SYRO-MALABAR CATHOLICS BRING MASS FROM INDIA TO COLUMBUS
That is certainly true here in the Diocese of Columbus. When the first Catholic parishes were established here in Ohio 200 years ago, they were founded by wave after wave of immigrants from Germany. Their language and culture were German and the church reflected that. Over the years, other immigrants came to our area from other cultures, including those of Ireland, Italy, Hungary, Poland, Russia, the Middle East, Latin America, Vietnam, the Philippines, and others. They came together in Catholic communities that reflected the Catholic traditions and culture of their homelands.

Our church is greatly enriched by this diversity of cultural expression of a unified faith in the teaching of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. The stories of these Catholic communities in the Columbus area stems from the oldest of our branches of our church. The Syro-Malabar Catholic communities at Columbus Sacred Heart Church provide a welcoming home for people who learned the Catholic faith in India. As you will read in this week’s Catholic Times, our Catholic family is big and growing. Our church can be traced back to the Syro-Malabar community of Syro-Malabar Catholic community, meeting at Columbus Sacred Heart Church.

The parishioners of Marysville Our Lady of Lourdes Church are anxiously waiting to hear the voice of their new organ—a voice that once filled a historic Episcopal Church in downtown Columbus.

In the spring of 2011, Paul Thornock, music director at Columbus St. Joseph Cathedral, made Father David P. Salisbury, the pastor at Marysville, aware of the closing of St. Paul Episcopal Church on Broad St., Columbus OH 43215, with "Philippines" in the main line. "CRS stuff in the Philippines was rushing to restock emergency supplies in the wake of the storm, Wos said. The agency’s normally well-stocked warehouses were depleted of materials because of a widespread distribution of supplies after a Magnitude 7.1 earthquake struck the central Philippines on Oct. 13. The typhoon struck some of the same areas affected by the earthquake.

Catholic Relief Services was hoping to gather 18,000 tarpaulins for shelters, hygiene kits, and water and sanitation supplies. The agency also planned to institute cash for work programs to provide income for people as they undertake debris removal, Wos said.
PRACTICAL STEWARDSHIP
By Rick Jeric

Did you find good ways to show how grateful you are for our veterans this past week? Most of us like to say thanks to our service men and women who defend our freedom and liberty but it takes a good amount of effort to properly show gratitude for their service and we should remember them often. They risk their lives for our country and we should thank them for their service. We should always reflect upon all the many favours we enjoy because it is a moich tale, three great men both on the battlefield and in the streets of transport. As I write this, I enjoy a great salad for lunch at a local restaurant, and I am so thankful for our service men and women tonight. Whenever I see a homeless or troubled or challenged person in the streets I always think about their struggle and what is really important in our daily lives.

The first analogy is that of the Most Holy Trinity. We adore that great mystery of three persons of one God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. They are one unique and indivisible God, while remaining three separate persons of that same God. I like to think of them as God our loving Father who created us, God our loving Brother who shares His perfect humanity with us, and God the loving Spirit who breathes life into everyone we encounter. "We buy into the eternal life of these three, and we get eternal life as the "free" gift. Of course, there is a cost, and that is what we struggle with. The next analogy is that of faith, hope, and love. St. Paul tells us in his first letter to the Corinthians that these three gifts will remain with us forever, "but the greatest of these is love." Much like our analogy with the Trinity, we "buy into" the three virtuous gifts of faith, hope, and love, and we still get eternal life as the "free" gift. Of course, the cost is determined by each one of us. I love the saying that you get as much faith and hope as you want, but love, I cannot freely attain it externally. Finally, in St. Paul's letter to the Romans, he tells us that there is debt, fulfillment, and the law in our lives. We must "buy into" all three so that eternal life is ours. "Owe nothing to any one, except to love one another; for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law."

Our practical challenge this week is to "buy into" these three important realities so that eternal life is closer to our grasp. It may not be free like a tree, but it is our utmost goal. Make the good habits often and pray, "The Glory Be" often this week. Consciously make choices to show acts of faith, hope, and especially love. Start at home. And see how much deeper we can accumulate by loving one another. jeric@eganyan.com is director of development and planning for the Columbus Diocese.

