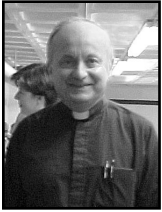


Connections

The Newsletter of Immaculate Conception Parish

July 2001



Dear Parishioners:

Recently I celebrated the "End of the Year" Mass for our students at Saint Patrick School. For a number of reasons, I arrived for Mass without

having prepared a sermon, and so I turned to the three altar servers, all seventh graders at the school and asked them what they thought I should talk about as the students prepared for their summer vacation.

One answered, "Tell the students to have fun but have a safe vacation."

A second said, "Tell them to be good to one another."

Another chimed in with, "Tell them to help one another."

Another comment came, "Tell them not to take a vacation from Church in the summer — we need to go to Church all year round."

I then went out on the altar and made exactly those comments to the students, parents, and school staff. I repeat those comments to you today for as we begin a time of vacation - a time of rest and refreshment, we could not do better during this summer time than to try and have a little fun, get some rest, engage in activities safely, be good and kind to one another, have a concern for others by helping them, and to ensure that our religious faith and practice continues during this summer vacation period. Out of the minds of our youngsters formed and educated by our Catholic school, come words of wisdom for us all to heed and hopefully to put into effect every day during this summer season.

Have a blessed vacation. My prayers and best wishes are with you.

Sincerely yours in Christ,
Rev. Edward J. Kelley

Contact Information

Phone 436-0048
Fax 436-8848
Pastor: Father Edward Kelley Ext. 7
Pastoral Minister Gayl Callis Ext. 9
Temporary Secretary Janice Ferguson . Ext. 6

Once known as "inquiry class", the RCIA is a journey of faith. Re-introduced during the 1970s, the process calls on the parish community for involvement and prayerful support.

The first step is for the RCIA coordinator to have a conversation with each inquirer. Doing this well means keeping the focus on the inquirer, respecting the ability of each person to walk their own walk. We trust that the Holy Spirit is part of this conversation, which usually happens mid-summer at the convenience of the person inquiring.

The next step is the **precatechumenate** (begins the first of September) when the RCIA team listens and is present to the inquirers, giving them time to discern where God is calling them to be. The team *allows the inquirers' questions to set the agenda*. By not imposing an agenda, the team provides time and space for inquirers to mentally 'try on the Church'. Inquirers search for the will of God and listen to the gospel message, as did the first century Christians. Once they have reached the point of accepting the gospel and wish to be received into the Church, they enter the Order of the Catechumens. The **catechumenate** often lasts several months and involves instruction and liturgical rites; these are celebrations of the word of God, blessings and anointing with the oil.

The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults



These events begin in the midst of the parish community and culminate with the Rite of Election celebrated by the Bishop at the Cathedral the first Sunday of Lent.

The stage of **election and initiation** takes place during Lent as the 'elect' are prepared for the sacraments of initiation: Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist, celebrated at the Easter Vigil service.

To strengthen the newly baptized, another period of catechesis takes place during the Easter Season. **Mystagogia** has a very long history in the Church; it is a deeper explanation of the mysteries of faith and community into which the newly baptized have been initiated. If you, or someone you know, is asking questions about the Catholic faith or wishes to be a parish sponsor of someone on this journey of faith, your specific questions may be answered by calling the rectory at 436-0048 (ext 9) to speak to Gayl Callis, pastoral minister and RCIA coordinator.

Father's Kelley's 35th Anniversary Mass - May 26, 2001



Photos by Joyce Miller, Parishioner

PARISH ACTIVITIES YOU CAN PARTICIPATE IN

Parish Service Day

Parish Service Day. It's a simple concept, *people helping people*. But it takes a surprising amount of organization to make it happen. Projects and people needing and willing to accept help have to be identified. Then volunteers have to be organized. We can all be thankful to the Parish Life Committee for their efforts in making the parish's second annual service day on May 19 a success. The number of projects more than doubled from last year with a good number of repeat "customers" from last year.

Cleaning a yard, hanging a curtain, planting some flowers and painting a ceiling were just some of the tasks done, nothing heroic. But we all know that little things like these can make such a difference in one's daily life. There are lots of simple tasks that are more easily accomplished by two than one, or which have been made more difficult by age or illness, though it may not always be easy to admit that this is true and give others the opportunity to help.

The volunteers got great satisfaction from helping their fellow parishioners. More over, they met a lot of other great people just like themselves, and got a terrific spaghetti dinner in the bargain. Again our thanks to everyone involved in every way, and especially to the Parish Life Committee members.

