

REPORT OF KOREAN MARTYRS' CATHOLIC (CENTER) (MISSION) CHURCH

Chicago, Illinois

Tu Jin Paul Kim, C.P.

1. The basic description of your parish

As you can see above, the names of our church are three. I am not sure which name is officially correct. We call ourselves Korean Martyrs' Catholic Church (KMCC). KMCC is the first Korean Catholic Church in Illinois. In 1970, our church was established by the Columban Fathers. In the Chicago area, there are four other Korean communities in Des Plaines IL, Arlington Heights IL, Joliet IL and Milwaukee, WI. All of these 4 churches were established from KMCC. Until 2013, the Columban Fathers were taking care of KMCC. I came to this Church as the first Korean pastor on January 1, 2014, and later Fr. Don Webber, C.P., came to join our community in June 2016 as a resident priest. It was great for me because I could have some community life with him, and I really appreciate his wonderful English ministry, such as our Sunday English Mass and ministry with grade school and high school students.

2. What are the areas of growth/success that you would like to highlight?

Most ministries of Mass, sacraments and counseling are in Korean language. In 2020, we tried to celebrate our 50th anniversary, but we were not able to do so because of the pandemic. Many parishioners live in the northern suburbs, so during the pandemic, every week Don and I wrote a letter/reflection based on the Sunday readings to include with the weekly bulletin. When Fr. Don and I wrote a letter/reflection every week, we tried to make our parishioners know the church does not forget them. This was sent out to every parishioner via U.S. mail since many older parishioners do not have internet. This greatly helped us remain connected to our parishioners. It was a lot of work, but the parishioners were very grateful for this, especially during the lockdown and when large groups were not encouraged. We also recorded our Sunday Mass for parishioners to find on YouTube. Later, we went to live-streaming of Sunday and also daily Masses, both in Korean and English. Interestingly, during the pandemic, we received generous donations and were able to finish some long-term dreams of major repairs: church roof and bell tower, painting, restoring parking lot, etc. Presently, we do not have any financial issue. Thankfully, as the restrictions were being reduced, we were able to celebrate our 50th Anniversary Mass in 2021 on Korean Martyrs' Feast Day, which is a solemnly for us. It was a bilingual Mass and Fr. John Schork joined us. Everyone wore masks. That also enabled us to have a festive social after the Mass.

3. What are the challenges your parish is/ will be facing

Definitely ageing! As I mentioned above, most of our parishioners are elderly. I have many Funeral Masses but few Sacraments of Marriage or Infant Baptism. Surprisingly, last Sunday we

had 6 infant Baptisms. Also, the younger generation has moved to the suburbs. With fewer kids and fewer volunteers to teach, we are considering closing Sunday school. It is very difficult to find bilingual teachers or volunteers. But the parishioners are very generous so, maybe, we can find some teachers for next year.

4. What are the hopes for the future of your parish?

I have been here nine years already, and I am sorry to say I am getting older, too. I am 68. I hope the Passionists in Korea might take care of KMCC in the future. I am considering very carefully when to leave KMCC, perhaps when I am in my early 70s. If Korean Passionists are not able to take care of this community, then the Archbishop of Chicago will need to ask a Korean diocese to send a Korean priest. As I mentioned before, our community is getting older. That might mean we will have to close our church in ten to fifteen years. The parish might need to be united with another parish, which is what the Archdiocese of Chicago is presently and actively pursuing. Maybe more younger generations will actively join our church, especially the younger generation that lives in downtown Chicago. They might be our HOPE for the future!

ST. JOSEPH PARISH
Ensley, Alabama
Patricio Manosalvas-Rizzo, C.P. - Pastor

Basic description of St Joseph Catholic Parish

St Joseph Catholic Parish is currently located in Ensley, one of the poorest sectors of the City of Birmingham, Alabama. The original idea of its foundation was to assist and minister the recent community of Italian immigrants, coming to the United States from Sicily, to work in the steel mills at the beginning of the 20th century.

The problems of adapting to a different type of society, language and culture were not to be expected, but time and patience helped these first people to overcome those obstacles.

Eventually, they progressed, and the children born in this new environment would serve them as cultural and linguistic bridges. It was also the natural human growth that influenced the new generations not only to change their lifestyle, but also the way of perceiving and practicing the Catholic religion and with the acquisition of new homes the local churches began to empty out. It was at the end of the 90's and beginning in 2000 when then Bishop David E. Foley opened the doors of this Church to the Hispanic community.

