

# The Concept

Newsletter of Immaculate Conception Parish

A Letter From Our Pastor

## In this Issue

2

The 33rd Annual Reverse Raffle

3

Catholic Schools *Dividends for Life*

4

Make This Lent a Family Season

5

A Plan for Spiritual Recovery

6

The Social Justice Committee

7

*The Patron of Catholic Schools in America*  
St. Elizabeth Ann Seton

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## Introducing Our New School Principal

Dear Parishioners,

Our Lady of the Lake Academy will open for Pre-School through eighth grade this coming fall. I am talking about the new, inter-parochial school that we are forming with Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish. After the final day of school this June, both Our Lady of Mount Carmel School and our parish grade school will close, and we will have one new, inter-parochial school for both parishes.

The first principal of Our Lady of the Lake Academy is Mrs. Loretta Pilla. I am very excited to have Mrs. Pilla as the principal of our new school. She has been teaching in Catholic schools for over 11 years, and is currently teaching at St. Mary School in Chardon, Ohio, where she is also the assistant principal. Mrs. Pilla graduated from Boston College, and she earned a master's degree in Educational Administration from Ursuline College here in Cleveland.

By way of introduction she writes this:

*During the time spent in Catholic schools, I have come to realize that a Catholic education is invaluable in today's society. It is a starting point on the path to a lifetime of success for our children. It is an investment in a valuable education and an education in values. This is why I decided to continue my own education and become an administrator in a Catholic school. I personally*



*believe in providing our children an environment that allows for not only educational and emotional growth, but spiritual growth as well. Catholic schools help children become the best they can be both inside and outside the classroom. I feel fortunate to have been given the chance to be a part of the process and to help shape young people to become adults of values, integrity, and good character.*

What more can be said from a principal deeply committed to Catholic education? We are on our way to a new beginning in the way that we hand on our Faith to our children by way of a Catholic grade school. New ways present new challenges to everyone who is involved. Our new venture demands the cooperation of our two parishes in order for one new school to be successful. This means that the administrations of both parishes, as well as the parents of the school children of both parishes, are called to "go the extra mile," as Jesus asks His followers. Please join me in praying for the success of Our Lady of the Lake Academy.

In Christ,

Fr. Troha



# The Concept

## The 33rd Annual Reverse Raffle *A Fun Night to Benefit Catholic Education*

**A**s the famous Clint Eastwood line goes: “You’ve got to ask yourself one question: ‘Do I feel lucky?’”

If your answer to that question is “yes,” then you might want to test that luck at the Immaculate Conception Holy Name Society’s 2010 Reverse Raffle.

The event, now in its 33rd year, will take place Feb. 21 at the LaMalfa Party center, with doors opening at 1 p.m. and the buffet beginning at 1:30 p.m. Proceeds from the Reverse Raffle primarily benefit the Holy Name Society Catholic Scholarship Fund.

“Every year, the Holy Name Society awards a \$4,000 scholarship to an eighth-grade student who is going to continue his or her education at a Catholic high school; \$1,000 for each year,” says Hap Berichon, who is co-chairing this year’s event with Frank Columbo. “The raffle provides the financial backing for that, plus any other things that we do during the year to help the church community.”

The big board at the raffle will award a grand prize of \$3,000, with prizes also being awarded for numbers drawn at certain intervals. There will also be \$2, \$3, and \$5 side boards at the event that will pay out \$200, \$300, and \$500 to the respective winners. Only 200 total raffle tickets are available for the big board, so the odds of coming away with a prize are relatively high compared to most raffles.

Tickets for the event are \$70, and include a number on the big board, an excellent buffet dinner, an open bar, and the option of purchasing a dinner and open bar for another person for an additional \$35.

“People think of the money side of it because of the raffle, but they really put on the best food spread in town,” says Hap. “If you’re just looking for a

night out for dinner as a birthday gift or a special night out on the town with your significant other, you’re not going to go home hungry!”

For the first time in the event’s history, this year’s raffle will also include a silent auction. Items up for bids will include a 7-inch portable DVD player, a marble Lazy Susan, a hand-crafted afghan, and several entertainment packages.

The Reverse Raffle is sure to be a night of great food, prizes, fun, and fellowship. But, most importantly, it will also help the continuing faith formation of a young Catholic in the Willoughby area.

