

The Concept

Newsletter of Immaculate Conception Parish

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Rooted in Faith – Forward in Hope

Just over a year ago, Immaculate Conception was one of nine pilot parishes from the Diocese of Cleveland that embarked upon the diocesan “Rooted in Faith – Forward in Hope” capital campaign. All parishes

of the diocese are participating in the campaign, with the goal of raising \$120 million for diocesan endowments that fund programs ranging from Catholic schools and Catholic Charities to the retirement fund for priests.

Fr. Michael Troha, Immaculate Conception pastor, says that serving as a pilot parish for the campaign involved a lot of hard work. But one of the primary reasons he chose to take on the challenge was the special attention that Immaculate Conception received from the Catholic Community Foundation, which is facilitating the campaign.

“Being a pilot parish, they tested everything out on us,” Fr. Troha explains. “We struggled to make our goal, and they did everything they could to help us fulfill our goal, which is why I wanted to be a pilot parish. They were very good at helping us out. They made a video that we showed at church during the breakout last March when we got everyone at the parish involved, and one of our parishioners, Patrick Anderson, who was ordained a priest, figured in it very prominently.”

Because the Rooted in Faith – Forward in Hope campaign took place at the same time of year as the annual diocesan Catholic Charities campaign, Immaculate Conception’s goal for that campaign was rolled over into “Rooted in Faith – Forward in Hope.” Thus, the parish’s overall goal was \$1,510,00 for “Rooted in Faith – Forward in Hope.” For its part, the parish would receive from the diocese a 30 percent return on any pledges fulfilled up to the parish goal, and a 70 percent return on any pledges fulfilled beyond the parish goal.



Strengthening the Catholic Church in Northeast Ohio

The Concept

Wills and Estate Planning Seminar

Estate planning has become a very important issue for many members of our parish.

We are pleased to announce that our parish will host an educational

Wills and Estate Planning Seminar on Thursday, May 24th, 2012.

The seminar will begin at 7:00 pm in St. Joseph Hall.

Since we do not know the time nor the hour when God will call us home, loving stewardship dictates we look ahead to make provisions for those in need in our families and parish. There is no greater satisfaction than knowing that your earthly gifts will be shared exactly as you have prayerfully discerned.

An estate planning attorney, Susan Priest Richlak, from the Catholic Lawyers Guild will be the presenter. The following topics will be discussed:

- **Wills**
- **Health care advance directives**
- **Durable power of attorney**
- **Probate**
- **Estate gifting plans**
- **Benefits of giving appreciated assets**

If you already have a will, this will be a perfect time to update yourself on current laws regarding your estate. If you do not have a will, this will provide an opportunity to guide your future planning. This seminar is meant to be educational. All knowledge learned through this seminar should be utilized in discussion with your attorney and/or your financial advisor.

We hope you will join us on Thursday, May 24th for this very educational program. Please return the RSVP below by Thursday, May 17th. You may place it in the collection basket or you may RSVP by calling the Parish Office 440-942-4500 (refreshments will be available).

Wills and Estate Planning Seminar

_____ Yes I/We are able to attend to the Wills and Estate Planning Seminar on Thursday, May 24th at 7:00pm in St. Joseph Hall.

Please reserve _____ place(s) for our family.

Name: _____

Address: _____ City/State/Zip _____

Phone: _____

Please place your RSVP in the collection basket by Thursday, May 17th. You may also RSVP by calling the Parish Office at 942-4500.

A Letter From Our Pastor

What Does the Ascension Mean to You?

Dear Parishioners,

One of these Sundays, I'd love to have someone take a survey of our parishioners as they arrive at Mass and record their responses for my own information. The survey I'm thinking of would have one question: What is the importance of the Ascension of the Lord?

Some might reply that it completes Jesus' earthly ministry. Others probably would mention that Jesus returned to heaven so he could send the Holy Spirit to guide and empower the Church. Still, others could state that he ascended to heaven to prepare a place for us. All these answers, and several additional ones, would be correct.

