

Immaculate Conception Parish



Please visit our website at
www.icworc.com and Facebook

SUNDAY MASSES

SATURDAY VIGIL: 4:00 PM

SUNDAY: 7:30 AM, 10:00 AM

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

Saturday 2:45 - 3:45 PM

(or by appointment)

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

Parents and godparents of infants to be baptized are expected to participate in a preparation session. Call the Rectory to register for this process and set a date for the actual Baptism. For Baptism of adults please contact the Rectory.

SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE

Please contact the rectory one year prior to your desired wedding date

SACRAMENT OF ANOINTING OF THE SICK

Father Walter can be called whenever someone can benefit from this sacrament of healing.

PROTECTING OUR YOUTH AND CHILDREN

If you or someone you know has been sexually abused by a priest, religious or lay person working for the Church, and you want to share feelings of hurt or betrayal, call Cathaleen Peloquin, Victim Services Coordinator, Office of Healing and Prevention, 508-929-4363 (direct, confidential line).

RECTORY ADDRESS

353 Grove Street, Worcester, MA 01605

Phone: 508-754-8419

Fax: 508-306-9718

Religious Education Phone: 508-868-8119

Rectory Hours: M: 9:30am-1:30pm, T: 9:30am-1:30pm

W: 9:30am-1:30pm, F: 9:30am-1:30pm

MOST REV. ROBERT J. MCMANUS, **Bishop of Worcester**

REV. WALTER RILEY, **PASTOR**

REV. ENOCH KYEREMATENG, **IN RESIDENCE**

KEVIN DEIGNAN, **PERMANENT DEACON**

FRANK MYSKA, **PERMANENT DEACON**

MARY SYCKS, **ADMINISTRATOR OF RELIGIOUS
EDUCATION AND YOUTH MINISTER**

C. HENRY MASON, **MUSIC DIRECTOR**

BRIDGET KLOFFT, **CANTOR**

ROBERT NOBERINI, **PARISH OFFICE MANAGER**

MATTHEW FOSTER, **PASTORAL COUNCIL CHAIRMAN**

LYNDA MONAHAN, **SAFE ENVIRONMENT COORDINATOR**

MASS INTENTIONS

Sat.	Feb 17	4:00 PM	Mary Karpowicz, from Family
Sun.	Feb 18	7:30 AM	Nicholas and Daniel Dinsdale, 20th Anniversary, from Family
		10:00 AM	Emelia Menard, 3rd Anniversary, from Family
Mon.	Feb 19	9:00 AM	Mark Buczek, 20th Anniversary, from Family
Tues.	Feb 20	9:00 AM	Dennis Ferrante, Month Mind, from Parish Family
Wed.	Feb 21	9:00 AM	Elizabeth Metcalf, Month Mind, from Parish Family, <i>(St. Peter Damian)</i>
Thurs.	Feb 22	8:00 AM	Parishioners of Immaculate Conception, <i>(The Chair of St. Peter the Apostle)</i>
Sat.	Feb 24	4:00 PM	Mirick T. Perkins, 39th Anniversary, & Josephine E. Perkins, 40th Anniversary, from Family
Sun.	Feb 25	7:30 AM	Parishioners of Immaculate Conception
		10:00 AM	Dr. Harry J. Kelly and his Parents, from family, & Jon Green, 2nd Anniversary, from Family

THIS WEEK the text for The 1st Sunday of Lent, may be found at #904 in the *Journeysongs* hymnal.

CHRIST THE KING WOMEN'S GUILD LENTEN EVENING OF RECOLLECTION

Christ The King Women's Guild invite all women to our Lenten Evening of Recollection on Wednesday, February 21st. Fr. Paul O'Connell, former pastor of CTK, is our presenter. The Evening will begin with 5:30pm mass followed by light dinner and presentation in the Johnson Room. Donation for the Evening is \$15. To make a reservation or if you have any questions, please contact Donna Byrnes at 508-753-3024 or dbyrnes@charter.net.

