

# IMMACULATE CONCEPTION CHURCH

1223 16<sup>th</sup> St (P.O. Box 849), Fort Benton, MT - 59442

## ST. MARGARET'S CHURCH

700 Brewster St (P.O. Box 50), Geraldine, MT – 59446

### Third Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year A)

*Rev. Mohan Raj Samy*

*Website: [iccfb.org](http://iccfb.org)*

*Pastor*

*Office: 406-622-3726*

<i>Day, Month &amp; Date</i>	<u>Mass Schedule for January 25 – February 01, 2026</u>
<b>Sun Jan 25<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time:</b> 9 am Mass @ ICC & 11 am Mass @ St. Margaret's.
<b>Wed Jan 28<sup>th</sup></b>	9 am Mass @ ICC ( <i>St. Thomas Aquinas, Priest &amp; Doctor of the Church</i> ).
<b>Thurs Jan 29<sup>th</sup></b>	10:30 am Mass @ Bluffs.
<b>Fri Jan 30<sup>th</sup></b>	11 am The Angelus, Novena & Mass @ St. Margaret's.
<b>Sat Jan 31<sup>st</sup></b>	9 am Mass @ ICC ( <i>St. John Bosco, Priest</i> ).
<b>Sun Feb 01<sup>st</sup></b>	<b>4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time:</b> 9 am Mass @ St. Margaret's & 11 am Mass and Benediction @ ICC.

### Sunday Collections: Jan 18, 2026 – Second Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year A)

ICC: \$ 686.00 + \$ (Maintenance) = \$ 686.00.
St. Margaret's, Geraldine: \$ 234.00

Thank you to All who have generously donated. Your Generosity is very humbling.

Reflection by Pastor: Dear Loving Sisters, Brothers and Children in Christ!

### **God's Permissive Will**

*When Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew to Galilee... From that time on, Jesus began to preach and say, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” [Matthew 4:12, 17](#).*

When John the Baptist was arrested, his followers were likely overcome with fear and grief. The man they revered as a prophet, who fearlessly proclaimed the coming of the Messiah and called for repentance through baptism, had been imprisoned. John was

arrested by Herod Antipas, the son of Herod the Great, infamous for ordering the massacre of infants in Bethlehem. Like his father, Herod Antipas was ambitious and morally corrupt. As tetrarch of Galilee and Perea under Roman authority, Herod's political survival depended on maintaining Roman favor. He often used religion to secure legitimacy among the Jewish people, though his actions routinely violated Jewish law.

Though nominally Jewish, the Herodian dynasty was of Idumean descent, tracing its lineage to Esau rather than Jacob. The Idumeans were forcibly converted to Judaism between 135–104 BC. While this history granted the Herods a claim to Jewish identity, their foreign lineage and collaboration with Rome made them unpopular with many Jews. Herod Antipas, like his father, prioritized political cunning and personal ambition over genuine adherence to Jewish law.

When John the Baptist emerged on the scene, he proclaimed his message with fearless conviction. His central call was one of repentance and baptism for the forgiveness of sins, urging the people to prepare for the coming of the Messiah. Yet John did not shy away from addressing the moral and spiritual corruption of his time. He famously denounced the Pharisees and Sadducees as a “brood of vipers,” rebuking their hypocrisy and lack of genuine repentance. John also boldly condemned Herod Antipas for violating Jewish law by divorcing his wife and marrying Herodias, the wife of his half-brother, Philip. This marriage not only violated Mosaic Law but also reflected Herod's ambitions to consolidate power and status. John's fearless denunciation of sin, even among the powerful, ultimately led to his arrest and eventual martyrdom.

This historical context surrounding John's arrest is crucial because it helps us understand God's providence - how He permits certain evils to occur in order to bring about a greater good. Jesus Himself later affirmed John's greatness, saying, “Among those born of women there has been none greater than John the Baptist” ([Matthew 11:11](#)). If the Son of God declared John's greatness shortly after John's arrest, why didn't God miraculously free him from persecution? The answer lies in John's mission. He had fulfilled his primary role: preparing the way for the Lord, the “Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world” ([John 1:29](#)). Once John's mission was complete, God permitted him to seal his testimony with his own blood, offering his life as a martyr for the Lord and for the Truth that sets all people free.

