

History of Immaculate Conception Church



Liberty Towers groundbreaking ceremony. Pictured L-R: Joseph Schierberl, Lou Tripodi, Mary Weaver, Fr. John A. Kuzilla, Keith Martin, Sr.; and Rev. Leroy Jones of the United Methodist Church.

Vatican II reforms in the church placed new emphasis on the participation of the laity. The Immaculate Conception congregation responded with a wealth of new ministries and outreach possibilities. Lectoring began, appropriately, on the feast of the Immaculate Conception in 1965. The first Eucharistic Ministers were commissioned in 1977. Inaugurated in 1989, Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) has flourished in welcoming new members to Catholicism. Religious Education, including the children's catechumenate and adult education, has expanded to become one of the largest programs in the Diocese, offering Bible studies and occasional lectures. Sacramental preparation, such as pre-Baptismal classes and pre-Cana, has grown too. In the late 1980's a Liturgy board was formed along with a Funeral Team. The parish began participating in a Food for Friends program, serving meals several times a year to Clarion's needy.

On November 25, 1984, groundbreaking ceremonies were held to start the construction of Liberty Towers, located at the corner

of Liberty Street and Sixth Avenue. Father Kuzilla headed up the project that was sponsored by Immaculate

Conception, and jointly co-sponsored by The Erie Diocese and the Benedictine Sisters of Erie. Liberty Towers, Inc. will own the facility and the Clarion Housing Authority will manage the facility once open. The cost of the 49 unit elderly housing project was close to 2 million dollars.

In August of 1989, Father John A. Kuzilla moved on to St. Bernard Parish, Bradford, Pa. and in October, Father Frank Pzrepierski arrived from St. Hippolyte in Guys Mills. In the 1990's with Father Frank's guidance the parish moved forward with renovations and innovations. Due to the generosity of the parishioners, "Stewardship" donations were earmarked to replace the roof, the heating/cooling systems, carpeting, and seat cushions in the



Fr. Frank J. Przepierski

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*St. Antoine de Lavaneau parish in Jacmel, Haiti.
Theodule Domond, pastor and choir.*

church. Handicapped-accessible restrooms were installed in the church. The parish school has been refitted with new windows and doors. The school cafeteria was completely remodeled in 1998. The improvements in the rectory included a new roof, air conditioning, and a handicapped-accessible entrance.

In the fall of 1998, Immaculate Conception adopted St. Antoine de Lavaneau parish in Jacmel, Haiti as part of the Haiti Parish Twinning Program, (HPTP). Through HPTP the IC Parish is gathering school supplies, medical supplies, tools, and money so that its new sister parish can meet its spiritual and material needs. Since 1998 almost \$40,000 has been sent to the parish, along with hundreds of pounds of supplies. The goal of the committee is to help these under privileged people to fend for themselves and to share with them what God has so generously bestowed on the people of Immaculate Conception. Dennis Kidney, Dawn Kidney, Stella Miller, Linda Summerville and Shirley Lahr are the founding and current committee members.

Following the call from Pope John Paul II, Immaculate Conception Parish marked the Jubilee Year of 2000 by celebrating a Great Mass, Dinner & Social at the Clarion County Park on August 13, 2000. More than 1,400 people celebrated the good that was present in our lives, our parish, our Church and our world. The Mass began with a procession of representatives from the various Liturgical Ministries, Educational Ministries, Parish Boards, Organizations and Sacramental Ministries that gave life to our Parish.

Following the Great Mass, attendees shared a meal, fellowship, and games and activities for all ages. The Great Mass achieved its purpose of enhancing a spirit

of community among parishioners. A committee of more than 50 parishioners helped plan the event co-chaired by Ann Jamison, Dennis Kidney, and Anita Lahr.

Immaculate Conception also hosted its first ever Chrism Mass on April 9, 2001. The Chrism Mass is held yearly and it is one of the most solemn and significant liturgies of the church. During the Mass, Bishop Trautman blessed the oil of Catechumens, the oil of the sick and the oil of Chrism. The Mass was attended by almost all of the priests in the Erie Diocese.

On August 1, 2001, Msgr. Joseph Riccardo replaced Fr. Frank as pastor. Over the last few years of his pastorate, Msgr. Riccardo has continued to add to the wonderful and glorious foundation of "faith and works" of the parish's 150 years. Our parish has grown together as a community of faith; parishioners reach out to others as Ministers of Hospitality, Cantors, Altar Servers, Ushers, Eucharistic Ministers, and Organists.

Educational programs include Pre-Baptismal, R.C.I.A., Pre-Cana, Religious Education, Summer Bible School. Many groups and committees give their time and effort to spread the good news of the Lord.



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The following three articles are taken from a 1925 Catholic Reference Book edited by Rev. Alexis A. Fischer.

Company Keeping

A young man and a young girl whose intention is to marry, must know each other, and the way to this is to keep company together. Though the Church knows the dangers of Company Keeping, still she does not condemn it when it is done under circumstances approved by said morality. There are three things necessary to assure this honesty in Company Keeping: 1, the age; 2, the length, 3, the place.

1. The age. Since Company Keeping is to lead to a future marriage, it goes without saying that it should take place only when young people are ready to marry, the marriageable age being from 22 to 25 for a young man, and from 20 to 22 for a young girl. It follows that Company Keeping before this age is not in keeping with moral laws. It is a pity to see school children sometimes engaged in a close friendship with the opposite sex. There is always a serious danger for both the boy and the girl and the prudent parents should obviate this abuse.