HOLY HOUR AND STATIONS OF THE CROSS FOR LENT

Each Friday during the Season of Lent, our Parish will be holding our annual Holy Hour at 5:30 p.m., followed by Stations of the Cross at 6:30 p.m. All are invited to come and spend some time with the Lord in Eucharistic Adoration, and walk the way of the Cross in preparation for Holy Week and Easter Sunday. Holy Hour and the Stations will begin this Friday, February 16.

LENTEN REGULATIONS AND GUIDELINES

Lenten fast and regulations for the Diocese of Worcester are as follows: Abstinence from meat is to be observed by all Catholics 14 years of age and older on Ash Wednesday, Good Friday, and all the Fridays of Lent. Fasting is to be observed by all Catholics who are 18 years of age but not yet 59 years of age on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. Those who are bound to fast may take only one full meal. Two smaller meals are permitted if necessary to maintain strength according to one's needs, but eating solid food between meals is not permitted. Catholics should not lightly excuse themselves from these prescribed Lenten penitential practices.

LENTEN READING MATERIAL

Many options for Lenten spiritual reading have been left at each entrance to the Church. All parishioners are invited to take one or two booklets to incorporate into your prayer life the great deal of wisdom found in them that comes to us from St. Teresa of Calcutta, Henri Nouwen, Pope Francis and others. These small bits of religious wisdom give us much to reflect upon as we go travel through this holy season in preparation for Easter.

OPERATION RICE BOWL

Cartons for Operation Rice Bowl can be found at each entrance to the Church. For those who participate in this Lenten program, we invite to place coins in the carton and we will collect them at the end of Lent, and forward the total to Catholic Relief Services. The money collected is used to serve the needs of the poor in America and throughout the world, and those who struggle through natural disasters.

RELIGIOUS QUOTE OF THE WEEK

THE WILDERNESS SETTING: Mark 1:12 "You see how the Spirit led him, not into a city or public arena, but into a wilderness. In this desolate place, the Spirit extended the devil an occasion to test him, not only by hunger, but also by loneliness, for it is there most especially that the devil assails us, when he sees us left alone and by ourselves. In this same way did he also confront Eve in the beginning, having caught her alone and apart from her husband."
St. John Chrysostom (349-407)

INVITATION TO DAILY MASS DURING LENT

There is a standing invitation to all parishioners to come to any or all of our weekday Masses during the Season of Lent. This longstanding tradition in the Church (daily Mass attendance during Lent) comes to us down through the ages, inviting us to experience God's word and Eucharist as we prepare for Easter. For anyone who has the capacity and time to share with us your presence at Daily liturgy from Monday-Thursday, we would love to have you, even if only one day during the week. Please think about incorporating this into your schedules if possible. Thank you, Fr. Riley.

ON THE EUCHARIST

"While it is never legitimate to concelebrate in the absence of full communion, the same is not true with respect to the administration of the Eucharist under special circumstances, to individual persons belonging to Churches or Ecclesial Communities not in full communion with the Catholic Church. In this case, in fact, the intention is to meet a grave spiritual need for the eternal salvation of an individual believer, not to bring about an intercommunion which remains impossible until the visible bonds of ecclesial communion are fully re-established."

St. John Paul II, from Ecclesia de Eucharistia (Encyclical)

PARISH ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE IRISH DINNER SAVE THE DATE!

Our Parish's annual Irish Dinner will be held this year on March 17 from 5:00 – 8:00 p.m. It's an opportunity for us this year to hold our dinner on the actual date of the feast of St. Patrick. Live music will be provided that evening by John Riley, a skilled guitarist with a breadth of knowledge of Irish songs and culture. Tickets for adults will be \$10.00, for children \$7.00, and families of five or more \$30.00. There will be a 50/50 raffle as well as door prizes to be given away. The Activities Committee will be collecting donations of Irish baskets for the raffle from anyone who wishes to donate. This is a BYOW event (Bring Your Own Wine). Also, if anyone can volunteer to help set up the Fr. Connors Center for the dinner on the 17th, please call Jim Hester at 508-852-3473, or email bevhester13@gmail.com. Thank you.

