



Immaculate Conception

Monthly Newsletter

Immaculate Conception Catholic Church

Respect Life Month:

Being Faithful Stewards of the Gift of Life

If you go to the corner of Mentor Ave. and Reynolds Rd. on Oct. 3, you will see an awe-inspiring witness of what it means to courageously love life, freedom, and justice. Not only will people be peacefully holding pro-life signs and praying, but they will also be quietly saving babies, promoting the culture of life in our nation, and redeeming wounded hearts from the pain of sin.

“The Life Chain always takes place on the first Sunday in October, and this will be our 28th year,” says Jean Poplyk, Coordinator of the Life Chain. “It only takes place for one hour, once a year, but it makes a very powerful statement. We stress the fact that it is meant to be silent, prayerful, and non-confrontational. We stand at the intersection holding different signs that say, ‘Abortion kills children,’ ‘Jesus heals and forgives’ and ‘Adoption is an option.’”

Over time, Immaculate Conception Parish has become more involved in the Life Chain, which exemplifies the commitment our parish family truly has to the Gospel of Life.

“Years ago, when we first started the Life Chain, the Pro Life Ministry did everything for it,” Jean says. “But when Fr. Troha came, he stepped up to the plate and said that our whole parish should be doing more to help out with it. Now the parish provides the envelopes, postage,



and printing of flyers about the event, while Pro Life Ministry members simply address and stuff the envelopes and get them ready for mailing.”

Amazingly, the Life Chain is just one of the many ways in which Pro Life Ministry members stand up for the cause of life. For example, on the first Saturday of every month, they carpool to St. Andrew Abbey to attend Mass and then accompany the Rosary for Life group in praying the Rosary in front of the abortion clinics on Shaker Blvd. Each January, they charter a bus to Washington, D.C., for the March for Life. In May and June, they hand out holy cards, bookmarks, magnets, and/or

continued on page 5

THE PRINCIPLES OF CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING

What makes being Catholic, well, “Catholic”?

Things like the Mass, the Rosary and the Seven Sacraments come to mind.

But there is also an element of Church teaching that’s often overlooked and sometimes misunderstood — Catholic Social Teaching.

Catholic Social Teaching guides Catholics on how to apply the faith to all aspects of life, and lays the framework for the Church’s teachings on the dignity and sacredness of human life.

Catholic Social Teaching can be explained with 10 key points. These 10 principles demonstrate the depth of the Church’s teaching on social justice, and they call Catholics to take an active role in shaping the world in which we live. Catholic Social Teaching, when taken to heart, can become the catalyst that causes positive change in a world that desperately needs it. Consider these principles and strive to apply them in your own life.



Human Dignity

Human dignity is the fundamental principle within the Church’s teaching on social justice. A firm understanding of this principle is required so that the rest of Catholic Social Teaching can be viewed from the appropriate perspective. God created us in His image and likeness, so we all are worthy of respect.

Respect for Human Life

Whether unborn or seconds away from death, no life deserves to be prematurely ended. The Church sees this principle as crucial to the health of any society.

Association

Association holds that social relationships must be developed so that all people may reach their fullest potential. The Church teaches that the family is the basic unit upon which all other elements of society rest. We must uphold the sacredness of the family, and foster the growth of other societal organizations that preserve the well-being of all people.

Participation

All people deserve the right to work and to participate in God’s creation. The joy of accomplishing a task and performing honest labor should be made available to all people.

Protection for the Poor and Vulnerable

Society exists in a balance between those with power, and those without it. The vulnerable — those with disabilities — and the poor must be protected from those with power who choose to wield it in an unjust manner.

Solidarity

“Love your neighbor as yourself” — this commandment extends beyond the boundaries of any town, state or country. The principle of solidarity encourages all people to reach out to their brothers and sisters in need and to help them, even if they live halfway around the world.

Stewardship

Everything we have — even our own lives — is a gift from God. Our talents, our time and our financial resources are not our own, but God’s. The same goes for the natural resources we so often take for granted.