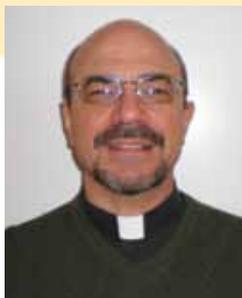
But if they answered honestly, I'm afraid many Catholics would confess they never give the Ascension much thought, even though they state they believe it every Sunday ("he ascended into heaven"), and they have no idea of its meaning. But it is one of the major feasts in May.

The Ascension is more than one of the key historical events that founded Christianity. It is also a call to us to turn our attention to heaven. St. Paul wrote, "If then you were raised with Christ, seek what is above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God" (Col 3:1) and "...our citizenship is in heaven" (Phil 3:20).

As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (§666) expresses: "Jesus Christ, the head of the Church, precedes us into the Father's glorious kingdom so that we, the members of his Body, may live in the hope of one day being with him for ever."

My point is that we should not limit our vision to earthly horizons. We're called to view our life here on earth in light of our ultimate home, with Christ in heaven.

There are those who claim that for Christians to pay any attention to heaven means that we neglect service



to other people here on earth. But just the opposite is true.

We actually have more incentive to work for the well-being of our fellow humans because we know that people live beyond the grave. The thought quoted by St. Paul, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die" (1 Cor 15:32) is one espoused by those who think our existence ends at the grave, not by Christians.

We know that how we treat others, how we help or hurt them, has eternal consequences – for them and for us. We're called to offer our time, our talent, and our treasure to share the Good News of God's love shown in Jesus and to relieve their suffering. Because we believe that human life is not confined to our years on earth we're called to work for justice and to eradicate the causes of poverty and bitterness. We have a responsibility to tear down the barriers that keep people from seeking the Kingdom of God.

The Church insists that our faith in God and our desire for all people to come into his presence in heaven strengthens rather than weakens our commitment to improve earthly life. In fact, the Liturgy of the Hours that the clergy and religious pray includes a petition, "Make our work today benefit our brothers and sisters, that with them and for them we may build an earthly city, pleasing to you."

In light of the truth of our heavenly citizenship, we may need to shift our priorities. How are you using the time, the talent, and the treasure God has entrusted to you to prepare yourself and others to enter the presence of our ascended Lord?

In Christ,



Fr. Troha

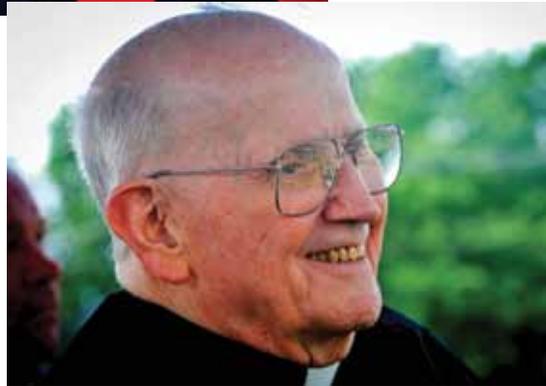
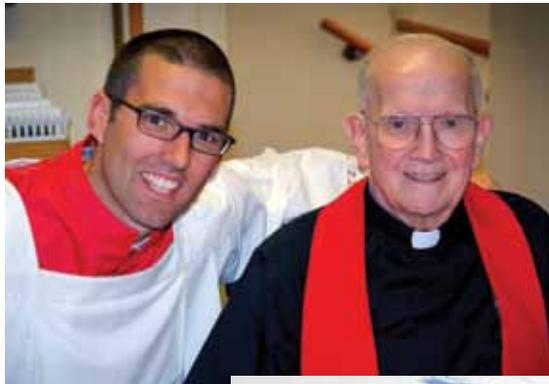
The Concept

Remembering Fr. Francis D. Curran 1922-2012

On Feb. 10, the Lord called home one of the most beloved members of the Immaculate Conception Parish family when Fr. Francis D. Curran, pastor emeritus, passed away at the age of 89.

