

July 2021



# Immaculate Conception

Monthly Newsletter

Immaculate Conception Catholic Church

## Welcoming Seminarian Fabian Han to Our Parish Family



*"I really like it here in the United States," says seminarian Fabian Han (third from right).  
"I appreciate how much the parishioners participate in the life of the parish."*

When Fabian Han was growing up in South Korea, the beauty of the Catholic faith was vibrantly alive in his heart, and in the hearts of his family members, all across generations.

"My parents and grandparents really helped to nurture my faith and my devotional life," he says. "We prayed the Rosary regularly as a family. Even though it has been only 200 years since Catholicism came to South Korea, I am an eighth-generation Catholic. My favorite saint is St. Andrew Kim because he was

the first Korean priest, as well as a martyr. My mother plays the organ for our parish. Her side of the family is especially devout, and they pray a lot for me and are very supportive."

Truly, the seeds of fervent faith that were sown in Fabian's young soul took root and began to bring forth bountiful fruit in years to come.

"I first thought about becoming a priest when I received my First Communion," he says. "I continued to pray about it over the years, and I entered seminary

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# Immaculate Conception

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## CATHOLIC CHURCH

### 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 the Body of Christ, created in God's image, we should strive to go beyond simply co-existing 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. As the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops points out, "To be a Christian disciple is a rewarding way of life, a way of companionship with Jesus, and the practice of stewardship as a part of it is itself a source of deep joy. Those who live this way are happy people who have found the meaning and purpose of living" (*Stewardship: A Disciple's Response*, 21).

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.

## A Letter From Our Pastor

# What Is the **Real Purpose** of Our Lives?

Dear Parishioners,

Do you ever think about your purpose in life? Even as a priest, I certainly do. There are days and times of frustration when I think, “What am I really supposed to do? What does God want me to do? Why am I here?” For eons, philosophers have considered these very questions and written about them.

But the truth is that we, as Catholics, already know the answers.

When we consider the many facets of life in our parish community, there are numerous activities and endeavors that go beyond attending Mass. From fundraising efforts, to social outreach/service, childcare and more, there are many ways in which we serve our community.

Yet, as we undertake these important pursuits — both within and outside of the parish — we must always remember that our ultimate goal is salvation. After all, the only reason we exist, the only reason our Church exists, is the same as the reason Jesus joined us and became a part of us here on earth — He came to save humanity.

We use the term the “body of Christ” to describe the Church with Christ as the head. We are all parts of that body, and the parts of the body must move in the same direction as the body itself — it simply won’t function if the parts are moving in different directions. We are all in this together.

When our lives are complete, we do not base our success or failure on how much money we have, or whether or not we are famous. Nor does our success or failure depend upon the difference between health and sickness, or pleasure and pain, or even being nice or nasty. Rather, it is the difference between being saved and not being saved.

I often think of my family members who have passed away, and as a priest, I deal with that issue with others on a very regular basis. Sometimes, I wonder if they ever fully realized that salvation was the answer to so many of our questions in life.

I am surrounded by memories of those who have gone before, as are almost all of you. We are apt to use the term “the communion



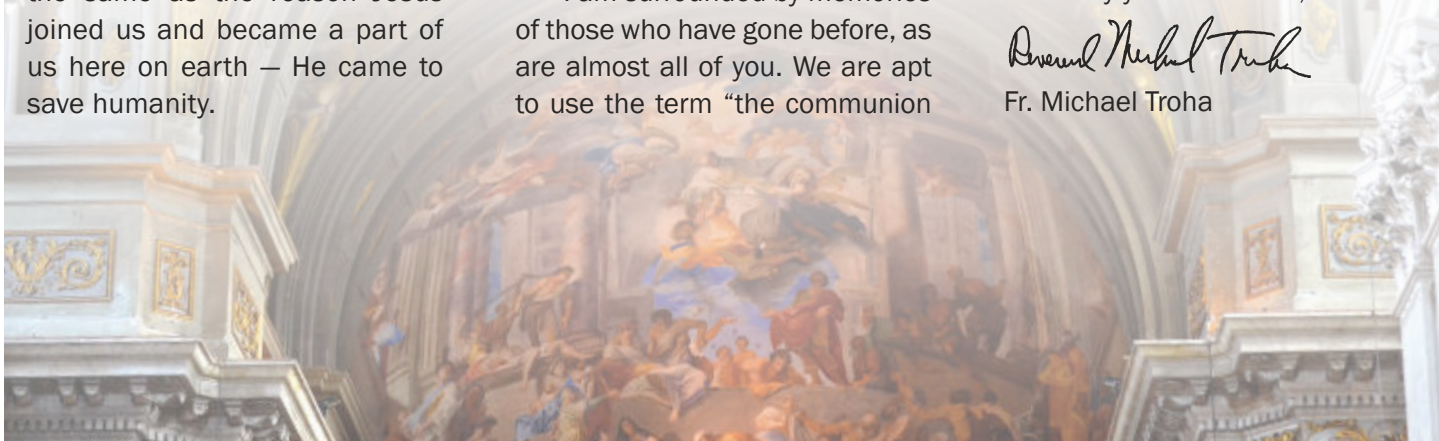
of saints” in many ways in our Church. Someday, we will know more about the “communion of saints” and how it all works. In the meantime, we pray for everyone who has gone before us, hoping they have made it home.