“I’m a product of Cathedral Latin High School, because I wanted to learn more about the Catholic teachings, and be raised in an environment that fostered the beliefs of the Catholic Church,” says Hap. “We at the Holy Name Society believe that should continue for students who take a similar interest.”

Reverse Raffle tickets are available at the Rectory Office during normal business hours, or you can contact Hap Berichon at 440-290-8364, or Jack Petersen at 440-951-2045, for more information. Remember, there are only 200 tickets available, so get yours before they run out, and find out just how “lucky” you are!



# Catholic Schools *Dividends for Life*

At the end of January, we will celebrate Catholic Schools Week — a time for us to rejoice in the benefits that our Catholic school affords our children.

Catholic Schools Week is a wonderful time to reflect on the importance of Catholic education. Does sending our children to a Catholic school instead of a public school really make a difference? The answer is a resounding “Yes!”

Sending our children to Immaculate Conception School often requires monetary sacrifice, and when we consider that we could send our kids to a public school, where they could learn everything they need to get into college, or to land a job, public schools seem to serve us sufficiently. However, we cannot allow the values of the secular world to rule our decisions.

Yes, public schools are less expensive. Yes, there are many well-qualified teachers in the public school systems who will educate our children in the ways of reading, writing, and arithmetic.

But we must remember there is so much more to life.

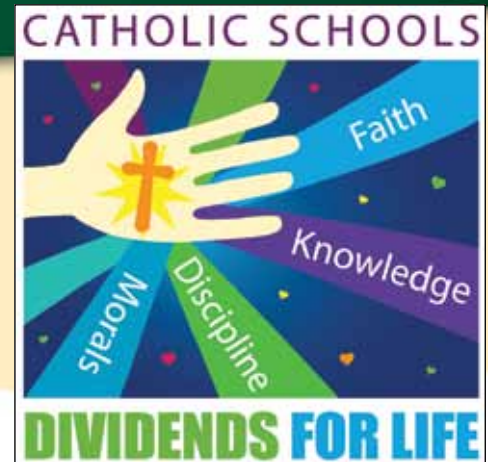
Education forms a young person in many different ways. Children are deeply affected by the schools they attend, and their teachers and fellow students have

a tremendous impact on their lives.

Day after day, year after year, our children spend hours roaming the halls of their schools. During these formative years, children are not only learning what is being taught in the classroom. They are learning important life skills, as well.

The purpose of any education — from elementary school, to junior high, high school, college, and beyond — is to arm students with knowledge of the truth, and to prepare them for the next phase of their life. So, even though a school’s value system may not make a difference in the way a child learns grammar or biology, a complete education truly requires a religious dimension. To properly form our children, there is truly no substitute for a Catholic education.

At a time when public schools cannot allow God to enter the classroom, we need to send a message to our children and the rest of the world: There is no objective truth —not in reading, writing, arithmetic or religion —without Christ. He is the truth! And as we celebrate Catholic Schools Week, remember that Immaculate Conception School remains a vital part of this mission of our parish.



# The Concept

## Make This Lent a Family Season

**T**his year, Lent begins on Feb. 17. Have you thought about what you're going to do to live the season of Lent this year? Lent offers us a time to focus on sacrifice and spiritual growth as we prepare to celebrate Jesus' death and resurrection. The idea behind the Lenten journey is that we unite ourselves with Christ, whose sacrifice, death, and resurrection makes it possible for us to gain the eternal reward of heaven. We offer sacrifices and we increase the amount of spiritual activities we do through prayer and service, all in an effort to unite ourselves with Christ on the cross, to build our bond with Jesus Himself, and to grow deeper in our Faith.

So, what are you going to do? Will you give up candy or soda, or TV? Will you spend more time in prayer or serving at the soup kitchen?

Why not take this time to focus on your family? Build your bonds with your family, spiritual and otherwise, this Lent. Surely, that will help to strengthen you and every member of the family as Christian disciples today.

"The family is under attack in society today," says Chris Hoag, our parish Catechetical Leader. "Yet, the family is the fundamental social block of society."

What's more, he adds, the Church, which is, in a sense, our extended family, is under serious attack as well. Yet, the Church is the means through which Christ established our salvation. It is through the Church and her sacraments that we, thanks be to God's mercy

and grace, are able to inherit eternal life as a result of Christ's passion, death and resurrection.