“He was a very gentle man and a very holy man, and one of my favorite things was his stories,” recalls Greg Patt, longtime Immaculate Conception parishioner and friend of Fr. Curran. “He just had stories after stories; I used to try to get him to put together a book of them. He was just very, very understanding, and you felt like he listened to you. People felt comfortable around him to the point where they felt they could tell him pretty much anything, no matter what the topic might be, because he was very soothing and supportive. There was a time I had lost my faith and was asking for his help, and he was very understanding and very helpful.”

Ordained in 1950, Fr. Curran spent a total of 37 years of his priesthood at Immaculate Conception Parish, first as parochial vicar between 1961 and 1966 and then as pastor from 1972 until his retirement in 2004. As the pastoral shepherd of our parish community, he was instrumental in instituting a number of ministries, events and activities that have become indelible parts of parish life at Immaculate Conception, including Perpetual Eucharistic Adoration and the annual Oktoberfest in July celebration.



In addition to his impact on the Immaculate Conception Parish family, Fr. Curran was also a well-respected civic leader in the greater Willoughby community. He marched annually in Cleveland’s St. Patrick’s Day Parade, and the Willoughby Chamber of Commerce honored him as its distinguished citizen of 1992. He served as confessor for Borromeo High School and a trustee for the diocese’s cemeteries. He also served as the chaplain of two Knights of Columbus councils, the Knights’ state assembly, and the Willoughby Fire Department.

“I think it started with the fire department,” Greg says. “He told me

once that he always wanted to be a fireman when he was young, so he kind of gravitated towards the fire department and eventually became their chaplain.”

Knee-replacement surgery in 2005 forced Fr. Curran’s move to the Regina Health

Center, where he lived until his death, but he remained upbeat and maintained an ardent love of golf in his final years. He continued to minister to the staff and patients of Regina Health Center throughout his life, and he made a special appearance at Immaculate Conception’s 50th Anniversary celebration – a source of great joy for both Fr. Curran and the parishioners who attended.

Fr. Curran’s wake took place at Immaculate Conception Church on Feb. 15, and attracted approximately 400 people who came to pay their

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respects. His funeral Mass, which took place at the church the next day, featured Bishop A. Edward Pevec as the main celebrant. Bishop Anthony Pilla and about 40 priests and deacons from throughout the diocese joined more than 600 individuals who crowded the church to bid a final farewell to Fr. Curran.

“The funeral and wake were definitely something you weren’t very used to, but were very appropriate,” Greg says. “The Knights of Columbus served as a color

guard, and the church was as packed as it would be for an Easter Mass. At the end, all of the priests sang a song in Latin, a capella and in unison, that they do for priests’ funerals, and that was kind of touching.”

Please continue to pray for the repose of the soul of Fr. Curran, and for his family and loved ones. He will always be fondly remembered for his many contributions to the faith community of Immaculate Conception Parish.

Rooted in Faith *continued from front cover*

“The bishop explained that it was not to take away from any of your normal charitable giving, but it was in addition to all of that,” Fr. Troha says. “It was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to leave your legacy to your parish and to the Church in Northeast Ohio.”

Upon completion of the active portion of the campaign, Immaculate Conception parishioners generously pledged 410 gifts for a total of \$1,548,894, or roughly 103 percent of the parish goal. Parishioners had an opportunity to fulfill the pledge in increments of their choice, with most pledges set to be fulfilled over the course of five years.

In March, Immaculate Conception received the first of several periodic disbursement checks from the capital campaign based on the current returns on the parish pledges, to the tune of \$76,441. All disbursements that the parish receives from the “Rooted in Faith – Forward in Hope” campaign will go toward paying off the \$400,000 that the parish borrowed, at interest, from the Fr. Francis Curran Endowment Fund, for the purpose of renovating St. Joseph Hall last year.

