



March 26, 2017

Fourth Sunday of Lent (A)

1 Sm 16:1b, 6–7, 10–13a

Eph 5:8–14

Jn 9:1–41

To Live By Faith

Our Lenten practices are transforming our hearts to receive the love of Jesus in his passion, death, and resurrection. Today's Gospel revolves around this theme of learning to live by faith.

The apostles take for granted that the man's blindness is due to someone's sin. The Pharisees call the man a sinner, born in sin. In their self-righteousness they judge both the blind man and Jesus.

Jesus sees and judges differently. He asserts that the man's blindness was not due to a sin of his own or that of his parents and restores his sight. He challenges the wise, educated, and insightful Pharisees by saying, "If you were blind, you would have no sin; but now you are saying, 'We see,' so your sin remains" (John 9:41).

While they can see physically, they cannot see the simple truth that Jesus is the Son of God and has the authority to heal, even on the Sabbath. They are so blinded by their "fidelity to God"—which is really fidelity to their distorted interpretation of the traditions and regulations God gave them—that they cannot see his spirit of mercy. They fail to see with eyes of faith.

Being merciful like Jesus doesn't mean merely condemning blind legalism, it means showing God's love to those in need. First we need to see as God sees. Then we need to love others and to enlighten them with the truth. Jesus heals one man's blindness in the hope of opening the minds and hearts of the Pharisees—and us today.

—Fr. Mark Haydu, LC

Piece: *Dogmatic Sarcophagus*, healing of the blind man, circa 325–350

Artist: Unknown

Location: Vatican Museums



For Reflection

Are there people or groups I blindly judge? What is at the root of these judgments? To what truths am I blind? How can I work to open my heart to these truths this Lent?

*"God does not see as a mortal, who sees the appearance.
The LORD looks into the heart" (1 Samuel 16:7).*

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION CHURCH

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FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT – MARCH 26, 2017

The Sanctuary Lamp Burns In Memory of Monsignor Thomas J. Birch

★ ★ MASS INTENTIONS ★ ★

SAT	5:15 PM	Mary Butler	THURS	7:00 PM	Bob Ellison
SUN	7:30 AM	Living & Deceased Parishioners	FRI	7:30 AM	Dolores McCullough
	9:00 AM	Marie Kozak	SAT	5:15 PM	Stella Powaski
	11:00 AM	Matthew Manegold	SUN	7:30 AM	God's Blessings on Ron & Mary Schwendt 9 th Wedding Anniversary
MON	7:30 AM	Chester Maccarone		9:00 AM	Living & Deceased Parishioners
TUES	7:00 PM	Louis Lanza – 1 st Anniversary		11:00 AM	Antonio Maccarone
WED	7:30 AM	Martha Kett			

NEXT WEEK AT A GLANCE

SCRIP: Porambo 5:15pm Costanzo 7:30am Schwendt 9:00am Grieco 11:00am Hafer

DAY	MASS	Lector	COMMENTATOR	ALTAR SERVERS
SAT	5:15PM	Sherry McCollum	Ann Marie Arbo	Lilia and Simon Crew, John Dinnocenti
SUN	7:30AM	Michelle Marley	Amanda Marley	Joey Cizmarik, Ande and Ethan Kraycik
	9:00AM	Stephanie Myers	Gretchen Markel	Mya Salaneck, Marissa and Steven Tepper
	11:00AM	Bob Newman	Jim Keaveney	Joey and Logan Conlon, Michael DiScala

Second Collection Next Week is for Church Building & Parish Maintenance

Immaculate Conception Academy Early Education Program News!

Immaculate Conception Early Education Program is now enrolling for its new **Pre-Kindergarten Program**, which will now feature an option to attend **five full days or five half days or a combination as needed from 8:30am – 2:45pm or 8:30am to Noon.**

This program will prepare students to enter our full day Kindergarten both academically and socially. The curriculum will include weekly art, music and library visits, as well as age appropriate physical education experiences. Before Care options are available for all students and After Care options are available for full day students.

