

June 2021



Immaculate Conception

Monthly Newsletter

Immaculate Conception Catholic Church

THE LEGION OF Mary

UPHOLDING *SERVICE* AND *PRAYER* IN UNION WITH OUR BLESSED MOTHER

When it comes to strong examples of stewardship, we can certainly look toward our Blessed Mother to be inspired in how we both follow and lead others to Christ through service and prayer. Taking the powerful example of Our Lady to heart, the Legion of Mary is the largest apostolic organization of lay people in the Catholic Church, with well over 3 million active members in almost every country of the world. It has been active in the United States since 1931, has been approved by the last six popes, and was endorsed by the Second Vatican Council. The main purpose of the Legion of Mary is to give glory to God through the sanctification of its members.



The object of the Legion of Mary is the glory of God through the holiness of its members, fostered by fervent prayer and active cooperation in the work of the Blessed Mother and the Church.

The object of the Legion of Mary is the glory of God through the holiness of its members, fostered by fervent prayer and active cooperation in the work of the Blessed Mother and the Church. Each unit of the Legion of Mary is

called a *praesidium*. Our parish's unit is named the Our Lady of Guadalupe *praesidium* — President Patricia Brown, Vice President Elizabeth Alder, Secretary Diana Hollis, and Treasurer Lawrence Bradwell serve as its officers.

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THE LEGION OF *Mary*

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Legionaries meet every other Monday at 3:30 p.m. in the parish office. At their meetings, they pray the Rosary along with the *Catena Legionis*, which is a set of prayers specifically used by the Legion of Mary. They also cover business, do a roll call, read minutes and review the treasury report. During the meeting, each member reports to the group about the charity work that they have done that week, for, as the Legion's website also states, "Every legionary is required to carry out a weekly apostolic work of at least two hours in the spirit of faith and in union with Mary."

"We have been limited in regard to which apostolic works we can do because of the pandemic, because we can't visit nursing homes, etc., but we have been active regardless," Patricia says. "We have been making phone calls to nursing residents instead, and we are still helping with our parish's food assistance program, the Society of Mother Teresa. Some of our legionaries

volunteer with the Parish School of Religion and the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults programs, and Lawrence does gardening around the church."

Devoted legionaries such as Elizabeth Alder find that belonging to the Legion is deeply fulfilling for many reasons.

"There is a place in the Legion of Mary for anyone who feels drawn to live a purpose-filled life," she says. "The Legion's flexibility is very attractive. It is a warm and welcoming group. There is always that family-like connection between members. With its solid history, the Legion of Mary has proven that it is a well-thought-out and well-run apostolate. It bears good fruit."

In hindsight, they are often profoundly grateful that God has brought the Legion of Mary into their lives.

"I began an auxiliary member of the Legion of Mary for many years until I reached a point in my life when I felt called to become

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— ELIZABETH ALDER

an active member," Elizabeth says. "Now, I feel that I have found the place where God wants me to be. The day I took my pledge, consecrating myself to Mary to serve her as she furthers her Son's work on earth, was extremely moving to me. It was one of the happiest days of my life."

If you would like more information about this beautiful ministry of Our Lady, please contact Patricia Brown at 440-256-6705 or call the parish office at 440-942-4500.

A Letter from our Pastor

REDEFINING LOVE THROUGH THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

Dear Parishioners,

One of the great feasts of the Christian year will occur in June, but it is often overlooked. It doesn't fall on a Sunday, and it isn't a Holy Day of Obligation. I am referring to the Solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, which will be on June 11 this year. This wonderful feast provides a great way to begin the summer.

However, despite widespread devotion and many parish dedications to the Sacred Heart, many Catholics have only a vague idea of what it's all about. So, let me try to briefly fill in the picture.

Often, when we think of the heart, we think of it as the seat of our emotions and feelings. The heart is often contrasted with the mind, as though our God-given reason were somehow evil or, at best, second-rate.

But feelings come and go — we can't really depend on our emotions to be reliable, steady guides.

However, when classical theology refers to the heart, it is considering an aspect of human life that goes beyond our feelings. It includes our will, where we make decisions. The heart can be considered the center of our personhood.

In explaining Christian teaching about human nature, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* says, "The spiritual tradition of the Church also emphasizes the heart, in the biblical sense of the depths of one's being, where the person decides for or against God" (368).

It is common to mistakenly label love as an emotion. Love often includes feelings, but true love is more than that. Real love is a settled attitude that wants the best for the person being loved. That's



why the Church's teaching usually uses the term "charity," to distinguish the Christian virtue from the more superficial popular concept of love.

The *Catechism* tells us, "Charity is the theological virtue by which we love God above all things for his own sake, and our neighbor as ourselves for the love of God... Jesus makes charity the new commandment. By loving his own 'to the end,' he makes manifest the Father's love which he receives. By loving one another, the disciples imitate the love of Jesus which they themselves receive" (CCC, 1822-1823).

This sort of love, this charity — demonstrated by Jesus Christ and commanded to His followers — is no lightweight passing emotion. Feelings alone do not bring one to offer oneself

to an agonizing death for the sake of someone else. No, that sort of sacrifice can only come from a considered and deliberate decision.

