

Immaculate Conception Parish



Please visit our website at
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.	Mar 10	4:00 PM	Deceased members of the Conlin Family
Sun.	Mar 11	7:30 AM	James L. McDonald, Anniversary Mass, from Tom Kelly
		10:00 AM	Deborah Arnoff, Anniversary Mass, from Family
Mon.	Mar 12	9:00 AM	Deceased members of Assumption Prep School
Tues.	Mar 13	9:00 AM	Rich Lewis and Brian Long
Wed.	Mar 14	9:00 AM	Parishioners of Immaculate Conception
Thurs.	Mar 15	8:00 AM	<i>(Lenten Weekday)</i>
Sat.	Mar 17	4:00 PM	Richard & Marie Riley, their Children, Grandchildren, and Great Grandchildren
Sun.	Mar 18	7:30 AM	Jeannette T. Burns, Brian B. Colonies, and Chuck Burns, from Family
		10:00 AM	Frank Myska, Sr., Month Mind, from Family

THIS WEEK the text for The 4th Sunday of Lent, may be found at #912 in the *Journeysongs* hymnal.

ON THE EUCHARIST

“It is their responsibility (priests) to preside at the Eucharist in persona Christi and to provide a witness to and a service of communion not only for the community directly taking part in the celebration, but also for the universal Church, which is a part of every Eucharist. It must be lamented that, especially in the years following the post-conciliar liturgical reform, as a result of a misguided sense of creativity and adaptation there have been a number of abuses which have been a source of suffering for many. A certain reaction against ‘formalism’ has led some, especially in certain regions, to consider the ‘forms’ chosen by the Church’s great liturgical tradition and her Magisterium as non-binding and to introduce unauthorized innovations which are often completely inappropriate.”

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

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.

MEN’S CONFERENCE TICKETS AVAILABLE

Our Parish Activities Committee has donated 10 tickets to the upcoming Men’s Conference at Assumption College on Saturday, March 17. There are still 4 tickets that remain for this day of coming together with 1200 men and listen to five outstanding speakers from around the country and talk about their Catholicism. The tickets include a lunch that will be served. If you have any interest in attending, please speak with or contact Fr. Riley.

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. **This will be the last weekend to purchase tickets. Tickets will not be sold at the door.** 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.

RELIGIOUS QUOTE OF THE WEEK

THE BLIND EVANGELIST (John 9:11) “See how he became a herald of grace. See how he preaches the gospel. See how, once he is endowed with sight, he becomes a witness. That blind man testified, and the ungodly were troubled in their hearts because they did not have in their own hearts what they saw in him.”

St. Augustine (360-430)

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.

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.

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 protection and daily satisfaction of all beggars, that God will lead them to a better place in life through actions of love on our part.*

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.

TRIP TO ITALY IN SEPTEMBER

Fr. Donato Infante, Associate Pastor at St. Joseph in Charlton, is leading a pilgrimage to Fatima and Rome from September 21-30 with Deacon Steve Kohut of Our Lady of Czestochowa in Worcester. The trip coincides with the annual diaconate ordination in Rome, at which a Worcester Seminarian, Alfredo Porras, is on track to be ordained. If you are interested in joining or seeing the itinerary, go to the website <http://www.johnpaultours.com/sjcc>.

Religious Education Religious Education classes take place Sunday, March 11th at 8:45AM-9:45AM for children in grades K-6, 7:00PM-8:00PM for children in grades 7-8 and 7:00PM-8:15PM for students in grades 9, 10 and Confirmation Class.

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 \$150.00 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, or by phone at 508-340-5788 to sign up.