For more information please contact Adele Reilly, Advancement Director at 610-404-8645 or adele.reilly@icaknights.org

Remember in your prayers the sick of our parish: Marco Fiato, John & Margaret Kakas, Maryanne Prentice, Delores Woy, Alice Arantowicz, Yolanda Marino, Ann Schlott, Kathy Patrick, Joseph & Susan McCorristin, Mary & Phil Morici, Margaret Maccarone, Dan Casciano, Jake Maccarone, Madge Butto, Joan Cronin, Rita Conrad, Rose Osorio, Tony Guilliams, Steve Mammarella, Joseph Kolenda, Kenneth Barth, Dominic Strock, Bob Hocker, Mike DiScala, Mildred Mattassa, Deb Petras, Ronald Kryman, Anna Swiezak, Margarie & Walter Hansen, Arlene Shirley, Robert Thomas, Madison Rhoads, Rita Dougherty, Norma Nanni, Lou Franco, Lucille Schiel, Helen McDonald, Alice Smyk, John Fritz, Maria Houck, Lucy Doney, Evelyn Segneri, Mary Okuniewski, Katie Davis, Joe Weyand and TJ Doyle

Welcome our new parishioners: Mr. & Mrs. George Allison and Crystal Eisennagel

Pray for the recently departed: Peter Pietrzyk

THIS WEEK AT ICC:

Women's Society Easter Candy Sale

Mon	03/27	7:30pm RCIA
Wed	03/29	7-9pm Eucharistic Adoration
Fri	03/31	1:45pm Stations of the Cross 7pm Stations of the Cross
Sat	04/01	4-5pm Confession

WHAT'S HAPPENING

Follow in the footsteps of Jesus as he carried the cross for our salvation.

Stations of the Cross will be held this week on Friday, March 31st at 1:45pm with the children of Immaculate Conception Academy and at 7:00pm.

Youth Group is hosting the **Community Table** at the Friendship Fire Hall on West 1st St. in Birdsboro on **March 28th, 5 to 8pm**. The Community Table is a meal that we share with approximately 160 patrons of the Birdsboro Food Pantry. We are in need of **HOT** casseroles in disposable foil (lasagna size) pans and desserts. If you are able to provide a casserole or dessert, please contact Liz at thestewarts@dejazzd.com or 610-404-4425.

The students of Immaculate Conception Academy cordially invite you to come pray with us as we proudly present ***The Way of the Cross***. The Presentation of The Living Stations will be April 7th at 10am and April 9th at 4pm in the Church. All are welcome to celebrate our Lenten gift to you.

Eucharistic Adoration: During the forty days of Lent our church will be open every Wednesday, 7-9pm for Eucharistic Adoration. The Blessed Sacrament will be exposed in the monstrance on the altar. You are welcome to come and spend some quiet time with the Lord Jesus. You may bring your own prayer books, use any of the books in our parish library, read the Bible, pray the Rosary, or just sit and relax and enjoy the peace that comes from simply being in the presence of God. You may feel that you can't pray well. Don't let that discourage you. The mere fact that you have carved out a period of time to be with Jesus is a great act of faith. When you come, bring to the Lord your hopes and desires, your dreams and aspirations, your fears and anxieties and entrust all them all to God.

A Lenten Endeavor: Operation Rice Bowl – Fast and pray with your family and make a sacrificial offering to Operation Rice Bowl so as to help those who live with hunger and poverty both at home and abroad. The Rice Bowl is located in the rear of the church near the baptismal font.

Immaculate Conception is participating with local churches in meeting the needs of the Food Pantry, called "Community Table" at the Birdsboro-Union Fire Department. We are collecting **Cleaning Products** such as bathroom, window and kitchen cleaners; laundry soap items and paper towel/wipes. The Collection Bin is in the Narthex. If you have any questions, please email Deacon Chuck at catgjo@comcast.net.

Annual Lenten Food Drive benefits the Food Pantry at St. Joseph's Parish, The Kennedy House, and Catholic Charities of Reading. Non-perishable food items and cash can be placed in the large basket and cash canister in the narthex. Food will be collected through Palm Sunday. Questions contact Deacon Jim at 610-385-3666.

HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE

Palm Sunday

Saturday, April 8th, 5:15pm
Sunday, April 9th, 7:30am, 9am and 11am
Blessing of Palms at all Masses
Solemn Blessing of Palms and Procession at 11am
Living Stations of the Cross at 4pm

Penance Service

Monday, April 10th, 7pm

Holy Thursday

Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper, 7pm
Family Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament
After evening Mass until 10pm
(Come, "Watch One Hour" with Jesus)

Good Friday

Commemoration of the Lord's Passion, 3pm
Confessions following until 5:30pm
Day of Fast and Abstinence

Holy Saturday

Blessing of Food at Noon
Confessions from 12:30pm to 2pm
Easter Vigil Mass, 8pm
Reception of RCIA Candidates

Easter Sunday

Masses at 7:30am, 9am and 11am
Blessing of the Children's Easter Baskets at 9am, 11am

Youth Group will be cleaning up the cemetery on April 2nd. At that time, all Christmas decorations will be removed and discarded.