TRINITY MAGICIAN

In preparation for Terra Nova testing, magician and escape artist Michael Griiffs presented an assembly for Columbias Trinity Elementary School. Besides astounding the students and faculty with his tricks and escapes, he encouraged the students near to give up on any obstacles with which they are presented in life by encouraging them to perform the "40 pins and thread-rolling trick." photos courtesy Trinity Elementary School

TURKEY TOSSThe annual "Turkey Toss" distribution of Thanksgiving turkeys to needy Vance County families served by the St. Francis Center will take place Monday, Nov. 25. More than $7,000 was donated by 85 people to provide the turkeys, which will be distributed at O’Charley’s on Morse Road at 8:30 a.m., arrive at the center around 10 a.m. and assist with the turkey distribution between 1:30 and 3:30 p.m. Following a lunch break, sorting of food and turkeys takes place from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m., with participants returning home around 6:30 p.m.

For more information, contact Jim Noe (614) 579-1966 or jimnoe@insignia.net.

What would you do with this cash?

Find out with our Good Vakhs with Education First Credit Union or Relinquer Your Current Auto Loan & Enjoy a 3% Interest Rate on a New No Collateral Auto Loan! SAVING START TOMORROW! WE’RE WAITING TO HEAR FROM YOU.

COLUMBUS CATHOLIC WOMEN’S CONFERENCE

The seventh annual Columbus Catholic Women’s Conference will take place from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 22, 2014 in the Voinovich Building at Ohio University. Speakers will be Kimberly Halin, Sister Miriam Jane, S.OLC, and Olympic cross country skier Rebecca Dussault. Kimberly Halin became a Catholic at age 13. Since then she has been involved in the struggle during the four years following the entrance of her husband. Dr. Scott Halin, into the Catholic Church. She has completed a book with Scott titled "Stumbling Toward Rome: Our Journey to Ca - tholicism."

Her other books include a four-part series on "the Proverbs 31 Woman" and "Life-Giving Love: Embracing God’s Beautiful Design for Marriage." She also has contributed chapters to the four-volume Catholic for a Reason book series, as well as The Gift of Femininity. With Mary Hauser, she has co-authored a book titled Catholic Edu - cation: Homeward Bound: A Guide to Home Schooling. Sister Miriam Jane was raised in Woodland, Wash., and is a graduate of the University of Nevada, Reno, where she played volleyball and majored in communications. On graduation, she joined the Society of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity (SOLT), a mission - ary community that serves global areas of deepest apostolic need. Sister Mimi - an is a co-founder of St. Anselm’s and has served in New Mexico, Iowa, North Dakota, and Seattle. In addition to speaking, her apostolates have most recently involved high school students, coaching high school softball, and as host to a Catholic radio program.

The life of Rebecca and her family is centered around Catholic faith, children, food, and physical activity. "She is happy around food, the outdoor, cross-country racing, traditions, and other endurance sports," Halin said.

She lives, plays, and works in the remo - nations of Colorado and tiers her best to never just exist." Her favorite quote, by Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati, is "Live without fear, without a patronymic tod - fold, without a steady struggle for truth — that is not living, but merely existing; we must never just exist."";

Visit www.columbuscatholicwomen. com for more information on the con - ference.

Catholic Times
How does one confess a mortal sin, and what should you do after confessing? (anytime, day or night). Ask the priest to explain what is expected of you, and remember to carry this heavy burden any further, with this promise: Do this penance on a constant basis. Is there a limit to the number of times you can repeat this penance? What you should do, right away, before confessing is to turn to God, to pray, to ask the Lord to forgive you and to come to confession. Yes, you can confess more than once a day, or even more than once a week. How long does a confession last? What are the benefits of confessing? In what way can you reclaim your soul, that you can go on living my faith and staying with my children as a Catholic, no matter what? 