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.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT: 3/4/18

Sunday Ordinary Income	\$ 4,913.00
Winter Fuel	\$ 200.00
Church in Latin America	\$ 290.00
Our Lady’s Statue	\$ 20.00

READINGS FOR NEXT SUNDAY, MARCH 18th, THE FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT

1st Reading: Ezekiel 37:12-14
 Psalm: 130
 2nd Reading: Romans 8:8-11
 Gospel: John 11:1-45

From the Pastor continued from the following page

These Gospel people are confused about the identity of the man born blind because it became routine to hate him as a blind beggar. Even though they saw him every day for years, they now failed to recognize him outside of the conditions of blindness and begging, and outside of their familiar location of hating him. “Isn’t that the one who used to sit and beg?” It seems they cannot recognize the good work of God when it happens in a profound way.

For us, recognize the good work of God in our own lives first, then notice it in the lives of others we encounter. Such notice builds up his kingdom. Christians don’t belong to the group of confused people. Know him in and through his Church and Her precious teachings. It is a very good place to be.

Peace, Fr. Riley

SACRAMENT OF CONFESSION ON TUESDAY EVENINGS

For the remainder of the Lenten season, Fr. Riley will offer the Sacrament of Reconciliation each of the next 4 Tuesdays (March 6, 13, 20, and 27) in the Church from 6:30-7:30 p.m.

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.

PARTNERS IN CHARITY FOR 2018

Our Parish has now begun the Partners in Charity campaign for 2018. Last week we kicked off Partners in Charity with our first week of envelope collections, as well as some who have already donated online. For 2018, our Parish goal remains at \$88,500, the same as last year. Ways to make a donation on behalf of Immaculate Conception are: 1) filling out an envelope that can be found in each pew, and either placing it into the collection basket any given Sunday, mailing it to the Parish, or mailing it directly to the Diocese of Worcester at 49 Elm St, Worcester, MA 01609 in care of Partners in Charity. Donations can be made either by check or credit card; 2) going online at www.partners-charity.net, and follow the easy instructions thereafter, which more parishioners are opting to do for their donation. Donations can be spread out over the course of 10 months to make it easier for all families and individuals in our Parish to give. Please consider doing so. If you have any questions about this year’s campaign, please speak with either Bill Stanton or Fr. Riley. Thus far, our Parish has had 55 donors totaling \$31,095.00 dollars, reaching 35% of our Parish goal. Thank you, and we hope to have another successful Partners in Charity campaign this year, as we have in each of the past years. Fr. Riley

CATECHUMENS AND CANDIDATES

As a community of faith, please keep in your prayers those who are preparing for the Sacraments of Initiation to be received at the Easter Vigil this year on March 31. We have two adults and four children and youth preparing to receive their respective sacraments on that night. Our responsibility as a community is to pray for the Spirit to continue to touch their hearts as they move closer to the joy of full communion into the Church. Last week we held the First Scrutiny at the 10:00 Mass for one adult (Christine) and two teens (Christabelle & Ramstin). The prayers offered that day were for the protection of their spirits and souls as they draw near to the joy of their Baptism. Please continue to pray for each of them.

TALK ON THE NEUROBIOLOGY OF ADDICTION

You re invited to join group for an hour-long DVD presentation of The Neurobiology of Addiction, by Dr. Sue Holman, on Thursday, March 15 at 6:30 p.m. in Our Lady of Loreto Parish Center, 37 Massasoit Road, Worcester. All are welcome to come and learn more about substance use disorder. For any questions, call Louise Faiola at 508-756-1150.

OPEN HOUSE

Notre Dame Academy is holding an Open House on 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.

FROM THE PASTOR

“Isn’t that the one who used to sit and beg?” “No, he just looks like him.” “I am,” he said.

Imagine being a beggar? And I don’t mean begging God for any New England sports team to win the big game. I mean begging for the things in life needed to survive, to breathe and live another day. It’s impossible for most all of us to imagine what that’s like; to what degree of desperation we would have to descend in order to secure a little food, a roof for shelter, some clothing to stay warm in the cold season.

“Isn’t he the one that used to beg?” “He looks like him; he talks like him; he dresses like him; yet, he’s no longer acting like him. Now that I see him out of his familiar place at the gate, and in an unfamiliar place of extending a sense of gratitude with eyesight, I’m not so sure he’s the same man. There’s a dust of doubt as to whether he’s the same guy.” Take him out of his place and offer him a new world to possess, and he looks different.

