



The Immaculate Connection

Newsletter of the Immaculate Conception Roman Catholic Church
Summer 2017 Ithaca, New York

Final Graduating Class Reflects on Lessons Learned, Great Memories of ICS

By Don Eckerson and the Graduating Class of 2017

This June, Immaculate Conception School will honor its final graduating class. After 133 years, ICS will be closing its doors at the conclusion of this school year. As our graduates took the time to reflect on what they'd learned and the experiences they'd had at ICS, all were filled with wonderful memories of their time here:

One of my favorite memories from ICS is when our 5th and 6th grade class went to the Baseball Hall of Fame. One other memory was when we got to go to Joe's every year.

-Jack

I started going to this school when I was in Pre-K/3 when I was three years old. I'll miss the friends I made here. A favorite memory is that on the first day of school I got in an argument with David about who is better, Batman or Superman.

-Ashok

One memory from ICS is the annual Christmas pageant where kids reenact the birth of Jesus. Another memory is when we used to go to Cass Park. One last memory is when the 5th and 6th graders went to the Baseball Hall of Fame and Doubleday Field.

-Isaiah



The ICS Class of 2017, Photo by Don Eckerson

One of the best things about coming here has been meeting my best friends. My favorite memory from being here is being able to play on the basketball team. I got to bond with people that didn't even go to school with me and people I did go to school with.

-Agoddess

My favorite memory is going to field day at Cass Park. I also liked going to the Baseball Hall of Fame. We saw statues of Jackie Robinson, Lou Gehrig, and Roberto Clemente.

-Victor

In fourth grade, I made an electro magnet, but when I tried it, I got shocked. Another great memory was last year when we went to the National Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown. Lastly, my favorite memory was the friends I made in Pre-K/3.

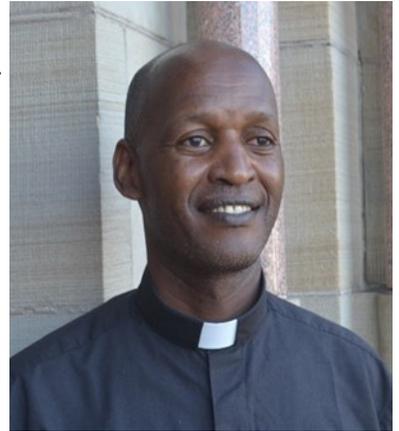
-David

We wish our graduates luck as they enter our area's middle schools and pursue their hopes and dreams these next few years.

Thoughts from Fr. Chumo

One Year Ago

One year ago, this month of June 2016, I accepted the responsibility to minister in this great parish with wonderful people. I am most grateful to God for this great privilege. I firmly believe the Lord has accompanied me in my ministry and He will continue to do so. He has been close to me in all ways and especially in the people I have come to know in my new parish. It is not only God I wish to thank for the blessings over the past one year. I owe deep gratitude to the many people the Lord has placed on my side; valuable helpers and collaborators in the ministry; the parish staff, the pastoral council, finance council, various ministries, and many, many talented volunteers who serve this faith community with great generosity and love.



My main ministry in this faith community is no different from what every baptized is called and commissioned to, namely to know God and experience Him in a deeper and in a more personal way. Close and intimate relationship with God, if nurtured, eventually matures into a mutual love and bears much fruit which blossom in service to God's people. I have seen a more intentional spirit of prayer and devotion to the Eucharist growing steadily in this community. It would be wonderful if all of us would concentrate on the central message of Jesus which is LOVE.



In the last few weeks, our parish has faced the greatest challenge of all times. Our beloved parochial school had to close its doors after 133 years of its great service to the community. The factors that led to its closure were beyond our control. Low enrollment and lack of sufficient funds to meet its expenses and guarantee quality education were two major factors. It was a difficult and painful decision. I want to thank each member of our parish for the respect and understanding with which you have received this decision. We must believe and trust that God is with us always and especially during this difficult time. With our firm faith in God, even

if the worst happens, we will not be destroyed by it.

My prayers go to the students, their families, the principal, faculty and the staff. I wish them every God's blessing as they navigate through this hard transition. May God be with them guide them, and go before them as they explore new ventures for their children.

I want to wish everyone safe travels and renewing vacation during this summer. May Mary Immaculate intercede for us all. Thank you and God bless.