So, as we focus on Jesus and his sacrificial suffering this Lent, we should also focus on rebuilding and strengthening the Church. And this, Chris says, "needs to start with the family, which is the domestic church."

Take time this Lent to attend a second Mass as

a family every week, in addition to your Sunday obligation. Go to the Sacrament of Reconciliation together as a family more often. Participate in parish ministries as a family. Take the time to eat dinner together every night (or at least as often as possible). Pray together daily. Focus on how you treat one another in the home. Don't let your family



become simply a group of people living together.

In one way or another, we encourage you to focus on your family this Lent. We assure you that you will emerge from this Lenten season stronger as individual Christian disciples, and stronger as a family unit. And as a result, the Church will be a stronger force in this world, preaching the Gospel message through love and example.

For additional information on opportunities for you and your family, please visit [www.catholicfamilyland.org](http://www.catholicfamilyland.org). Catholic Family Land is located in Bloomingdale, Ohio, approximately an hour-and-a-half outside of Cleveland, and, as Chris explains, "They have many opportunities for forging a strong Catholic family life."

# A Plan for Spiritual Recovery

**T**wo thousand nine will be remembered as the year when American history nearly repeated itself. The financial meltdown, housing crisis and economic downturn have all played a part in bringing our beloved country to the brink of collapse. For those of us old enough to remember the depression of 1929, today's news headlines and "talk of the town" are eerily familiar to those 80 years ago.

Recently, financial analysts have declared that the recession is over. While this is good news, most of us still feel the effects of the past year. If the recession is truly over, why aren't things like they used to be? Why does the unemployment rate continue to rise? Why does our nation continue to hold its breath?

Our spiritual journey here on Earth is similar to the ebb and flow of the international economy. Christ "bailed us out" when He died on the cross so many years ago, yet we still feel the effects of sin. If Our Lord truly defeated sin and death, why can't Christians today seem to escape its grasp?

Because, just as the "free market" allows businesses to flourish and collapse on their own accord, God gives us free will to choose or reject His love. Every second of every day, Christ gives us the opportunity to freely choose Him. In the same regard, we are completely free to allow history to repeat itself and consent to sin's presence in our life.

How are we to steadfastly choose God's plan for our lives, especially when the path to hell can seem so appealing? How can we avoid investing our souls into worldly fabrications, spiritual "ponzi schemes" and empty promises? The answer is stewardship.

When we live a life of stewardship – spending quality time in prayer each day, actively participating in the life of the Church, and financially supporting its endeavors – we allow God to transform us into His disciples. We view our time, personal talents and possessions as gifts given to us by our loving Father, not as merits of our own accord. Life becomes a series of opportunities to glorify God and share His love with those around us. A transformation must take place in our lives if we hope to accept New Life in Christ. Because, as St. Mark explains in his gospel, "No one pours new wine into old wineskins. Otherwise, the wine will burst the skins, and both the wine and the skins are ruined. Rather, new wine is poured into fresh wineskins" (Mk 2: 22).

Although sin's reign in the world ended when Jesus died on the cross for our sake, the recovery process in our own spiritual lives doesn't fully take effect until we allow God to transform us into Christian stewards and disciples of His Word. Take the first step today, and discover how here, at Immaculate Conception, you can return the "first fruits" of your time, talent and treasure to Christ and your fellow brothers and sisters in the Lord.



# The Concept

## The Social Justice Committee *Doing Christ's Work on Earth*

**A**s Christian disciples, it is our responsibility to care for others, to follow Jesus' example and to work for the good of all. That is, after all, what Jesus did during His time here on Earth. He fed the hungry, cared for the sick, and more, all the while preaching the Gospel to those He served. He provided for the physical and spiritual needs of those around Him, helping to make life better for all. And that is exactly what our parish's Social Justice Committee works for today right here in Willoughby.

"We're doing the Lord's work, and I love it," says Marty Hughes, the current coordinator of this ministry.

The 13 members of this parish ministry recognize that as Christians in the world today, we are called to continue Christ's work on Earth. The members of the Social Justice Committee act as Christ's hands and feet in this day and age, and they work tirelessly to ensure that His work is done.



The Social Justice Committee serves the St. James Lunch Program on the first Sunday of every month, offering a warm meal in a friendly atmosphere to local Willoughby residents who often go without food. It also organizes and coordinates the annual giving tree project within our parish every Advent, seeing to it that local underprivileged families are afforded a joyful Christmas celebration. What's more, the committee pools its efforts with others, supporting the St. Vincent de Paul Society and a number of other parish ministries.

