

# IMMACULATE CONCEPTION PARISH

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## SIXTH SUNDAY OF *Easter*

MAY 17, 2020

### A TIME OF TRANSITION, INSTABILITY, AND HOPE

Today's readings describe that period when the apostles are getting used to acting on their own. Acts describes the spreading of the word to Samaria, curing the sick, and their reception of the Holy Spirit. First Peter reminds us that our response to evil must be to do good and to speak of our hope with gentleness and reverence. The psalm is joyous with praise for God and a reminder of God's saving of those held captive in Egypt long, long ago. John talks not only about the Father and Jesus but also another Advocate, who will remain even when Jesus leaves. The readings also contain the promise of continued love and comfort. The readings today reflect a time of transition, instability, and hope, much like we are experiencing in these days of the pandemic.

#### WHEN YOU ARE MALIGNED

Each of the readings describes a time of transition and uncertainty. In Acts, the apostles are learning how to respond to those seeking to share in the joy of healing the sick and casting out unclean spirits. In First Peter, the new Christian community is reminded that they will be maligned. Their response to such suffering is shaped by Jesus' example of gentleness and reverence. The Gospel offers Jesus' words of consolation to those who are being left behind. All those who had lost Jesus once through crucifixion must prepare to lose him again. But this time they are promised that they will not be abandoned. They are left with the promise that Jesus' new commandments are the continuing guide to a life that, through death and resurrection, unites those who believe in Jesus, the Father, and the Spirit.

#### KEEP MY COMMANDMENTS

If keeping Jesus' commandments is the key to loving him, being loved by the Father, and accompanied by the Spirit, then what choice do we have but to keep his commandments? It seems simple, but unlike the commandments carried down the mountain by Moses, Jesus did not leave us with ten statements of conduct to guide our actions. Jesus left us with a much more complicated commandment, to love our neighbor as ourselves. This commandment requires that we first love ourselves as Jesus loved us. We must see in ourselves what Jesus saw in each one of us. Jesus saw that we too are made in the image and likeness of God and that we carry with us the fragility of our humanity. We must see that same Godliness and humanity in every person we encounter. It is not just ourselves we see in the face of our family, friends, acquaintances, and strangers. It is the face of God. We should act accordingly, especially during this pandemic.

#### TODAY'S READINGS

Acts 8:5-8, 14-17  
Psalm 66:1-7, 16, 20  
1 Peter 3:15-18  
John 14:15-21

Jesus said, "If you love me  
you will keep my commandments."

John 14:15

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### Mission Statement

Called to be disciples of Jesus Christ, we strive to live His Gospel by answering daily, "Yes, here I am Lord". Strengthened by the sacraments and trusting in God's saving grace, we joyfully commit ourselves to sharing our gifts for the continual renewal of our parish and the Maplewood community.

## **From Deacon John:**

### **Easter Season – Why do I relate to it so well?**

#### **The Season between Easter and Pentecost:**

I can put myself in the shoes of the apostles at this time of the year (between Easter and Pentecost). They have been FOLLOWING Jesus for a few years, and they LOVED him. When he was arrested and crucified they ABANDONED him out of fear. When they witnessed him alive after the resurrection they BELIEVED. But they were still afraid. They locked themselves in the Upper Room until Pentecost.

Like the Apostles I have been following Jesus since I was baptized as a child. I do love him. When I sin I have abandoned him. When I have witnessed him alive (moments of inspiration, certain retreats, special moments in my life) it strengthens my belief. Then I become afraid when I focus on my own weaknesses and the challenges of the world.

This makes me aware that I need Pentecost. I need the power of the Holy Spirit.

#### **Powerful Scripture readings this week:**

The first reading (Acts of the Apostles) shows Philip proclaiming the gospel fearlessly and working signs of curing. There was great JOY in the city. Later the Apostles are sent so they might receive the Holy Spirit.

The second reading (First letter of St Peter) he gives the advice “*always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope.*” Hope is a wonderful cardinal virtue. Hope provides a sense of peace when times are stormy. Hope allows us to experience joy in the midst of suffering. When Jesus rose from the dead on Easter he gave hope to all of us that death is not final...death is the beginning of eternal life. Jesus did not just give us a vague hope, but his promise that eternal life is real.

The gospel (John) records Jesus saying “*If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you always, the Spirit of truth.*” Love leads to obedience because love is a relationship and obedience strengthens that relationship.