FRIDAY FASTING AND INTENTION

We thank all our parishioners who continue to fast for one meal and abstain from meat each Friday as we commemorate our Lord's saving act on that day. This wonderful Catholic tradition is reemerging, calling us to be mindful of our Lord's crucifixion every Friday of the year. Such a particular awareness in our lives can only deepen our faith and love in Christ. As we fast and abstain, we do so each week for an intention that is to us on a local, national, or world level, always effecting our faith. Next Friday's intention is *for the hungry throughout the world, that religious-minded people and governments and will ease their burden of hunger.*

TAX STATEMENTS FOR 2018

Any parishioner who wishes to receive a statement of contributions for 2017 for tax purposes can do so by calling the rectory at 508-754-8419 during business hours found on the front of the bulletin, by emailing the rectory at icworc@live.com, or stopping by the rectory during business hours.

Religious Education There are no Religious Education classes on February 18th due to the school vacation week. Classes will resume on Sunday, February 25th at 8:45AM for children in grades K-6, 7:00PM for children in grades 7-10 and Confirmation Class.

Clothing Drive Megan Dickie, a Confirmation Candidate at Immaculate Conception, is organizing a clothing drive on March 3rd and 4th. All Women and Children's clothing will be donated to the Abby Kelly Foster House in Worcester. Their mission is to provide a safe place for women and children to stay, regroup, and rebuild. The Men's clothing will be donated to Veteran's Inc. in Worcester. Their organization is a committed advocate for eliminating homelessness among veterans. Megan will be collecting any and all of these items before and after Mass on Saturday March 3rd and Sunday, March 4th. I hope you will all consider donating in some way to help make a change in the world. There is no donation too small! Megan has always enjoyed giving back to Worcester and Immaculate Conception Parish communities. Thank you in advance for your consideration, prayers, and generosity!

HOPE FOR HOUSING FOOD CARDS

Please consider purchasing food cards for the purpose of helping to stop homelessness here in Central Massachusetts. 5% of each card purchased will be donated by the participating grocery chain, while the purchase receives the full value of the card that is purchased. The money raised from this ministry has helped to prevent hundreds of families from being homeless, a situation that no one in our country should have to experience. Last week at Immaculate Conception our parishioners purchased \$290.00 in cards. **Thank you** to those who continue to participate in this very worthy program.

PARISH ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE

Our Parish Activities Committee will be serving food and refreshments on the 3rd Sunday of the month, February 18. A meeting of the Activities Committee will take place on the same morning at 8:30 a.m. to discuss and prepare for our upcoming Irish Dinner. The Committee is always looking for new members to assist with different events throughout the year. More information can be offered at the monthly meeting.

PRAYER SHAWLS

We have a few prayer shawls in our possession that we would like to give out to anyone who feels the need of having one. Or, if you know of someone who may be dealing with cancer or any other disease and would benefit from the comfort and peace of a prayer shawl, please speak with Fr. Riley. We thank the Prayer Shawl Group at Our Lady of Good Counsel in West Boylston for making and donating the beautiful work of their shawls to us.

MSGR. RICHARD COLLETTE THANK YOU

Thank you to Msgr. Richard Collette for his presence at all Masses last Sunday and for sharing a few of his of priestly experiences in book form over the course of 65 years of priesthood. Thank you also to all our parishioners who purchased a copy of Msgr. Collette's book to help support the healthcare of retired priests in our Diocese. May God continue to bless this good priest at the age of 90 with many more years of sharing his wisdom and goodness to those he encounters.

COLLECTION FOR CHURCH IN LATIN AMERICA

Envelopes for the collection for the Church in Latin America may be placed into the first collection basket this Sunday. This annual national collection from the United States Bishops helps to support the many good works of our Catholic brothers and sisters in Central and South America, and those who serve the millions of Catholics in these countries.

From the Pastor continued from the following page

If God did destroy all of creation way back when, and placed an emphatic exclamation point to his destruction, we wouldn't be here today to discuss the ways of God, either in favor or against Him. Humbly seeking God's mercy during this season we have now begun makes our prayer, fasting, and almsgiving offerings of truth and goodness, revealing at the same time that the Spirit is alive and well in our lives.