PARISH COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

Parish Picnic - September 16, 2001

Mark your calendars! The parish picnic will be held on Sunday, September 16 on Jamaica Island at the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. as a special part of our 150th anniversary celebration.

Try your hand at croquet or volleyball while the kids explore the "Jump & Tumble Bus.", a full sized school bus equipped with gymnastic equipment, including bars, beam, trampoline, ropes, rings, climbing apparatus and more. It should bring hours of well supervised fun.

The kids can also play games, don some face paint, or try their skill at a scavenger hunt. There will also be plenty of good music, and maybe a sing-a-long or two.

After all that activity, you're sure to get hungry. The menu will include hamburgers, hotdogs, chicken, salads, brownies, cookies, and soda.

Need a ride? Transportation to the Shipyard will be available. Tickets are \$3 per person, with a maximum of \$15 per family. Sign-ups will be held after masses in early September.

In the event of rain, we'll move the fun inside the church basement. The "Jump & Tumble Bus" will be parked outside.

To volunteer to help, or for further information, please contact Kate Gordon at 431-8920.

The Bereavement Ministry

The experience of losing a loved one to death forces us to examine our values and faith-life, our reliance on God and the very meaning of prayer and spirituality in our lives. Our parish, which has been present to the bereaved during the wake and funeral, continues to walk with those who grieve.

Ministers of consolation help the family prepare services for the wake and funeral. Then, once the reality of death begins to take hold of the bereaved, the greatest gift we give is our presence as a listener.

A few weeks after the funeral we send a card, letting the bereaved know we are here if they need us, offering our prayer support for the family and assistance. After an appropriate time, a bereavement minister phones to ask if they wish a visit or if we can provide books and materials to assist in the process. We can also recommend names of bereavement experts to assist those who have suffered loss.

Between six months and one year, those who are grieving often wish to join others in a small group led by a trained bereavement facilitator. Such a parish support group is available four times a year, usually for a period of seven weeks. After the first session, the groups are closed, providing a strong bond between participants; for this reason, preregistration is necessary. Information about upcoming bereavement support group sessions are posted several weeks in advance in our parish bulletin and

also announced at all Masses. Those whose loved ones' funerals have been celebrated in this parish are also notified by letter but everyone who has suffered loss of a loved one is encouraged to attend, even if the loss has not been recent. Our next support group begins August 6th.

For more information about our Bereavement Ministry, how you can be involved in it or be assisted by it, please contact Gayl Callis at the rectory, 436-0048, ext 9

MEET THE USHERS

Most of you will recognize many of these faces. These men provide a valuable service to the Parish each and every week of the year. Their duties include preparing the pews for Mass, distributing bulletins, arranging for the bringing forth of the gifts during the

Offertory, taking up the offertory collection and any other special collections, counting of heads, and assisting as needed in the Church. **Currently we are in need of additional ushers; won't you join the ranks of these fine men?**



Front Row: Randy Briolat, Paul Anania, Al Stewart
Middle Row: Mark Larrivee, Ryan Briolat, Mike Cocchiaro, Glen Gordon Back Row: Harold (Gene) Murphy, Bill Cynewski, Jim Birt, Joe Boldiga

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION PARISH HISTORY - 1907-1934

In August, 1907, Father Walsh took charge of the parish and devoted his energies to its spiritual and financial affairs. In order to discharge the debt incurred by the new school and convent, he instituted a 10¢ offertory collection and in less than 8 years the debt was reduced by more than \$20,000.

Father Walsh died suddenly of heart failure at the parish rectory on March 23, 1915, after complaining of a slight illness for several days. As a mark of respect, all businesses in the city closed during the hour of his funeral services. The Mayor and City Council passed a resolution to adjourn their meeting to attend the funeral and the school board, municipal departments, members of business organizations, and clergy of all faiths in the city attended the funeral Mass. The parish at this time had 500 families with 500 children attending St. Patrick's School.

On September 8, 1915 the Reverend D. Alexander Sullivan was appointed pastor. The parish was still in debt, but scarcely three years elapsed until he was able to announce on Sunday, September 22, 1918, the happy news that the parochial school debt was paid in full and that no other debts existed.

Under his spiritual leadership a custom of holding memorial services in honor of all the deceased members of the parish was initiated. This was a custom in many other cities at the time and was distinct from the Memorial Day services which consisted of honoring the deceased military and decorating the graves of soldiers. The first of these services was held on Sunday afternoon, October 22, 1916 at St. Mary's and Calvary Cemeteries. A tradition that has lasted til this day.