**STABILIZATION . EARTH RETENTION . ROLLER COMPACTED CONCRETE**

The Catholic Committee on Scouting invites Catholic young men and women to partake in two exciting programs designed to help them grow in their faiths and combat the challenges they face in the world today. Participants will have opportunities to take part in the “Surviving the Storm” retreat, a night of faith-sharing and discussion, and to go on an adventurous trip to the Automotive Technology Fair. This month’s presentation in the Columbus Catholic Committee on Scouting’s Program will take place at the Columbus Boys’ Ranch, 3880 Reed Road. The speaker will be Loren M. McKeon, consultant and program director for McKeon Education Group Inc.

The program will take place Friday, January 10 at 6:00 p.m., in the Youth Center. Evening will consist of a meal and discussion of the fair and the church activity. Participants will have opportunities to take part in the “Surviving the Storm” retreat, a night of faith-sharing and discussion, and to go on an adventurous trip to the Automotive Technology Fair.

If you meet these requirements and are interested in this program, contact the Catholic Committee on Scouting, in participation by invitation only and on a limited number of participants. Registration fee is $40 for the weeklong events. This is not a fund-raiser. To register or for more information, contact the Catholic Committee on Scouting, 400 W. columbus Ave., #214, Columbus, OH 43201, or go to the Catholic Committee on Scouting, www.cdeducation.org/oym/dccs.

Information on Venturing is available from Chuck Lamb at (614) 882-7806.
I have the great privilege of fulfilling this calling by bringing comfort to the sick and the dying and spiritual support to those families through the sacrament of Reconciliation.

Since late 2010, Father Faustner has been in residence at Columbus St. Timothy Church and in ministry at three nearby hospitals, visiting patients at Riverside Methodist Hospital, The Ohio State University Medical Center on Tuesdays, and Columbus St. Timothy Church and in ministry at three nearby locations on Wednesdays. Father Faustner has also done hospital chaplaincy during two previous hospital stays.

“Taking those two years off allowed me to do a lot of growing and maturing,” he said. “So when I returned, I was prepared for whatever was going to happen.”

My wife, who received a liver transplant two and a half years ago, and I are registered organ, eye, and tissue donors. We encourage all of you to take this opportunity to register. More than 95 percent of Ohioans have not done so to please join us on this Ohio Donor Registry during this National Donor Sabbath Weekend at the Lifeline of Ohio website, www.lifelineofohio.org.

He spent the next three years at an Associate of the Province in the Diocese of Cleveland, where he was ordained a priest in 1972. He is also a member of the Province of St. Joseph and St. Joseph Catholic Church. During that time, he was also chaplain of the University Hospitals of Cleveland. From 1974 to 1979, he spent a year’s study at the North American College in Rome.

In 2012, 297 Ohioans shared the gift of life through organ donation at the time of their death. Through their unselfish sacrifice, 1,885 Ohioans were saved or sustained by organ, eye, and tissue donation.

For more information, call (614) 276-5263.

A general session will begin at 1 p.m., followed by tours and department presentations.

The Petrosians are members of Columbus St. Catherine Church.

OAKLAND NURSERY
SHERIDAN FUNERAL HOME
www.muetzel.com

Physically challenging, it’s hard for me to imagine what people who don’t have faith feel. For them, words are important when it comes to the meaning of life. I believe that, for these people, there is a little more meaning in a transaction that/when sacrifice and sharing and acceptance and giving can be part of life’s meaning.

For Fr. Patrick Toner

The way I see it, Jesus can take a practiced skill or knowledge and turn it into more than our abilities. The fire of God can transform a man who, as he once did, feels a sense of being called to serve others into the man who, as he once did, feels a sense of being called to serve God.

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CATHOLICS FROM INDIA RETAIN LEGACY OF ST. THOMAS

COMMUNITY MEETS AT COLUMBUS SACRED HEART

BY TIM PFEUT 

J oes’ final command to the Apost- les just before his ascension was to, "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you." The churches include the same elements of all Catholic Masses — the Liturgy of the Word, followed by the Liturgy of Eucharist and distribution of Communion — with some of the elements arranged in a different order than the Roman Catholic Mass; for instance, Malabarese Catholics commence with the Gloria, followed by the Our Father. Like the Roman Mass, the Qurbana was established in the first century. It has three forms, with the most simple of the three being the one used most commonly in the United States. This form includes much more participation by the people than the Mass in the Roman Catholic tradition.

