



April 5, 2020  
At the name of Jesus  
every knee should bend . . .  
and every tongue confess  
that Jesus Christ is Lord.

Philippians 2:10, 11

## Church of the Immaculate Conception

*Pastor: Rev. James J. Ward*

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To help prevent the spread of the disease, until further notice,

**ALL PUBLIC MASSES ARE SUSPENDED**

Mass intentions will be said privately by Fr. Ward.

**The Rectory office is closed to visitors,**

**INDIVIDUAL CONFESSIONS TIMES:**

Immaculate Conception, Saturdays: 3 to 4 p.m.

St. Joseph Church, Mondays: 6:30 to 7:00 p.m. \* *note change*

**Palm Sunday**  
OF THE PASSION OF THE LORD

**PRAYER TO OUR LADY, HEALTH OF THE SICK  
DURING THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC**

O Mary,

You shine continuously on our journey  
as a sign of salvation and hope.

We entrust ourselves to you, Health of the Sick,  
who, at the Cross, united with Jesus' pain, keeping your faith firm.

You, Salvation of the Roman people,  
know what we need,  
and we trust that you will provide for those needs so that,  
as at Cana of Galilee, joy and celebration may return  
after this moment of trial.

Help us, Mother of Divine Love,  
to conform ourselves to the will of the Father  
and to do what Jesus tells us.

He who took our suffering upon Himself,  
and burdened Himself with our sorrows  
to bring us, through the Cross, to the joy of Resurrection. Amen.

We seek refuge under your protection, O Holy Mother of God.  
Do not despise our pleas — we who are put to the test —  
and deliver us from every danger. O glorious and blessed Virgin.

*Pope Francis, March 11, 2020 © Libreria Editrice Vaticana*

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# *Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion*

*Mass intentions will be said privately by Fr. Ward.*

- Sat. April 4** Millie Radocha (DePuy Family)  
**Sun. April 5** Dennis & Margaret Dugan (Hugh Dugan) / Moss Family (Helen)  
**Mon. April 6** Christopher Gallagher (Bonnie McElmoyle) / Donald Genshart (Ann Vandembord)  
**Tues. April 7** Ralph Wertman (Ken & Rose McArdle)  
**Wed. April 8** Joseph Martino (Paul Martino) / Joseph Howley (Jim Kattner)  
**Thurs. April 9** All The Priests of the Allentown Diocese  
**Fri. April 10** Private Prayer Service



## *Easter Sunday of the Resurrection of the Lord*

- Sat. April 11** For all Medical, Police, Fire, & Ambulance Personnel of our Community  
**Sun. April 12** All Parishioners, Living & Deceased

My Dear Parishioners,

I hope that this letter finds you healthy and safe at home. I have a sense of how you must be feeling in terms of the unknown and being isolated. Each time that I go into church daily to “read the Mass” as the old Irish would say, it’s just myself, in the dark church with one light over the altar and no one to respond.

As we approach Easter, which is normally the biggest celebration of the Church year, we all may be feeling a bit of what Jesus felt on the Cross when he said “*My God, My God, Why Have You Forsaken Me.*”

As you all may know, the Bishop has decided that there will be no public Masses for Holy Week and Easter. This is of course a very difficult decision, but the health and safety of everyone is paramount.

When we are once again allowed to celebrate Mass together, we will hold a Mass of Thanksgiving, where we will use the Easter Flower donations to decorate the Church, and a listing will be published with those contributions.

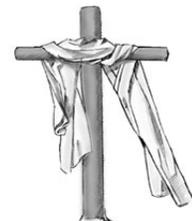
This prayer is one that I will be using on Good Friday. It is a prayer that should be used often in this time by all of us.

*Let us pray, dearly beloved, for a swift end to the coronavirus pandemic that afflicts our world, that God our Father will heal the sick, strengthen those who care for them, and help us all to persevere in faith.*

*Almighty and merciful God, source of all life, health, and healing, look with compassion on our world, brought low by disease; protect us in the midst of the grave challenges that assail us and in your fatherly providence grant recovery to the stricken, grace to those who care for them, and success to those working to eradicate this scourge.  
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

Respectfully yours,

Rev. James J. Ward



## CHURCH OPEN FOR PRIVATE PRAYER

Good Friday: 12 noon to 3 p.m.

