord Catholic Church, 2000 Shelmire Ave. Phila., PA. A funeral liturgy for Denise will be held at 11:00 AM. Rite of Committal will be at Holy Sepulcher Cemetery, Cheltenham, PA.

In lieu of flowers, charitable donations to honor Denise may be made to:

Immaculate Conception Catholic Church Memorial Fund
6650 Carolina Beach Rd, Wilmington, NC 28412
www.iccwilm.org

The Oblates of St. Francis De Sales
PO Box 87, Childs,
MD 21916-0087
www.oblates.org

Alzheimer's Association
225 N Michigan Ave, Floor 17,
Chicago, IL 60601
www.alz.org



The Athanasius Center

The Athanasius Center



Did you know that we have a Catholic ministry that welcomes people of all religious denominations to gather and discuss theological topics impacting personal and global

life? We are *The Athanasius Center*, and we welcome you to join us to share and explore ideas. All men and women, ages 18 and up, are welcome. We meet on Sundays from 2:30—3:30 pm in the DeSales Faith Formation Center, located on the campus of Immaculate Conception Catholic Church.

For more information, please email or text us:

- **Oliver Galbraith:** olivergalbraith@gmail.com or text 910-619-3933
- **Julianna Breit:** julianna.breit@gmail.com or text at 910-338-8802

You can also find us on social media:

- **Instagram Name:** [athanasius_center](#)
- **Whatsapp QR code:**



Besides our Sunday meetings, the Athanasius Center also offers the following activities, which are hosted at the homes of participating members:

- **Book Club: Christianity Through the Centuries - 1st Friday of the Month at 7:00PM**
- **Bible Study: 3rd Friday of the Month at 7:00PM**

Palms

by Paul Turner



The Catholic faithful use palm branches at Mass on Palm Sunday and bring them home for devotional purposes. Palm Sunday is the popular name for the Sunday before Easter, though its full title is Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion. Two Gospel passages are proclaimed at Mass that day: One tells of people waving branches or spreading cloaks to welcome Jesus in triumph to Jerusalem, and the other tells of his passion and death.

Any branches may be used in the liturgy, but parishes usually provide palm branches, as mentioned in John's gospel (12:13). The faithful hold them at the beginning of the Mass for the blessing and procession.

After Mass, people may bring the branches home as a sacramental. Various customs have developed. Some place branches behind a wall-mounted crucifix or other religious image. Others cleverly fold them into crosses. Still others incorporate blessed branches into improvised prayers for protection during harmful weather.

Used palm branches are burned the following year, and the ashes are placed on the heads of the faithful on Ash Wednesday. Some parishes burn their own ashes. People who wish to dispose of old palm branches may offer them back for burning or dispose of them at home in some reverent manner.

Palm branches appear in religious art as a symbol of martyrdom. In the Book of Revelation (7:9), a great multitude praises God with palm branches in hand. In the apocryphal gospel of pseudo-Matthew (20-21), a palm tree miraculously bends over to nourish the Holy Family on the flight into Egypt, and an angel plants one of its branches in paradise, making the palm a sign of victory in any contest.

Lenten Family Project—Way to Go, ICC!

Lenten Family Service Project Family Meal in a Bag

With the generosity of the entire parish community our Faith Formation Families were able to work together to create:

192 Meals Assembled

Each meal feeds a family of 4 that 768 people

With enough leftovers to create a possible 300+ meals

- | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 221 cans chicken | 34 diced tomatoes |
| 121 black beans | 31 evaporated milk |
| 91 rice | 31 diced potatoes |
| 66 diced tomatoes with chili | 23 pasta |
| 64 corn | 19 creamed corn |
| 59 mixed vegetables | 17 pasta sauce |
| 57 cream of chicken soup | 17 kidney beans |
| 53 green beans | 6 pinto beans |
| 35 tomato sauce | 8 biscuit mix |
| 35 carrots | 140 miscellaneous items |