“...one of the things I enjoy most about our Mass,” said Solly Joseph, who has been part of the local Syro-Malabar Catholic community since it began regularly scheduled Masses nine years ago.

“I was so used to the involvement of the people that I really missed it after arriving in America.”

Jesus, who also is a member of the Columbus St. Matthew Church and attends Mass there on weekdays, came to Columbus from Arizona in 1995. “I was very interested in technology, inform- nation technology for The Limited, and now I am an independent IT consultant,” he said. He noted that for her, adjusting to the Roman Cath- olic Church, Malabar Catholics were less adapted to adapting to a new form of technology.

“The change in Masses was like having a new boss,” said Father Pacheriyil, who has been an associate pastor at the Carmelites’ Jerusalem Re- mote Cultus, which the order describes as “God’s zone in Kerala.” He said about 25,000 people come there for Masses every week, with largest crowds for solemn celebrations and healing services. He estimated that he spoke to more than one million people during his time at the center.

Father Parcheiyil is an occasional visi- tor to the area, but on most weekends, the Columbus Syro-Malabar community is served by Father Jose Uppari, who is studying for his doctorate at Franciscan University of Steubenville. Father Up- pari, a priest for 32 years, has been in the United States since 2001. While in India, he led many large retreats, something he has continued to do at various locations throughout the United States in the last 10 years. Earlier this month, he conducted a weekend retreat at Sacred Heart.

“What was an amazing experience,” Jo- seph said. “In three days of mag- nificent prayer, teaching, and healing. Father used the Bible, the Catechism of the Church and his own experience to give us a weekend course in basic Ca- tholicism and remind us of the truth we Catholic Church as a very familiar person.”

Another important thing is that people try

to visit each family at least three times a year, making for good relations between priests and families and making the pastor a very familiar person.

Joseph said. “Father is an Israeli. I have been an associate pastor at the Carmelites’ Jerusalem Re- mote Cultus, which the order describes as “God’s zone in Kerala.”

He estimated that he spoke to more than one million people during his time at the center. That ministry, the one he now runs, was first celebrated on July 3, 1962, the Feast of St. Thomas. The Syro-Malabar Church has four mil- lion members and is the second-largest of the 22 Eastern Catholic churches in full communion with the Vatican. St. John Chrysostom Church is best known as the local Syro-Malabar community in Columbus. The Syro-Malabar Church has two- and three-weekend retreats each year, making for good relations between priests and families and making the pastor a very familiar person.

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By Doug Bean
Columbus Bishop Ready, Columbus Bishop Hartley and Newark Catholic matched it through the first round of the 2013 state high school football playoffs last weekend with ease.

For Columbus St. Charles and Portsmouth Notre Dame, it was “one and done” as their successful seasons came to an end.

Here’s how the five diocesan teams fared last week:

**Bishop Hartley**
The Hawks (10-1) rolled to a 64-7 victory over eighth-seeded Charlotte Zane Trace in Division V, Region 17 game played Friday night.

The game was decided early, giving coach Brad Beauford an opportunity to play starters and reserves.

Hartley scored six touchdowns in the first quarter and ended it 43-0. Jacob Miercic had a 30-yard rushing run and Giri Hickman, Sam Mackowick, Cavell Bennett, Shawn Smith-Davis, and Richard Jones also reached the end zone. Hickman added a two-point conversion pass from Jalen Austin.

Hawks running back Cam Ron Culver completed a 21-yard touchdown run and opted to keep the ball for the two-point conversion.

Hartley out-gained Zane Trace 377-61.

The final statistics reflected the disparity between the teams. Hartley produced 434 total yards against Zane Trace’s 72.

The Hawks play fifth-seeded Baltimore Liberty Union (9-2) on the road Saturday at Bloom-Carroll’s Carl Fell Stadium.