Areas of growth

Since then, the Hispanic community, mainly made up of Mexicans, has increased. Their perseverance, fervor and dedication have resulted in a flourishing and well-organized community, with catechism classes for children and adults, Bible studies, RCIA, pre-Cana, etc. The Charismatic prayer movement and El Cursillo de Cristiandad flourish as well. Due to the great number of people injured by many circumstances of their life, we promote personal and spiritual growth through workshops such as, Emotional Intelligence and Social Intelligence workshops. With the Guadalupana Missionaries, we also offer Social Services and Community Resources, including immigration and legal services.

What are the challenges?

Currently the grim economic situation is affecting immigrants and consequently the local Churches, (the high costs of electricity, gas and insurance, etc.) which makes our apostolic work slow a bit.

The HOPES for the future

Our perhaps uncertain future is filled with hope by working with the children and youth of the catechism classes. Also, the group of young adults who serve in the parish give us hope. Finally, the Lord has blessed us with these two wonderful choirs that decorously and joyfully animate the Holy Eucharist.

St. Joseph Catholic Parish, se encuentra actualmente ubicada en uno de los sectores más pobres de la ciudad de Birmingham en Alabama, la idea original de su fundación fue de asistir a la reciente comunidad de italianos, en su mayoría proveniente de Sicilia, que migraron a los EEUU a principios del siglo XX, para trabajar como se ve en la mayoría de los casos en la fundería del Acero.

Los problemas de adaptación a un tipo distinto de sociedad, lenguaje y cultura no se dejaron de esperar, pero el tiempo y la paciencia ayudaron a estos primeros grupos a progresar y los hijos nacidos en este nuevo medio servirían de puentes culturales y lingüístico para estas personas, también fue el deseo natural de superación humana que influyo a las nuevas generaciones no solo a cambiar su estilo de vida, sino también la forma de percibir y practicar la religión católica y por lo tanto cambian los domicilios con el consecuente resultado del abandono de las Iglesias locales.

Sera hasta el fin de los años 90 en que el Obispo David E. Foley abre las puertas de esta Iglesia para la comunidad hispana.

Desde entonces, la comunidad Hispana principalmente compuesta por mexicanos ha aumentado, su constancia, fervor y entrega dieron como resultado una comunidad floreciente y bien organizada, con diversidad de clases de formación para niños y adultos. Florecen los movimientos de oración Carismáticos y de Cursillo de cristiandad, clases de superación personal y espiritual como: Ingles, Inteligencia emocional e Inteligencia Social además de Servicios Sociales y Recursos comunitarios como asesoramientos legales para casos de migración y asuntos varios.

Actualmente la difícil situación económica está afectando a los inmigrantes, los altos costos de la energía eléctrica, gas y seguros hacen que nuestro trabajo apostólico sea menos efectivo. Nuestro futuro tal vez incierto se llena de esperanza al trabajar con los niños y jóvenes del catecismo y el grupo de jóvenes adultos que sirven en la parroquia, además el Señor nos bendice con la música de 2 coros que animan decorosa y alegremente las Santas Eucaristía

ST. AGNES CATHOLIC COMMUNITY
Louisville, Kentucky
Nelson Justin Alphonse, C.P. – Pastor

Saint Agnes Parish Community originated when the Passionist Congregation came to Louisville, Kentucky in 1879, and continues to staff it to this day. The Parish school, with over 500 students, adds immense youthful energy to our community. We aspire to remain Christ-centered through our worship, service, education and formation. As COVID-19 wanes, the parish is re-engaging its robust community life. We are a growing parish with 4,130 registered members representing 1,317 households. We are encouraged when we see families regularly joining our parish, inspired by our parish school, by the countless ministry opportunities that are available and by the faith formation programs that St. Agnes offers for all ages.

