



FEBRUARY 28, 2021

*Jesus was transfigured before them, and his clothes became dazzling white.*

*Mark 9:2-3*

## THE BELOVED SON

Today's first reading, known as "the Binding of Isaac," refers to the way Isaac is bound and laid upon the wood of the altar of sacrifice. God directs Abraham to offer his son in sacrifice, killing the beloved son that had been a special gift to him and Sarah in their old age. How could God ask Abraham to do such a thing? Abraham offers no resistance, but in preparing for the sacrifice, Abraham may have agreed with the psalmist that he was "greatly afflicted." Saint Paul's letter to the Romans refers to Jesus as God's beloved Son, which is also how God identifies Jesus to Peter, James, and John at the Transfiguration. Afterward, Jesus tells those disciples not to mention the event to anyone until after his resurrection from the dead. The event, together with Jesus' comments, leaves the disciples thoroughly confused.

### HOW COULD GOD ASK ABRAHAM TO DO THAT?

Through the centuries, Christians and Jews alike have found the Binding of Isaac one of the most difficult passages in the Bible. Even though God intervenes to save Isaac, the whole episode strikes some readers as cruel. However, Abraham, the ultimate man of faith, raises no objection, offers no resistance as he simply goes about preparing for the trip and the sacrifice.

Today's other readings might help us see that text differently. In Mark's description of the Transfiguration, Jesus' clothes become white and shining, and Moses and Elijah appear with him. Moses was the great liberator and lawgiver who led the Jews out of bondage in Egypt and into the wilderness, forming them into the people of Israel by giving them the Law he received from God. Elijah was among Israel's greatest prophets, so close to God that, at the end of his life, he was taken up into heaven by a fiery chariot. Together, Moses and Elijah represent the Law and the Prophets, the ultimate authority for the Jews in the conduct of their daily lives.

### LOVE AND GENEROSITY

The Law, the Prophets—and Jesus. For Paul, Jesus is someone quite different from the other two. The reading from his letter to the Romans is short, but rich in meaning. When Paul declares that God "did not spare his own Son," and when God praises Abraham "who did not withhold from me your own beloved son," it is the same Greek word for "spare" and "withhold." God's voice at the Transfiguration identifies Jesus as his "beloved Son"—the same way God refers to Isaac as Abraham's beloved son. Ultimately, God spares Isaac but not his own Son, whom he "handed over for us." Even if we are disturbed that God tested Abraham like this, Paul says we should be overwhelmingly grateful that God did for us what, in the end, he did not require of Abraham. Jesus, God's Son "handed over to us" in love and generosity, is already a sacrificial gift, signifying that God wants to give us "everything else along with him."

#### ***SAINTS AND SPECIAL OBSERVANCES***

Sunday: Second Sunday of Lent; Penitential Rite for Candidates for Full Communion  
Wednesday: St. Katharine Drexel  
Thursday: St. Casimir  
Friday: First Friday; World Day of Prayer; Abstinence

LENT

SECOND SUNDAY OF

# Immaculate Conception Parish

## Immaculate Conception Church & St. Joseph Church

*Pastor: Rev. James J. Ward • Deacon: Mr. Jack Mroz*

Immaculate Conception Rectory: 570-325-2791 • [iccjt@ptd.net](mailto:iccjt@ptd.net) • [www.iccjimthorpe.org](http://www.iccjimthorpe.org)  
St. Joseph Rectory: 570-325-3731 • [stjosjt@ptd.net](mailto:stjosjt@ptd.net) • [www.saintjosephchurch-jimthorpe.org](http://www.saintjosephchurch-jimthorpe.org)

*St. Joseph Church side entrance is open daily for private prayer*

**Sacrament of Reconciliation:** Tuesdays after 8 a.m. Mass, & Wednesdays, 6:30pm @ ICC;  
Thursdays after 8 a.m. Mass @ St. Joseph Church

Diocesan Victim Assistance Coordinator: Wendy S. Krisak, MA, NCC, LPC Direct Phone: 800-791-9209; Diocesan Secretary for Youth Protection: Pamela J. Russo, MSW, MS Phone: 610-871-5200, Ext. 2204; Catholic Bishop Abuse Reporting Service: If you have an allegation of abuse against a bishop, please contact the Catholic Bishop Abuse Reporting Service [ReportBishopAbuse.org](http://ReportBishopAbuse.org) or by calling 800-276-1562.

## Second Sunday of Lent

### **Sat. Feb. 27**

4:30 pm (ICC) **Margaret Dugan** (Hugh & Fran Dugan) /  
**Ed & Lucy Wildoner** (Charlie)

### **Sun. Feb. 28**

9:00 am (SJC) **Margaret Martino** (Family)

### **Mon. March 1**

(private) **Kevin Doll** (Joe & Margie Pelcheck)

### **Tues. March 2**

**NO MASS**

### **Wed. March 3**

(private) **All Parishioners, Living & Deceased**

### **Thurs. March 4**

8:00 am (SJC) **Adel & John Horvath** (DelRay & John McArdle) /  
**Anna Kociolek** (Lea Paluck)

### **Fri. March 5**

(private) **Cliff Hurley** (Lisa & Bob Schaninger)

6:00 pm (SJC) *Stations of the Cross*



## *Third Sunday of Lent*

### **Sat. March 6**

9:00 am (SJC) *Rosary for Life*

4:30 pm (ICC) **Connor McHugh** (Grandparents)

### **Sun. March 7**

9:00 am (SJC) **Clarence Ulshafer, 32<sup>nd</sup> Anniv.** (Wife & Children)

**RESPONSORIAL PSALM ~I WILL WALK BEFORE THE LORD, IN THE LAND OF THE LIVING.**

**\*\*PLEASE NOTE:** There is **NO MASS** this Tuesday, March 2<sup>nd</sup> at Immaculate Conception Church.

**PARISH STEWARDSHIP:**  
2/7/21: \$ 5,001.00  
*Thank you for your continued support & generosity.*



**REST IN PEACE:** Kindly pray for the souls of **Kathleen Reihman, Margaret Dolena, & Mark Kelley**. Please remember them and their loved ones in your prayers. May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed rest in peace.