Yet, what's most amazing about this group of parishioners is that they do not participate in activity after activity

simply because they feel obligated to do so. While they recognize their Christian obligation to love and serve those in need, the 13 members of this ministry thoroughly enjoy what they do, and they all feel blessed to be able to serve.

"I enjoy it all," Marty says. "It is challenging sometimes, but, again, we are doing the Lord's work, and that's the most important part."

Are you interested in working for social justice in the Willoughby community? Don't let the idea of social justice intimidate you, as Marty says is often the case. Simply see the service of this ministry for what it is – serving others just as Jesus did – and join in.

"Roll up your sleeves and jump in," Marty encourages us all. "Together, we can make a better world."

If you are interested in becoming a part of this ministry, please contact the parish office at 440-942-4500 and request that Kathy Hughes call you back.

# The Patron of Catholic Schools in America

## St. Elizabeth Ann Seton

As the first American-born canonized saint, Elizabeth Ann Seton's entrance into history was guided by Divine Providence. Born on Aug. 28, 1774 immediately following the Boston Tea Party, Elizabeth witnessed pivotal events in the formation of our country as a child: the Continental Congress, the Declaration of Independence, and the American Revolution. At the time of the foundation of the new Republic, in a society predominately hostile toward Catholicism, a flower blossomed that would forever change the shape of education in the United States.

Elizabeth Seton was born into a wealthy Protestant family in New York City. Her life, although materially blessed, was not without suffering. Elizabeth's biological mother died when Elizabeth was only 3, and her younger sister, Catherine Josephine, died at the age of 2. Despite these trials, a spark of faith was visible even in Catherine's early childhood. When questioned about her sadness concerning her sister's death, Elizabeth simply responded: "Kitty is gone up to heaven. I wish I could go there, too."

Elizabeth grew into a beautiful woman, courted lavishly by handsome young men from prominent New York families. At the age of 19, she met a charming New York financier, William Seton, and the couple was wed in 1794. They remained in high society until her father-in-law's passing, which left them to care for William's seven younger siblings, along with three children of their own. Consequently, the Seton finances crashed.

The couple traveled to Italy, and it was here that William's health failed him, and he died in December 1803. Providentially, Elizabeth was left in the company of a strong Catholic family where she witnessed the practice of the Faith. In a letter to her sister, Eliza-



beth wrote: "My sister dear, how happy would we be, if we believed what these dear souls believe, that they possess God in the Sacrament, and that He remains in their churches."

After an eight-month stay, Elizabeth returned to America, where she began to investigate Catholicism more deeply. She was besought by Protestant friends who hoped to dissuade her. At this time, Elizabeth prayed repeatedly: "If I am right, Thy grace impart, still in the right to stay. If I am wrong, oh teach my heart to find the better way."

In 1805, after much interior struggle, Elizabeth became Catholic. Abandoned entirely by her family and friends, she resolved her financial difficulties through teaching.

In 1807, Elizabeth was invited to establish a Catholic school for girls in Baltimore. The task was daunting, and Elizabeth labored feverishly, explaining that "from half past five in the morning until nine at night, every moment is full—no space even to be troubled." After winters spent in continual hardship and sacrifice, the school flourished and, within years, Mother Seton planted the seed from which sprang the parochial school system (along with hospitals and orphanages).

Before her death in January of 1821, she was the active mother of five (although two of her daughters died young) and the spiritual Mother of a full-fledged religious congregation known as the Sisters of Charity of the Americas. She was canonized in 1975, and her feast day is celebrated on Jan. 4.

Thanks to St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, the Catholic parochial school system remains vibrant and active. From Jan. 31 to Feb. 6, we celebrate Catholic Schools Week. We are thankful for the sacrifice of this loving wife, devoted mother, foundress, and All-American saint.

# Immaculate Conception

Catholic Church

37935 Wright Street  
Willoughby, OH 44094-5899

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## Mass Schedule

### Saturday

5 p.m. Vigil Mass

### Sunday

8 a.m., 10 a.m., and noon

### Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday

7:45 a.m. in the rectory chapel

### Wednesday

8:30 a.m. (at the church during the school year)

### Friday

Tridentine Mass in the church, 7:30 p.m.