So, as we earnestly move into another holy Season of Lent, seek God's mercy today, tomorrow, and every evening before you call it a night. God's second chance is a lifelong second chance of mercy. It doesn't happen just once, but, like his forgiveness, seventy times seven.

Peace, Fr. Riley

RETREAT FOR POTENTIAL PRIESTLY CANDIDATES

Have you thought of a vocation to the Priesthood? Come and learn more. The Diocese of Worcester's annual discernment retreat, directed by Bishop McManus, will be held on March 23 & 24. This retreat begins at 6:00 p.m. on Friday and ends at 6:00 p.m. on Saturday. It is for men high school, college age, and older. The retreat center is only 30 minutes from Worcester at the Immaculate Conception Retreat Center in Putnam, CT. There is no cost, and transportation is provided if needed. Contact Fr. Jim Mazzone at jmazzone@charter.net, or by phone at 508-340-5788 to sign up.

18th ANNUAL DIOCESAN CATHOLIC MEN'S CONFERENCE AT ASSUMPTION COLLEGE

Men (of all ages, including teens and college students) are invited to this important annual Conference, scheduled for Assumption College on Saturday, March 17. Visit the conference website at www.firstmensconf.org for information and to purchase tickets online and elsewhere. Come and hear dynamic talks from outstanding Catholic leaders: Marcellino D'Ambrosio, Father David Cavanagh, Robert Rogers, Ryan Tremblay, and Elvis Grbac. Bishops and priests will hear confessions. Bishop McManus will offer the Conference Mass. For a Conference brochure, further information or registration, call Sara Smillie at 508-929-4345. Adult tickets are \$45 until February 28, afterwards \$60. Student tickets are always \$30.

WORDS OF POPE FRANCIS FROM The Joy of Love

THE NEED FOR SEX EDUCATION: "Sex education should provide information while keeping in mind that children and young people have not yet attained full maturity. The information has to come at a proper time and in a way suited to their age. It is not helpful to overwhelm them with data without also helping them to develop a critical sense in dealing with the onslaught of new ideas and suggestions, the flood of pornography and the overload of stimuli that can deform sexuality. Young people need to realize that they are bombarded by messages that are not beneficial for their growth toward maturity. They should be helped to recognize and to seek out positive influences, while shunning the things that cripple their capacity for love. We also have to realize that 'a new and appropriate language' is needed 'in introducing children and adolescents to the topic of sexuality.'" Par. 281

FOOD PANTRY NEEDS

Our food pantry is on the lesser side of goods at this time, so we ask any parishioners who wish to help out to consider purchasing items such as Spaghetti sauce, cereal, peanut butter, jelly, rice, canned tuna and all vegetables, and canned dry fruit. Thank you to all who assist our small but important food pantry that helps to serve the needs of those who come to our door each Monday.

READINGS FOR NEXT SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 25th THE SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT

1st Reading: Genesis 22:1-2, 9a, 10-13, 15-18

Psalm: 116

2nd Reading: Romans:8:31b-34

Gospel: Mark 9:2-10

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT: 02/11/18

Sunday Ordinary Income	\$ 4,091.00
Winter Fuel	\$ 55.00
Catholic Free Press	\$ 280.00

FROM THE PASTOR

As we walk into the desert for another Season of Lent, I pray this may be a time for all of us to clean the slate, if you will, and allow God's mercy to touch the deepest part of our souls. A couple of weeks ago, the Gospel was the story of the entire village coming to the front door of Simon Peter's house to be healed by the touch of Christ. Jesus began his healing that day directed at one individual, curing the fever of the mother-in-law of Simon. Word obviously got out, because by the time the sun set, Jesus had done the same for the entire village. He was as popular that day as Tom Brady is inside the territory of New England. We also know that three years hence, Jesus would be treated by the authorities like Tom Brady would be outside of New England. But somehow I can't picture T.B. carrying a cross.

