

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

Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year A)

Rev. Mohan Raj Samy

Website: icefb.org

Pastor

Office: 406-622-3726

Day, Month & Date	<u>Mass Schedule for June 28 – July 05, 2026</u>
Sun June 28 th	<i>13th Sunday in Ordinary Time: 9 am Mass @ ICC & 11 am Mass @ St. Margaret's. (Intention: Vicky & Wally Morger RIP, R/B Morger Descendants).</i>
Tues June 30 th	<i>Fr. Mohan leaves to India (New Parish Administrator (Fr. A. Joseph) will arrive on the 7th of July)</i>
Sun July 05 th	<i>14th Sunday in Ordinary Time: 9 am Mass @ St. Margaret's & 11 am Mass @ ICC (Celebrant: Fr. Jay Peterson).</i>

Sunday Collections: June 21, 2026: The Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year A)

ICC: \$ 3,010.00 & \$ 105 (Maintenance) = \$ 3,115.00	[Boiler Fund: \$]
St. Margaret's, Geraldine: \$ 380.00	

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

[Reflection by Pastor: Dear Loving Sisters, Brothers and Children in Christ!](#)

Receiving and Expressing Love

Jesus said to his apostles: "Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever does not take up his cross and follow after me is not worthy of me." [Matthew 10:37–38](#).

When a scribe approached Jesus and asked Him which of the commandments was the greatest, He replied: "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these" ([Mark 12:30–31](#)).

Today's Gospel offers a similar teaching: We must love God above all else—even more than father, mother, son, or daughter. By contrasting love for God with love for family, Jesus is not diminishing familial affection; rather, He is revealing that the only way to truly love others is by loving God first.

Saint Thomas Aquinas teaches: “God must be loved above all things and before all others out of charity, for He is loved as the source of happiness, whereas our neighbor is loved as one who shares in that happiness along with us” (*Summa Theologiae* II-II, Q.26, A.2). In other words, God must be loved first because He is the ultimate cause and source of beatitude—the only true happiness. Though we are called to love our families and our neighbors, Christian charity dictates that we love them in relation to God—as fellow recipients of divine happiness.

One reason this Gospel is challenging is that our natural affections, though good, must be transformed by divine charity. It is natural to love our parents and children—God designed us with these affections. Even animals instinctively care for their offspring. But Jesus calls us to something higher: a love that is perfected by divine charity, transcending mere emotional attachment or duty. His teaching does not negate natural love; rather, it purifies, elevates, and directs it toward the highest good—God Himself.

When Jesus speaks of loving “father or mother” or “son or daughter” more than Him, He is addressing the inner conflict we sometimes experience in our emotions. When natural affection is not transformed by spiritual charity, the love we offer another can do more harm than good. Disordered affection replaces the ultimate good—God—with the lesser good of emotional attachment and human consolation. The real danger arises when our loved ones stray from God's will, and we, out of misguided affection, affirm them in their error, thereby confirming them in a state lacking true beatitude.

The foundation of true love is this: God alone is the source of perfect happiness, for us and for our loved ones. Our belief in God transforms the way we love others. No longer do we merely seek their earthly comfort or emotional well-being; rather, we direct them to the eternal Good—God Himself—who alone fulfills every longing.

When we love God first, all our relationships are purified. Instead of loving others with human affection alone, we love them with the very love of God, seeking their ultimate good: eternal life in Him. This purified love does not exclude human affection; rather, it elevates and directs it, ensuring that our love is not merely sentimental but truly transformative through divine charity.

Reflect today on those closest to you—those whom God calls you to love with the highest form of love. Are your affections rightly ordered, or do they sometimes compete with the charity God desires to instill in you? If so, turn your heart to God. Seek to love

Him above all else. Let Him become the object of your deepest love and desire. When God is first, His love will transform you from within, enabling you to love others not just with natural affection, but with the very love of Christ, leading them to the eternal joy of union with Him.

