



IMMACULATE CONCEPTION SCHOOL

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**CELEBRATING 162 YEARS OF MISSION • COMMUNITY • SERVICE**

*The mission of Immaculate Conception School is to provide experiences to inspire, challenge, and nurture the mind, body, and spirit of our students within the framework of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the tradition of the Catholic Church.*

**OPEN THE DOORS OF MERCY!**

July 1, 2015

V. 41 #01

Dear Parent, Guardian, Student, Teacher, Friend,

Our first letter of the new school year brings the arrangements for the celebration of the life of Zac Epplin, son of our school Secretary Mrs. Bev Epplin and Doug Epplin, and brother to Luc, Andrew and Matthew. When you think in terms of beginnings and endings, Zac's journey to new life has just begun. He leaves us with many wonderful memories of his courage and faith.



Zachary D. Epplin

Born: February 25, 1996

Died: July 01, 2015

Zachary D. Epplin, 19 yrs., of Waterloo, IL, passed away at home with his family at his side. He was born in Belleville, IL, the son of Doug and Beverly, nee Meyer, Epplin, who survive him.

Zac loved being the big brother of the family and always had a bit of advice or a good practical joke ready for us. He loved his pets very much and had hoped to one day become a veterinarian. He was very proud to have been teammates with his high school soccer team. Zac liked to fish and hunt and grill up a good meal to share with us. He put his family and friends above himself and we were all blessed to have known him even if it was only for a short time.

**Visitation:** Friday, July 3, 2015, 4:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Saturday, July 4, 2015, 9:00 am - 10:00 am

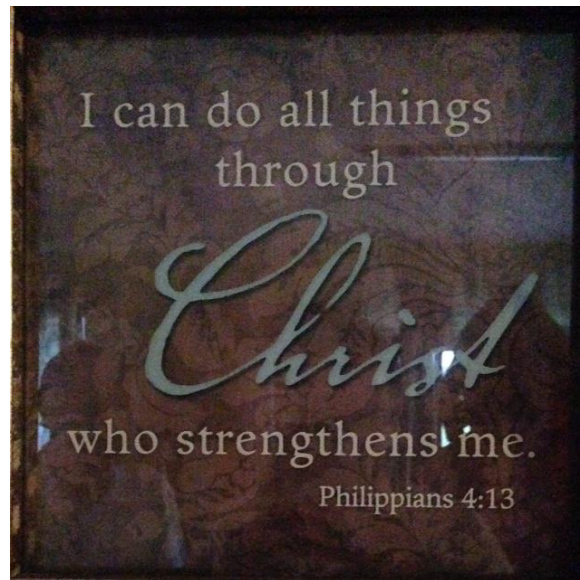
Immaculate Conception Catholic Church, 411 Palmer Road, Columbia, IL

**Funeral Mass:** Saturday, July 4, 2015, 10:00 am, Immaculate Conception Catholic Church, Columbia, IL  
Fr. Carl Scherrer, officiating

**Interment:** Immaculate Conception Cemetery, Columbia, IL

**Memorial Contribution Suggestions:** As an expression of sympathy, the family prefers memorial contributions to: Immaculate Conception School - New Playground Fund, 411 Palmer Road, Columbia, IL 62236, or The Gibault High School Soccer Team, 501 Columbia Ave., Waterloo, IL 62298

**Also Surviving:** Brothers, Lucas, Matthew, and Andrew Epplin of Waterloo, IL  
Special Friend, Kassy Clark of Smithton, IL  
Maternal Grandparents, Kenny and Betty, nee Andres, Meyer of Columbia, IL  
Paternal Grandparents, Robert and Janet, nee Langa, Epplin of Pinckneyville, IL  
Aunts, Uncles, Cousins, other relatives and many friends



**God always speaks to us right where we are...**this is the weekly post from one of my favorite spiritual writers fits well in the life plan for all of us. We do financial plans but often ignore our more important spiritual plans.