Thank you for living Lent through prayer, sacrifice, and service. All food went to Catholic Charities and the Help Center at Federal Point

“Where there is love, there is goodness; and where there is goodness, there is God.”
— St. Francis de Sales

Lenten Family Service Project Family Meal in a Bag



Prayer Matters

Please remember the following people in your prayers:

Herbert Aiken	Margaret Lupton
Margaret Ager	Dianne Lusk
Kelly Avgerinos	Nicholas Lusk
Frank Ballard	John Lyons
Denise Barnes	Julia Macdougall
Marley Basurto	The Maney Family
Iliana & Maria Bouneva	Petar Manolev
Lee Bowling	Frankie Marcinkiewicz
Barry & Teresa Brighten	Sonia Martin
Julie & John Bussi	Teri Massey
The Casiere Family	CJ Miley
John Clavin	Diane Miller
Christine Coco	Chris Moore
Eva Congleton	Irene & Kyle Muccia
Lizzie Cooper	Barbara McCann
Joe Craig	Ed McCann
Margaret Deaton	Paul McCauley
Marion DeCoursey	Leah McDaniel
Bertha Dennard	Maura McGoldrick
Leslie Dixon	Joan McKillop
Judith Dreisbach	Loretta McManus
Kathy Driscoll	Maureen & Vince McNally
Skip & Charlotte Fairall	Anne Obermeyer
Robert Flavin	Edward O'Neill
Jennifer Freeman	Joanne Owens
Mary Gable	John Paulhus
Jim Gallagher	Debra Paulson
Keira Gibson	Camden Peterson
Donna Glisson	Natalina Pittari
Brenda Grainger & Family	Martin Plage, Jr.
Sandy Greggs	Lexie Queen
Lisa Plarre Griffith	Alice Radewicz
Lenora Guy	Susan Reynolds
Jerry Haggard	Ken Rowe
Maureen Hayes	Tom Russell
Gilbert Hirscher	Patti Schacht
Sandra Hobbs	Beatrice Schultz
Linda Hogan	Misty Moore Seals
Ruth Hohmann	Rita & Ralph Seidl
Marcia Horvath	Bob Smith
Pam Hults	Cynthia Spencer
Dan Janusek	Fr. Greg Spencer
Theresa Jeffers	Cynthia & Paul Streb
Dwayne Jessup	Luanne Styron
Denise Kassem	Christopher Swan
Loretta Kelly	Ginny Tascone
Tom Lakas	Mike Temple
Tracy Langone	Marieange Tribie
Gene Laskowski	Jack Walsh
Eileen Lavelle	John Weisenreider
Riley Liberati	Suxanne Westlake
Emily & Lauren Limbach	Diane Wiegand
Darryl Lindner	Jim Wirth

Names will remain on the list for one month from time of request. Please call the office if you wish to renew.

Reminder of Parking Lot Courtesies

With Easter approaching, and the increase of new visitors to ICC, here are a few reminders of parking courtesy . . .

- ✝ You are invited to drop off passengers at the front walkway to the Gathering Area, but this is an emergency lane and parking is NOT allowed at any time.
- ✝ Handicap parking is available in the front of the church, and is clearly marked.
- ✝ Please be good stewards and park ONLY in lined parking spots. There is additional parking along the side of the church with a second entrance to the Gathering Area in the back.
- ✝ Our church is located on a very busy highway. To ensure a safe and speedy exit from the parking lot following our weekend Liturgies, we have paid Sheriff Deputies directing traffic. Please watch them carefully and follow their lead.
- ✝ We appreciate that so many of our parishioners want to be courteous and stop and allow people out of their parking spot, but that interrupts the flow of exiting. The Sheriff Deputies have asked us to remind everyone that they are only allowed to stop traffic for a few minutes at a time, so it is very helpful to keep the flow going while the traffic is stopped.
- ✝ We know that everyone has someplace to be after Liturgy, but that should not preclude common courtesy. Please practice an attitude of patience, and follow the proper flow to exit the church parking lot. It is up to each of us to do our part and keep everyone safe and accident free.
- ✝ And, lastly, but not least: the parking lot is not continually patrolled during service times, so please make sure to lock your car, and remove all valuables when you come to Liturgy. It's always better to be safe than sorry.

