

# Immaculate Conception Parish



Please visit our website at  
[www.icworc.com](http://www.icworc.com) and Facebook

## 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**

## 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)

## WEEKDAY MASSES

**MONDAY, TUESDAY, WEDNESDAY 9:00 AM**

**THURSDAY 8:00 AM**

## NEW PARISHIONERS

Anyone is welcome to join the Parish Community.

Please contact the Rectory and introduce yourself.

## 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).

**MASS INTENTIONS**

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
Mon.	Feb 26	9:00 AM	Dominic DiPilato, from Cindi Deluca and His Grand Daughters
Tues.	Feb 27	9:00 AM	Charles Clarke, Month Mind, from Parish Family
Wed.	Feb 28	9:00 AM	
Thurs.	Mar 01	8:00 AM	Paul Lovely, 15th Anniversary, from Family
Sat.	Mar 03	4:00 PM	Richard Riley, Sr., 17th Anniversary, from Family
Sun.	Mar 04	7:30 AM	Parishioners of Immaculate Conception
		10:00 AM	Delores H. Lang, Anniversary, from Family

**THIS WEEK** the text for The 2nd Sunday of Lent, may be found at #907 in the *Journeysongs* hymnal.

**OPEN HOUSE**

Notre Dame Academy, Sunday, March 25, from 2:00-4:00 p.m., for grades 7-12. For more information, visit their website at [www.nda-worc.org](http://www.nda-worc.org).

**ANNUAL BLACK CATHOLIC GOSPEL MASS**

St. Peter's Church in Worcester proudly hosts the annual Black Catholic Gospel Mass on Sunday, March 4 at 5:15 p.m. The principle celebrant for the Mass will be Bishop Robert McManus, to be joined by Boston's Black Catholic Gospel Choir. All are invited.

**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 TENT OF THE SPIRIT: Mk 9:7a; "It seems to me that this cloud is the grace of the Holy Spirit. Naturally, a tent gives shelter and overshadows those who are within; the cloud, therefore, serves the purpose of the tents. O Peter, you who want to set up three tents, have regard for the one tent of the Holy Spirit who shelters us equally."  
*St. Jerome*

**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**

"Reading the account of the institution of the Eucharist in the Synoptic Gospels, we are struck by the simplicity of the 'solemnity' with which Jesus, on the evening of the Last Supper, instituted this great sacrament. There is an episode which in some ways serves as its prelude: the anointing at Bethany. A woman, whom John identifies as Mary the sister of Lazarus, pours a flask of costly ointment over Jesus' head, which provokes from the disciples – and from Judas in particular – an indignant response, as if this act, in light of the needs of the poor, represented an intolerable 'waste.' But Jesus' own reaction is completely different. While in no way detracting from the duty of charity toward the needy, for whom the disciples must always show special care... he looks toward his imminent death and burial, and sees this act of anointing as an anticipation of the honor which his body will continue to merit even after his death, indissolubly bound as it is to the mystery of his person."

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

**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 sick in our Parish, for their peace and healing.*

**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. Tickets will be on sale the next 3 Sundays after each Mass. 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](mailto:bevhester13@gmail.com). Thank you

**Religious Education** Classes resume on this 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 \$375.00 in cards. **Thank you** to those who continue to participate in this very worthy program.

**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.

**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](mailto:jmazzone@charter.net), or by phone at 508-340-5788 to sign up.

**PARTNERS IN CHARITY TALK FOR 2018 THIS SUNDAY**

The Partners in Charity Campaign for 2018 will begin this weekend with a talk by parishioner Bill Stanton at each Mass. I thank Bill for graciously stepping forward as the chairperson for our Parish for this most important Diocesan drive that helps to support 29 different ministries throughout the diocese. The annual talk on Partners in Charity will be followed by an in-pew collection next Sunday, March 3 and 4, at all Masses. For any parishioners who use envelopes for giving, they will be left at the end of each pew in the Church. I invite you to please take one and return it the following week, or shortly thereafter. We have more and more parishioners who choose to make their donation to Partners in Charity online each year. For those who can, I ask that you please consider making your donation as close to the in-pew collection as possible. Thank you, Fr. Riley.

*From the Pastor continued from the following page*

Abraham had to say to himself, "What's going on here with God asking me to do this?" What makes Abraham the great soldier and lover of God is that he was willing to trust in the Lord when the strangest, most difficult, singular moment in his life was upon him. By doing so, his faith, which was already strong, went an ocean or two deeper by the end of that day.

Expect the unexpected from the Lord at times. His purpose is always to draw us deeper into His life; that which is eternal.

*Peace, Fr. Riley*

**RITE OF ELECTION**

Congratulations to our 4 catechumens and 2 candidates who were present at St. Paul's Cathedral last Sunday for the annual Rite of Election for those receiving Sacraments of Initiation at this year's Easter Vigil in our Parish. As always, it was a joyous celebration at the Cathedral for our people and all others. Please keep these 6 adults and youth in your prayers this Lenten season as they continue to prepare for the reception of the Sacraments needed for full initiation into God's Church.