Although we sometimes forget that fact, Jesus is fully human as well as fully divine. So His human heart was involved in His sacrifice on the Cross. Thus, simply put, devotion to the Sacred Heart reminds us of the basic fact that God loves us. It was a costly love, the ultimate act of charity, to give His life on our behalf.

We know the kind of love Jesus has for us. What kind of loving response are you going to make? How will that affect your use of your time, talent and treasure?

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Fr. Michael Troha

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Invitational



When we all practice stewardship, we are doing our part to give of our time, talent, and treasure. For Anthony “Tony” Pinto, the Invitational Golf Outing is a fantastic way to practice stewardship. In 2020, the Invitational raised almost \$15,000 for Immaculate Conception, and, in the three years of the Invitational, Tony, the golfers, and sponsors have given \$40,000 back to Immaculate Conception. The golf outing has even attracted golfers from North Carolina and Cincinnati.

This year’s golf outing will take place at Pine Ridge Country Club on June 27 with a 1:00 in the afternoon shotgun start.

“I lived away for close to 34 years, but I never forgot that everything started at Immaculate Conception,” Tony says. “There is so much that all these teachers, nuns, and priests taught us.”

Amid the pandemic in 2020, Tony rounded up more golfers and sponsors, as each year, more participate in the Invitational setting new records. There is a due date to get foursome registration forms in this year.

During the tournament, each of the men's and women's tee boxes had a sponsor. People also sponsored, "Remembering" signs, which were placed by the greens to honor those loved ones who passed away. There were blue candles for the men's tee box and red candles for the women's tee box to show where each would tee off from. There were a record 27 foursomes with each foursome teeing off at a different time due to Covid guidelines.

This year’s event will be a shotgun start. The \$100 registration fee per golfer includes lunch, a steak dinner, drink tickets, and a welcome bag. There are cash prizes for the winning teams and several skill shots for cash prizes throughout the round of golf. And at this year's event, as an option, the steak dinner can be taken home as a take-out meal.

Tony enjoys organizing this event since he loves golf and believes it’s important to give back to Immaculate Conception. He has even rallied a lot of his classmates from grade school to participate. The Invitational is a month before the popular Immaculate Conception Church Oktoberfest. The very first Invitational was held the Sunday before the Oktoberfest, but was too close together, so the Invitational was changed to the first Sunday after Father's Day. Volunteering to help the Church runs in Tony's blood as his late Mother and Father were heavily involved in the Church as well as the Oktoberfest with Sister, Joanna, still involved in the Chinese Auction.

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If you would like to sign up or make a donation to the Immaculate Conception Church Invitational, please contact Anthony “Tony” Pinto at 972-465-0125 or njspnvj@aol.com.

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“It’s for the parish,” Tony says. “It’s for giving back and doing something you enjoy while giving back.”

Tony's goal is to raise \$25,000.00 per year with the Immaculate Conception Church Invitational.

Mary Jane Kirbus sponsors a "Remembering" sign for the Invitational to honor her late parents, who were married at Immaculate Conception, and two of her brothers who have also passed away.

“Immaculate Conception has always been part of my family’s life,” Mary Jane says. “My whole family has felt very supported by the church, especially at the end of my Dad’s life when Fr. Troha visited my Dad at hospice and did a beautiful funeral Mass for him.”

Mary Jane says since the Catholic faith was so important to her parents, sponsoring a hole has been a great way to honor their lives.

Bruce and Sandy Smylie sponsor a "Remembering" sign for Sandy’s father, Paul Michello, a longtime parishioner.

“Immaculate Conception was such a part of his life in Willoughby,” Bruce says. “I want people to remember my father-in-law, as he was a great guy.”

Tim Jackson, who attended Immaculate Conception School, enjoys golfing in the tournament. For him, this is a great way to have fun and support the parish.

“The golf outing provides me with an opportunity to see longtime friends, participate in a charitable event for a good cause and enjoy a round of golf at a challenging, well-conditioned golf course,” Tim says. “It certainly helps if your team plays well enough to earn bragging rights over your friends for the next 12 months!”

Amy Kurnick is a longtime Immaculate Conception parishioner. She enjoys that the golf tournament is well organized and just a lot of fun, and she looks forward to it each year.

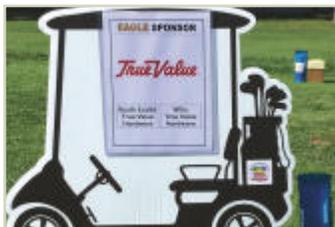
“The Oktoberfest has brought the parish and the community together for years,” Amy says. “So, when Tony added the golf outing, my husband and I didn’t hesitate to get teams together.”



Tim Jackson’s team in 2019, which won the tournament that year



Amy Kurnick’s team in 2019



Immaculate Conception

CATHOLIC CHURCH

Stewardship

Don't Take a Vacation From Stewardship This Summer

Everyone deserves a vacation.

After nine busy months of school, kids get to enjoy the summer to relax and regroup before beginning a new grade. Employees, after diligently working long hours and dealing with stressful situations, deserve time away from the office to enjoy their favorite getaway.