The main focus of Lent is to prepare for the joy of Easter. When Jesus is raised from the dead on Easter Sunday by the glory of God the Father, his being raised is an event for us that takes much preparation to fully grasp and enjoy. We don't simply wake up one day and say, "Is he raised yet?" And if we find the answer is no, then we head back into our den like Punxsutawney Pete to rest and relax for six more weeks of winter. Lent, as much of a contemplative season as it is, calls us to get up and go with our spiritual lives, to run a Boston Marathon with Christ for 40 days and nights, and be constantly on the spiritual move by way of prayer, fasting, almsgiving, and spiritual reading (which is one type of prayer). Lent without any of these is a lessening of the season and its purpose. With all four of these elements moving ahead at "full speed" each day, then celebrating Jesus being raised from the dead is the natural result of our preparation.

My constant concern as a priest during this holy season is that some of us Catholics don't take advantage of the power and meaning of Lent, availing ourselves of what the Church offers to us in terms of Christian spiritual growth. Being lukewarm during Lent, and treating these 40 days like any other 40 days, is a sad process and self-defeating approach to our relationship with Christ. Awakening our spirit, and challenging ourselves to spiritual growth, is the proper and healthy format that prepares us for the greatest event of all; the resurrection of Christ from the grave. This should have the gravest meaning to anyone who wishes to see their loved ones again one day.

So, what is it that we are to search for this Lent? What undergirds the purpose of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, and brings each one of these tenets alive during Lent? We look to this week's first reading from the book of Genesis where we find God making a covenant with Noah, thus with all creation, in twos. This covenant that God establishes with the righteous Noah is a covenant where God promises never to destroy the earth with water – or by any other means – again because of human sinfulness. It seems that God comes to realize that his most prized possession – the human person made in his image and likeness – is worth the effort on his part to establish a lasting relationship. Noah shows God that human beings have the capacity within our hearts to love and represent Him in ways that reflect His Divine way, and not the ways of destruction. Because of Noah's pure reflection of God in his life, this lasting covenant offers us a second chance, if you will. Thus, God establishes through Noah the beautiful truth that second chances are the way of the Lord.

In the context of Lent, what the covenant with Noah points to is the Ultimate Second Chance of Jesus Christ. Thus, what undergirds our openness to allow Lent to penetrate our lives is the divine element of mercy, and our seeking it now. Even though Noah was a righteous man, God still extended to Noah his mercy by way of not destroying his family and the rest of creation.

Continued on Previous Page

THIS WEEK AT IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

Sat.	Feb 17	2:45 PM 4:00 PM	Confession Mass
Sun.	Feb 18	7:30 AM 10:00 AM	Mass Mass
Mon.	Feb 19	8:30 AM 9:00 AM	Rosary Mass
Tues.	Feb 20	8:30 AM 9:00 AM	Rosary Mass
Wed.	Feb 21	8:30 AM 9:00 AM	Rosary Mass
Thurs.	Feb 22	7:30 AM 8:00 AM	Rosary Mass
Sat.	Feb 24	2:45 PM 4:00 PM	Confession Mass
Sun.	Feb 25	7:30 AM 10:00 AM	Mass Mass

OUR LADY OF CZESTOCHOWA TRIP TO POLAND

Our Lady of Czestochowa Church in Worcester is sponsoring a pilgrimage to Poland and Prague from July 16-31, 2018 with Fr. Richard Polek, in the footsteps of St. Maximilian Kolbe, St. Faustina Kowalska, and St. John Paul II. The all-inclusive cost, with 3 meals a day, is \$3,290. Detailed itinerary can be requested in the parish office at 34 Ward St, Worcester, MA, or by calling 508-577-5959, or online at www.olcworcester.com. For more information or to register please call Christine at 508-865-9390.

BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUP IN WEST BOYLSTON

Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish will hold a six-session bereavement support group beginning, Monday, Feb. 19, 1 – 2:30 pm. in the Parish hall, 111 Worcester St., West Boylston. For more information or to register (required prior to the start of the sessions) call Renate Isbell (508) 835-3286.

**YES, WE WOULD LIKE TO REGISTER
AT IMMACULATE CONCEPTION!!**

Name _____

Address: _____

City
& Zip _____

Phone _____

Envelopes yes ____ No ____

Number of People in Household _____

**PLEASE, TEAR THIS OFF AND PLACE IN THE
COLLECTION BASKET! THANK YOU!**