

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION CHURCH

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

ST. MARGARET'S CHURCH

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

Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year A)

Rev. Mohan Raj Samy

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Pastor

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Day, Month & Date	<u>Mass Schedule for February 08 – February 15, 2026</u>
Sun Feb 08 th	<i>5th Sunday in Ordinary Time: 9 am Mass @ ICC & 11 am Mass @ St. Margaret's. (Intention: Shirley Yirsa RIP, R/B Sheila Ross).</i>
Wed Feb 11 th	9 am Mass @ ICC (Our Lady of Lourdes).
Thurs Feb 12 th	10:30 am Mass @ Bluffs.
Fri Feb 13 th	11 am The Angelus, Novena & Mass @ St. Margaret's.
Sat Feb 14 th	9 am Mass @ ICC.
Sun Feb 15 th	<i>6th Sunday in Ordinary Time: 9 am Mass @ ICC & 11 am Mass @ St. Margaret's.</i>
Tues Feb 17 th	<i>Ash Tuesday: 6pm @ St. Margaret's.</i>
Wed Feb 18 th	<i>Ash Wednesday: 6:30 pm @ ICC (Fast & Abstinence).</i>

Sunday Collections: Feb 01, 2026 – **Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year A)**

ICC: \$ 1,555.00 + \$890 .00 (Maintenance) = \$ 2,445.00.
St. Margaret's, Geraldine: \$ 790.00

[Thank you to All who have generously donated. Your Generosity is very humbling.](#)

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

Flavor, Preservation, and Purity

Jesus said to his disciples: "You are the salt of the earth. But if salt loses its taste, with what can it be seasoned? It is no longer good for anything but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot." [Matthew 5:13](#).

Sodium chloride, also known as salt, is one of the most commonly used substances in the world, used for seasoning, preserving, and purifying. Sodium chloride is a very stable

compound and cannot lose its flavor unless there is a chemical reaction or dissolution. Why, then, did Jesus suggest that salt could lose its taste? One likely explanation is that the salt used in ancient Palestine could indeed lose its flavor due to impurities and the conditions in which it was stored.

The Dead Sea, located in modern-day southeast Israel, contains a massive deposit of salt and other minerals. According to biblical history, Lot's wife was turned into a pillar of salt in this region. Because of the vast salt and mineral deposits, the area surrounding the Dead Sea is desolate. Salt extracted from the Dead Sea was never pure sodium chloride. Gypsum and other minerals were also present, making the salt impure. If this salt were stored improperly or came into contact with water, the sodium chloride could dissolve and wash away, leaving behind the solid residue of minerals. These residual substances, like gypsum, had the appearance of salt but were tasteless and useless for flavoring, preserving, and purifying purposes. When this happened, the "salt" lost its taste. In light of this explanation, Jesus' teaching becomes especially clear.

The first notable feature of salt is its ability to add flavor to food. By calling His disciples the "salt of the earth," Jesus was instructing them to enhance the "flavor" of the world by bringing the truth of the Gospel and the joy of His message to others. A Christian life lived in fidelity to Christ would make the world a better and more virtuous place, just as salt enhances the flavor of food.

Salt is also commonly used for preservation. Before the age of refrigerators and freezers, salt was mixed with food to prevent corruption, by drawing out moisture and hindering bacteria and other microorganisms. Though this practice is still used today, it was especially vital in ancient times. By being the "salt of the earth," Jesus was calling His disciples to preserve the world from moral decay. Through their witness and proclamation of the Gospel, they were to act as a preservative against sin and spiritual ruin. If they were to "lose their taste," they would become indistinguishable from the rest of the world and ineffective in their mission. Hence, Jesus was exhorting them - and us - to avoid becoming watered down and bland in our witness to the Gospel.

Lastly, salt held a significant role in Jewish religious practices, symbolizing purity and consecration. In sacrificial rituals, salt was used to consecrate offerings, as commanded in Leviticus: "You shall season all your grain offerings with salt. Do not let the salt of the covenant with your God be lacking from your grain offering. On every offering you shall offer salt" ([Leviticus 2:13](#)). By seasoning their offerings with salt, the Israelites preserved the sacrifices from decay, making them pure. This practice reflects the disciples' role in purifying the world through their example of holiness, their lives of self-sacrifice, and their participation in Christ's redemptive work. They were to live lives of integrity, leading others to God through the purity of their hearts and their unwavering commitment to His will.