No one would argue that we need to mentally refresh our minds and bodies from time to time so that we can come back rejuvenated and ready to do our best.

Taking a break from some things, however, is not a possibility.

Take stewardship, for example. Imagine saying to yourself, "Well, this month I think I will not pray, I won't share any of my talents with anyone in need, and I will hoard my treasure." What would doing this accomplish? You certainly wouldn't feel refreshed, rejuvenated and ready to be at your best. Instead, feelings of greed, selfishness and spiritual unrest may occur. Stepping back from being a good steward just doesn't make sense.

So, now that summer has arrived in full force and our leisure time each day has increased, how can we remain good stewards?

It is likely that the regimented opportunities available during the school year are no longer available. Youth ministry and parish religious education formation may also be on summer break.

So, where do you turn? How can you keep your faith alive?

First and foremost, don't stop praying. The slow-paced days of summer are a perfect time to quiet ourselves for a few moments and try to reconnect with God. Why not take a moment of your free time each day to read the Gospel or a spiritual reflection while lounging in a hammock?

Next, try to participate in an outreach program over the summer. Think of the life of Christ — everything He did on Earth was an act of service. Now, think

of the gifts God has bestowed on you. He wants you to share them with others like He did, and summer gives us the time to do just that.

If you like working with kids, you can volunteer at the Vacation Bible School by helping to decorate, organize or being a team leader for the younger children.

If you are handy with tools, you may call Habitat for Humanity to see how you can help build a home for a family in need.

Or, if you are musically inclined, you might share your singing or instrumental gifts with a local nursing home. Maybe you are good in the kitchen — if so, you could offer your culinary skills to a local soup kitchen or food bank.

If you are a strong student, you could offer tutoring services to neighborhood kids to help prepare them for the next school year.

No matter what gift God has given you, there is a way to share it.

Getting paid for volunteering sometimes happens. And, if you have a summer job while on break, you'll get a paycheck for sure. Have you ever taken an opportunity to think about sharing the first fruits of your check?

As a young adult, returning a portion of your paycheck to God is an important thing to consider. Giving a portion back to Him is a way to say "thanks."

Whatever you do this summer, don't take a break from being a good steward. Remember that the time God gives you is a gift. What you do with it — whether on vacation or not — is meant to give Him glory.



MEET Brad and Katie Shininger: A Family Legacy of Faithful Service

It's been said that children may not always listen to your words, but you can be assured they're watching your actions. Parishioners Brad and Katie Shininger, who were inspired by their own parents' example, hope their children will remember seeing them prioritizing their faith and giving back to the parish community.

"My parents always talked about the importance of giving back and volunteering," says Katie, who grew up locally. "They were active in school-parent organizations and volunteered to work Bingo and parish festivals. I learned from their example at an early age, and that has been a part of me ever since."

"We both feel that it's important to be involved and give back," says Brad, who was raised in Indiana, and came to northeast Ohio for college. "We hope our kids see that in us."

The Shingingers, who joined the parish shortly after getting married, 15 years ago, serve in a variety of different ways. Each year, they volunteer at Oktoberfest and Katie is a member of the Mary's Ministry. She also volunteers frequently at the school and assists with fundraising and committee positions on the PTU. Brad has served on the Finance Council for the past five years,



Katie and Brad Shininger and their sons, Jordan and Carter, love being involved in the community at Immaculate Conception and Mater Dei.

as well as assisting in collecting and counting money at the festival each year. Their sons, Jordan and Carter, both attend Mater Dei, and are active in the parish — in addition to attending Sacramental Preparation classes, they are both altar servers.

"We are blessed in so many ways that it only seems right to help our parish and others in our community," Brad says.

According to both Katie and Brad, getting involved in service has been a great way to build a sense of community in the parish, while getting to know

and work alongside their fellow parishioners.

"Being involved in the parish and school has given me a chance to get to know other parishioners better," Katie says. "I feel a real sense of community among others. I have learned that there are a lot of really devoted people who love our parish and that there's so much talent out there among the parishioners!"

"Our fellow parishioners are very committed and have a lot to offer," Brad adds. "I've especially seen this through the Finance Council, where others have

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Brad and Katie Shinger *continued from page 7*

'taken their talents to IC,' and truly care about its future success."

The Shingers encourage their fellow parishioners to find ways to use their gifts and talents in service to God and the parish community.

"We're always looking for finance professionals or those in related fields to help advise on decisions for the parish through our Finance Council," Brad says.

"Pick one ministry that sounds interesting and attend a couple meetings," Katie says. "I think you will be happy with the parishioners you meet and feel a sense of accomplishment with the work you will do. Start with that and see how it makes you feel — I feel good knowing that I am serving God by helping the parish and others who need it."

Thank you, Brad, Katie, Jordan, and Carter, for the example of generous service that you give to our parish community!

"Being involved in the parish and school has given me a chance to get to know other parishioners better. I feel a real sense of community among others. I have learned that there are a lot of really devoted people who love our parish and that there's so much talent out there among the parishioners!" — Katie Shinger