Pray for me as I pray for you!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Reverend Michael Troha". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Fr. Michael Troha





# Immaculate Conception

CATHOLIC CHURCH

## Oktoberfest Returns For Summer 2021

### *Bringing Fun and Fellowship to the Community*



*The 41st Annual Oktoberfest is set for July, and Immaculate Conception parishioners and members of the wider community all look forward to this event with games, food, music and prizes.*

Last year's cancellation of Oktoberfest can be left behind as a bad memory as plans go full-tilt for the 41st Annual Immaculate Conception Parish Oktoberfest, set for July 16-18.

This annual festival features food, live entertainment, rides, gaming, a \$10,000 cash raffle, and more. All proceeds benefit the parish and its activities.

"This year, we are resuming the tradition and are encouraged to get back to the things we look forward to every year," says Brent Woerner, President of the Oktoberfest Committee. "We're coming back with a smaller footprint and spacing a couple of things out."

Planning began in January when the committee met to discuss how the event would be held this year. The All Parishes Meeting convened, as well, when planners from all the parishes in the area discussed how their events could proceed.

"As this is a year of returning to normal from the pandemic, we are doing our part to be safe," Brent says. "We are receiving guidance from the local health department, local government, and the Diocese of Cleveland. As you are aware, things are subject to change to stay in compliance and we will keep everyone updated as this great Oktoberfest gets closer."

As work continues on the festival events, the Oktoberfest Committee will stay in touch with other



*There's just something wonderful about Oktoberfest after dark when the lights, music, and aromas of good food all mingle to guarantee a great time.*

festivals in the area to learn if there are problems or issues.

"We'll know about it," Brent says. "We all have experience to pass along."

There will be some things missing from this year's event but will return for 2022. The "Baby Derby" and "Toddler Trot" are suspended this year, with plans to hopefully bring them back next year. Monte Carlo is also pushed back to the 2022 Oktoberfest festival.

A variety of rides for children of all ages represent one of the festival's big draws. There will still be miniature golf, a Chinese auction, kids' games, and food to enjoy.

Two stages will offer continuous live entertainment. One stage is dedicated to polka music, another to various contemporary sounds, including Disco Inferno — always a big crowd favorite. Other bands scheduled to appear include Ulterior Motive, Abby Normal & the Detroit Lean, and the Magic Buttons polka band.

"There is music for everyone at this event," Brent says.

The Chinese auction will again be in St. Joseph Hall. There will be a variety of regular auction baskets and a section for Grand Chinese auction baskets to include cash, a 65-inch big screen T.V., Canon camera



*Rides for the little ones are a feature of Oktoberfest. The rides will be sanitized after each round of use.*

bundle, and a laptop to name a few. This year's cash raffle is \$10,000, with second and third place to receive \$500 each. The drawing will be at 10 p.m. on Sunday at the main stage.

Food is a big part of Oktoberfest, and this year is no different. The parish kitchen and various vendors will offer ethnic dishes and summertime treats. The parish food tents will be serving stuffed cabbage, cabbage & noodles, sausage and peppers, walking tacos, pierogies, burgers, hot dogs, pizza, German food, cavatelli, ice cream, lemonade, and much more.

Soft drinks, wine, and beer will be available. A "premium" wine and beer garden will cater to those wanting more upscale beverages.

Elayne Kramer, parish Business Manager, has been working behind the scenes to make sure everything is in place for the festival.

"There's a lot more to putting on a festival that people don't know," Elayne says. "We have to secure permits for building, electricity, tents, liquor, and

gambling. Building, police, fire, and health inspections must be scheduled prior to opening. We line up the bands for the next year's Oktoberfest immediately following the festival."

Elayne handles lining up the food vendors and making sure they have contracts, as well as making sure all the ride concession companies are notified and under contract. She organizes police and security, orders the tents, tables, chairs, and gaming equipment. She also makes sure the permits are in place for the beer and wine sales.

Lauren Smith, the Volunteer Coordinator, organizes the hundreds of volunteers who make the festival work. There are at least 1,000 man-hours devoted to the festival.

Work to set up the festival site begins two weeks before Oktoberfest, and teardown takes a week after. The volunteers build the booths, the stage, and set up tents.

"Staging the event involves a community effort with contributions from the mayor, city council, safety forces, businesses, and scores of volunteers," Brent says. "We are always in need of volunteers as parishioners, family friends, groups/organizations and local community people assist in making this event such a success. As with any event of this size, we can never have enough volunteers, whether it is setting the grounds up, working one of the booths, cooking food, or helping out with odds and ends. There is a job for anyone."

There still is a need for volunteers. To sign up, log on to <http://www.immaculate.net>, and scroll down to the Oktoberfest icon.





