

Bulletin Letter March 28, 2021 Palm Sunday Cycle B

From the Pastor:

This Sunday has two names on the church calendar. The more popular name is ***Palm Sunday***. The mood of the day in a great many churches emphasizes this with palm branches, children in procession and jubilant music. But its day is also called ***Passion Sunday***. Why? Because today begins the week of our Lord's suffering, or passion. This week comes to its conclusion on Thursday, in the celebration of Jesus' last supper with his disciples and on Friday, with Jesus' crucifixion and burial, and Saturday, with our Lord's body in the tomb. So we call this day *Passion Sunday*, because it begins with week of such dramatic, sorrowful events.

You all should have received a letter in the mail from me with our **Holy Week** schedule. All the events of this solemn week will take place on the campus of the Church of the Immaculate Conception. The liturgy committees of each of the parishes have participated in the planning of the Triduum, and each parish will be represented at each celebration. It is our hope that all of you will feel welcome and at "home" when you come to the church. Your presence during these sacred days of prayer will help all of us to enter the spirit of these special once a year events. Along with the letter was an envelope which we hope you will use to continue to support the mission of each parish. Your generosity, especially during this time of Covid-19, is greatly appreciated. If you did not receive a schedule of events, please call any of the parish offices.

Our Parish Trustees continue to meet on a weekly basis to discuss our futures as we continue our earthly pilgrimage as **three distinct parishes** with one pastor. I am so grateful to all of them for their generous hearts, time, and talent. We really are in uncharted waters, and we are all doing the best we can. As of today, we have had meetings with the Pastoral Councils of Our Lady and Grace and Immaculate Conception. We will be meeting with the St. Joseph council next week.

So far, we have concluded that each parish will have at least one mass on a weekend. The times of the masses have not been decided just yet. The new mass schedule will begin on the Feast of the Most Holy Trinity, May 30. The mass schedule will be set in such a way that one priest will be able to celebrate all the masses each weekend if necessary. Fr. O'Brien will be on a new assignment by that time, and no longer here with us. We would have been in tough shape without him and are grateful for his service. Fr. Jack will be assisting diocesan parishes along with ours, so he may not always be available. The Trustees and I have also decided that all Faith Formation, for our youth and young adults, all adult formation including RCIA will also take place on the Immaculate Conception campus. This, of course, will be a big adjustment for all of us, but as Deacon Frank Thomas said last week in his homily quoting St. John Henry Newman, ***"To live is to change, and to be perfect is to have changed often."*** We are looking to be a stronger more vibrant church along the Route 50 corridor.

I am sure this information will bring up many questions – and that you have all been wondering. This weekend there will be an insert in each bulletin and on our websites that is the first step in our comprehensive communication plan for our family of parishes. You will find a FAQ, or Frequently Asked Questions sheet and we will go forward from there. If you have questions, please ask one of the trustees from your individual parish – they are here as your primary contacts and will bring your concerns to my attention. To reach them, see your bulletin, website, or call your parish office.

All of this is new ground, as I said earlier and will bring us some challenges indeed, but the Lord, the Holy Spirit, and our Blessed Mother are helping us forge ahead. Together we join in prayer, faith, and with hope to have the light of Christ shine ever brighter in our area.

Until next week, be well, do good deeds, and say your prayers.

Fr. Jerry