National 40 Days for Life Campaign and Prayer Vigil through April 9. Reading Planned Parenthood, 4th and Franklin Sts, Reading, 7am-4pm, Mondays through Saturdays. 40 Days for Life is a focused pro-life campaign with a vision to access God's power through prayer, fasting and peaceful vigil to end abortion. Call Pro-Life Berks 610-375-3395 for info.

Don't Give Up Chocolate For Lent! Join Dynamic Catholic for *Best Lent Ever*, a **FREE** email program designed to help you have a life changing Lent. This program is based on Matthew Kelly's "Resisting Happiness". Visit BestLentEver.com to sign up and receive daily emails with practical tips, short inspirational videos from Matthew Kelly, and personal reflections from Dynamic Catholic team members. Discover how to open your hearts to God and do more than just give up chocolate for Lent...leading to your best Lent ever.

EASTER EGG HUNT for our parish children age 12 and younger on April 15th at 11am in the social hall. We are collecting bags of small individually wrapped candy and cash. A donation box is in the narthex of the church. Thanks!

ICCYO Spring Registrations: Boy's Baseball (Boys: 6th-8th) and for Track "tentative based on coach" (Boys and Girls: 6th-8th) Visit our website www.ICCYO.com

Hurting from a past abortion? Rachel's Vineyard Retreat Weekend, June 23-25 through Catholic Charities. Within a safe, confidential, non-judgmental environment, experience God's healing love and forgiveness. For info or to register call Sr. Meg at 610-332-0442, x19, 1-866-3Rachel, or projectrachel@allentowndiocese.org.

Calendar

Monday

March 27

Lenten Weekday

Is 65:17-21

Jn 4:43-54

Tuesday

March 28

Lenten Weekday

Ez 47:1-9, 12

Jn 5:1-16

Wednesday

March 29

Lenten Weekday

Is 49:8-15

Jn 5:17-30

Thursday

March 30

Lenten Weekday

Ex 32:7-14

Jn 5:31-47

Friday

March 31

Lenten Weekday

Wis 2:1a, 12-22

Jn 7:1-2, 10, 25-30

Saturday

April 1

Lenten Weekday

Jer 11:18-20

Jn 7:40-53

Sunday

April 2

Fifth Sunday

of Lent

Ez 37:12-14

Rom 8:8-11

Jn 11:1-45

Dear Padre,

What are social or communal sins? Do I need to confess them?

To answer this question properly, we must first make a number of distinctions. First, we are social beings. We act not only as individuals but also as groups, and we are capable of sinning each way. Sin is an analogous concept with nuances, depending on context. There are original, personal, and social sins. There are also both mortal and venial sins. When we sin as individuals, we commit a personal sin. When we sin in a group, we commit a social sin. As with personal sin, some social sins are more serious than others.

Societies that enshrine laws promoting abortion, euthanasia, and in many countries, capital punishment are involved in serious social sins. Our degree of culpability in such sins depends on the level of our participation in the group. The key distinction is whether we are actively (formally) or only accidentally (materially) cooperating in the evil. For example, if you actually voted for a law enshrining one such evil, then you are formally cooperating in the evil. If you voted against it but are paying taxes that fund such practices, then you are only materially cooperating in it.

Formal cooperation in a serious offense against God's will should be confessed.

Material cooperation lessens the degree of blame, sometimes to the point of eliminating it. It is important to examine the nature of the social evil, study the teachings of the Church on the issue, determine your level of participation, and form your conscience accordingly.

Dennis J. Billy, CSsR
sundaybulletin@liguori.org



PAUL SHUANG/SHUTTERSTOCK

A Word From Pope Francis

"How many Christians show...that they are 'eyes to the blind' and 'feet to the lame?' They are close to the sick in need of constant care....This service, especially when it is protracted, can become tiring and burdensome....And yet, what a great path of sanctification this is!"

—Message at 23rd World Day of the Sick, 2015