The Rectory built in 1934 with funds left by Father D. Alexander Sullivan

service as pastor when he died on June 10, 1925, following complications after surgery for appendicitis. His death was a distinct loss to the parish and community. He, too, had been active in city affairs as library trustee and director of the Family Welfare Association as well as an active member of other committees. He left a very substantial sum in the parish treasury for the construction of a new rectory and established a trust fund for the education of the youth of the parish. The Rev. D. Alexander Sullivan Scholarship Fund continues today to assist worthy students in their efforts to obtain a college education.

In September, 1925, the Rev. James H. Brennan was transferred from the pastorate of Holy Trinity Parish, Somersworth. Almost from the first he proceeded to undertake the plans of Father Sullivan for the construction of the new rectory. The present three story brick building at the corner of Summer and Austin Streets was erected at a cost of \$50,000. In 1930 the Chapel of the Sisters of Mercy convent was completely redecorated and a complete electric light system was installed in the parochial school.

THE PRESENT CHURCH IS BUILT

It had been decided that the existing church was structurally weak and too small to meet the needs of this large and growing parish. Even the devastating economic depression failed to halt renovation and expansion within the parish. In 1932, in order to raise money for a proposed new church, Father Brennan suggested a contribution of a dollar a month from all members of the parish gainfully employed. The parishioners accepted his proposal with enthusiasm and the collection continued after completion of the church until this debt had been discharged.

By March 1933, sufficient funds were on hand to start building the church. Crews of workmen commenced a planned demolition of the old church as construction started on the new. All materials which could be used in the new church were carefully stored for reuse. Because of the excellent location of this church property in Portsmouth, it had been decided to locate the new church on the same site, but instead of abutting directly upon the street the new church was to be set forty feet back from the street. During the one year of demolition and construction, daily Mass was celebrated on weekdays in the school hall and on Sundays for the larger congregation in the Knights of Columbus Hall and Portsmouth Theater.

The new church opened its doors for services for the first time on Easter Sunday, April 1, 1934. As the worshippers crowded in on this Easter morning, they were awestruck by the spaciousness, richness, and beauty of their new church. Sentiments of joy and gratitude for this splendid new temple to Almighty God were expressed by pastor and parishioners alike as they joined in the celebration of the Easter Mass.

The architectural style of the present church is pure Gothic. The exterior is of New Hampshire red brick trimmed with Indian limestone, with a slate roof. The interior was finished in California stucco with ornamental features finished in French gray, the plain surfaces in Mexican tan, while the apse was done in richer and deeper tones. The floor of concrete blocks was covered with linoleum in sober patterns. The altars, the altarsteps and predella, as well as the chancel-rail were of fine white Italian marble exquisitely carved. The interior dimensions are 122 by 60 feet, affording a seating capacity of about nine hundred, including the organ gallery. This choir gallery, reached by two staircases from the nave, is above the vestibule and extends the entire front of the church. The nave is 26 feet wide and 48 feet high and is separated from the aisles by arcades of seven bays.

Along the outer walls of the aisles are placed the stained glass windows purchased for the 1872 church by Father O'Callaghan. The columns separating the nave from the aisles bear upon their capitals large figures of winged angels that support the main ribs of the groined ceiling of the nave. Beautiful windows in the clerestory afford the necessary light for the vaulted roof of the nave. The ceilings in the aisles are likewise finely vaulted and groined. At the facade the three entrances are arched and above them are mullions and columns rising upwards to a traceried cornice. The apex of the roof, rising sixty feet above the



Immaculate Conception Parish Photo taken from the Dedication Booklet from 1934

ground, is surmounted by the symbol of Redemption in gilded copper. Along the sides of the building are flanking buttresses in aisles and nave. The apse is finished exteriorly in a graceful design to match the front. The bell tower rises majestically above the church, a landmark which can be seen for miles from Portsmouth. The

total cost of the church was estimated at \$135,000.

On October 21, 1934 the church was dedicated to Our Blessed Lady under the title of Her Immaculate Conception. The dedication was conducted by the Most Rev. John B. Peterson, D.D. Bishop of Manchester. Following the blessings of the church, a Solemn Pontifical Mass was offered by Bishop Peterson, assisted by six priests who had been ordained from this parish. Former assistant pastors and a delegation of Sisters of Mercy, who had been connected with Saint Patrick's School since its inception, were in attendance.