TRIDUUM: The Three Days

What is the Triduum? Throughout the year we hear about the high holy days of other religions like Yom Kippur and Ramadan, but what are the high holy days for Christians? In the Catholic Tradition, Holy Week contains our high holy days, beginning with Palm Sunday and ending with Easter. The high point of the week occurs on the last three days: Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday. Each of these three days is marked with special liturgies which will be explored below.

The Church is always clear that the Paschal Mystery of Jesus Christ is to be celebrated in its entirety. In other words, the Church does not stop at the passion of the Lord, dwelling only on the sufferings Christ endured while forgetting about the reason for the cross: resurrection, redemption and new life. On the other hand, there cannot be a focus only on the resurrection, forgetting the heavy price that was paid for humanity's redemption. During the Triduum, the Church takes three days of intense prayer to celebrate the entire Paschal Mystery of Jesus' life, death and resurrection.

The Triduum begins on Holy Thursday at the Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper, continues on Good Friday with the Celebration of the Lord's Passion and reaches its high point on Holy Saturday night with The Easter Vigil. The purpose of these celebrations is to make the Church present to the great mysteries of salvation found in the saving work of Jesus Christ.

The Triduum tells the story of what it means to be Christian. This cannot be done with haste. It takes time to tell how God created us, chose us and redeemed us through Christ. Telling the story of salvation takes more than just words, and at these special liturgies the Church makes use of additional rites to do so. On Holy Thursday, for example, there is the washing of feet. On Good Friday there is the veneration of the cross. At the Easter Vigil there is the blessing of fire and water. These additional rites enhance the liturgy, and although they take time, they do not impede but actually facilitate the flow of movement through the mysteries of Christ's death and resurrection.

Holy Thursday: Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper



The celebration of the Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday is so named because it takes place at night in commemoration of the first time this meal was celebrated by Jesus and the disciples. Sunset on Holy Thursday marks the ending of Lent and the beginning of the Triduum. Although Lent ends Thursday evening, Good Friday is a day of fast and abstinence. In the early Church, this fast was continued through Holy Saturday until the celebration of the Easter Vigil.

The source and summit of the Catholic faith comes from the weekly celebration of the Lord's Supper which commemorates the death and resurrection of Jesus. The primary source of the Lord's Supper is the Last Supper, the meal which Jesus celebrated with his disciples on the night before he died. The Last Supper was a distinctly Jewish meal

which might have been a Passover celebration. In fact, the word "paschal" as used in the term "Paschal Mystery" means "Passover."

On the night of Holy Thursday, the Church remembers that it was ransomed from death like the Jews who

were spared death in the time of Moses by putting the blood of the lamb on their doorposts. However, the blood that was shed for the world's salvation was not from an animal but from Jesus himself. Eating and drinking the body and blood of Christ is a sign that God's people are committed to the new and everlasting covenant which was sealed forever in the sacrifice of Christ.

Each year at the Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper, the same three readings are proclaimed. The first one is from Exodus (12:1-8, 11-14) in which God proclaims that the Jewish people should celebrate Passover each year, drawing a connection with Jesus' use of the Passover to institute the Eucharist. The second reading is the oldest written account of the Last Supper. It comes from Paul's letter to the Corinthians written before the gospels: *"The Lord Jesus, on the night he was handed over, took bread, and, after he had given thanks, broke it and said, "This is my body that is for you." (1 Cor 11:24)*

The gospel for this Mass comes from the Bible's latest account of the Last Supper which occurs in John 13:1-15. John's gospel is unique because it includes the washing of the disciple's feet by Jesus. After the gospel is read, the priest washes the feet of several members of the assembly to remember Jesus' final act before his passion and death. Jesus was saying that it is not enough merely to celebrate the Eucharist. Disciples of Jesus must also live their faith in the service of others by "washing feet," or else the celebration of the Eucharistic will be empty and meaningless.