Jesus promises he will send the Holy Spirit to be with them and with us ALWAYS. The spirit allows us to see Jesus when the world cannot see him. (*I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you. In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me.*) During some quiet time during the COVID-19 disruption I have done some extra reading, walking in the woods, and gardening at home. This quiet time has made me more aware of God's presence—God the Father as creator through the beauty of springtime this year, Jesus is his presence in people, and the Holy Spirit who is our Advocate and who reveals truth.

Our readings inspire us to proclaim Jesus, to bring joy, to express reasons for hope. Our readings make us look forward to the feast of Pentecost (May 31st), the coming of the Holy Spirit on the apostles.

**Come Holy Spirit and fill the hearts of the faithful  
and kindle in us the fire of your love.**

**May God bless you in a special way,  
Deacon John**

P.S. Masses may begin soon (May 23/24) but things are NOT “back to normal”. We have gone nine weeks without mass and our ordinary lives have been disrupted. COVID-19 IS STILL GOING STRONG—82,373 DEATHS NOW VS. 71,078 JUST LAST WEEK. The virus could get worse if we loosen up too much in our activities. I did a funeral service today. “**STAY SAFE**” so I do not have to do yours or your friends.

Diocesan guidelines are coming out about limiting the number of people, social distancing, requiring masks. The obligation to attend mass is still dispensed. Anyone over 60 years old and those with underlying health complications are encouraged to participate in masses via live-stream only. Social distancing means families will depart maintaining six feet of distance with other households. No refreshments or social gatherings for the time being. More details will follow.

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Archdiocese of St. Louis has created a comprehensive landing page with the latest parish and school updates, statements from Archbishop Carlson, resources and prayers in response to the Coronavirus. You can access that page here: <https://www.archstl.org/coronavirus>



And whoever loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and reveal myself to him." Invite Jesus into your marriage on an upcoming Worldwide Marriage Encounter Weekend. The next weekends are Aug. 7-9 and Sept. 25-27 at the Courtyard Marriot in St. Peters, MO.

<https://stl-wwme.org/schedule.php> or call or text 314.649.7317.

SLUH is pleased to offer MULTIPLE virtual opportunities to future Jr. Bills and their parents to experience our brotherhood, our academics, and our robust athletics and co-curricular opportunities including InsideSLUH Visits, a Campus Tour, Office Hours, and Feature Zoom Events with SLUH Subject-Matter Experts. Visit our Virtual Admissions Office at <https://www.sluh.org/admissions> to learn more.

**COVID 19** CORONAVIRUS DISEASE **STOP THE SPREAD OF GERMS**

Help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases like COVID-19.

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
- Stay home when you are sick, except to get medical care.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

For more information: [www.cdc.gov/COVID19](http://www.cdc.gov/COVID19)



## St. Louis Friends of Birthright Virtual Run for Life and Learning

Looking for a fun and safe way to support Moms in need? The Friends of Birthright Run for Life and Learning has gone Virtual! To register or donate, visit:

[run4lifeandlearning.eventbrite.com](http://run4lifeandlearning.eventbrite.com). Complete a Run/Walk distance of your choice (6K, 1 mile, 0.25 mile) individually or with your immediate family anytime between Monday, June 1 and Sunday, June 7. Post your time and/or photo to our Facebook page, or email us, and receive a race t-shirt. Proceeds enable women who are financially stressed by an unplanned pregnancy to continue their education. Please email us at [run4lifeandlearning@gmail.com](mailto:run4lifeandlearning@gmail.com) for sponsorship opportunities.



When SSM Health Cardinal Glennon Children's Hospital opened its doors as the nation's first free-standing Catholic pediatric hospital, a promise was made to the community that any child in need of care would be welcomed, whether their parents could afford to pay for care or not. That promise still holds true today.

St. Louis has a long tradition of responding generously in times of crisis, coming together in solidarity to give hope to those in need. SSM Health Cardinal Glennon is a proud part of that tradition, and we need you now more than ever. In this extraordinary time of crisis, our costs to deliver care are extraordinary as well. Now is the time for our dear friends in the faith community to come together and partner with us as we uphold a commitment to our mission of faith-filled health care services, delivered by some of the region's best caregivers: Through our exceptional health care services, we reveal the healing presence of God.

IC please join us by making a gift during Glennon Sunday weekend, June 6-7, online at [glennon.org](http://glennon.org). Together we will continue to make miracles possible bringing God's love and joy into the lives of our young patients. On behalf of our patients and families, may God bless you for providing hope, healing, faith and compassion to every child who walks through the doors at SSM Health Cardinal Glennon.