**Bishop Ready**
The second-seeded Silver Knights breezed through the first round in Divi- sion VI, Region 21 with a 48-0 victory over seventh-seeded Oak Hill Friday night at Upper Arlington.

Ready (10-1) rebounded from a 24-14 overtime loss to Hartley in its final regular- season game, putting Oak Hill in their final two-lack touchdowns. 

Mike scouring the field first touchdown on a 15-yard run. Nicholas Chapman followed with a 3-yard run later in the first quarter.

In the second quarter, quarterback Matt Yoho threw three touchdown passes — 18, 28 yards and 18 yards — to lead the Silver Knights in the first quarter.

Ready second-half touchdown came on a 5-yard run by Alex Taylor, who rushed for 113 yards on 15 carries.

Yoho completed eight of 11 passes for 190 yards.

Ready’s defense stymied Oak Hill’s (6-3) offense. It intercepted one quarterback and rushed for 125 yards.

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The Church Persecuted

George Weigel

Each issue of the admirable ecumenical journal Touchstone includes a department called “The Suffering Church.” It is a title that Catholics of a certain age associate with persecution; in Touchstone’s vocabulary, however, “the suffering Church” is being purified and here and now by persecution. It is a useful reminder of a hard fact.

For that hard fact too rarely impinges on the Christians’ self-awareness, much less the Christian conscience, of the Church Comforted, the Church Left, or the Church of Nice—even though the historical consensus maintained that more Christians were killed for fidelity to Christ in the 20th century than in the previous 19 centuries of Christian history combined. As I’ve noted in this space before, “ martyrodonty” is not just a matter of Richard Burton and Jean Simmons turning their backs on Tony Robinson’s mockup of Caligula while Michael Hensey-St. Peter looks on benignly in the classic Hollywood romance The Robe; “ martyrodonty” is going on in one form or another just about everywhere.

Thus a single page of a recent issue of Touchstone noted that 20,200 Christians are being imprisoned in shipping containers in desert camps where “ torture is routine”; that Mustafa Baydha, a 27-year- old Christian convert, was arrested and charged with “ illegal gathering and participating in a house church” in Iraq (a sobering reminder to those bears of little brain who discern a new “ moderation” in the Middle East today, “ we are witnessing some- thing only: it’s open season on Christians. Within two decades, perhaps less, Christianity may well have become a marginal reality in many of the places where Christianity was born, not to mention the cities where subapostolic and patristic Chris- tianity developed. The sole exception to this pattern throughout the Middle East and North Africa is Israel. Thus, Tom Holland, a popular historian and author of The Forge of Christendom (an intriguing book exploring the ways the latest first millennium’s expec- tations of an imminent end time shaped the West’s triumph in the second millennium), said recently at a London press briefing that “in terms of the sheer scale of the hatreds and sectarian rivalries” afoot in the Middle East today, “ we are witnessing some- what on the scale of horror of the European Thirty Years War.”

At that same conference, my old friend and col- league Nana Shea, director of the Hudson Institute’s Religious Freedom Center in Washington, raised some pointed questions about Western media igno- rance—or worse—about this persecution. Shea noted that a fourth-century Copia church dedicated to Lady Rachel was recently destroyed in Egypt, even though it was on a shortlist to be declared a UNESCO world heritage site; the UNESCO-listed Bamian Buddhas in Afghanistan, whose destruction by the Taliban in 2001 was widely reported and universally condemned, yet the mainstream media treated this grotesque act of anti- Christanity developed. The sole exception to this pattern throughout the Middle East and North Africa is Israel. Thus, Tom Holland, a popular historian and author of The Forge of Christendom (an intriguing book exploring the ways the latest first millennium’s expec- tations of an imminent end time shaped the West’s triumph in the second millennium), said recently at a London press briefing that “in terms of the sheer scale of the hatreds and sectarian rivalries” afoot in the Middle East today, “ we are witnessing some- what on the scale of horror of the European Thirty Years War.”