# Immaculate Conception

CATHOLIC CHURCH

## Sisters of the Most Holy Trinity:



O.S.S.T. Sisters at the Grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes

For the last 45 years, Sister Phyllis Ann, O.S.S.T., has been bringing people freedom and hope, and she has loved every minute of it, even though it hasn't always been easy.

"The main work of the Sisters of the Most Holy Trinity is to redeem captives from anything they need to be redeemed from," she says. "We used to focus on redeeming people from ignorance through education, so we taught classes in schools. However, over time, the Lord has called our sisters to simply teach people about Him. Now, our main mission is to remedy people's ignorance about God and the Catholic faith. What better thing could we do than this? Helping people grow closer to God is our greatest joy."

Throughout the years as a sister, Sr. Phyllis Ann has "worn many hats." She served as a school

principal and is currently the Major Superior of the Sisters of the Most Holy Trinity, as well as the administrator of their main apostolate, the National Shrine and Grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes, which the sisters own and operate. The Shrine serves our faith community in beautiful ways, such as by offering novenas as well as outdoor Masses on Sundays in the summer at 8 a.m. in the chapel and at 9:30 a.m. in the grotto.

Furthermore, two of the sisters teach Parish School of Religion at our parish, Sister Celestine and Sister Josephine, who also serves as our Parish Catechetical Leader.

The Sisters of the Most Holy Trinity were initiated in 1198 when John of Matha was inspired to establish a community dedicated to the

*“People might think I am lonely because I have been in this for so long, and I don't have a husband or children. My answer is that everyone is my child. I am the bride of Christ, and God is always with us. He never leaves us. It is hard to understand because it is a mystical kind of thing. If you are really, truly called to be a religious sister, nothing else will satisfy you, and you will always have a longing to be one.*

— Sister Phyllis Ann, O.S.S.T.

# Joyfully Growing Closer to God

Trinity to share the Trinity's love through redemptive charity.

As described on the order's website, "As members of the Trinitarian tradition, we are dedicated to giving glory to the Most Holy Trinity through a unique apostolic ministry... Our Eucharistically centered order embraces the apostolates of elementary education and ministering to pilgrims who visit the Shrine. These activities typify our witness to Christ through setting spiritual captives free by works of redemptive charity." Their motherhouse in the United States is located at the Shrine. In addition to their apostolic works, they enjoy a profound prayer life, which includes daily Mass, Eucharistic Adoration, the Liturgy of the Hours, and prayers specific to their order, such as the Trisagion Chaplet, which is a prayer to give glory to the Trinity and bring souls closer to Him.

For women who have considered the religious life, Sr. Phyllis Ann has some helpful advice.

"I would encourage them to have a really strong prayer life," she says. "The greatest thing that helped me was going to Eucharistic Adoration. I also suggest talking it over with someone you really trust and then visiting some orders."

To those who may not understand the blessings of religious life, she also has some inspiring words.

"People might think I am lonely because I have been in this for so long, and I don't have a husband or children," she says. "My answer is that everyone is my child. I am the bride of Christ, and God is always with us. He never leaves us. It is hard to understand because it is a mystical kind of thing. If you are really, truly called to be a religious sister, nothing else will satisfy you, and you will always have a longing to be one."



An O.S.S.T. Sister teaching children about Our Lady of Lourdes Shrine



O.S.S.T. Sisters working with PSR Students



Two O.S.S.T. Sisters at a community jubilee



O.S.S.T. Sisters praying with a youth group at the Grotto



O.S.S.T. Sisters serving at the Senior Citizen Center



O.S.S.T. welcoming pilgrims to the Shrine and Gift Shop

If you would like more information about the Sisters of the Most Holy Trinity and the National Shrine and Grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes, please visit [srstrinity.com](http://srstrinity.com) or call 216-481-8232.

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JULY 2021

## Seminarian Fabian Han *continued from front cover*

while I was in high school. After I graduated from there, I went to St. Mary Seminary in Cleveland, where I just finished my second year. I have been discerning the priesthood for about 11 years.”

Fabian was given the privilege to come to study in America because there is a special partnership between his home archdiocese, the Archdiocese of Daegu of South Korea, and the Diocese of Cleveland. Every two years, his archdiocese sends one seminarian to study in the Diocese of Cleveland, with the understanding that once they are ordained, they will serve in the Diocese of Cleveland for four years, and then return to the Archdiocese of Daegu.

This summer, we have been blessed with the presence of Fabian, who will continue to serve our parish community until Aug. 15.

“I am very excited to be at Immaculate Conception Parish, and I am happy to do my internship here

and spend time with the parishioners,” he says. “They are great! I look forward to preaching more homilies, and making some great memories during my time here.”

So far, his experience in the United States has been an excellent one.

“I like it here in the United States,” he says. “I appreciate how much the parishioners participate in the life of the parish. It is not necessarily that way in South Korea, because the parishes there are structured in a more hierarchical manner. The seminary in the Diocese of Cleveland is really good, as well. My favorite subject to study is Scripture.”

To men who are considering the priesthood, Fabian offers some inspiration.

“The priesthood is a very blessed way of life,” he says. “It is wonderful to be able to walk the journey with Christ and with others, all together.”