Before the gifts of bread and wine are brought to the altar, the new oils which were blessed by the bishop at the Chrism Mass may be placed in the ambry of the church. These are the Oil of the Sick used to anoint those who are ill, the Oil of the Catechumens used to strengthen those preparing for baptism and the Oil of Chrism used at baptism, confirmation and ordination.

Holy Thursday ends with a solemn procession of the Eucharist at the end of which the body of Christ is reposed in a tabernacle. Often the church is left open for people to watch and wait with Christ for the story to continue as did his disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Good Friday: The Celebration of the Passion of the Lord

The Celebration of the Lord's Passion consists of three parts: the Word of God, the Veneration of the Cross and the reception of Holy Communion. Although communion is distributed, it is not a Mass because the Eucharist is not consecrated on this day. The primary focus of this celebration is the death of the Lord.

Each year on Good Friday the passion of Jesus is proclaimed from the gospel of John which is not like the other gospels because it is very triumphant. It is not the story of the abused suffering servant which is witnessed in Mark, but rather it is the story of a Jesus who is very much in control of the events going on around him. This is the Son of God who tells Pilate that he has no power over him and who cries out "It is finished" when he dies, indicating that all was done according to his plan. The Jesus of Good Friday is one who uses death to defeat death.

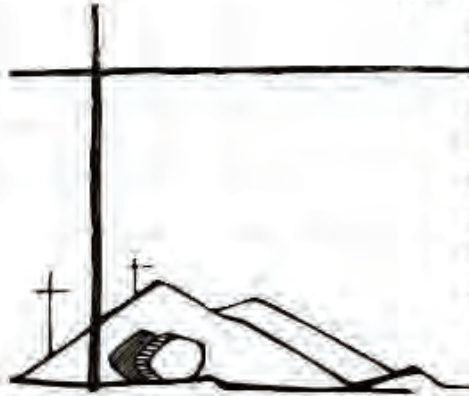
After the homily special intercessions are prayed for the world, for the Church and for those who do not know Christ. These prayers are believed to come from the very earliest days of the Church, and they are the source of the Prayer of the Faithful used at all of our Masses



today. One of the most moving events in the Church's liturgies occurs after the intercessions: the veneration of the cross. The entire assembly comes forward to venerate the wood of the cross with a bow, kiss or other sign of reverence. It is a very powerful way for the people of God to acknowledge Christ's great sacrifice.

Because of the solemn nature of Good Friday, the Church does not celebrate any sacraments this day, including the Eucharist. After the veneration of the cross, communion which is left from the Holy Thursday celebration is distributed to the assembly. There is no final blessing at the end of Good Friday because the liturgy is not really over, the story does not end on Calvary.

Holy Saturday: The Easter Vigil



The Easter Vigil occurs on the evening of Holy Saturday. It is the most powerful liturgical celebration of the entire church year. According to Church law, it must occur at night, starting about one hour after sunset. A vigil implies watching and waiting for something. Christians watch and wait for the coming of the Lord, and at the Easter Vigil, God's people wait to experience the resurrected Christ just as the original disciples did on that first Easter morning.

Jesus' death and resurrection brought about a new creation, and this is reflected at the Easter Vigil celebration which starts outside around a fire. The new flame is blessed and used to light the Easter

Candle which will be lit for the entire Easter Season (until Pentecost). The candle is inscribed with the current year because Christ's light shines through the ages. During the Vigil, all members of the assembly receive a candle as a sign that they have been enlightened by Christ.

