



The Catholic
Archdiocese
of Edmonton

Joy in Christ
100 Jubilee
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Jubilee 100 Biography Project

Biography of Mr. Byungyung Ahn

Submitted by St. Jung Ha Sang (Korean) Parish, Edmonton

Mr. Byungyung Ahn was born in 1927 in South Korea. During the Japanese occupation, he narrowly escaped forcible recruitment with Korea's independence in 1945. The same year he married Youngsoon Nam, with whom he had four sons. In 1946, he joined the Korean Navy. A year later, the ship that he had been stationed on was taken captive by communist traitors and was forcibly taken to North Korea. Fortunately for Mr. Ahn, he was assigned to another ship three days prior to this event. He retired from the Korean Navy in 1958. That same year, he and his family received the Sacrament of Baptism at Joong Ang Church in the city of Jinhae. He was confirmed in 1960 at the same church. His baptismal name is Hyacinth.

During the 1960s at the height of the Vietnam War, Mr. Ahn worked in Vietnam as an engineer for three years. In June of 1975, he immigrated to Edmonton with his family. He worked as a welder. He attended his first mass in Edmonton at St. Agnes.

Mr. Ahn was involved in the initial process of establishing a Korean parish in Edmonton. With the number of immigrants from Korea growing, along with the desire to celebrate mass in their own language and to preserve their customs and traditions, Mr. Ahn and 11 other Koreans living in Edmonton gathered in February of 1976 and decided that there was a need for a Korean Catholic Church. In October of 1977, with a visiting priest from Korea, 20 households had their first mass in their native language at Queen of Martyrs Catholic Church.

In 1978 the first Korean priest came to preside over both the Edmonton and Calgary Korean Catholic Communities. In March, Mr. Ahn attended a mass that was celebrated in Gull Lake with both the Edmonton and Calgary Korean communities. He volunteered as the parish president in 1981. During his presidency he was a member of the Church Construction Committee and in 1982 he helped acquire the first rectory in Millwoods.

He passed on his dedication of contributing to the life and development of the parish to his sons as they have also volunteered many years as parish managers and Legio Marie leader. Mr Ahn had a vital role in establishing the Korean parish in Edmonton and for over 30 years he has continued to support the development of the parish through his own contributions and through the contributions of his sons and grandchildren.

In 1997 Mr. Ahn volunteered for the Korean community as the president of the Korean Seniors' Citizen Society of Edmonton. Despite his age, today Mr. Ahn is still involved in the Joseph Elderly Group in our parish and he still attends mass every Sunday with his wife. Mr. Ahn has 24 godsons. He is a respected role model to many parishioners.