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Book Review: *The Way of Divine Love: Inflamed with Love for Us*

By Wendy Babiak

In June, we honor The Sacred Heart of Jesus, so it seems appropriate to recommend a book that will deepen a reader's devotion to that blessed furnace of divine charity. *The Way of Divine Love* is a narrative, arranged and edited by her Mother Superior, and taken from her diaries kept under obedience, of the visions and experiences of a shy Spanish nun in France, at a convent of the Society of The Sacred Heart, at the beginning of the last century. Sr. Josefa Mendendez's extraordinary encounters with the Holy Mother, Our Lord Jesus, saints and demons, and her intense sufferings (wearing His crown of thorns, carrying His cross, spending time in Hell), make a gripping and moving tale. And one gets a picture not only of the reality of Christ's presence in the Eucharist and how our lack of reverence for Our Sacramental Lord offends both He and Our Lady, but also of how hard both Christ and His Holy Mother continue to work for the sanctification and salvation of souls. How sin matters, as do penance and sacrifice. How precious and loved by God is each and every eternal human soul. How His Heart is an abyss of both love and mercy. In addition to these blessings, the book also gifts the reader with prayers dictated to their faithful scribe, the humble nun Josefa, and teaches us how we can offer our suffering to console Christ's Sacred Heart and assist in the sanctification of souls.



Pompeo Batoni [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons PD-1923

Calendar (continued from page 5):

September 13

10:30 am - SCC (George Green Parish Center)
3:00 pm - Pietra Fitness (Carges Hall)
5:00 pm - Contemporary Choir Rehearsal

September 14

1:30 pm - Mass at Titus Towers

September 17

12:00 noon - Youth Ministry Parent/Participant Mtg (Carges Hall)

September 18

3:30 pm - Finance Council (George Green Parish Center)

September 19

6:00 pm - Adult Choir Rehearsal
6:30 pm - Evangelization Team (George Green Parish Center)

September 20

10:30 am - SCC (George Green Parish Center)
3:00 pm - Pietra Fitness (Carges Hall)
5:00 pm - Contemporary Choir Rehearsal
7:00 pm - Knights of Columbus (Carges Hall)

September 21

4:00 pm - Mass at McGraw House

September 24

Coffee Hour after 8:30 am & 10:30 am Masses (Carges Hall)
11:45 am - HS Youth Group (George Green Parish Center)
2:30 pm - MS Youth Group (George Green Parish Center)

September 25

10:30 am - Mass at Cayuga Ridge
TBA - Christlife Team Meeting

September 26

6:00 pm - Adult Choir Rehearsal

September 27

10:30 am - SCC (George Green Parish Center)
3:00 pm - Pietra Fitness (Carges Hall)
5:00 pm - Contemporary Choir Rehearsal

October 1

11:45 am - HS Youth Group (George Green Parish Center)
2:30 pm - MS Youth Group (George Green Parish Center)
TBA - Christlife Informational Mtg

Our Music Ministry

By Elizabeth Burns

“To sing once is to pray twice,” said St. Augustine. If so, then Immaculate Conception is full of prayer! The music ministry at Immaculate Conception is directed by Gary Vrabel, and parishioners can participate in one of several choirs or as a cantor.

The contemporary choir sings at the 8:30 mass. There are currently 6-8 members and the director is Christopher Davenport, who is an organ major at Ithaca College. The singers are accompanied by a keyboard and often by drums and a guitar. The hymns they sing are modern, often written in the last fifty years since Vatican II.

The traditional choir is directed by Gary Vrabel, and sings at the 10:30 mass and for special services. The music is more traditional and is accompanied by an organ, or sometimes a piano and synthesizer. This choir also sings an octavo during the preparation of the gifts, which is a piece “whose theme is rooted in the theme of the day but with a good purpose and a good message,” says Gary. “Its purpose is reflection.” There are about 15 members this year.

The cantors are a ministry that sing at all masses and for special services. They lead the congregation in singing, begin hymns, lead psalms and acclamations, and teach new music to the congregation. There are also two choirs that do not sing at Sunday masses, but at services. The Resurrection Choir sings for funeral masses. Some of its members are from other choirs, but some of its members sing only for funerals. The children’s choir sings at school masses and special services; Pat Ober plays piano and Don Eckerson plays guitar accompaniment.