## Schedule For The Week

<b>Sunday, May 17</b> 8:30 a.m.	Mass-Suspended
<b>Monday, May 18</b> 10:30 a.m.	Senior Exercise-Cancelled
<b>Tuesday, May 19</b> 7:00 p.m.	Choir-Cancelled
<b>Wednesday, May 20</b> 9:00-10:00 a.m.	Parish Hall Walking-Cancelled
<b>Thursday, May 21</b> 9:00 a.m. 9:30 a.m.	Small Faith-Cancelled Quilting-Cancelled
<b>Friday, May 22</b> 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. 9:00-10:00 a.m.	Adoration-Cancelled Parish Hall Walking-Cancelled
<b>Saturday, May 23</b> 4:00 p.m.	Mass-Suspended

4:15-4:45 p.m.	<b>CONFESSIONS—with Fr. Pete St. Luke's Parish</b>
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**Sunday, May 24**  
8:30 a.m. Mass-Suspended

## Weekly Offering



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Register for simple & convenient  
Online Giving at:  
[https://  
www.osvonlinegiving.com/1357](https://www.osvonlinegiving.com/1357)

**May 2nd/3rd: 1st Collection: \$3,940.00 2nd Collection: \$691.00**  
**Online Giving: \$702.25**

**May 10th/11th: 1st Collection: TBD 2nd Collection: TBD**  
**Online Giving: \$1,457.25**

**OFFERTORY COLLECTIONS:** I want to remind you that collections remain essential to the continued operation and existence of our parish and our mission. Thank you to all who use online giving. It helps so much during times like this, snow days and vacation times. It is EASY to sign up for online giving at [www.osvonlinegiving.com/1357](http://www.osvonlinegiving.com/1357). You may make one-time payments or set it up for automatic payments--it is very flexible. Otherwise, please mail or drop-off your contribution. Many expenses continue.

## Stewardship

*Beloved: Sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts. Always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope, but do it with gentleness and reverence, keeping your conscience clear, so that, when you are maligned, those who defame your good conduct in Christ may themselves be put to shame. 1 Peter 3:15 & 16*

Do you fear the moment that someone may ask you why you are a Christian? Do you know the answer to why you have faith? Do you have insight and confidence in the teachings of the Catholic Church?

We may never have all the perfect answers, but most Catholics need to get better at answering these questions in ways that resonate with our lives. We do not stop learning when we walk out of our last catechism class. We need to grow each day in our understanding of the Catholic faith. If YOU don't know why you are a Catholic, how will you be able to confidently tell other why you are.

Pray, attend Mass, read Holy Scripture and search your heart; be ready to defend your faith and explain your hope, "with gentleness and reverence, keeping your conscience clear". We are the stewards of Christianity!

## Readings for the Week

Monday: Acts 16:11-15; Ps 149:1b-6a, 9b; Jn 15:26 – 16:4a  
Tuesday: Acts 16:22-34; Ps 138:1-3, 7c-8; Jn 16:5-11  
Wednesday: Acts 17:15, 22 – 18:1; Ps 148:1-2, 11-14; Jn 16:12-15  
Thursday: Acts 1:1-11; Ps 47:2-3, 6-9; Eph 1:17-23; Mt 28:16-20 (for Ascension); otherwise Acts 18:1-8; Ps 98:1-4; Jn 16:16-20  
Friday: Acts 18:9-18; Ps 47:2-7; Jn 16:20-23  
Saturday: Acts 18:23-28; Ps 47:2-3, 8-10; Jn 16:23b-28  
Sunday: Acts 1:12-14; Ps 27:1, 4, 7-8; 1 Pt 4:13-16; Jn 17:1-11a; or (for Ascension) Acts 1:1-11; Ps 47:2-3, 6-9; Eph 1:17-23; Mt 28:16-20

## Dynamic Catholic, Alive! – The Gift of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is called the Advocate, the Paraclete, and the Consoler in Scripture. He is the gift of the Father whom we received at Baptism and then more fully in Confirmation. The Holy Spirit is our defender, the one who stands by us in the midst of the attacks of Satan (the accuser). Constantly reminding us of what Jesus has taught us and guiding us into prayer, the Spirit leads us just as He led Jesus. "The Holy Spirit, whom Christ the head pours out on his members, builds, animates, and sanctifies the Church" (CCC 747). Praise God for the gift of the Holy Spirit, our anointing, our dove, our fire.  
[archstl.org/dynamic](http://archstl.org/dynamic)

## Prayer For A Pandemic

May we who are merely inconvenienced  
Remember those whose lives are at stake.

May we who have no risk factors  
Remember those most vulnerable.

May we who have the luxury of working from home  
Remember those who must choose between  
preserving their health or making their rent.

May we who have the flexibility to care for  
our children when their schools close,  
Remember those who have no options.