Watch for the next Connections when we cover another period of Immaculate Conception history. Much of this history comes from the Alexander V. Munton history published in 1977. John O'Sullivan, a parishioner, is conducting additional research and updating the history with additional facts as well as writing the history from 1977 to the present. If you have any items, stories that may be of interest, contact John at 603-436-1622 or email him at adcetera@mediaone.net.



Pastor Rev. Brennan in front of the Immaculate Conception Church in 1934 with the altar boys

Here's Your

Connections

to the Events and Goings on of
 Immaculate Conception Parish

Take Yourself Out to the Ballgame

Take yourself out to a ball game! The Parish Life Committee has reserved a limited number of tickets for the Portland Sea Dogs game on **Sunday, July 8** at 1 p.m. It should be an exciting game, as the opponent is Trenton, a minor league team of the Boston Red Sox. Tickets are \$6 per person.

Bus transportation is available at an additional cost of \$4 per person. Meet at the Masonic Temple at the corner of Middle Street and Miller Avenue at 11 a.m. on July 8. There is parking available in the Masonic lot. The bus will depart for Portland at 11:15 a.m.

For additional information, please contact Marie Cowgill at 427-0998.



Tidbits about
 What's going
 on in
 your parish
 this quarter!

Stained Glass Window Update

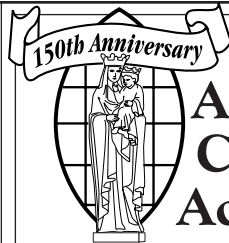
All twelve of our main stained glass windows have been restored! Currently the two transept windows just before the altar are being restored.

Do you have info in News for the Pews

Any information you would like included in "News from the Pews" should be forwarded to the Parish secretary (e-mail: icc150@juno.com, telephone: 436-0048 ext. 6, or fax: 436-8848).

Newsletter Articles

We are always looking for articles from our parishioners for "Connections". Have a story about your organization or your slant on parish life? If so, contact John O'Sullivan, editor at 603-436-1622 or by email: adcetera@mediaone.net.



Anniversary Celebration Activities

~ July 2001

8th: Portland Seadogs Game

~ August 2001

7/31-8/8: Trip to Ireland with Father Kelley

~ September 2001

16th: Parish Picnic at Jamaica Island

~ October 2001

13th-17th: Parish Mission with Msgr. Robert Ecker

~ October Fest

27th Music, Dancing & Food!

~ November 2001

3rd & 4th: Stewardship Fair

~ December 2001

1st: Women's Club Bazaar

~ December 2001

8th: Anniversary Closing Mass with Bishop McCormack followed by the 150th Anniversary Dinner at the Elks

Parish Sacraments

The following Sacraments were administered in our Parish since our last publication.

FIRST HOLY COMMUNION May 6, 2001

Taylor Berounsky
 Bryana Clark
 Michaela Cowgill
 Harlan Cutshall
 Matthew D'Orazio
 Eileen Foley
 Danica Fournier
 Allyson Greco
 Leah Guercio
 Quinn Hegarty
 Aliza Lantz
 Tyler Lefebvre
 John Mitchell
 Ryan Marconi
 Kelsey Murray
 Hannah Najar
 Kevin O'Leary
 Conor Trefethen
 Kelsey Zukowski

BAPTISMS

John Harrison Burke
 Brandon Steven Cook
 Cole Daniel Fuller
 Ava Gagne
 Michael Gerald Jolly
 Henri Harrington LaLime
 Zoe Elizabeth Thompson

MATRIMONY

Michelle Gauvin
 & James Armstrong
 Susan Kenney
 & Joel MacQuade
 Suzanne Leard
 & Fredrick Corriveau
 Rachel Higgins
 & Michael Willerer

FUNERALS

Eunice McKenna
 Sophie Berounsky
 Peter Paul Hobbs
 Paul J. Buckley
 Joseph A. Roland Morin
 Patricia M. Roy
 Alta M. Sullivan
 Kenneth P. McDonough
 Jeannette Hadley
 Charles McCaffery

CONFIRMATION May 23, 2001

Magdalene Balz
 Kyle Belmont
 Chad Bergeron
 Jennifer Brown
 Scott Burns
 Amanda Hett
 Andre Littlefield
 Olivia Luke
 Allison Marconi
 Jeremiah Moynahan
 Kristin Parker
 Christine Roy
 Michaela Sparling
 Christopher Wrenn

We ask God's perpetual light to shine upon all the souls who have departed this world.