

Immaculate Conception Church – Organizations

Knights of Columbus Council 7549



A crowd of over 100,000 watched a replica of the Santa Maria, Christopher Columbus's ship, in the Clarion Autumn Leaf Festival Parade. The two designers Bud Cramer, Bill Molnar with the help of fellow Knights received two awards. Best in the Parade and Best in its Class.

The Knights of Columbus were founded in New Haven, Connecticut in 1882 by a young priest named Michael J. McGivney. Father McGivney and a handful of parishioners formed the largest Catholic fraternal organization in the world, in the basement of St. Mary's Church. Today more than 1.6 million members belong to some 12,000 councils throughout the United States, Canada, Mexico, the Philippines and the Caribbean. Including wives and children of members, the K of C extended family totals an excess of six million people

Locally Council 7549 was chartered on April 13, 1980 with 36 parish men and Father John Kuzilla as Council Chaplain. Prior to forming a council at the Immaculate Conception Parish, K of C members attended meetings and functions at Council 4216 located at St. Joseph's Church in Lucinda. This council was named the Clarion

County Council from the mid-nineteen fifties until the chartering of the IC Council in 1980. Council 4216 has been renamed the St. Joseph's Council and meets in the council hall located along Route 66 in Lucinda.

Founding Members of Council 7549 included Rev. John A. Kuzilla, Robert L. Bodenhorn, R.L. Lewis, Keith F. Martin, Sr., K.J. Martin, K.M. Martin, Keith F. Martin, Jr., K.P. Martin, Lew L. Pontzer, A.C. Lenhart, R.E. Leonard, J. Damien Zdarko, Robert A. Walter, M.U. Aladi, P.L. Pontzer, J.L. Wagner, L.H. Lewis, E.L. Baker, Charles J. Conrad, Gus L. Magrini, L.T. Cramer, Harold L. Clinger, Hunter M. McMeans, S.B. Montana, Michael J. Kennedy, Richard E. Steiner, L.A. Beary, I.S. Hook, John R. Doran, D.J. Phillips, A.E. Bernard, F.J. Zacherl, Robert L. Gesin, T.E. Zacherl, A. DeSantis, G.P. Reinsel, Anthony N. Fragale.

Today more than 150 men are proud to call themselves members of the Knights of Columbus and belong to the Immaculate Conception Council, 7549. Throughout the two decades that the council has been a part of the IC family, several notable projects have been developed and contribute to our daily lives as parishioners. As you leave the church you will see a beautiful statue of our Blessed Mother Mary.



Fourth Degree Knights march in the Autumn Leaf Parade, 1982.

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This in part was a gift of the local K of C. When you have occasion to visit the Church cemetery, take a moment to visit the Memorial to the Unborn Child. The monument was dedicated in 1994. The sign that stands in front of our beautiful school was donated in part by the Knights from proceeds derived from their annual sausage stand sales. The sausage stand has been located at the corner of Sixth and Wood for over 20 years.

Each spring you will see K of C members and their families collecting pennies to dollars for the ARC, Association of Retarded Citizens. This is a national as well as local project which benefits local retarded citizens. In 2003 several Knights were instrumental in organizing and starting an ARC chapter which is housed on Main Street near the Clarion County court house.

The K of C has a thriving life insurance program which is a benefit to members and their families and is rated in the top 6% of insurance companies in North America. The local Knights also donate money to Catholic Charities, natural family planning, assistance to individual seminarians and vocations. Donations were sent to both the Pennsylvania and national World War II memorials.

The Knights of Columbus are truly a Catholic, Family, Fraternal and Service organization serving the needs of Immaculate Conception Parish and the men who belong to IC Council 7549.

Catholic Daughters of America

The Catholic Daughters of the Americas is the largest Catholic women's organization. It is open to women age 18 and over which includes divorced or separated Catholic women. The CDA was organized in June, 1903 in Utica, New York by the Knights of Columbus. The organization later became incorporated and separate from the Knights.