May we who have to cancel our trips  
Remember those that have no safe place to go.

May we who are losing our margin money  
in the tumult of the economic market  
Remember those who have no margin at all.

May we who settle in for a quarantine at home  
Remember those who have no home.

As fear grips our country,  
Let us choose love.

During this time when we cannot physically  
wrap our arms around each other,  
Let us yet find ways to be the loving embrace  
of God to our neighbors.

Amen.



URSULINE SISTERS  
OF LOUISVILLE

Prayer: Historic Saint Paul Catholic Church, Lexington, KY

**PARISH PASTORAL STAFF**

Deacon John Flanigan, Parish Life Coordinator  
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johnflanigan@hotmail.com  
Father Peter Blake, Sacramental Minister  
314-644-2144  
Deacon Clyde McEntire, Deacon (Retired)  
Kathleen O'Reilly, Parish Nurse, 314-644-6805  
Father Michael Esswein, Pastor 314-962-5955

**PARISH STAFF**

Eva May, Administrative Assistant, 314-645-3307 Ext. 202  
Colleen Eichler, Campus Manager, 314-645-3307 Ext. 206  
Daniel Jenkins, Maintenance Assistant

**Parish School of Religion**

Karen Lightfoot, PSR Coordinator, psricmaplewood@gmail.com  
**St. Vincent DePaul Help Line**  
314-289-6101 ext. 2226

**PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL**

Tim Yohe, Chair  
Nikki & Todd Bircher  
Deacon John Flanigan  
Laura Miller  
Mary Bankston  
RJ & Suzee Irwin  
Becky Konersmann  
Ken Amend

**Schedule**

We will announce when Masses resume.

SVDP Food Pantry: Saturdays from 9:30-11:00am

**Ministry Schedule-Suspended**

Saturday EM's: *Suspended until Masses resume*  
Saturday Lectors:  
Saturday Servers:  
Saturday Usher Captain:  
Saturday Gifts:  
Sunday EM's:  
Sunday Lectors:  
Sunday Servers:  
Sunday Usher:  
Sunday Greeters:  
Sunday Gifts:



**Hope and Healing**  
"There is no grief like the grief that does not speak."  
Henry Longfellow.

The grief over an abortion experience is often so deep that it seems to be silent. Women and men may bear this burden for years thinking that there is no hope of forgiveness or peace. Project Rachel/Project Joseph offers free, private, professional counseling for anyone who is suffering because of an abortion experience. Call Project Rachel/Project Joseph at 314-792-7565 to begin your journey of healing and reconciliation.



*Suspended until mass resumes.*

Please email the church to reschedule a Mass Intention-scheduled from March 16th-present or call Eva May at 314-776-7172.

**Please Pray For:**

Jim Higgins, Eileen Lencz, Jim Haislip, Alice Hezel, Gary Gray, Ellen Simmons, Chuck Ellermann, Mona Tillman, Heidi Barks, Madelyn McClure, Paul Rygelski, Mary Johnston, Jim White, Everleigh Lauber, Jack & Pamela Warner, Pam MacDonald, Nancy Maurer, Linda Amend  
Paul Bredenkamp (brother of Mary Bankston)  
Terry & Ron Kippenberger (family of Rita Kippenberger)  
Lisa Massack (sister of Joshua Capstick)  
Jamie Jackson (Granddaughter of Annabelle Moran )  
Pam Brown (former parishioner)  
Tony Simmons (son of Tom & Ellen Simmons)  
Sr. Barbara Paul (former parishioner)  
Jan Pilla (daughter in law of Eddie Pilla)  
Nick Simmons (son of Tom & Ellen Simmons)  
Carl & Susan Case (brother and sister in law of Pat Curtis)  
Mary Lucas (friend of Al & Maureen Daniels)  
Drew Becker (son of Paul Becker)  
John Biondo (brother of Maria Gray)  
Deimeke Family  
John Graves (brother of Karen Bish)  
Lisa Hanley Blake (daughter of Celene Hanley)

**PRAY FOR THOSE SERVING OUR COUNTRY**

Col. Peter White, USAF, son of Jim & Lucy White  
Senior Chief Matthew J Paul, USN, son of Maria and Gary Gray  
William Patrick Flynn, USN, son of Patrick & Michelle Flynn

To add your loved one's name (s) contact Eva at the rectory. 314-645-3307 or email at icmaplewood@gmail.com

**CONFESSIONS**—with Fr. Pete

Available at St. Luke's Parish  
Saturdays 4:15 to 4:45

**Rest in Peace**

JOHN HOCHSTATTER,  
longtime parishioner

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