The readings used at the Easter Vigil are especially poignant. They trace the story of salvation history including the story of creation, Abraham's near sacrifice of Isaac and Moses' parting of the Red Sea. The story of God's saving events is followed by Paul's reflection on baptism (Romans 6:3-11) and culminates with one of the gospel accounts of Jesus' resurrection. Having just traveled with Jesus to the cross on Good Friday, we now see how the story ends. The women who go to anoint Jesus' body do not find a tomb of death but a garden of life. This is true at the Easter Vigil as well. The church is left on Good Friday in the shadow of death, but at the Vigil, there is a movement from darkness to light. Voices that sang with sorrow now burst forth with "Alleluia." The church which was bare on Good Friday is filled with flowers and signs of new life.

The baptismal font, which was emptied on Holy Thursday, is filled with water to be blessed this night. The water is another sign of the new creation which comes about when members of the Church are born through baptism. On this particular night, the assembly renews its baptismal promises and is sprinkled with the blessed water to be reminded that through baptism all are reborn in Christ.

Liturgy is concerned with entering deeply into the mysteries of God in order to know the Lord better. At the Easter Vigil, the presence of the resurrected Christ is encountered in a very real way through the Eucharist. In the breaking of the bread and the sharing of the cup, all those present are united as one with the resurrected Christ.

ALTAR FLOWERS

January to June 2026

Our weekly Altar Flowers depend solely on donations from you, our parishioners. We need your help to ensure that we have flowers at all the weekend liturgies.

Fill out this form with the date (s) you would like to donate the Altar Flowers in memory of a loved one or in celebration of a special event.

The size of the flower arrangement is determined by the number of households that contribute on a given weekend. We accept up to 4 households per weekend. Memorial contributions are **\$65.00**. Make your check payable to **Immaculate Conception Church** with *"Altar Flowers"* written on the memo line.

Place your form and check in an envelope marked *"Flowers - Tracey Kruger"* and put in the collection basket or drop off during office hours, Mon-Fri, 9:00 am to 4:00 pm.

"The flowers appear on the earth, the time of pruning the vines has come, and the song of the turtledove is heard in our land."

Song of Songs 2:12

Choose from the following weekends:

- Jan 3 & 4, 2026 - Epiphany of the Lord
- Jan 10 & 11, 2026 - Baptism of the Lord
- Jan 17 & 18, 2026
- Jan 24 & 25, 2026
- Jan 31 & Feb 1, 2026

- Feb 7 & 8, 2026
- Feb 14 & 15, 2026 - World Marriage Weekend

No Flowers during Lent

- Apr 18 & 19, 2026
- Apr 25 & 26, 2026

- May 2 & 3, 2026 - 1st Eucharist
- May 9 & 10, 2026 - Mother's Day
- May 16 & 17, 2026 - The Ascension of the Lord
- May 23 & 24, 2026 - Pentecost
- May 30 & 31, 2026 - Most Holy Trinity

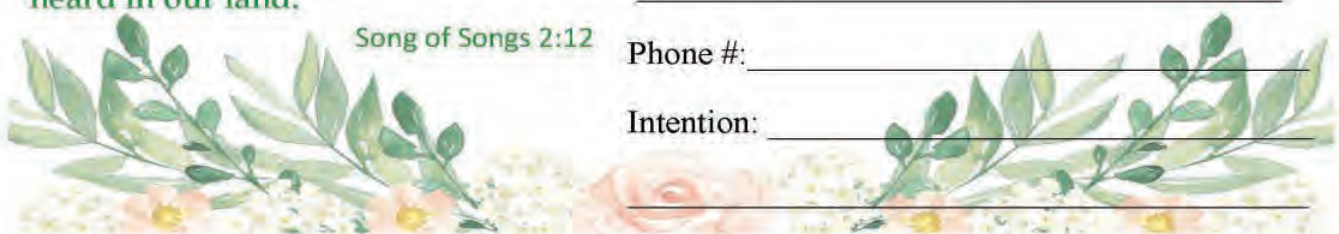
- June 6 & 7, 2026 - The Most Holy Body & Blood of Christ
- June 13 & 14, 2026
- June 20 & 21, 2026 - Father's Day
- June 27 & 28, 2026

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