Catholic Daughters of the Americas Court Immaculate Conception of Clarion, Court #2454 was instituted on March 21, 1998. This was the first new court in the Erie Diocese in forty years. Thirty-six ladies were installed. They were: Nancy G. Armagost, Rosemary Bish, Florence Brochetti, Madelon D. Callen, JoAnne T. Conniff, Lorraine B. Cramer, Jolene S. Cyphert, Jane E. Detrie, Christine Dougherty, Mary A. Duncan, Victoria L. Ferringer, Jacqueline Y. Griebel, Linda G. Ida, Nancy M. Kadunce, Dawn M. Kidney, Denise M. Kid-

ney, Jacqueline R. Kriebel, Shirley J. Lahr, Dorothy C. Lander, Elizabeth M. Lander, Susan A. Larrow, Mary E. Lewis, Ann E. Liska, Stella J. Miller, Elanie D. Moore, Anna T. Phillips, Magaret A. Potvin, Susan M. Rathfon, Lorraine M. Schildknecht, Barbars J. Sekula, Elizabeth H. Shumaker, Arlene M. Stahlman, Victoria R. Whisner, Stacy A. Wiles and one deceased charter member, Benedicta T. Worrell, who joined our Lord in December of 1998. There are currently thirty four members. Members come from Immaculate Conception Church in Clarion, St. Charles Church in New Bethlehem, St. Mary's Church in Crown, St. Michael's Church in Fryburg, and St. Joseph's Church in Lucinda.

Their mission is to engage in creative and spiritual programs which provide its members with the opportunity to develop their God-given talents in a meaningful way to positively influence the welfare of the church and all people throughout the world. They strive to embrace the principle of faith working through love in the promotion of justice, equality and the advancement of human dignity for all. CDA's motto is Unity and Charity, their patroness is the Blessed Mother, and their Emblem is the Cross and Crown. CD of A supports various programs under the "Circle of Love" program in the Clarion community by visiting nursing homes, rosary recitation, helping with receptions, and supporting Catholic Campus Ministry. They also help support a Mission church in Paraguay.

Meetings are held on the second Monday of each month, except for July and August.

The Ladies Guild

The Ladies Guild, with membership open to all ladies of the parish, was started in the early 1920s. The purpose of the guild is to support the parish in all aspects; all funds that are raised go back to the parish.

They also help the summer Bible school program and the Religious Education Program. Our children are a great concern to the Ladies Guild. The guild has also been a great asset to the school. They have contributed generously to the purchase of much needed equipment to help keep the school running smoothly.

The guild has always met on the first Wednesday of the month, and a covered dish dinner is the norm for all meetings. An average meeting consists of 25 to 30 ladies, and over the years have become a very close knit group. The Ladies Guild continues to be an active part of Immaculate Conception church and school.

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Catholic Knights of St. George

The Catholic Knights of St. George was founded on January 8, 1881 in Pittsburgh, PA and was known as the German Roman Catholic Knights of St. George.

On May 24, 1909 Grand President Joseph H. Reiman, represented the German Roman Catholic Knights of St. George for the purpose of installing Branch 114 of said order in the Immaculate Conception Church in Clarion.

The meeting was opened with a prayer by Rev. H. A. Deckenbrock. The following are the charter members, Joseph B. Aaron, Edward P. Blatt, John M. Confer, Jacob J. Fagley Chambers E. Gano, Joseph Hartle, Charles A. Heinrich, John A. Hoover, Joseph H. Hubauer, Leo J. Huefner, Stephen C. Huefner, Frank C. Kappert, William H. Griffith, George A. Snyder and George W. Blissell. Leo S. Selker and Valentine Huefner were installed as passive members.

Four additional members made application for transfer to the new Branch 114 at Clarion. They were John J. Wilshire Branch 4, John Engelmeier and Joseph Engelmeier Branch 11 and J.J. Purcell of Branch 69.

The following officers were elected: Spiritual Adviser, Rev. H.A. Deckenbrock; Director, Stephen C. Huefner; President, Edward P. Blatt; Vice President, George W. Blissell; Secretary and Treasure, John A. Hoover; Marshall, Leo J. Huefner.

The next three decades the Knights grew in membership and the social and insurance needs of the members were met. During World War II the Knights of St. George was keep active by Secretary Treasurer Edward Trunk. Although few meetings were held during this time the "Knights" remained an active Branch in the parish.

On April 19, 1951 a reorganization meeting was held with many new members inducted into the "Knights". Donald Schmader was Chairman of the new membership committee.

Over the next two decades the Knights of St. George played an important role in the church and school, funding many projects. In 1964 and 1965 the Knights ran bingo from January to the first of Lent to fund the athletic program. In January 1966 the Knights started jackpot bingo and ran the bingo ev-

ery Monday night all year long for the repair and building fund of the old church

In 1967 the Knights started the church bulletin and bought a duplicating machine for the church. In 1968 the Knights paid for new carpet and the painting of the church. The cleaning of the church was paid by the Knights for many years. Farther Joseph Meisinger asked the Knights to start an envelope system for the parish and the Knights paid for the envelopes for one year.