“We used St. Joseph Hall for the Oktoberfest in July celebration last year, and we’ve been using it every Sunday since,” Fr. Troha says. “When people see it, they

immediately enjoy using it, and we’ve used it for funeral luncheons, parish functions, PSR gatherings, and social events like baptism parties, baby showers, and wedding receptions.”

Fr. Troha is extremely thankful for the parish’s support of the “Rooted in Faith – Forward in Hope” campaign, and he emphasizes the importance of everyone who contributed to this effort fulfilling their pledges to the best of their ability. If the parish receives disbursements on the full 103 percent of its goal that was pledged to the campaign, it will be able to pay back the \$400,000 that was borrowed from the Fr. Francis Curran Endowment Fund in its entirety.

“It’s important to fulfill the pledges because the parish and the diocese are counting on the return for one, so there is a practical reason,” he says. “Secondly, we all get excited and we have good intentions to make the financial commitment. And things may change or we may lose our enthusiasm for it, but it’s kind of important that we stick to that commitment that we make, and trust in God to help us fulfill the pledge.”

If you are interested in more information about the “Rooted in Faith – Forward in Hope” capital campaign, please visit its website at www.cdcf.org.

The Concept

Our Lady of Fatima: *With the Faith of Young Children, the World was Changed*

It is interesting to note how often God uses children to spread the Faith. To most of us, young children seem so fragile and simple-minded. We wouldn't dream of entrusting our young children with huge responsibilities. After all, they are our responsibilities – we are entrusted to care for them and bring them up in the Faith.

Yet, time and again, God calls upon the faith of a young child, and He uses that child to carry out His will. Ponder for a moment the Blessed Mother, whose memory we hold especially dear during this month of May. She was but a young 12 year old to whom, once she uttered that simple “yes,” God made the mother of His only Son. What weighty responsibility that was – and yet, God knew that there was no better Christian to bear that responsibility than she.

This month, in particular, we celebrate the feast of Mary's appearances at Fatima, and we honor the three young children to whom she entrusted them with the message that “God... is about to punish the world for its crimes by means of a war.” She showed them a vision of hell – “a great sea of fire which seemed to be under the earth.” Then she told them, “You have seen hell where the souls of poor sinners go. To save them, God wishes to establish in the world a devotion to my Immaculate Heart.”

From then on, the young children – Lucia, age 10; Jacinta, age 7; and Francisco, age 9 – were to pray and make sacrifices for sinners while they spread the devotion to her Immaculate Heart. Can you imagine seeing hell? Surely that would be a most terrifying vision for any of us. And then, to be told that you must pray and make sacrifices – spreading devotion throughout the world or many sinners won't be saved?

Well, these young children heeded her warning and took the task on themselves. But not without some trouble.

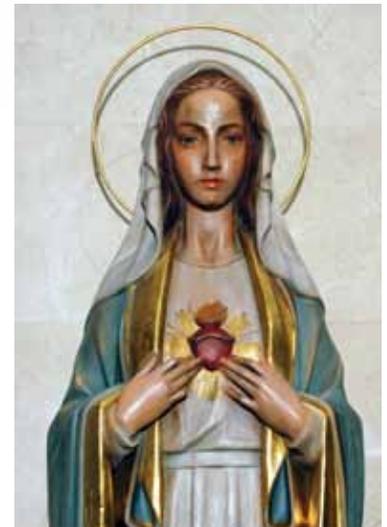
The children were soon kidnapped by the atheistic mayor and put in jail. Yet, they were not slightly deterred. They had taken on the task that Mary laid before them, and, no matter how young they were at the time or how much Satan would try to get in their way – they were committed to carrying out God's will.

While in jail, the children converted the men in jail – a mark of their commitment to the mission.

Then, on Oct. 13, 1917, the day on which the Blessed Mother had promised the children that she would reveal her name to them, Lucia told the public that Mary would perform a great miracle – testifying to the truth of her apparitions.