Responsibilities and Limits of Government

Governments, while created for the common good, sometimes overstep their boundaries. The Church teaches that all governments should seek to operate at the lowest level of organization possible — striving to solve problems at the source, with those who understand them best, and not through oppressive force.

Human Equality

God made all humans equal, including those of different ethnicity and race, and in different stages of life. No one person is of more value than another.

Common Good

It is especially important in our society to promote the common good — the social well-being and development of the “human group.” If we consider the entire human race as one family, the common good urges us to support our brothers and sisters so that they may reach their full potential.

A Letter From Our Pastor

OCTOBER:*A Month to Turn to Our Lady of the Rosary*

Dear Parishioners,

Day by day, our heavenly Father provides spiritual food and graces to His beloved children, nourishing us on our earthly pilgrimage. October brings us the grace of the Holy Rosary, a prayer buried deeply in the heart of the Church, as one of its most precious treasures.

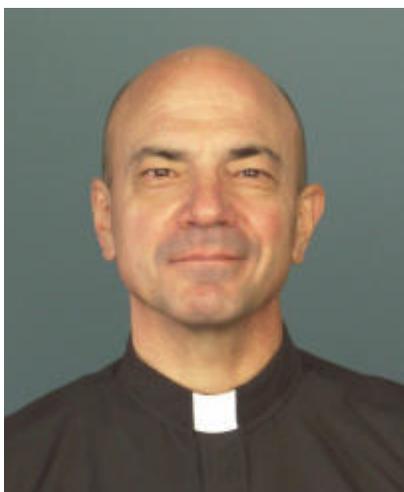
The Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary, which takes place Oct. 7, is a commemorative feast established by St. Pius V on the anniversary of the naval victory won by the Christian fleet at Lepanto. The victory was attributed to the help of the Mother of God, whose aid was invoked by praying the Rosary.

This victory revealed the power of the Holy Rosary more than ever. Catholics who were open to the inspirations of the Holy Spirit took with deep resolve the Rosary as their link to God.

Pope St. John Paul II, in his 2002 Apostolic Letter, *Rosarium Virginis Mariae*, writes:

“The Church has always attributed particular efficacy to this prayer, entrusting to the Rosary... the most difficult problems. At times when Christianity itself seemed under threat, its deliverance was attributed to the power of this prayer, and Our Lady of the Rosary was acclaimed as the one whose intercession brought salvation” (39).

Thus, not merely through the Rosary, but more significantly, through the woman behind the Rosary – the glorious Mother of our Savior, Christ the Lord – a well-spring of God’s love has been discovered.



Indeed, the Rosary is truly a way to discover Christ’s infinite love through the tender heart of His Mother.

“With the Rosary, the Christian people sits at the school of Mary and is led to contemplate the beauty on the face of Christ and to experience the depths of his love. Through the Rosary the faithful receive abundant grace, as though from the very hands of the Mother of the Redeemer” (*Rosarium Virginis Mariae*, 1).

