

Dear Friends,

By the time many of you read this, the final Mass at the Church of the Immaculate Heart of Mary was celebrated. I wish to thank the many people who made this celebration a fitting tribute to the short but rich history of this Church. We welcomed many people who have not attended a Mass at IHM in some time. While there was a sense of sadness, the opportunity that lies ahead must be grabbed: St. Mary's Church is the sole worship site for All Saints parish. With limited and diminishing resources, we must do everything we can to ensure the safety, structure, appearance and accessibility of the building.

Don't forget, another celebration is our annual school and parish picnic on Sunday, September 8th at Craig Park in Painted Post from 1:00pm to 3:30pm.

Your Church is open for prayer.....

For over 10 years, The Church of the Immaculate Heart of Mary served as the weekday chapel and was open from morning through evening for prayer. The recent closing has prompted discussion and decision about the availability of St. Mary's Church to be opened for prayer during the daytime. As of September 9, St. Mary's Church will be open the following days and hours:

On weekdays (Monday through Friday), the church will be opened at 6:30am and will close at 5:30pm

On Saturday, the Church will open at 7:30am, in time for the recitation of the rosary, and will remain open until the conclusion of the 5:00pm Mass.

On Sunday, the Church will be opened at 6:15am (in time for the 7:00am Mass) and will remain open through 4:00pm, the conclusion of adoration in the Brennan Chapel.

For me, one of the most disheartening things is to approach a Church with the hope of entering, only to find it locked. I hope this schedule helps you make time to come to the Church and offer prayers of Thanksgiving and need outside of Mass, Liturgy of the Hours, Adoration and Rosary that are on the schedule.

The concluding part of this week's good news article is a brief reflection on St. Peter Claver. He is regarded as the patron of slaves and those held in captivity. I became acquainted with him during my time at St. James parish on the southside of Chicago, which I mentioned a few articles ago. This parish was a once thriving and very rich area comprised of successful Irish immigrants. A few blocks to the north was McCormick place, a train stop on the Illinois Railroad which, for several years after the end of the Civil War, welcomed freed black slaves from the south to freedom in the north (today, the site is a massive convention center). One of those was Augustus Tolton, who was born into slavery in 1854 and was baptized and raised Catholic. He considered St. Peter Claver to be a patron due to his struggles and despite heavy opposition, fulfilled his childhood dream of becoming a priest. He was ordained in 1886 at the Basilica of St. John Lateran, the seat of the Diocese of Rome. His training and ordination in Rome indicate that he

was not welcome to study at an American seminary and the only option for his first assignment was at his home parish in Quincy, Illinois. A short time later, he was assigned to be the founding pastor of St. Monica Church in Chicago, a black national Catholic Church on 36th and Dearborn Street in Chicago. This site was just a few blocks from St. James Church. On July 8, 1897, Fr. Tolton was on his way to Mercy Hospital (near the shore of Lake Michigan) to visit the sick when he collapsed of exhaustion during a massive heat wave. He died the following day. In Chicago, he remains a source of hope for many people who are still struggling to make ends meet and who lack the basic necessities of life, and many who fear for their lives on a daily basis due to heavy violence. I will never forget praying to Augustus Tolton during my most difficult struggles during my time there and the seminary, and consider him a patron who helped get me through the final stages of priestly formation. He is now called Venerable Augustus Tolton, the second stage of attaining sainthood (the first being Servant of God). He was advanced to this stage on June 12 of this year by Pope Francis. If his cause advances, he will become blessed and then, we pray, a saint.

Saints become acquainted with other saints to help them in their search for holiness. Saints remind us of the extraordinary ways God calls us to lay down our lives, and invite us to reexamine our priorities. What these saints went through is, by some accounts, deplorable. We will never encounter that they had to endure simply to survive. Yet, they persevered to help others find light through darkness and hope beyond despair. Their lives and struggles make ours seem so trivial in comparison. Peter Claver and August Tolton never met in person, but they had something better: the Mass. As parishioners of All Saints, we have many patrons and we must look and pray to the multitude of saints so they can help us find forgiveness, holiness, peace, wisdom and courage.

In Christ,

Fr. Jones

Celebrating Saint Peter Claver

“Who is my neighbor?” Jesus’ answer to this question was the parable of the Good Samaritan. In short, the person you least expect. Peter Claver was born in 16th century Spain. Peter became a Jesuit and was deeply influenced by the missionary call. At age 30, he set out for modern-day Colombia. At the time, Cartagena was one of the largest slave markets in the New World. As a priest, Peter knew his role was spiritual service. He quickly dedicated his ministry to these “neighbors” whom the world rejected. When a slave ship entered the harbor, Peter would rush on board with food, water, and a human touch. He introduced some slaves to Christ in a more formal way. As these new converts were moved to plantations, he would visit them, stay in their quarters, and advocate with the masters to act humanely. St. Peter Claver called himself “the slave of the slaves forever.” May we, too, have a powerful sense of our neighbor.

In Christ,

Fr. Jones