

The Concept

Newsletter of Immaculate Conception Parish

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A Letter From Our Pastor

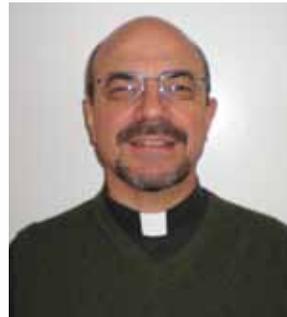
Getting Our Priorities in Order

Dear Parishioners,

I know that many people are not on a school year calendar. But for many of us, September brings a livelier rhythm to our schedules. Life just seems to get busier after Labor Day. Therefore, September seems to be a good time to ask you to think about your priorities and to pray for God's guidance as well.

Someone has said that the truly important is often pushed aside by the merely urgent. So as you review your priorities, please make sure that you include what's really important.

First of all, include time for God as well as for job, family, and recreation. Of prime importance, make sure that Mass on Sundays is a top priority. That's the most important event of the week. In addition, reserve some time for personal Scripture study as well as prayer with your family or a prayer group and incorporate that into your daily and weekly routine. For a link to view the daily Mass readings go to <http://new.usccb.org/bible/readings>. There is also a link there to subscribe to hear or



watch a daily reflection on those readings.

There are many forces pulling at us as we decide where we'll use our talents. For most of us, our jobs claim the lion's share of our efforts and sometimes threaten to engulf our whole

lives. We also have responsibilities to our families and legitimate calls for service to the community. That obviously includes the Church, the Body of Christ. We have lots of areas for service right here in our own parish – religious education, the music ministry, serving as an usher, or any one of the many ministries we have to help you use your talents to grow closer to God.

And finally we have to set priorities for using our money. As Christians, we are responsible to God for the use of the financial resources He has entrusted to us, no matter if it's a lot or a little, and to make a return to God in thanksgiving for the ability to earn our income. In regards to the return, Scripture gives us the tithe as a goal to work towards. Working toward

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The Concept

St. Joseph Parish Hall



“It is truly a first-class facility for larger groups,” Ron says. “It will be great for large parish functions, as well as for private functions like wedding receptions, graduation parties, large baby showers, etcetera.”



Five years ago, the facilities planning team asked the entire parish to participate in a survey about facilities needs. The response was unanimous: a large, multi-purpose parish hall.

After a few delays, due to the school merger and the freeze on building in the diocese during clustering, the parish was able to move forward with the project. After Immaculate Conception School joined with Mt. Carmel to become Mater Dei Academy, space in the old school became available and the site for the parish hall was chosen.

“Last year when the clustering process was finished, we resubmitted the proposal to the diocese,” says Ron Felter, the parish business manager. “When Fr. Troha met to discuss it with Bishop Lennon, the bishop said that this is exactly what we should be doing and encouraged us to move forward with it.”

With the bishop’s blessings, building began in mid-February and was finished by the first week in July. The hall, which was the original church when Immaculate Conception was founded, has served a number of purposes over the years, but was most recently the site of four classrooms at Immaculate Conception school.

The St. Joseph Parish Hall opened just in time for Oktoberfest, during which it served as the location for both the Chinese Auction and the mini-golf course. It will be used for routine events ranging from coffee and donuts after Sunday Masses to other parish-wide functions throughout the year. And with a seating capacity of 240 people, the hall will also be available for rent.

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Reaches Completion

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In the past, many large parish events were held in the gym, which often left CYO teams without a place to practice. The addition of the St. Joseph Hall to the parish campus should alleviate that problem altogether.

Along with the creation of the St. Joseph Parish Hall, the parish also transformed the school library and computer room into a second, smaller hall called the Pope John Paul II Room. Accommodating parties of 50 or less, this smaller hall will be a good option for meetings and for smaller rental occasions. While the creation of the St. Joseph Hall required the hiring of private contractors, the Pope John Paul II Room will be entirely renovated by the parish’s own maintenance staff.