2. The length. Since the end of Company Keeping is to know each other-to find out whether or not their character, taste, aptitude or fortune might agree together, it follows that this Company Keeping should not be carried out beyond the acquisition of this knowledge. It is an error to think that the longer a young man woos a young girl the better he will know her; no, because often times the young girl anxious to please, will not make herself known as she is in reality, i.e., she will hide her faults and other defects of character and will try to appear as good as possible, and this as long as she can hold on to this two-faced game. Young men, beware of those putty-faced girls who hide their ill-temper or their jealous dispositions as carefully as they hide the wrinkles of their face under - "rouge" and powder.

3. Place. Company Keeping should take place in the home under the supervision of the parents. How imprudent are those parents who allow their daughter to run the streets late at night. Still more imprudent when they allow this Company Keeping to take place in a dark or ill-lighted parlor and without supervision. Do not say that your daughter is good and reliable. This is precisely the reason why you ought to protect her. Wooing has always been considered dangerous when it is not conducive to marriage. But it is still more so at the age when passions are developing. Parents beware-If your daughter is not of a marriage-

able age, convince her that she should not keep regular company with any young man. Make this Company Keeping always short duration, and above all do not expose your daughter to lose her reputation on her honor in allowing her pretended friend to take her in places where Christian decency forbids her to go.

It Is The Correct Thing For Catholics...

To always be in time for Masses and other services of the Church.

To remember that the Church bells are rung for a purpose and not merely to keep the sexton busy, and that it would be well, therefore, to obey their call.

To take Holy Water on entering the Church.

To make the sign of the Cross on the person and not the air.

To genuflect on the right knee and to have it touch the floor.

To remember that the King of Kings is present on the altar, and to conduct one self accordingly.

To avoid whispering, laughing, and looking about the Church.

To walk gently up the aisle if one is unavoidably detained after service is begun.

To make a short act of adoration on bended knees after entering pew.

To be devout and recollected at the different parts of Mass.

To remember that bodily presence in the Church, with the mind wandering to temporal matters, does not fulfill the precept of hearing Mass.

To pay attention to the sermon, and make it the subject of one's thoughts during the day as also during the week.

For ladies to enter the Church with head-dress on.

For gentlemen to enter the Church without any hat or cap on.

To remember when special collections are to be taken up, and to have your contribution in hand.

To make a practice of putting something in the offertory contribution box every Sunday and Holy Day. This should never be omitted at Holy Mass. This collection is of Apostolic origin and is necessary.

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It Is The Correct Thing For Catholics . . .

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- To train children to this practice.
- To listen to the music as a means of elevating the heart to God.
- For a gentleman occupying a pew to move in or rise and let ladies pass in before him.
- For pew-holders to offer seats in their pews to strangers.
- For men too stingy to have seats of their own in Church to occupy the free pews and not blockade the entrance by standing or kneeling on one knee around it.
- To avoid coughing, moving the feet around, or making noise to the annoyance of the charge and people.
- To be punctilious in following the ceremonies of the Church, standing, kneeling, etc., at the proper times.
- To take an earnest Protestant to hear a good sermon.
- To remain kneeling until the last prayers have been said.



An Admirable Guide For Every Christian Home

It is the Correct Thing . . .

- To Know that open-handed hospitality is generally rewarded by the happiness afforded, even in this world.
- To Know that great men and noble women are generally reared in happy homes.
- To remember that courtesy, patience, consideration, affability, self-sacrifice, sympathy are some of the virtues to be practiced in the home circle.
- To let no unpleasant subject ever be broached at table.
- To be temperate in eating as well as in drinking.
- To be ever ready and glad to give a place at one's board to a friend.
- For a Christian "to eat to live, not to live to eat."
- For children love, honor and obey their parents.
- For parents to each children their prayers as soon as they are able to talk.
- To be careful that children never see or hear anything that could tarnish their innocence in the slightest degree.
- To take care that children are not frightened by stories of ghosts and goblins.
- To punish them when they need correction.
- To be kind but firm always with children.
- To watch over their associations.
- To answer their questions accurately.
- To understand their faults as well as their perfections.
- To let them dress as children, partake of the amusements of children, be innocent as children.
- To be punctilious about saying grace before meals, and returning thanks afterwards.
- To remember the old maxim about the twig and the tree.
- To celebrate both the birthdays and the feasts of the patron saints of the several members of the family, as well as all other family feasts, since it tends to foster a love of family and of home.

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Anno Domini Millesimo Octingentesimo Quin-
quagesimo sexto die Decima quinta Junij qua fuit Do-
minica tertia mensis ac quinta post Pentecostes. Illustris-
simus Reverendissimusque Dominus Josue Maria Young
Episcopus Diocesis Cruiensis dedicavit Ecclesiam in Clarion
ad Honorem Immaculate et absque labe originalis peccati
conceptae Virginis semper Mariae ipsamque Immaculatam
Virginem pro patrona principali hujus congregationis dedit
In fidem hujus manu propria subscribo
Leopold Pawloski

In the year of the Lord eighteen hundred and fifty-six, on the fifteenth day of June, on the third Sunday of the month and the fifth after Pentecost, the most illustrious and Most Reverend Josue Maria Young, Bishop of the Diocese, dedicated the church in Clarion to the honor of the Immaculate and Ever Virgin Mary, conceived without original sin, and gave the same Immaculate Virgin to this congregation as principal patron.

In witness thereof, I sign in my own hand,

Leopold Pawloski