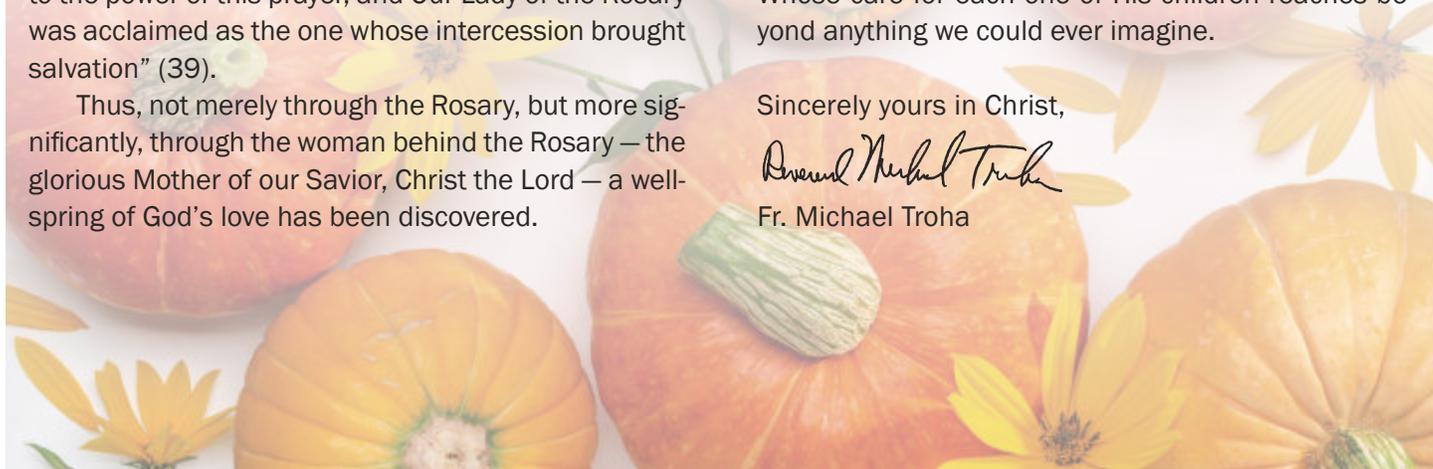
A great number of saints, such as Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta, who had a special concern for the

preservation of the Christian family, sensed that its salvation would be through the Holy Rosary. And as Pope St. John Paul II wrote, “Today I willingly entrust to the power of this prayer... the cause of peace in the world and the cause of the family” (*Rosarium Virginis Mariae*, 39). Our Lady of Fatima, who pleaded with families to pray the daily Rosary, would agree with him!

Let us entrust everything to the Rosary along with the saints. As our hearts burn with hope, let us give to the Mother of God every concern that we bear, each cross we carry, piece by piece, worry by worry. She will be there to offer everything to our Heavenly Father, Whose care for each one of His children reaches beyond anything we could ever imagine.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Fr. Michael Troha



Immaculate Conception

CATHOLIC CHURCH

MEET PARISHIONERS *Richard and Pam Lann:*
..... DEVOTED TO

For Richard and Pam Lann, stewardship has been a way of life for many years. Over the years – as they raised their daughters, Kathryn and Clare, and now – the couple has truly found ways to give of their time, talent and treasure, knowing everything they have belongs to the Lord.

“Stewardship is taking care of that which does not belong to you,” Pam says. “God gave us these talents and the energy to do something with them for Him and for His glory. We don’t go anywhere without God.”

Richard and Pam were on the Stewardship Committee the first time Fr. Michael Troha was at Immaculate Conception. Pam is currently working on her doctorate in organizational leadership through Indiana Wesleyan University. She is so passionate about the topic of stewardship that she is exploring it for her thesis!

Pam came to love the Catholic Church through her college years at the University of Saint Mary in Leavenworth, Kan., and the University of Notre Dame in South Bend, Ind.

“There were nuns who really shaped my love for Catholicism,” Pam says. “I developed a devotion to Mary.”

Richard’s passion for stewardship stems in large part from his deep roots at Immaculate Conception. He grew up here and his parents, Jim and Mary Lann, were very involved – in fact, they were instrumental in starting Eucharistic Adoration. Richard is very involved in the Irish Society’s Ancient Order of Hibernians in Willoughby. The group members volunteer at Catholic churches, support scholarships to Catholic high schools, and perform church cleanup and landscaping.

Pam also serves on the Parish Council. They are both heavily involved in the Oktoberfest



Richard and Pam Lann with their daughters, Kathryn (22) and Clare (20)

– Pam serves as the vice president and secretary. Both Richard and Pam work at a food stand at the event.

“Oktoberfest is really a great event that draws a lot of people,” Pam says.

Richard and Pam are passionate about serving because Immaculate Conception and its people are so important to them. This parish is their community, and they want to do whatever they can to ensure that it prospers. As we approach our annual Stewardship Renewal, Richard and Pam ask everyone to fill out the commitment card.

SERVING AS FAITHFUL STEWARDS

“Even if you don’t want to take on any new ministries, it helps us know what you are involved in,” Richard says. “We also want to know your prayer commitment.”