A number of parishioners donated their time and talents to bring this project from planning to completion. Many thanks to the Facilities Planning Team: led by Greg Patt and including Mark Dutton, Marty Hughes, Paul Mrozek, Fr. Michael Troha, Ron Felter and Bob Fiala. An additional “thank you” goes to Bob for donating his services as the project’s architect, and to parishioner Jeff Mitchell, who is the vice president of Hamann Construction and oversaw the project with Bob and Ron.

If you have not visited the hall yet, stop by for a tour at the next coffee and donuts after Mass. The St. Joseph Parish Hall represents stewardship at its best: parishioners sharing their time, talent and treasure in service to the Lord in our parish community!



The Concept

Oktoberfest in July a Rousing Success!

From July 15-17, our parish community gathered in fellowship at the annual Oktoberfest in July celebration. People of all ages from throughout the Willoughby area came together for the ceremonial start to the festival on Friday featuring the mayor and other local public figures, then got down to the business of eating, socializing, and generally having a great time! Everyone in attendance enjoyed a wide variety of wonderful foods and beverages, including hot dogs, hamburgers, a beer garden, and our world-famous cavatelli.

There were games and activities for all ages, including card games, children's rides, and the ever popular "baby crawl." Several talented performers kept the patrons entertained throughout the weekend with Polka, German, and Irish music, as well as modern tunes. Sunday's Family Day featured a number of great raffle drawings throughout the day, and Brenda Silvaroli walked away as the grand prize winner of either a new Chevy Cruze or \$15,000. This year's event generated \$169,000 in gross revenue, a 6% increase over last year. We'll be able to do some great things for our parish community with these funds.

This celebration of our community would not be possible without the generous help of many volunteers who shared of their time and talents to help make it a success. Immaculate Conception Parish thanks everyone who volunteered and attended the Oktoberfest in July, and we hope to see you again next year!





The Concept

Parishioners Relish the Opportunity of Eucharistic Adoration

“What we need is for every Parish to come before Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament in Holy Hours of prayer.” – Blessed Mother Teresa

In 1986, Immaculate Conception opened the perpetual adoration chapel; since then thousands of people have come before the Lord in prayer, worship and adoration.

For those that have invested the time in Eucharistic Adoration the experience can be profoundly moving.

“I have always found adoration to be one of the most intimate things we do in our lives as Catholics,” says Dennis Lann, who coordinates the scheduling of chapel holy hours with his wife Stacey. “My dad helped found the chapel and get Adoration started, so I was around it a lot from a fairly young age. As a teenager, I was a substitute, and I came to really enjoy it. Ever since my parents passed away I have taken on the leadership of the ministry. It’s just so important: the Mass and the Eucharist are without a doubt the highlights of our lives in the Church, but adoring the Blessed Sacrament gives us a little bit more time to dwell and meditate on the reality that the God of the universe is here and present in the Holy Sacrament. It hits me sometimes how inadequate our understanding of that is; we will never fully grasp that.”

Coming to spend an hour with Christ in adoration offers adorers the chance to speak with Christ in a very personal way.

“For people that are new to Adoration, it sometimes takes a little while to focus on the reality that God is truly present and to kind of dwell in that reality,” Dennis says. “In fact, I sometimes lose sight of it and have to re-center myself. It is very personal though, you can bring everything that you are experiencing and going through



and lay it before Him. I am often alone when I am there, and have the opportunity to open up to God — it sometimes even gets a little bit emotional.”

Eucharistic Adoration is a wonderful opportunity to engage in all kinds of prayer, from reading the daily readings for the Mass or saying the Liturgy of the Hours, to praying the Rosary, the Divine Mercy Chaplet or particular novenas. But in this

most intimate of settings many people like to simply sit and talk and listen with Christ.

For Shirley Marsh, who has been participating in Eucharistic Adoration for many years, the holy hour is a wonderful opportunity for gratefulness.