In 1973 at the request of Father Kuzilla the jackpot bingo along with the activities account was turned over to the PTO. In 1975 the Knights of St. George donated ten thousand dollars for the altar in the new church.

In October 1987 the Knights of St. George merged with the William Penn Association of Pittsburgh, PA, to strengthen both societies financially and fraternally.

At present there are approximately 450 members in the Knights of St. George of the William Penn Association in Branch 8114 in Clarion. The following officers of the Branch are, Spiritual Advisor Monsignor Joseph J. Riccardo, President Vance Slike, Vice President Kevin Slike, Secretary Arthur A. Aaron, Treasurer Robert V. Donahue, Trustees Joseph M. Smith and David Ragley.



Front L-R: Bob Donahue, Tony Lapinto, Fr. John Kuzilla, Firmin Zacherl. Back row: Chuck Nanz, Ed Osteried, Jim Delaney, Clete Schill, Andy Montana.

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The Immaculate Conception Cemetery Association

On March 14, 1855, the Rt. Rev. Josue M. Young, Bishop of Erie, entered into an agreement to purchase 1.01/100 acres of land from William M. Lyon of Pittsburgh, for the sum of one dollar, to be used as a cemetery for the Catholic families of Clarion and the surrounding area. An article in the Clarion Democrat 1917 also lists that in the parish records Thomas McCulloch Esq. of Madison Furnace donated the cemetery to Father James Slattery in 1854.

A second purchase was made on the second day of August 1892, by the Rt. Rev Tobias Mullen, Bishop of Erie, for approximately one acre of land for \$125.00 from John and Effie Brown and W.A. and Maggie Hindman of Clarion Pennsylvania. A third purchase containing thirty-five and eight tenths perches was made on the twentieth day of June 1903, by the Rt. Rev. John E. Fitzmaurice, Bishop of Erie, from I.M. Shannon and E.Y. Shannon his wife, of Clarion, Pennsylvania for the sum of one dollar.

A fourth purchase of 5.448 acres, was made on the fourth day of September 1926, by the Rt. Rev. John M. Gannon, Bishop of Erie, for \$1,089.60 from J. Clyde and Elizabeth Reed, of Clarion. There are now approximately seven and three-fourth acres in the Immaculate Conception Cemetery.

The first person buried in the cemetery on record was Ignatius Hauwiller in 1856, followed by Thomas Donahue age 2, Margaret Kelly, John M. Graham age 2, John B. Graham age 3, Joseph Hubbinger age 80, Lucinda O'Neill age 38, Michael Ryan age 25, Joseph Hartle age 15. These names were taken from headstones as there were no burial records found. These names represent the first twelve years of the cemetery. There were probably more buried in the early years but they have no grave markers.

The final resting place of Rev. Henry Deckenbrock who served as pastor of the Immaculate Conception Church

in Clarion for thirty-eight years is at the base of the Risen Christ statue in our cemetery. Father Joseph Meisinger, a pastor and native of Clarion, is also buried in our cemetery in the Meisinger family plot.

On July 9, 1968 Father Joseph Meisinger, along with several men met to discuss the financial needs and care of the cemetery. Those attending were Gordon Rice Jr., Gerald Bauer, Jack Rowan, caretaker John Heinrich. Over the next several meetings it was decided a onetime perpetual care charge be asked of all who had a lot in the cemetery. This money was placed in the "Immaculate Conception Cemetery Endowment". It was determined to incorporate the cemetery and legal counsel suggested a five member board of directors be appointed.

On February 16, 1969, a Board of Directors was chosen consisting of Rev. Joseph Meisinger, Gordon Rice Jr., Gerald Bauer, Robert V. Donahue and Edward L. Trunk. The association is now known as "The Clarion Immaculate Conception Cemetery Association Inc."

In 1976 under the direction of Rev. John Kuzilla, a mausoleum was built with eighty crypts and eighty niches. A chapel was also built at the front parking lot for grave-side services. This now serves as an office and maintenance building.

In 1999 under the direction of Rev. Frank Przepierski, a new mausoleum was added with ninety-seven new crypts with a chapel in the center. The dedication of the new mausoleum was held on October 31, 1999. There are 1,392 burials to date on record, with enough land to fill our needs for the next one hundred years.

The present Board of Directors are Monsignor Joseph J. Riccardo, Gordon J. Rice Jr., Robert V. Donahue, Chester McMillen, Arthur A. Aaron, Anthony Lapinto (now deceased) and Regis Walters.