Sort of like Jesus after the resurrection when he walked with two disciples on the Road to Emmaus. He was no longer in his familiar place of being able to die, but in a resurrected body they didn’t recognize. He left a few years earlier the gate area of Nazareth, begging for souls to follow him to heaven. “I am the way, the truth, and the life.” And when he left, remember what happened when he went back home for a day? They almost threw him over the cliff headlong. They had to ask themselves if it was the same man who was the son of Mary and Joseph, the carpenter’s son, but they didn’t recognize him any longer in his proclamation that “This passage is now fulfilled in your hearing.” Nor did they recognize the power working in him, called the Holy Spirit whom he was equal with in Divinity, performing incredible acts of love and compassion on the sick and suffering, and raising the dead in one place where the response was nothing less than “God has visited his people.” The strangers recognized his God-ness in the city of Nain, but his own people were blind, like the man in this week’s Gospel prior to the miracle.

It’s somewhat hilarious how the reaction to the man born blind is one of confusion. “Does he have an identical twin we haven’t known about all these years? Did his twin brother who wasn’t born blind ever come out of the house these past 40 years, or did he live the life of a hermit with his parents, now walking outside in order to confuse us?” Confusion ensues on a grand scale when a man born blind is now able to see. Ironically, they’re not certain about who they now see. We know they see him, based on their reaction. But do they really see who it is? The man born blind gives them the answer that God gave Moses at the burning bush: “I am.”

This Gospel is an important spiritual challenge to see Christ for who he is. The major issue in today’s world, as well as past generations and future ones to come, is that so many folks define Christ for themselves, many times missing the mark. We see this in our culture today with issues of life and death, the issue of marriage, trying to drag Jesus into a place where he’s never been, and never will be. The present issue of immigration where human beings are treated as something less than human. Legal or illegal, Jesus would never break up families, or throw anyone out of his country without first an attempt at understanding their plight. Divine law supersedes human law. This is an indisputable fact of the Christian faith, and to put it aside is to not know the true Christ, resulting in confusion and anger. Divine law works always within the parameters of love, which are quite wide. And this is where we find the Lord in his workings with the man born blind; as always, in the land of love.

Love is the supreme virtue of the Christian. On a personal level for us, choosing love over hatred removes the confusion Satan seeks to stuff into our hearts and lives. Love allows us to see Christ for who is truly is, and not create in our lives a Christ who is someone he is not, which is deception.

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THIS WEEK AT IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

Sat.	Mar 10	2:45 PM 4:00 PM	Confession Mass
Sun.	Mar 11	7:30 AM 10:00 AM	Mass Mass
Mon.	Mar 12	8:30 AM 9:00 AM	Rosary Mass
Tues.	Mar 13	8:30 AM 9:00 AM 6:30 PM	Rosary Mass <i>Confession</i>
Wed.	Mar 14	8:30 AM 9:00 AM	Rosary Mass
Thurs.	Mar 15	7:30 AM 8:00 AM	Rosary Mass
Fri.	Mar 16	5:30 PM 6:30 PM	<i>Holy Hour</i> <i>Stations of the Cross</i>
Sat.	Mar 17	2:45 PM 4:00 PM	Confession Mass
Sun.	Mar 18	7:30 AM 10:00 AM	Mass Mass

WORDS OF POPE FRANCIS FROM *The Joy of Love*

PASSING ON THE FAITH: "Faith is God's gift, received in baptism, and not our own work, yet parents are the means that God uses for it to grow and develop. Hence 'it is beautiful when mothers teach their little children to blow a kiss to Jesus or to Our Lady. How much love there is in that! At that moment the child's heart becomes a place of prayer.' Handing on the faith presumes that parents themselves genuinely trust God, seek him and sense their need for him, for only in this way does 'one generation laud your works to another, and declare your mighty acts....' This means that we need to ask God to act in their hearts, in places where we ourselves cannot reach." Par. 287

**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!**