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Geraldine Mahan  

Funeral Mass for Geraldine Mahan, 86, who died Friday, Oct. 25, was held Tuesday, Oct. 29, at St. Francis de Sales Church. Burial was at Spring Grove Cemetery, Heath. 

She was born May 17, 1927, in New- 
ark to Catholic family members.

There is no charge for obituaries. To have an obituary printed in the Catholic Times, please send it to: Catholic Times, Obituaries, 197 E. Gay St., Columbus, OH 43215, or fax to 614-641-2518. Obituaries cannot be taken by phone. Obituaries will be edited for length/clarity/style and printed as space permits.

Submit obituaries

Geraldine Mahan, 86, who died Friday, Oct. 25, was buried Tuesday, Oct. 29, at St. Francis de Sales Church. Burial was at Spring Grove Cemetery, Heath. She was born May 17, 1927, in Newark. Mahan attended Catholic schools, and she served for many years as a nun in the ministry of her parish.

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The Amish Project is a fictional exploration of the shooting at Nickel Mines schoolhouse, preparing for the production to announce its fall production, the Columbus St. Charles Preparatory School high school theater troupe. The Amish Project by Jessica Dickey, the most widely read and performed play in the nation, is being adapted for the ensemble. The original version of The Amish Project was first produced by Playwrights' Arena at the New York International Fringe Festival on Aug. 8, 2008.

Dickey, a young actor-playwright from Pittsburgh, will be eager to create a story about what happened in Nickel Mines, Pa., on Oct. 2, 2002, when a local millennial carrying a gun walked into a classroom and opened fire, killing five girls and himself. The play, a story of forgiveness and compassion forged in its wake, is a national story of how modern American violence can assault even those who may not try to protect it from the fear of their being lured into evil. If you have forgotten that day in 2006, you might also recall how about 25 Peace Players from the United States and the United Kingdom toured the gymnasium.

Events of unexplainable violence are hardly uncommon on American soil. But it is hard to think of another moment in which television broadcast a call for immediate forgiveness, rather than anger or revenge, as the community even shared money that was collected for the victims with the gunman’s widow.

Inspired with great poetry and surpir- ing humor, the Amish Project investigates a divided community’s attempts to reconcile competing needs and desires in spite of a sea of cultural differences.

The cast members include hopefuls from Claire Gehringer, Nick Anderson, Matt Munsell, Ten Cleary, Carl Hals, Maggie Tu- rk, Natalie Belford, Lloyd Stevenson and Faye Cleary.

The Columbus St. Charles Prepara- tory School is located at 2010 E. Broad St. Adult tickets are $10 and student tickets are $5 each. Reservations may be placed by calling 614-267-7808 or (614) 267-7808. For reserved seating, contact Lori Ameri at larner@cdedication. org at 614-267-7808.

Tickets Go Up!
A show about faith and forgiveness
On a small stage set, the audience is drawn into the story through the use of music and movement.

Meet the young, star-struck actress, played by Sarah Schaber, and her confused boyfriend, played by Trent Grubb, along with the rest of the cast of characters who make up this comedy in three acts. An unexpected romantic twist for Miss Burgess also thickens the plot.

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Curtain Going Up!
Meet the young, star-struck actress, played by Sarah Schaber, and her confused boyfriend, played by Trent Grubb, along with the rest of the cast of characters who make up this comedy in three acts. An unexpected romantic twist for Miss Burgess also thickens the plot.

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I hope that you all had a chance to see the poster in the vestibule of our church that depicts the pilgrims trying to sneak into the United States under a barbed-wire fence. This poster was a recent cartoon in *The New Yorker* magazine, which is noted for its hilarious cartoons. The scene is a desert landscape with cactuses and other features of the American southwest. Of course, the pilgrims landed in what is now New England on the Mayflower and other ships, but the cartoon reminds us how in our country’s history, most immigrants had a pretty easy time getting into the country, even though it may have been hard to make the journey. They just came! The scene also is a challenge to all Americans to consider whether it is time for real immigration reform.