**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](http://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 also include respect and appreciation for differences, as a way of helping the young to overcome their self-absorption and to be open and accepting of others. Beyond the understandable difficulties which individuals may experience, the young need to be helped to accept their own body as it was created, for 'thinking that we enjoy absolute power over our own bodies turns, often subtly, into thinking that we enjoy absolute power over creation'... An appreciation of our body as male or female is also necessary for our own self-awareness in an encounter with others different from ourselves. In this way we can joyfully accept the specific gifts of another man or woman, the work of God the Creator, and find mutual enrichment.

**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: Exodus 17:3-7  
 Psalm: 95  
 2nd Reading: Romans 5:1-2, 5-8  
 Gospel: John 4:5-42

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT: 02/11/18**

Sunday Ordinary Income	\$ 3,350.00
Winter Fuel	\$ 75.00
Catholic Free Press	\$ 117.00
Church in Latin America	\$ 343.00

## **FROM THE PASTOR**

Some of the stories in the Scriptures we encounter and are called to reflect upon are sometimes beyond belief. For example, the story in this week's first reading from Genesis being the story of God calling Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac. We can only ask ourselves, "Did God really do this? Did God really and truly set up Abraham by telling him that he must sacrifice his son on a griddle?" The answer is an apparent yes.

Using this story as a connection to our lives, seeing the bigger picture as to why God would demand something from us that seems either irrational at times or downright impossible is a hard pill to swallow. We know we want all things easy and plush. I know I do. But we also know that things get in the way of our easiness and smooth living. However, do we see such "things" that get in the way of an uneventful day as opportunities to grow as a Christian?

Abraham had his day all set. He was going to take Isaac to Dairy Queen for an ice cream, then head out to the Red Sox game at Fenway Park to watch them beat up on the dreaded Yankees again, and then have a nice dinner in Boston after the Sunday afternoon game, drive home with some lively conversation between father and son, and then finish off the night with the watching of the replay where Isaac made such an incredible catch on a foul ball in the State Street Pavilion, leaning over the pole that holds the fans in, reaching down three feet while Abraham held onto the shirt of his son, that it made all the news stations. The foul ball by Isaac catch was so good that even Big Papi, while still playing at the time, tipped his helmet to Isaac for making a spectacular catch. What a way to end a good day between father and son.

Instead, God tells Abraham to gather together some wood, put your son on the griddle as the sacrificial lamb, and get ready to start the fire. Which day would you prefer. If you answered the first one, and not the second, then that makes you part of the majority of 99.9% who would prefer the day at Dairy Queen and in Boston. It's much easier, and much less stress, for obvious reasons.

On the other hand, how many of us can say we have the faith of Abraham? A level of faith that absolutely, unequivocally trusted that God, in his own way that was fully mysterious to Abraham, was going to bring good out of the sacrificial offering of Isaac. Thus, one purpose of this seemingly irrational, violent, and disturbing story that we find in the Book of Genesis is that God, in his own way, will allow situations in our lives that will, over the long haul, bring about a deeper faith in him that we previously did not know. And quite honestly, this is a hard truth. It's a hard truth because most of us want the easy road to Paradise. I know I do. Realistically, however, this easy road may be easy for some moments here and there, as the disciples experience in the Gospel story on the mountain this Sunday; easy in the sense that a semblance of quiet and peace reign for the moment, appreciating that we have such moments still.

The hard truth of our faith, however, - and this is a lifelong spiritual battle for most every one of us - is that as Christians, a Cross is never far away from being carried by us. Smaller, yet sometimes painful crosses, that were made from the wood of Jesus's Cross. Our faith is never deepened in Christ by way of the easy road and easy life that many folks seek. Christian faith is deepened through hard moments and hard experiences, better known as cross-carrying. All one needs to do is read the Epistles of St. Paul to grasp this fundamental Christian factoid, most especially Galatians.

The part missing from the story in Genesis regarding Abraham sacrificing Isaac is the certain anguish that Abraham had to know as he and Isaac, instead of walking into Fenway Park, walked to a griddle for burning.

*Continued on Previous Page*

**THIS WEEK AT IMMACULATE CONCEPTION**

Sat.	Feb 24	2:45 PM 4:00 PM	Confession Mass
Sun.	Feb 25	7:30 AM 10:00 AM	Mass Mass
Mon.	Feb 26	8:30 AM 9:00 AM	Rosary Mass
Tues.	Feb 27	8:30 AM 9:00 AM	Rosary Mass
Wed.	Feb 28	8:30 AM 9:00 AM	Rosary Mass
Thurs.	Mar 01	7:30 AM 8:00 AM	Rosary Mass
Sat.	Mar 03	2:30 PM 2:45 PM 4:00 PM	Rosary Confession Mass
Sun.	Mar 04	7:30 AM 10:00 AM	Mass Mass

**SIGN OF PEACE**

It's the time of year again when colds and sniffles are all around us. For those who have a cold or not feeling 100% healthy, we recommend you refrain from physically passing on the sign of peace during Mass with a handshake. Your neighbor will thank you. For those who are not physically offered the sign of peace by someone sitting near you, don't take it personally. They are saving you from getting their sickness. Thank you to all for being considerate in this matter.

**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](mailto:icworc@live.com), or stopping by the rectory during business hours.

**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!**