Reflect today on this powerful metaphor of being the salt of the earth. The world desperately needs the enriching “flavor” of God’s grace. Without Him, the world is left to corruption and decay. With God, we, and those we serve, are preserved as pure and holy offerings, adding to His glory and growing in holiness. Be the salt of the earth. Do not become watered down in your faith. Remain steadfast in your fidelity to Christ and His Gospel, and you will transform the world around you. In doing so, you will not only glorify God but will also share in His eternal joy.

Thank You...!

The Ladies of Martha and Mary would like to thank everyone from Immaculate Conception and St. Margaret's parishes for all the delicious salads and bars, CYC students for setting up tables and chairs, the wonderful kitchen help and everyone who stepped in where needed for Ken Engellant's funeral reception. It was a large gathering full of stories and laughter. A wonderful tribute to our friend, Ken. *Worship Commission* – Joanne Streit.

St. Margaret’s Bulletin

Valentine Plates - Sunday, February 15 we will put together Valentine Plates before 11:00 am Mass. Please have your treats to the church by 10 am that is when we will begin making the plates. We have made approximately 40 plates in the past few years. What to donate -- Fruit, nuts, snack cups, or snack bars, baked items or any treat you wish to contribute is welcomed.

The plates will be ready for deliver after Mass. Please plan on taking a couple plates as you leave the church and deliver them to individuals. You don’t need to know the person you are delivering to. The plates are always welcomed by the recipient. A card attached states it is from St. Margaret’s Faith Community.

Ash Wednesday Mass in Geraldine Tuesday, February 17 at 6:00 pm.

Sunday, March 1—10:30 to 12:30 a time of reflection, discussion and prayer. Theme: There is Good Positive News, led by Trish Eklund. After 9:00 am Mass we will have treats and fellowship 10:00 to 10:30 prior to time of reflection. Everyone is welcome join us.

Reflection by Trish - About Desmond Tutu

Desmond Tutu was a South African Anglican bishop and theologian known for his work as an anti-apartheid and human rights activist. He won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1984 for his role in opposing apartheid. (Apartheid was a system of racial segregation and discrimination in South Africa from about 1950 to 1994.)

During the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa he became a leading spokesman for the injustice of the apartheid system. He frequently openly preached about the injustices that were present. One Sunday as his church was filling with Black South Africans it was also filling with military personnel with rifles. The armed men stood along the walls of the church. Those in the pews wondered what their Bishop would do. If he preached about equality he could be arrested or worse. If he did not, it would mean that the oppressive government was winning the battle.

When Bishop Tutu walked in, he was silent for a few minutes. Then he began to laugh. He just laughed and laughed. He kept laughing. Soon people joined in, soon even the armed guards were laughing. Bishop Tutu deflated this very tense situation. Everyone joined together in laughter.

Quotes by Bishop Desmond Tutu:

If you want peace, you don't talk to your friends. You talk to your enemies.

Hope is being able to see that there is light despite all of the darkness.

If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you are on the side of the oppressor.

My humanity is bound up in yours, for we can only be human together.

We are each made for goodness, love, and compassion. Our lives are transformed as much as the world is when we live with these truths.

Differences are not intended to separate, to alienate. We are different precisely in order to realize our need of one another.

God is not evenhanded. God is biased, horribly in favor of the weak. The minute an injustice is perpetrated, God is going to be on the side of the one who is being clobbered. We may be surprised at the people we find in heaven. God has a soft spot for sinners. His standards are quite low.

When the missionaries came to Africa they had the Bible and we had the land. They said 'Let us pray.' We closed our eyes. When we opened them we had the Bible and they had the land.

God's dream is that you and I and all of us will realize that we are family that we are made for togetherness, for goodness, and for compassion.

Our maturity will be judged by how well we are able to agree to disagree and yet continue to love one another, to care for one another, and cherish one another and seek the greater good of the other.

Loving Creator of us all,
Help us to see the world as Desmond Tutu saw it
With a need for one another in the spirit of forgiveness and love.