Annual Catholic Appeal

This year's theme, "A Season of Hope, A Future of Faith," reflects both the strength and generosity of our people. It invites us to look forward with confidence—trusting that what we nurture today will sustain the Church for generations to come. The Annual Catholic Appeal is more than a request for funds. It is an invitation for every Catholic household to participate in the shared mission of the Diocese. Your local leadership—in word, witness, and coordination—helps connect parishioners to the broader Church and strengthens our collective ability to serve. *Your generosity makes it possible for our Diocese to serve every parish and community across Eastern Montana. Please take a moment to prayerfully make your gift. Your participation helps ensure a future of faith for generations to come.*"

St. Margaret's Bulletin

Updates on Elevator/Lift fund - We presently have \$15,502.76 in our elevator account. We have pledges for \$6,500.00 more. We thank all those who have donated.

We wish Fr. Mohan good travels and all the best in your future endeavors. Blessings and peace. (**Fr. Mohan's Mailing Address** in USA: Post Box 868, Fort Benton, MT – 59442; **India** – Fr. Alby Mohan Raj, St. Anthony's Street, Mazhuvankarunai, Kill Villi Vanam Post, Vandavasi Taluk, Tiruvannamalai District, Tamil nadu – 604 408).

Reflection by Trish - Present Moment

I am sure your life has not unfolded exactly as you anticipated. Sometimes we have disruptions to our day's plan. Sometimes circumstances totally disrupt our lives. We might experience losing a job, a health diagnosis, and death of a loved one, financial problems, or feeling emotionally devastated. Sometimes life seems to fall apart. It feels like a large rock cliff has raised up in front of us.

A Jewish Rabbi says in the Talmud that you have to bless both the good and the bad that comes to you. (The Talmud is the central text of Jewish law and scholarship.) Several years ago someone came to me asking what to do with a difficult situation. One thing I advised that they ask God to bless it. They were stunned. Why bless something that is not good?

When we are in the midst of a difficult time, we often spend our energy focusing on how we wish it was different, thinking about what we would change if we could, or trying to

push the situation away. In good and bad times, it is important to be present to the moment.

Life unfolds in ways we can't always understand. Some things happen that cause us joy. Some things cause us suffering. Some things happen that we want, some we don't want. We can't control most of what happens in life. We are to just open our heart and accept what is happening and be present to it.

When we try to avoid or push away what we don't like happening, when we try to fight it instead of opening our heart to it, we increase our suffering. We are all going to have a certain amount of pain in our lives. To bear it we need to be open to the present moment, just being with the "now" without projecting into the future. If we take care of this present moment and then the next moment as they unfold, we can continue to take care of each moment when it comes. We decrease the anxiety and stress we bring on ourselves by wishing or hoping it were different. We can stop worrying about the future and focus on the here and now.

Kaira Jewel Lingo, a Buddhist teacher, tells us that being fully present can alleviate suffering. She says all we have is the moment we are in. When struggling we can say, "Present moment is the only moment." It is the only moment we have. It is the part of life we have been given. If we're going to live it, we have to decide to live it.

Problems are not something to deal with but something God is inviting us to face with God's help. Knowing we can't change people or things can bring peace. There is still the difficulty, but wishing it away adds more suffering. We can free ourselves from having to fix the situation. This can help us see what is happening in the moment, giving us perspective.

Mirabai Starr said, "Stop arguing with reality and instead soften into it." We can ask for strength from the Spirit of God to be present and open to this moment. Realize this is our life at this moment. Arguing with it makes life harder.

So, when presented with a small interruption in your day, give your attention to the person or situation that is taking place. Don't think about what you planned on doing or will be done shortly. This is where you are. Be present.

When you are faced with a life altering situation, soften into it, accept it. Ask God to bless it and give you strength to be in this moment.

Good and Gracious God, You are always with us.

Jesus showed us how to face suffering with an open heart.

The Spirit of God provides strength and courage to find some peace with difficulties we face.