Gary chooses hymns to fit with the themes of the Sunday liturgy, and he sets up the hymn schedule three months in advance. He has been director of the music ministry for 11 years, but he began singing at Immaculate Conception early—he started singing with the children’s choir in the early sixties. One day in 2005 before Christmas, Gary found a CD he didn’t know he had. On it was a hymn he really liked and which he feels led him to directing the music ministry. That year he was asked to direct the Christmas services and he asked if the choir could sing the hymn. “God told me to do this piece,” says Gary. When Father Leo Reinhardt, the pastor of Immaculate at the time, asked him to stay on, at first Gary declined, but then later accepted the position. “If I can bring even one person closer to Jesus through our music ministry, then I’ve done everything I’ve set out to do,” he says. He enjoys working with the choir members, who are not professional musicians. “They’re a dedicated group and we share tasks. They come to rehearsals and give their all. They give their heart to the music.”

Kathy Teeter has been a choir member at IC ever since she was in the youth choir in 6th through 8th grades at Immaculate Conception School. “I have always told people that for me singing is good therapy; it helps me when I am troubled and feeling down and lifts me higher and higher when things are going well”, she says. “For me it is spiritually uplifting when we do our specialty anthems and special services and cantatas that bring us together with our sister parishes.”

The traditional choir meets for practice weekly on Tuesday, the contemporary choir meets on Wednesday. If any parishioner is interested in joining either choir, the Resurrection choir, or the cantor ministry they can contact Gary Vrabel at holyspearrats@gmail.com.



OUR GROWING PARISH

By Maureen Seeley

We are pleased to recognize our newly-registered parishioners and the parishioners who have successfully completed and received the sacraments:

Jacob Gasque	Taylor Merritt
Brianna Gasque	Patricia Ramer
Sonja Gasque	Lee Johnson II
Lisa Gasque	

We wish to welcome to our Parish community the following newly-registered parishioners:

Michael Lathrop	Elena Eckmeyer
Dante Iozzo	Marisciel Puguon
Anthony Lacatena	Timothy & Candice Larkin
Stacey & Parker Stone	Children: Derek Larkin and Aurora Larkin
Children: Julianna Stone and Audrey Stone	

We congratulate the parishioners who received the sacrament of First Holy Communion:

Isabella Aguirre	Isabella Pepe
Elijah Fox	Aria Petrella
Christopher Jett	Caden Senno
Alisha Lyons	Sadie VanderVen

We welcome and congratulate our newly-Baptized members:

Atir Grandison, Parent: Stephanie Grandison
Shylin Grandison, Parent: Stephanie Grandison
Shmeeia Grandison, Parent: Stephanie Grandison

Parishioner Profile: Shirley Engman

Story and Photo by Rich Rasmussen

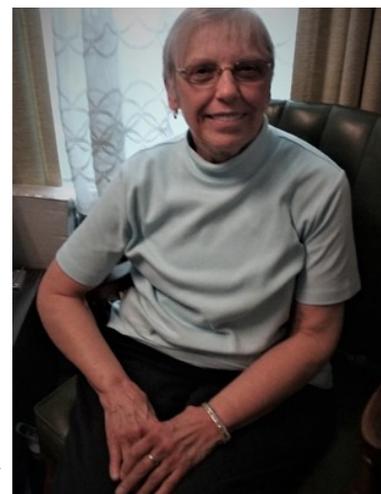
“St. Francis of Assisi and the Beatitudes are where I draw inspiration.” These words spoken by Shirley Engman are no surprise to those who know her. Her gentle nature and deep faith are what so many people admire about Shirley.

Shirley was born in Washington D.C. and grew up in Massachusetts. Early in her life Shirley knew that she enjoyed helping people. Her desire to care for and serve others led her to Keuka College where she graduated with a BS in nursing. Her career covered many different areas including dialysis support and eventually working with Surgical Associates in Ithaca.

Shirley has always been very active in the churches that she has attended. She became more involved at Immaculate in 2013 as we were working through our Parish Discovery process. She began her service to the parish as a volunteer in the gift shop. As the need for volunteers in other areas increased so did her service to the parish. Although she serves as a Lector and Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion, she particularly enjoys helping out “behind the scenes.” She helps on a weekly basis with preparing the parish bulletin and changing the marquis sign in front of the church. She fills in as our administrative assistant when Erika is away and helps knit shawls for the parish Prayer Shawl ministry. Shirley also spends her Monday afternoons volunteering at the Salvation Army food pantry and is a substitute for the Immaculate parish food pantry on Tuesdays.