Easter Sunday: 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Please use social distance rules when visiting the church, and use the hand sanitizer provided when entering and leaving. St. Joseph Church is open daily 8am until dark.

**PALM SUNDAY** – Unfortunately, due to Covid-19 and the Governors order to “stay at home”, and under the direction of the Diocese, **we will not be distributing Palms**. If one person who has the coronavirus even touches some of the palm which someone else will take, the risk of spread could impact potentially others who will receive them. The risk is too high as infectious disease doctors are telling us that the virus is very contagious. The Church certainly does not want to be the one who endangers the lives of others, especially our elderly who would want so much to take part in this Sacramental.

### WCC Question of the Week

Today begins the holiest week of the year. It is a once-a-year opportunity to really reflect on Jesus life, death, and resurrection. How will you enter into this experience? How will you be open to how you might be changed??

**FAMILY ACTIVITY:** Make crosses from the palm branches and put them in a prominent place in your home. Ask each family member to reflect quietly on the following: Is there something that I need to give up in order to be closer to Jesus? After a few moments, join hands and pray the Lord’s Prayer together.

**“VIRTUAL MASSES”** There are many options available to “participate” in Mass. We have listed various streaming links on our website, with Bishop Schlert, or other local priests. Please see our website for more info and links.



**HOLY LAND COLLECTION:** In light of the restricted celebration of Holy Week due to the Covid19 pandemic, Pope Francis has authorized the transfer of the annual Collection for the Holy Land to another date. The Holy Father has authorized its transfer this year to Sun, Sept 13, 2020. This is the Sunday closest to the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross.

**THE ST. JOSEPH “LUCK OF THE DRAW”** April drawing will be held privately by the committee on April 19<sup>th</sup>. Winners will be notified.

**CONTRIBUTIONS/ENVELOPES:** We realize that the pandemic can be causing financial hardship for many people. Thank you to all who have mailed, dropped off, or electronically sent donation envelopes. The Diocese has launched a new, online Parish Support initiative as an option to support local parishes. The new site allows individuals to make a one-time or recurring credit card contribution to any parish in the Diocese. Visit [allentowndiocese.org/parish-support](http://allentowndiocese.org/parish-support) and select the parish of your choice.

You may continue to mail a check with one of your envelopes to the rectory office; Drop envelopes/mail through the rectory office mail slot; or hold your donation until Masses resume. We ask that you combine your Sunday donation into just one envelope, there is no need to return multiple Sunday envelopes. Thank you for your understanding and support.

**FIVE SIMPLE WAYS TO CELEBRATE HOLY WEEK AT HOME:** Create a simple prayer space in your home, and gather there to pray during the week.

**Palm Sunday:** At your regular Mass time, read the first Palm Sunday Gospel (Mt 21:1–11) and meditate on or discuss what Jesus might be thinking as he enters Jerusalem for the last time.

**Holy Thursday:** Bake bread for sharing at dinner; make a ritual of stripping the dinner table of all cloths and decorations after dinner.

**Good Friday:** Pray the Stations of the Cross at 3 p.m.

**Holy Saturday:** In the morning, read Psalm 64 and break your Good Friday fast solemnly with a simple meal.

**Easter Sunday:** Dress up the dinner table again. Include candles and crosses, so that the candy baskets aren’t the only festive items present. Sing Alleluia and read the Easter Gospel (Matthew 28:1–10) with solemnity and joy.

Look online for other suggestions for celebrating Holy Week at home, to deepen and enrich your experience at this time of social isolation.

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**OPERATION RICE BOWL:** We hear Jesus’s command to feed the hungry, whether he is multiplying loaves and fish for a crowd of thousands, or simply breaking bread with friends. Jesus invites us to share what we have with all people—our global human family. As we prepare for Easter, take some time as a family and talk about what you have learned from these stories and activities, and what Trinh, Yvone, and Maria Ana and their families have taught you. Their stories of hope celebrate the many lives our Lenten journey has touched. What we did for Lent changes lives—both in our community and in our world.