“Some people think this has a lot to do with money, and that’s not true,” Pam says. “It’s really where is your heart and does your heart belong?”

As we reflect upon what we are already doing at Immaculate Conception, and discern what else we may do here at the parish, Pam asks everyone to consider their many blessings.

“We really need to fulfill the promise that He gave us,” she says. “He has given me so much. All that I have accomplished is from Him and Mary. I need to give back.”

“*Stewardship is taking care of that which does not belong to you. God gave us these talents and the energy to do something with them for Him and for His glory. We don’t go anywhere without God.*”

— Pam Lann

Respect Life Month *continued from front cover*

small gifts to mothers and fathers before all of our parish Masses. In July, they host a pro-life booth at the Oktoberfest through which they distribute pro-life balloons, literature, buttons, and bumper stickers. They also hold an annual bake sale to raise money for pro-life efforts and organizations such as Open Door, Birthright, and Priests for Life. In the past, they have sponsored talks from two priests belonging to Priests For Life; raised funds to arrange for the Pro-Life Memorial to be placed on our parish grounds, and collected signatures and donations to place a pro-life ad in the *News-Herald*.

Each October, in honor of Respect Life Month, the ministry displays white crosses on our parish grounds along with a sign with a pro-life message. Members

also encourage the parish to participate in the Week of Prayer and Fasting to end abortion.

Overall, ministry members work to bring awareness regarding not only anti-abortion issues but also euthanasia, culture of life, and death penalty issues.

“We want to teach people that respecting life doesn’t just mean fighting against abortion, but it also means respecting all stages and ages of life,” Jean says.

By being faithful stewards of the gift of life, Pro Life Ministry members show what it means to be authentically Catholic in the midst of the “culture of death.”

“I don’t think you can be a believer without respecting life,” Jean says. “It is God’s greatest gift and we need to value it.”

Volunteers are needed to help value the gift of life by working with the Respect Life Ministry. For more information, please contact the Parish Office at 440-942-4500.

Immaculate Conception

CATHOLIC CHURCH

St. Thérèse of Lisieux: Saint of Love

“In the heart of the Church, my Mother, I will be love!” — St. Thérèse

All of us were made for love. Only love can fulfill our hearts and help us realize our human destiny. We have been created from all eternity to love God and neighbor with all of our beings.

St. Teresa of Calcutta, who was named after St. Thérèse of Lisieux, once said, “I am not just a number. I was made for great things, to love and be loved.”

St. Thérèse of Lisieux, whose feast day is Oct. 1, was a saint who understood the beauty of true love. As patroness of missions, she knew what it meant to quietly spend herself for the salvation of souls, making countless daily sacrifices in imitation of her Crucified Savior.

Thérèse Martin was the last of nine children born to Louis and Zélie Martin on Jan. 2, 1873, in Alençon, France. She was an overwhelmingly sensitive child. Her mother’s death — Thérèse was only 4 at the time — certainly did not help to alleviate her moodiness.

However, when she was 14, on Christmas Eve, Thérèse experienced a miraculous conversion that transformed her whole life. That evening, her sensitive spirit turned away from selfishness and turned toward love. Receiving strength from God, whose very being *is* love, Thérèse resolved to sacrifice herself for the happiness of others.

When Thérèse was 15, she entered the Carmelite cloister in Lisieux, giving her whole life to God. There, she lived up to her religious name, Sr. Thérèse of the Child Jesus and the Holy Face, by her profound de-



votion to Christ Incarnate in the Eucharist, and to His Passion, as revealed in His Holy Face.

Thérèse fulfilled her vocation in Carmel to the utmost of her ability, embodying the essence of an authentic contemplative in every way. She died on Sept. 30, 1897, following a long struggle with tuberculosis. Her last words captured the meaning of her life well lived, “My God, I love you!”

Day by day, St. Thérèse lifted her soul towards heaven and her heart towards the face of Christ, both in times of trial and in joy. She practiced through detachment from earthly things so that

her spirit could soar to unite with God above. As she writes in her poem, *Jesus Alone*, “Jesus, you alone can satisfy my soul. Nothing can charm me here below... My only peace, my only happiness, my only love is you, Lord!”