Zac Epplin was a happy kid who danced the gift of life. As we suffer through our loss, words like these help and they remind us of perspective and hope for the future and can orient us in this difficult time for the Epplin and Parish families.

## **AMAZING GRACE FR. RON ROLHEISER, OMI**

It was William Auden, I think, who wrote that when grace enters a room everyone begins to dance.

Would this were so! More often the opposite happens, grace enters a room and instead of dancing we become discontent and our eyes grow bitter with envy. Why? Nikos Kazantzakis, the great Greek writer, tells a story of an elderly monk he once met on Mount Athos. Kazantzakis, still young and full of curiosity, was questioning this monk and asked him: "Do you still wrestle with the devil?" "No," replied the old monk, "I used to, when I was younger, but now I've grown old and tired and the devil has grown old and tired with me." "So," Kazantzakis said, "your life is easy then? No more big struggles." "Oh, no!" replied the old man, "now it's worse. Now I wrestle with God!" "You wrestle with God," replied Kazantzakis, rather surprised, "and you hope to win?" "No," said the old monk, "I wrestle with God and I hope to lose!"

There comes a point in life when our major spiritual struggle is no longer with the fact that we are weak and desperately in need of God's forgiveness, but rather with the opposite, with the fact that God's grace and forgiveness is overly-lavish, unmerited, and especially that it goes out so indiscriminately. God's lavish love and forgiveness go out equally to those who have worked hard and to those who haven't, to those who have been faithful for a long time and to those who jumped on-board at the last minute, to those who have had to bear the heat of the day and to those who didn't, to those who did their duty and to those who lived selfishly.

God's love isn't a reward for being good, doing our duty, resisting temptation, bearing the heat of the day in fidelity, saying our prayers, remaining pure, or offering worship, good and important though these are. God loves us because God is love and God cannot not love and cannot be discriminating in love. God's love, as scripture says, shines on the good and bad alike. That's nice to know when we need forgiveness and unmerited love, but it's hard to accept when that forgiveness and love is given to those whom we deem less worthy of it, to those who didn't seem

to do their duty. It's not easy to accept that God's love does not discriminate, especially when God's blessings go out lavishly to those who don't seem to deserve them.

Allow me to share a story: When I was first ordained, I lived for a time in one of our Oblate rectories with a semi-retired priest, a wonderfully gracious man, who had been a faithful priest for fifty years. One evening, alone with him, I asked him: "If you had your priesthood to do over again, would you do anything differently?" The answer he gave me was not the one I'd anticipated. "Yes," he said, "I would do some things differently. I'd be easier on people than I was this time. I'd risk the mercy and forgiveness of God more." Then he grew silent, as if to create the proper space for what he was about to say, and added: "Let me say this too: As I get older I'm finding it harder and harder to accept the ways of God. I've been a priest for fifty years and I've been faithful. I can honestly say, in so far as I know, that in my whole life I've never committed a mortal sin. I've always tried my best and done my duty. It wasn't easy, but I did it with essential fidelity. And you know something? Now that I'm old I'm struggling with all kinds of bitterness and doubt. That's natural, I guess. But what upsets me is that I look around me and I see all kinds of people, young people and others, who've never been faithful, who've lived selfish lives, and they're full of faith and are speaking in tongues! I've been faithful and I'm full of anger and doubt. Tell me, is that fair?"

In the end, we need to forgive God and that might be the hardest forgiveness of all. It's hard to accept that God loves everyone equally – even our enemies, even those who hate us, even those who don't work as hard as we do, even those who reject duty for selfishness, and even those who give in to all the temptations we resist. Although deep down we know that God has been more than fair with us, God's lavish generosity to others is something which we find hard to accept. Like the workers in the Parable of the Vineyard who toiled the whole day and then saw those who had worked just one hour get the same wage as theirs, we often let God's generosity to others warp both our joy and our eyesight.

But that struggle points us in the right direction. Grace is amazing, by disorienting us it properly orients us.

**Mike Kish**  
**Principal**