Reflect today on John's arrest and consider how you might have reacted if you had been one of his disciples. From an earthly perspective, martyrdom is difficult to comprehend or accept, especially in our own lives or in the lives of those we love. Though John's arrest and subsequent martyrdom likely brought fear and grief to his disciples, shaking their sense of security, from an eternal perspective, John's martyrdom was his greatest act of witness. It fulfilled his mission by pointing his disciples—and all of us—toward the

true Prophet and Messiah, Jesus Christ. John is forever glorified in Heaven, and in the end, that is all that truly matters. As we honor John's unwavering faith, seek to embrace God's permissive will in your own life. Even in the face of suffering or evil, trust that God, in His providence, can bring about a greater good if we surrender ourselves fully to Him.

## HOSPITAL MINISTRY

As our elderly parishioners transition to Assisted Living and the Nursing Home, Hospital Ministry becomes their connection with the Immaculate Conception Parish family. At this time we are fortunate to have ministers who cover our homebound and Front Range Assisted Living and other ministers to cover Benefis MRMC.

One of our Hospital Ministers has some ongoing health issues that is keeping them from participating. That leaves just one Minister to cover all of the weeks. This will be an issue for the next several months and we are asking for your help. Please consider becoming a temporary Hospital Minister. Training is available for those new to this position or as a refresher. If you are willing to help, please contact Fr Mohan at (406) 622-3726 or Cecilia Dostal at (406) 836-0184

## Catholic Foundation of Eastern Montana

Did you know the Catholic Foundation of Eastern Montana has more than 200 endowments that support Catholic churches, schools, and ministries all throughout the Diocese of Great Falls-Billings? By supporting these endowments, you can help ensure the Church remains strong for generations to come. To learn more, visit [www.catholicfoundationmt.org](http://www.catholicfoundationmt.org) or call (406) 315-1765.

## St. Margaret's Bulletin

Women's Annual Luncheon Sunday, February 1 at 10 am following 9:00 am Mass. If convenient bring something for the brunch potluck. We will plan the calendar of events for 2026; enjoy playing a simple game and visiting with one another.

## Reflection by Trish - The space In-between/ Liminal Space

I loved being a hospice social worker. Working with patients and families at the end of life was rewarding, and I felt I was making a positive impact on my clients. After 9 years in this position, I lost my job. The hospital restructured and dropped my position. After the shock lessened a bit, I found myself feeling lost. I was between what was and what was to come. I couldn't change the past and did not know what the future held. This is liminal space. We must wait in this in-between time, the liminal space. Spending time dwelling on the past and thinking about the should haves, could haves, or would haves is

not helpful. It serves no purpose. Often, we do not know what the future holds. We can't change what happened in the past or control what will happen next. This is a time of transition.

It is common to be angry, frustrated, or disappointed when life changes and we have no control over the situation. It is important to find a way to move on from these emotions and accept the present situation. To be patient. When we accept the situation, we can find a place of growth in the liminal space, the empty space in between the past and the future. Life can be a constant struggle when we believe we can control what happens. When we hold dear to the notion of what we deserve, what is fair, or what our life is supposed to look like. When life does not follow that path, we can feel let down or we can adapt. Everyone's life journey includes unexpected change.

We can find the sacred by accepting this time in-between, and asking the Divine Holy One to just be with us. When we give up trying to control our lives, The Great Mystery can work through us. A new path will appear in the darkness, and we will set off again on our journey. Even as we set out again, we know that at some point another unexpected change will take place. When we stop trying to control things we find guidance from the Holy Spirit. I was unemployed for 5 months. During this time, I wanted to know what the future held, yet I could not. I felt like I was drifting in an undefined space and time. It was difficult. There were 2 prayers I repeated daily to keep hope and trust in The Divine.

1. "God does not close a door without opening a window." I would envision a large window opening to bright sunshine, a gentle breeze, and a green landscape. I knew at some point I would move through this window to what the future held for me.

2. "It is only in the darkness that we can see the stars." In this time of uncertainty, I had to trust in God and believe that eventually stars would appear and I would be directed to where I was needed. The stars may give off only a dim light, but they would show me the path I was to take.

When we try to earnestly control multiple aspects of our lives, we do not leave space for The Great Mystery to work and move in our lives. When you find yourself in liminal space, be quiet and wait. Open your heart and mind to the Holy Spirit for patience as you wait for the Source of Our Being to show us where you are needed.

*Trusting the Spirit of God fills us,  
The Source of our Being surrounds us  
And the Word of Jesus shows us the way.  
May we quietly rest trusting we will find guidance.*