When it came to loving others, St. Thérèse understood that Christians must first love Christ. As the shape of the cross demonstrates, our focus must be first and foremost on loving our Father, and then on loving others.

“You want my heart, Jesus, I give it to you. I surrender all my desires to you, and those whom I love, O my Spouse, my King, from now on I only want to love them for you,” her poem continues.

Let us take a moment to thank God for all of the saints who have gone before us, paving the way to Eternity for all. This Oct. 1, let us remember this mystical “Saint of Love” and imitate her in a special way.

The Parish Nursing Ministry: Caring for Our Bodies as a Temple of the Lord

*I*f there is something to be learned from this time of COVID-19, it is that our health is not something to take for granted and that wellness is never a guarantee. The call to be good stewards of ourselves not only includes the spiritual aspect of our beings, but the physical as well. After all, as St. Augustine said, “Take care of your body as if you were going to live forever, and take care of your soul as if you were going to die tomorrow.”

“God gave us these bodies and we have to treat them appropriately,” says Kathy Brazytis, head of the Parish Nursing Ministry. “Fr. Troha reached out to me to start offering wellness checks for our parishioners. He feels very strongly about making sure our parishioners are not only caring for their spiritual side, but their physical side as well.”

This ministry is not entirely new to the parish, having offered wellness checks several years ago —parishioners found this to be very helpful. Presently, wellness checks will be offered one weekend a month, following Sunday Masses, in St. Joseph’s Hall.

“The checks will consist of taking blood pressure, pulse, temperature and respirations,” Kathy says. “This information will be given to the parishioners along with any literature they may need for further information. They can bring this to their doctor to discuss any further care that is needed.”

St. Teresa of Calcutta once said, “Not all of us can do great things. But we can do small things with great love.” Kathy’s dedication to her long nursing career and helping others is an example of this in action. Her many years spent as a nurse dedicated to helping others has given her experience in hospice and palliative care, as well as psychiatric care.

“When Father first reached out to me, I was retired and had a lot of time to dedicate to this,” she says. “Since then, I have accepted a position as the Director of Nursing at a new substance abuse facility. But I am committed to getting this important ministry going within our parish.”

Kathy does not hesitate to devote her time and energy to the parish.

continued on back cover

“*God gave us these bodies and we have to treat them appropriately. Fr. Troha reached out to me to start offering wellness checks for our parishioners. He feels very strongly about making sure our parishioners are not only caring for their spiritual side, but their physical side as well.* — Kathy Brazytis”

Immaculate Conception

CATHOLIC CHURCH

37940 EUCLID AVENUE WILLOUGHBY, OH 44094

440.942.4500 | WWW.IMMACULATE.NET

NON PROFIT ORG
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
CLEVELAND, OH
PERMIT 362

OCTOBER 2021

The Parish Nursing Ministry *continued from previous page*

“This is one way for me to give back and help others,” she says. “My son passed away in July of 2020, and Father and the parish really supported me through that.”

It is the ministry’s hope to eventually extend its efforts into support and education groups. “Especially with the holidays coming up, we are wanting to have these supports available,” Kathy says.

The ministry also hopes to offer grief support, as well as support for those with substance abuse issues. More may be added as needs arise.

As this important ministry is getting started, more volunteers are needed.

“We could use more nurses or health care professions to help do the wellness checks themselves,” Kathy says. “We would like to be efficient and not make parishioners wait too long.”

But even if someone is not in health care, there is still a need to be filled.

“We could use help with organizing, setting up, having someone record information as we do the checks,” Kathy says. “We could use all types of volunteers.”

Giving of one’s time and abilities in this capacity is a great way to not only promote health and wellness within the parish, but to also serve others by doing those “small things with great love.”

More information on upcoming wellness checks will be posted in the bulletin.

If you are interested in helping to serve with the Parish Nursing Ministry, please contact the parish office at 440-942-4500.