“Praying at Adoration is definitely different from praying anywhere else,” Shirley says. “What better company can you have! It really makes a difference. We’re always asking God for help with this or that — and rightly so — but when you see Christ present in the Blessed Sacrament you realize how blessed you are. It’s a great opportunity to say ‘thank you’ too.”

According to Shirley, the benefits of perpetual adoration go beyond the people that participate.

“It’s very, very beneficial,” Shirley says. “And it’s not just good for the individual but for the parish as a whole. The blessings that come upon the parish for holding adoration are enormous — just knowing that the Lord is being adored at every hour! When your Lord is available to you 24 hours a day and seven days a week how could you not spend some time with him?”

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Stewardship: A Need to Give

When the church needs a new roof or the local food bank needs donations, we jump at the chance to give for the sake of the need. It's part of our human nature: we identify a need, and we want to give of our time, talent, and treasure to help.

But as a stewardship people, we are called to give of ourselves not simply because the Church has needs, but because each of us has a need to give. As the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops states in its pastoral letter on stewardship, *Stewardship: A Disciple's Response*, "We need to give our money to individuals and families in need, to the Church, and to other worthwhile charitable organizations because giving money is good for the soul and because we need to return thanks to a loving God for all of the many blessings each of us has received" (67).

As fellow members of body of Christ, created in God's image, we should strive to go beyond simply coexisting with one another on Earth. The life we live should be fueled by love for each other. This love should dictate how we live – by giving of ourselves.

Jesus Christ showed us the perfect example of this self-giving love when He died on the cross. His death was a completely selfless act. He gave of Himself for our sake, offering us – through that gift – life everlasting.

As Christ's disciples, we follow His example, and we give of ourselves for the sake of others, out of love and an inherent need to give.

That's not to say that we gain nothing through our gifts. In fact, in His goodness, God sees to it that we do. Most of us have experienced what happens when we give of our time, talent, or treasure. We feel as though we get more out of it than we give. If you speak to someone who serves at the soup kitchen or someone who has made it a regular practice to tithe to the Church, you are likely to find that he or she feels blessed to be able to give.

Find out for yourself. Get involved in a ministry. Make a commitment to put some money in the collection basket next Sunday. Don't wait to find out if there is a need. Give of yourself right now. You will be richly blessed for doing so.

Eucharistic Adoration *continued from page 6*

The benefits of coming before our Lord in Eucharistic Adoration are innumerable, but one that many people experience is peace.

"We are so busy with a million things going on in our day to day lives, running around with our phones constantly ringing, but Adoration offers a deep sense of peace," Dennis says. "It is always there if we just take the time to reach for it.

Keeping the adoration chapel open depends upon the commitment of a great number of people.

"There are 168 hours in a week and we need at least one person signed up for

every hour – preferably two," Dennis says. "We need about 260 people to be involved to keep this ministry going, which means we're always looking for more people."

If you have never turned to the Lord in Eucharistic Adoration before, come and pay him a visit — you'll be glad that you did! Also, please consider signing up for a weekly holy hour — the graces and spiritual growth that you will experience are truly inestimable. To sign up, please contact Dennis or Stacey at 216-990-2121.



Immaculate Conception

Catholic Church

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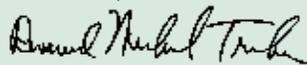
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Getting Our Priorities in Order *continued from cover*

a title may indeed mean some changes in your priorities but I can tell you from personal experience that people I know who have adopted this as their standard of giving experience a joy that comes from the spiritual growth they have experienced.

Priorities – yes, they're a part of life. As you review yours, how are you going to use the time, talent, and treasure entrusted to you by God, your Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier?

In Christ,



Fr. Troha



Mass Schedule

Saturday: 5 p.m. Vigil Mass, **Sunday:** 8 a.m., 10 a.m., and noon,

Monday through Thursday: 7:45 a.m. in the rectory chapel, **Friday:** Tridentine Mass in the church, 7:30 p.m.