Our Parish is a tightly connected community of people with hearts of service and prayer. In addition to offering sacraments and faith formation to our members, parish life at St. Agnes is rich with ministry opportunities, community outreach efforts, prayer groups, social events and stewardship. Our parishioners actively serve in a wide array of volunteer positions, to keep our community healthy and vibrant and to realize our mission goals each year. Our faith ministries help support a multitude of small groups within and surrounding our parish community. When looking at our sacraments in 2022, we held 50 Baptisms, 47 Confirmations, 41 First Holy Communion, 31 funerals and 22 weddings. So far in 2023, we have held 50 confirmations, 13 funerals and 2 baptisms, with many more Sacraments on our calendar to come. People in the Louisville area seek out St. Agnes for its deep sense of community, stewardship opportunities and strong ties with our wonderful parish school. Our church and school, work closely together in harmony to enrich the faith experience for both our school children, their families and the parish at large.

Our nationally recognized Blue Ribbon School, an award we have received a record of four times, is growing. St. Agnes is the only school in Kentucky to have received this honor. We are also a nationally recognized Green Ribbon School, awarded for our campus-wide efforts in environmental preservation and reducing our carbon footprint. With a new and active preschool of 72 children, we are blessed with the largest student enrollment to date. There are 512 students in preschool through 8th grade. With gifted teachers, committed staff and students eager to learn, St. Agnes is an excellent school where growth flourishes mentally, emotionally, physically and spiritually.

Our goals at St. Agnes are to continue to grow our community, increase our volunteerism and stewardship and complete a campus Capital Campaign plan by 2028, when we celebrate our beautiful church's 100th anniversary. This Capital Campaign – *'Congregate for Something Great'*, began in 2013, and will culminate with a beautifully enhanced campus for all our community to enjoy. We also want to see an increase in liturgy participation and stewardship from our parish

school families and young adult demographic. Until then, we remain steadfast in our commitment to our faith, our community, our parish and our school, and pray for peace, joy, health and spiritual and educational fulfillment for our future.

HOLY FAMILY and ST. MARY'S PARISHES
Birmingham, Alabama
Phillip Paxton, C.P. - Pastor

In Alabama, there are two parishes founded by the Passionists of Holy Cross Province: Holy Family Parish, in the Ensley section of Birmingham, established in 1938, and St. Mary's Parish in Fairfield, which is a suburb adjacent to Ensley, established in 1943. These parishes were founded to serve the African-American communities in both locations.

In the early years, both parishes had elementary schools, and there was a high school associated with Holy Family. St. Mary's School has since closed, and Holy Family High School has been changed into a Cristo Rey High School. Holy Family Catholic Academy, which has K-4, Kindergarten and First Grade, along with 7th and 8th Grades, has remained open. The early grades have been more recently added, as the Academy had been a middle school for some years. Right now, the middle school is being phased out, and the school is looking to begin building up from the primary grades. With the school board's efforts and the generosity of benefactors, the school has been fairly stable financially. The challenge is to bring in more students.

Both parishes remain small. Combined, they are comprised of approximately 250 families on the books. Mass attendance is still affected by COVID-19, but there are some indications of people coming back.

Since the height of the pandemic, there has been live-streaming of the Sunday Masses on Facebook, which has kept people in touch, but there is concern that it might now be enabling some to stay away. As is the case with many churches in the United States, both parishes are getting older, even though there are some youth and young adults who attend. One major challenge is to find ways to engage young adults. St. Mary's is in the beginning of a relationship with Miles College, an HBCU (Historically Black College and University) only blocks away.

Another challenge is finances. Many parishioners are generous, but some major contributors have passed away over the past few years. Over the past year or two, there have been joint meetings of the leadership of both churches.

Despite the challenges, the parishioners have made many efforts at outreach and formation. More and more, people see the need for both churches to work together in these areas.

As pastor, I am advocating a pastoral plan for both churches. Recently, Holy Family celebrated its 85th anniversary. Claire Smith and Lissa Romell visited from Chicago, with a request to interview a group of parishioners on being black and black Catholic, in Alabama, as well as being part of a Passionist parish. The dialogue was open and honest about the positives and

negatives in the history of both churches. But among the parishioners who were there, a sentiment arose which can be expressed as “What are *we* going to do?” This gives me hope for the future.

I have been in Birmingham for a little more than 15 years out of my almost 28 years as a Passionist priest. I feel that the Passionist presence in Birmingham has been good for the people here, but also important for the Province. I do not know what the future will hold, but I do believe that as long as we strive to fulfill the mission we have been given, no matter what happens, God will bring us to whatever is best.