When asked what gives her the greatest joy in life she stated, “helping people; especially children.” True to her words, she quit her job in 2005 to be nanny and grandma to her grandchildren. Shirley has also volunteered her time filling in as secretary at our school when Kathy O’Neill is away and often helps serve pizza to the kids on Thursdays.

Shirley has a calming quiet presence and is a true example of a person who works to do an excellent job at whatever she does. It takes a lot of volunteers to help keep a parish functioning and “behind the scenes” people, like Shirley are so critical to the life and vitality of Immaculate Conception.



Shirley Engman at home

The Beatitudes (Matthew 5:3-11)

Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven.
Blessed are those who mourn: for they will be comforted.
Blessed are the meek: for they will inherit the earth.
Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness: for they will be filled.
Blessed are the merciful: for they will be shown mercy.
Blessed are the pure in heart: for they will see God.
Blessed are the peacemakers: for they will be called children of God.
Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Spring and Summer at Immaculate Conception

(All Events held in the Church unless otherwise indicated)

Weekend Masses

Saturdays - 4:30 pm

Sundays - 8:30 am and 10:30 am

June 26

10:30 am - Mass at Cayuga Ridge

June 29

5:30 pm - Light Weigh (George Green Parish Center)

July 1/2

Fr. Chumo is on Vacation in Kenya all month

Fr. Quinn (Missionary) will celebrate the Masses

July 3

Office Closed - No Mass

July 4

Office Closed - No Mass

No Food Pantry

July 6

5:00 pm - Light Weigh (George Green Parish Center)

July 8/9

Fr. George Heyman will celebrate the Masses

July 10

1:30 pm - Cemetery Committee (George Green Parish Center)

July 13

5:00 pm - Light Weigh (George Green Parish Center)

July 15/16

Fr. Daniel Condon will celebrate the Masses

July 18

5:00 pm - Catholic Charities Anniversary Mass with Bishop Matano

6:00 pm - Catholic Charities Anniversary Reception (Carges Hall)

July 19

7:00 pm - Knights of Columbus (Carges Hall)

July 20

5:00 pm - Light Weigh (George Green Parish Center)

July 22/23

Fr. John DeSocio will celebrate the Masses

July 27

5:00 pm - Light Weigh (George Green Parish Center)

July 29/30

Fr. Peter Mottola will celebrate the Masses

August 3

5:00 pm - Light Weigh (George Green Parish Center)

7:00 pm - Parish Council (Carges Hall)

August 10

5:00 pm - Light Weigh (George Green Parish Center)

Sacrament of Reconciliation

Saturdays - 2:30-4:00 pm or by appt.

Food Pantry every Tuesday - 1:00 pm Carges Hall

August 15 - Feast of the Assumption

7:00 am - Mass

7:00 pm - Mass

August 16

3:00 pm - Pietra Fitness (Carges Hall)

7:00 pm - Knights of Columbus (Carges Hall)

August 17

5:00 pm - Light Weigh (George Green Parish Center)

August 20

1:00 pm - Contemporary Choir Rehearsal

August 23

3:00 pm - Pietra Fitness (Carges Hall)

5:00 pm - Contemporary Choir Rehearsal

August 24

5:00 pm - Light Weigh (George Green Parish Center)

August 27

12 noon - Youth Ministry Parent/Participant Info Mtg (Carges Hall)

August 30

3:00 pm - Pietra Fitness (Carges Hall)

5:00 pm - Contemporary Choir Rehearsal

September 1

7:30 am-11:00 am - Exposition/Benediction

September 2

3:00 pm - Holy Hour

September 4

Office Closed for Labor Day

9:00 am - Mass

September 5

6:00 pm - Adult Choir Rehearsal

September 6

3:00 pm - Pietra Fitness (Carges Hall)

September 7

7:00 pm - Parish Council (Carges Hall)

September 11

1:30pm - Cemetery Committee (George Green Parish Center)

TBA - Christlife Team Meeting (George Green Parish Center)

September 12

6:00 pm - Adult Choir Rehearsal

September 13

10:30 am - SCC (George Green Parish Center)

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Immaculate Conception Church
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Have a Great Summer!



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