I think back on the arrival of my own ancestors to these shores. I am mostly of German descent and about one-quarter Irish. My earliest German forbears arrived in 1837 and settled on farms in the area of Marietta, Ohio. The family lore contains no horror stories about having to sneak into the country or even having to endure much discrimination. Of course, my early relatives were all farmers, and they just worked hard to support their families and no one bothered them. Maybe if some of them had settled in a big American city, it might have been different. And, of course, in the 1800s there arose movements such as Nativism and political parties such as the so-called “Know Nothings,” which were anti-immigrant and which must have caused some concern among those who were not of Anglo-Saxon descent. My dad used to tell us that the Ku Klux Klan had a few followers in the Marietta area in the early 1900s, but, unlike in the deep South, this organization was pretty much shunned, even by white Protestants, in southeastern Ohio. Occasionally, the Klan would burn a cross on a Catholic family’s farm, but everyone just laughed at them.

One of the most interesting phenomena of 19th-century immigration to America is that some foreigners were allowed to vote even before they became citizens. Over 40 states and territories have at some time permitted aliens to vote in both state and federal elections. This practice reached its zenith around 1850 and for some time afterward. The Supreme Court upheld the right of states to allow non-citizens to vote in a case from Missouri in 1874. The Constitution of Ohio, adopted in 1802 on the eve of the admission of our state to the union, made no distinction between citizens and non-citizens when it came to the franchise. However, the right of aliens to vote was later specifically outlawed in Ohio in 1851. Based on these historical facts, I am fairly confident that some of my ancestors voted before they became citizens of this state. In the period of 1900 to 1920, as anti-immigrant sentiment strengthened, most states where it had been allowed put an end to voting by aliens. But even today, some jurisdictions allow documented immigrants to vote in local elections, like for school board, and there is discussion of widening these voting rights in some areas.

I recite this history to show that early immigration to America was one of remarkable hospitality to the newcomers. This hospitality was not always consistent or ideal, but people who wanted to come here were allowed to enter without much fuss. Even after the establishment of Ellis Island in 1891, which processed many foreigners wanting to settle here, it was still not too hard to get in.

Certainly the readings for this evening remind us that Christians are called to be hospitable to the stranger. In that first reading from the Book of Leviticus, God commands the Israelites to treat the resident aliens the same as those who were native-born. And the Lord pointedly reminds the Hebrews that they were once aliens in the land of Egypt themselves. Remember that Leviticus is one of the law books where God tells his people what he expects of them. Leviticus also reminds us that we are all, without exception, immigrants to the land now known as the United States of America. The second reading from St. Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians reflects the attitude of the early communities of faith that our parish’s great patron established — namely, the attitude that there is no distinction between any of the members of Christ’s body, no matter what their background or social condition. The spirit of God is the spirit of unity which brings all of Christ’s followers together and puts an end to division. In the Body of Christ, we all share in each other’s joys and sorrows. This reading also reminds us Catholics that our Baptism and, for that matter, our common humanity as children of God make us brothers and sisters — regardless of our status as citizens or non-citizens.

The beautiful Gospel from St. Luke paints for us the scene in the synagogue of Nazareth where Jesus gives his inaugural address (so to speak) as he begins his public ministry. Quoting from the prophet Isaiah, the Lord proclaims that he, in his person, is the fulfillment of God’s desire that all people be treated with the utmost respect. The poor, the sick, the oppressed, the imprisoned are folks Jesus has been called to lift up. The spirit of the Lord will, through the Christ, set everyone free from all that beats them down. This gospel challenges us as the Body of Christ to continue his work of liberation in our time.

Immigration reform is thus primarily a matter of hospitality. God through Christ welcomes everyone to share his love and grace. As we celebrate the feast of Christ the King, let us pray for the inspiration and courage to welcome the stranger because of his vast resources.

It is a great witness that the Catholic Church in our country is among the many voices calling for immigration reform. To sum up, my friends, this is the reality in our country today: undocumented immigrants are here; they are human (and mostly Catholic, by the way) and they deserve to be treated humanely and hospitably — just as the pilgrims and my ancestors and those of so many other Americans were treated when they came seeking a new life summed up in that iconic phrase “the American dream.”