**SAINT JOSEPH ECUMENICAL FOOD PANTRY**  
Located on the corner of 6<sup>th</sup> & North St. will be open Wednesdays, March 10 & 24 and Saturdays, March 6 & 20 from 9am-11am.

**ADORATION AT ST. JOSEPH CHURCH:** Next Tuesday, March 9<sup>th</sup>, Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament beginning at 9am (except when there is a funeral Mass and then it will start after the Mass). Adoration will conclude with Rosary and Benediction at 5:30pm. Time with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament is a tremendous blessing!

**THE FOLLOWING DONATIONS HAVE BEEN MADE TO THE MEMORIAL FUND:** In Memory of **Alexander "Pepsie" Cinicola** from Fred & Terrie Cinicola, Pat & Katie Leonzi; In Memory of **Thomas Sheehan** from Fred & Cheryl Crawford; In Memory of **Kathleen Reihman** from Ann McHugh & Family.

**REOPENING OF THE THRIFT SHOP:** Mother Pauline's will reopen on Monday, March 1<sup>st</sup>, 9am-1pm. (Weather permitting). Our days of operation are Mondays, Wednesdays & Saturdays. Customers will need to wear masks and we will continue to restrict customer numbers in the store. Big sale happening for our re-opening! Come and see!!



**SAINT JOSEPH TABLE:** We would like to continue the custom of gathering food for the poor on the Feast of Saint Joseph (March 19) as a way of honoring our patron. Saint Joseph Food Pantry is in need of food in particular canned meats such as tuna, chicken, Dinty Moore Heat and Serve stews, Hormel pot pies and chunky soups. Please bring these items and put them in the baskets by the Blessed Mother Altar at St. Joseph Church starting next weekend, March 6 & 7 through March 19.

### BETTER MEALS IN MADAGASCAR

In Madagascar, half of all children are undernourished. That means 50% of kids won't grow to reach their full potential. But communities are changing this by focusing on improving health and nutrition. What role has food played in your life? How can you help those who lack access to enough nutritious food. Visit [csrcricebowl.org](http://csrcricebowl.org) to learn more.



**TRY THE NEW AND IMPROVED AD TIMES ONLINE:** Please consider signing up for the new & improved online version of the *AD Times*. Doing so will mean you'll get the news faster, and you will save the Diocese money on printing and postage. Email your name and address to [communications@AllentownDiocese.org](mailto:communications@AllentownDiocese.org) & we'll sign you up for the free email subscription & remove your name from the mailing list of the printed newspaper.

**HISTORY OF SALVATION:** The first reading today continues the "history of salvation" narrative that we hear throughout Lent this year. Today's story was among the best-loved in the Jewish tradition (surely Joseph told the story to young Jesus as he formed him in the ways of their faith); the early fathers of the Church were very fond of it as a means of explaining the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. The overall tone of the first reading, psalm, and second reading seems a little incongruous with the dazzling Gospel, until we remember that the Transfiguration was placed as the Gospel for this Sunday precisely to remind us of the glory that awaits those who live faithfully and obediently to the will of God. In the life of Jesus, it is a preview of the glory of his resurrection; for us it is a glimpse of the destiny of those who continue, as we heard in last week's Gospel, to repent and believe in the Good News.

© J. S. Paluch Co.

**DIOCESE STATIONS OF THE CROSS** will be offered each Friday in Lent at 7pm. The Stations will be live-streamed to the DOA Facebook page, to AD Today, and to the DOA YouTube channel. Links to join us virtually:



AD Today: [www.ad-today.com](http://www.ad-today.com)

Diocese of Allentown Facebook Page:

[facebook.com/DioceseofAllentown](https://facebook.com/DioceseofAllentown)

Diocesan YouTube Channel:

[youtube.com/user/DioceseofAllentown](https://youtube.com/user/DioceseofAllentown)

**THIS IS A TEST:** I used to wonder how God could lie to Abraham about sacrificing his son Isaac. But the story begins by telling us God put Abraham to the test. Abraham himself seems to know it's a test. Apparently, I'm the only one fooled by God. I don't know if I would have passed the test. I would have at least argued with God about it, begging him to spare my son. Yet in our second reading, St. Paul reminds us that God did not spare his own son. (Rom 8:32) He passed his own test. Jesus was sacrificed so that God could show us how much he loved us. If God loves us so much that he gives his Son to die for us, why would he not forgive us? He doesn't. But he is still testing us. What does that tell us about life? You may have noticed that things don't always go your way. Does that mean those tragedies are our fault? No, God gives everyone free will and some people choose to do wrong. God intervenes sometimes and lives are saved. Other times, God intervenes by saving us after death with our resurrection. As long as people doubt God's love, there will be tests. That's why it is so important to proclaim the Kingdom: so that someday all people will know God's love and not need to be tested. Tom Schmidt, © J. S. Paluch Co.