

## **DEACONS**

Deacons share in the mission of the parish in a special way. The sacrament of Holy Orders, which they share with the bishop and priest in a lower degree, marks them permanently and configures them to Christ as servants of all. Their tasks include assisting priests in the celebration of the divine mysteries, above all the Eucharist, in the distribution of Holy Communion, in witnessing and blessing marriages, administering baptisms, proclaiming the Gospel and preaching. At the direction of the pastor, they preside at communion services, the exposition and veneration of the Blessed Sacrament, grave side burial services, and the stations of the cross. They coordinate communion to the sick and homebound, comfort the bereaved and preside at wake services. They train the Eucharistic ministers serving the parish. Their ministry is one of charity and service.

## **PARISH COUNCIL**

The role of the Parish Council is to represent the total parish and all its organizations and groups. Members serve in helping the Pastor in the administration of the parish. They act in an advisory capacity, evaluating and recommending courses of action for parish needs and activities. Members of the Parish Council are elected by the Parish from a slate of nominees and volunteers.

## **EDUCATION**

### **Coordinator of Religious Education (CRE)**

The CRE organizes, implements, and evaluates the religious education program for youth from grades one through senior high school. This includes the direction of sacramental preparation of youth and parents involved in First Penance, First Eucharist and Confirmation. The CRE also provides educational sessions for parents and adults interested in the field of Religious Education.

Teachers of the youth programs are provided enrichment and guidance through materials and training. The Religious Education Program provides for a stronger faith through increased knowledge and love of the Catholic faith. Volunteer teachers are needed each school year to provide religious education to children in preschool through high school.

### **The Adult Education Ministry**

The current Adult Education ministry in Immaculate Conception Parish functions under an ad hoc committee formed to accomplish specific educational projects such as “The Synod,” the four-year exposure to the Catechism “Echo of Faith” and the “Renew Program.”

The goal of the Adult Education ministry is to develop programs that enable the individual to:

- develop a more mature understanding of the Catholic faith.
- develop a better understanding and appreciation of the Bible.
- develop a deeper spirituality.
- give and receive mutual support through the sharing of one’s faith.
- develop the ability to share/explain one’s own faith and to understand, appreciate and dialog with people of other faiths.

### **Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)**

Prepares the non-baptized and those already baptized in another Christian Church to become full participating members of the Catholic faith. The candidates attend weekly learning sessions in the basic beliefs of scripture, catholic doctrine and practices. Within the community framework, they are introduced and given an opportunity to participate in the liturgical rites of Christian Initiation of Adults. Volunteers are needed to act as catechists and sponsors for the candidates.

### **LITURGY**

#### **Liturgy Committee**

The Liturgy Committee has as its main goal to prepare a more meaningful atmosphere for the parishioners attending celebrations of worship. The Committee does this through assisting with the scheduling of Eucharistic ministers, gift bearers, and lectors. The committee also assists with preparations for special liturgical celebrations such as Holy Week, Easter, Advent, and Christmas. Acknowledgment of parish ministries is coordinated through the Liturgy Committee on Appreciation Sunday. Recruitment of parishioners to parish ministries is enhanced through the liturgy committee's work on the annual "Time and Talent" survey and the parish Ministry Handbook.

## **Liturgical Music**

The church choirs provide a quality musical accompaniment for the liturgies. Appropriate and meaningful hymns are selected for all age groups for the enhancement of prayer. There are four different choirs:

**Adult Choir:** Sings for 10:30 a.m. Mass on Sundays.

**Youth Choir:** This is made up of youth grades 4 through 12. This choir sings for the Mass on the third and fourth Saturday of each month. They also sing for Christmas, Easter and First Communion. This choir prepares and performs a Christmas Musical Drama for the community each year. This choir does not sing during the summer months.

**Guitar Group:** Provides music once a month at the 10:30 Sunday Mass. This choir does not sing during the summer months.

**Men's Choir:** This choir sings for the Saturday Mass once a month. This Mass is usually on the first Saturday of the month.

**Cantors:** lead the songs at Mass when there is no choir.

**Sixth Grade Folk Group:** Provide singing at week day Mass, once every three weeks during the

months of January through April.

The director of Liturgical Music has church music practice once a month with the fourth, fifth and sixth grades. Choir members do not need to have try outs to be a choir member. A musical voice and the ability to carry a tune are encouraged. Cantors do need to have try outs. Everyone is welcome!

### **Sacristan**

The sacristan prepares the altar for the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and other liturgical worship. This includes preparing the cruets, the hosts, sacred vessels and taking care of the linens for daily and weekend Masses. Assistance is also given to servers at the time of the liturgy. The sacristan may assist with lighting candles and turning on church lights as needed.