At noon, the sun appeared as a disk that gave off various colors. The people looked straight at it. It spun like a fireball and looked as if it would fall to the earth. The sun then broke free from its orbit and began to plunge to the earth, and the people screamed “God, have mercy on me.” Suddenly, the sun returned to orbit, and it turned into a beautiful day. Then, Mary appeared with St. Joseph, holding a brown scapular. “I am the Lady of the Rosary,” she proclaimed.

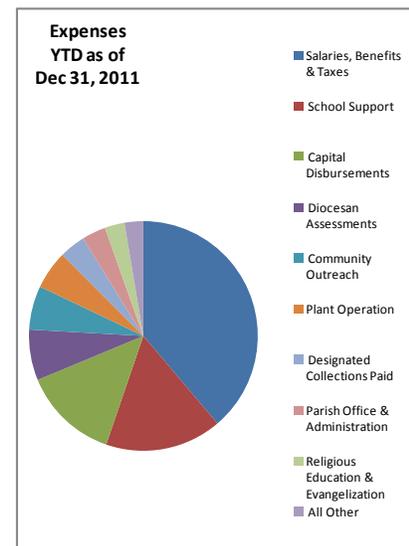
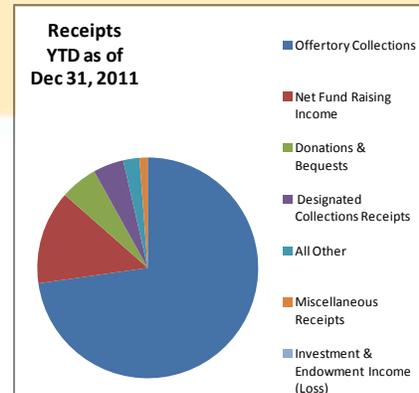
We now celebrate the life and work of these young children on May 13, the day of her first apparition. Young as they were, they carried out a great task of God, and now they are great among the blessed. May we be so courageous if God one day calls us to be.



Financial Report

Year to Date as of December 31, 2011

	Actual Quarter Ended Dec. 31, 2011	Budget Through Dec. 31, 2011
Offertory Collections	\$448,870	\$450,000
Other Collections	3,089	5,000
Donations & Bequests	33,692	30,000
Net Fund Raising Income	84,740	42,500
Income from Parish Programs	11,581	5,000
Investment & Endowment Income	(38,387)	85,000
Net Rental Income	775	5,000
Miscellaneous Receipts	6,642	4,000
Designated Collections Receipts	27,562	16,500
Total Parish Receipts	\$578,564	\$643,000
Salaries, Benefits & Taxes	\$290,569	\$276,098
Rectory & Household	4,607	7,500
Parish Office & Administration	25,274	28,250
Altar, Sanctuary & Liturgical	15,123	15,500
Community Outreach	46,357	49,400
Religious Ed. & Evangelization	20,899	21,750
Utilities	22,059	26,000
Insurance & Property Taxes	-	19,600
Maint., Repairs & Plant Operating	18,525	18,750
Diocesan Assessments	53,652	53,652
Designated Collections Paid	27,630	16,500
School Support	123,040	75,000
Capital Disbursements	100,899	35,000
Total Parish Disbursements	\$748,634	\$643,000
Total Parish Surplus (Deficit)	\$(170,070)	\$0



Our parish financial report for the first half of the fiscal year is above. The \$170,000 deficit in the budget needs some explaining. \$100,899 of the deficit is due to the renovation of St. Joseph Hall from last summer. \$38,387 is a "paper loss" due to the value of our investments going down in the second half of 2011. \$46,357 is due to "community outreach," mainly the cost of maintaining the Society of Mother Teresa meals program. We have just about reached our budget amount for the Mother Teresa meals in just half a year.

Thank you for your support of our parish!

Fr. Troha

Immaculate Conception

Catholic Church

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Mass Schedule

Saturday

5 p.m. Vigil Mass

Sunday

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

Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday

12:00 noon in the church

Friday

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

Confessions

Saturday

3:45 - 4:45 p.m. before Vigil Mass