### **Eucharistic Ministers**

Eucharistic Ministers serve at Mass and at communion services as needed. They assist in bringing communion to the sick and homebound. This ministry also coordinates the names of persons requesting a Eucharistic home visit and assigns a Eucharistic Minister to make the visit. This ministry provides for exemplary Eucharistic Ministers in sufficient numbers to meet the needs of the parish community. The ministry also fosters an understanding of the sick as part of the worshipping community. The sick are viewed as the suffering Body of Christ and represent Christ in our parish. The role of a Eucharistic Minister provides an opportunity for individuals to come forth as candidates to enter a deeper and ongoing process of spiritual formation. This ministry is commissioned every two years at a major parish liturgy. The ministry calls for persons of mature faith who have shown a commitment to the life of Christian service, and who believe in the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist.

## Servers

Serving Mass is one of the ways that our youth of the parish can participate in liturgical ministry. Any sixth grader or above who is a baptized Catholic can be a server. There are two requirements: Parental permission and participation in training sessions. After training, a server will be assigned to serve Mass or other liturgical services.

- **Sixth graders** serve the 8:10 Mass during the week.
- **Seventh and eight graders** serve the Saturday Mass.
- **Ninth through twelfth graders** serve the Sunday Mass.

Special request for funerals, weddings or other liturgical celebrations may be made of servers at various times.

## Lectors (Readers)

The lectors proclaim the first and second readings for the Mass liturgies. The responsibility of the lector is to proclaim the Word of God to the community of worshipers. Through this ministry, they exercise a genuine liturgical function. Lectors meet with a trainer before their first assignment. The purpose of this meeting is to read and practice using a microphone. Lectors are expected to be good readers. Lectors need to prepare themselves for the assigned readings and to follow the instructions and helpful hints from the “Lector’s Handbook”. This handbook is given when they receive training.

### **Funeral Support Group**

This group of parishioners help the bereaved family plan the liturgical funeral services for their deceased loved one. The Mass of the Resurrection, along with selected readings and hymns, is planned in conjunction with the family's prayer intentions. This ministry support group assures the family that they and their deceased loved ones are included in the community's prayers in their time of grief. These ministers bring an understanding of the liturgy, a respect for the deceased and a caring compassion to this service.

### **Ushers**

The ushers in the parish are men and women who help facilitate the needs and comfort of the congregation during the weekend services. Their primary roles are the greeting and seating of people, taking up the weekly collection, and the distribution of the church bulletins at the end of weekend Masses. The ushers observe and help with special needs for the comfort of the congregation such as opening doors and windows or the operation of fans.

### **THE HOSPITALITY MINISTRY:**

This ministry operates through a committee. The role of the committee consists of contacting and welcoming new members to the Ottoville community, letting them know that they are welcome to visit/or attend services at Immaculate Conception Church. Newcomers are invited to register as new parishioners if they are of the Catholic faith. An invitation to accept a home visit by a committee member is extended to new members of the entire community. Committee members also serve as greeters for special parish activities. Through this and other activities, the Hospitality committee reaches out to the parish community and the Ottoville community to help people feel welcome and to enhance the liturgical celebrations through a sense of belonging.

### **VISIT SHUT-INS**

Parish volunteers visit our brothers and sisters of Immaculate Conception Parish who are in Nursing Homes, Hospitals and the Homebound. These volunteers work with the Altar/Rosary Society who keep informed of all the shut-ins including the bedridden in their own homes. Through the Altar/Rosary society support these volunteers distribute Christmas gifts, send get well cards and stay in touch with the sick. They extend and share the community's loving concern with those who are ill. Volunteers must have an understanding and spiritual concern for those whom they visit.

### **THE PRAYER LINE**

This parish ministry is made up of a group of people who pray for the needs of others. Anyone can call the prayer line leaders at anytime with their prayer request. Community members can also phone the parish office with their request. These requests will be forwarded to the prayer line leaders. The prayer line coordinator works with four prayer line leaders who respond to day and night time petitions. The leaders respond by notifying the people in their groups of the prayer needs.

### **ROSARY ALTAR SOCIETY**

The purpose of the Rosary Altar Society of the Immaculate Conception Parish is to unite the women of the parish in a spiritual and social organization. The women of the Rosary Altar Society strive to bring the church and the community together through fund raising activities that support the church. The overall objectives include the promotion of Christian values in the home and parish, the practice of community Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy, caring for and helping to supply materials needed for the altar and sanctuary. All women of the parish are considered members of the Society. A daily rosary is prayed for the parish by the women of the society on a rotating basis. Deceased members of the society continue to be remembered in prayer.

### **PRAYER GROUP**

The objective of the Prayer Group is to provide an additional means by which to thank God, to share Scripture and Christ and to offer prayers of petition for greater faith, courage, love and grace. These prayers are offered for the needs of the parish and individual needs. This group meets once a week on Thursdays after the week-day Mass.

### **CATHOLIC LADIES OF COLUMBIA**

This organization exists as an outreach group bonded by members who have insurance with the national organization but also includes social members who do not have insurance. This group performs both corporal and spiritual works of mercy. Through fund raising activities they provide funds to the church, community, and various organizations. They meet three times a year and these meetings are announced through the parish bulletin.

### **HOLY NAME SOCIETY**

This group strives to promote fellowship among the members and encourages active participation in parish ministries and activities. Fund raisers are sponsored throughout the year to assist with parish expenses.

### **PRE-MARRIAGE/ MARRIAGE ENRICHMENT**

The pre-marriage team provides couples with an opportunity for fostering open and sincere communication in preparation for their marriage. The team also provides the opportunity for married couples to share their experiences with the engaged couples. Two times a year the engaged couples team presents the “pre-marriage and engaged couples Sunday.” Training is provided to the engaged couples team. Volunteers are needed to share ideas to the presenting couples, to assist with snacks, packet set-up and continued prayers.

### **CATHOLIC YOUTH ORGANIZATION (CYO)/YOUTH GROUP**

The Youth Group provides the high school parishioners opportunities to socialize, perform community service, and learn about Catholic faith spirituality. This is done through local events that the youth organizes and through Hearthstone, (Lima Deanery) activities such as the Youth Conference, Battle of the Youth, Christmas Mass-in-the-barn, ski trips, and CYO basketball. These activities help the youth become active members and learn to take pride in Immaculate Conception Church. Meetings for the youth are held monthly after class during the Religious Education season or on an as-needed basis to help plan activities. Adults willing to help for even one annual event are most welcome and appreciated.

### **CEMETERY BOARD**

The cemetery board is responsible for the maintenance and records of St. Mary's Cemetery located south of Ottoville. Board members meet twice a year to approve maintenance expenses and consider any changes and improvements for the cemetery. The Secretary/Treasurer is responsible for the records involved with all the physical planning and preparation of burial lots as well as all cemetery purchases, donations, finances and a fiscal year report. Board members are all volunteers.

putting up the Christmas decorations. This committee provides the community with the beauty of flowers year round to honor God and to beautify the place of worship. Parishioners can donate flowers or money to purchase flowers by contacting the Parish Office or by putting a check into the weekly collection with a flower designation. Volunteers, who have a love of God's work and church and are willing to volunteer their time and patience, are always needed.

### **FLOWERS/DECORATIONS FOR ALTAR**

This ministry involves ensuring that the altar and the body of the church is decorated with flowers and other liturgical symbols for the feast days of the church as well as the Sunday Liturgies. Those responsible take donated orders for flowers from parishioner for Christmas, Easter Sunday, and other occasions. Other duties performed include taking care of the live plants in church, setting up the Easter Garden in the front entrance to the church and in front of St. Joseph's altar. Some equipment may be purchased in support of the church decorations. This group also assists in

### **CHURCH CLEANING**

This is a service in which volunteer men and women of the parish come together to clean the church. This is organized through a volunteer head manager who recruits other volunteer managers to rotate on a two-week schedule throughout the church year. The "two week" managers recruit cleaners from a parish list of volunteers. The first week of each tour of duty is spent checking over main items and ensuring that the holy water fountains and vigil lights are full and ready

for use. The second week of each tour of duty is spent sweeping, and dusting. One day of the week before Holy Week, Spring cleaning is done. This is done by all the managers and volunteers. This constant effort keeps our church clean and allows the parishioners to take pride in how the House of God is kept. Weekly volunteers are listed by name on the church bulletin.

### **ST. MARY'S FEDERAL CREDIT UNION OF IMMACULATE CONCEPTION PARISH**

The St. Mary's Federal Credit Union offers low-cost loans to parish members along with a savings program that always pays higher interest rates than local banks on their pass book savings. This service is available to all parish members by contacting the Credit Union Manager. The Credit Union has continued for more than 50 years to help parishioners with their financial

problems and savings. The manager and staff of the credit union are volunteers who meet on the third Sunday of each month after Sunday Mass in the parish hall basement. Volunteers need to have good money management skills.

### **IMMACULATE CONCEPTION CHURCH FESTIVAL**

The Immaculate Conception Parish festival is held each year for one day on the third Sunday of July. The Parish Council recruits the chairperson and assistant chairperson from members of the parish. The chairperson makes all of the logistic

arrangements and coordinates the needs of the booth managers. The assistant chairperson will take over as the chairperson following one year as assistant. Planning commences in January and continues with recruitment of leadership personnel and workers up to July. This is the only major fund-raising event held by the parish. This event serves to bring the entire parish together to socialize and work with each other toward a common goal. Funds raised through the festival are used for the needs of the parish and its programs. Large numbers of volunteers are needed. To achieve this, we need a willingness to give of one's time from all who are able to do so.

