

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

WEEKDAY MASSES

MONDAY, TUESDAY, WEDNESDAY 9:00 AM

THURSDAY 8:00 AM

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

Saturday 2:45 - 3:45 PM

(or by appointment)

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 24 | 4:00 PM | Charles Clarke, Memorial Mass, from Family |
| Sun. | Mar 25 | 7:30 AM | |
| | | 10:00 AM | Kathleen Cushing, Month Mind, from Family |
| Mon. | Mar 26 | 9:00 AM | Deceased Members of Marlborough High School |
| Tues. | Mar 27 | 9:00 AM | Deceased Members of Worcester State university |
| Wed. | Mar 28 | 9:00 AM | Vincenza Pultorak, 2nd Anniversary, from Husband |
| Thurs. | Mar 29 | 7:00 PM | Pam Potenti, <i>(Holy Thursday)</i> |
| Fri. | Mar 30 | 3:00 PM | <i>(Friday of the Passion of the Lord - Good Friday)</i> |
| Sat. | Mar 31 | 7:15 PM | Robert F. Kelleher, 1st Anniversary, from Family |
| Sun. | Apr 01 | 7:30 AM | Mary E. Early, Anniversary Mass, from Tom Kelly |
| | | 10:00 AM | |

THIS WEEK the text for Palm Sunday of Lent, may be found at #918 in the *Journeysongs* hymnal.

ON THE EUCHARIST

“The Apostle Paul had to address fiery words to the community of Corinth because of grave shortcomings in their celebration of the Eucharist resulting in divisions and the emergence of factions. Our time, too, calls for a renewed awareness and appreciation of liturgical norms as a reflection of, and a witness to, the one universal Church made present in every celebration of the Eucharist.”

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

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.

OPERATION RICE BOWL

A box has been left at the side entrance to the Church on the rectory side for those participating in Operation Rice Bowl on behalf of Catholic Relief Services. Funds will be forwarded to our Diocese after Easter, who in turn will forward them to CRS. Thank you to our parishioners who choose to participate in this annual Lenten collection that helps to address the needs of the world’s poor, those dealing with natural disasters, and numerous other needs that our Church addresses throughout the world.

RELIGIOUS QUOTE OF THE WEEK

EMBODYING HUMILITY: Mark 11:7; “The master of humility is Christ who humbles himself and became obedient even to death, even death on the cross. Thus he does not lose his divinity when he teaches us humility... What great thing was it to the king of the ages to become the king of humanity? For Christ was not the King of Israel so that he might exact a tax or equip an army with weaponry and visibly vanquish an enemy. He was the king of Israel in that he rules minds, in that he gives counsel for eternity, in that he leads into the kingdom of heaven for those who believe, hope, and love. It is a condescension, not an advancement for one who is the Son of God, equal to the Father, the Word through whom all things were made, to become king of Israel. It is an indication of pity, not an increase in power.”

St. Augustine (360-430)

HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE

Our Parish schedule for Holy Week is as follows: there is no 8:00 a.m. Mass on Holy Thursday morning. The Mass of the Lord’s Supper will take place on Holy Thursday evening, March 29, at 7:00 p.m., with the doors of the Church left open for adoration until 11:00 p.m. Stations of the Cross will be held at Noon on Good Friday, March 30. Our Good Friday Service will be held at 3:00 p.m. in the afternoon. Our Easter Vigil Mass will begin at 7:15 p.m. on Saturday, March 31. Easter Sunday Masses, April 1, are the normal Sunday schedule with Masses at 7:30 & 10:00 a.m.

BUS TRIP TO HART’S TURKEY FARM & "EVITA" MUSICAL

Bus Trip to Hart’s Turkey Farm & "Evita" Musical in Meredith, NH. Thursday, July 12, Depart Immaculate Conception Church parking lot at 8:30 a.m. (be there at 8:15). Trip includes lunch and musical. Select lunch: Roast Turkey, Sirloin of Beef, or Baked Haddock. We’ll see the Lakes Region Theatre’s production of "Evita" and visit the Kellerhouse Ice Cream Shop. Cost is \$89 per person. Registration deadline is June 1. Send check payable to FOX TOURS, with your name, phone number, parish name AND lunch choice to Michelle Deignan, 227 St. Nicholas Ave., Worcester, MA 01606. Questions? Call Michelle at 508-853-0820 or mmdeignan@charter.net.

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 homeless, that they find the assistance needed to secure their basic needs and comfort.*

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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 next Saturday, 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.

Religious Education Religious Education classes take place Sunday, March 25th 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.

Star Student of the Week Our Student of the Week is Katelyn Nguyen! Katelyn is a kindergarten student in our Religious Education Program. She is a quiet student with a good knowledge of our faith. Katelyn is helpful to her classmates and always has a smile on her face. She participates in the Children's Liturgy, Christmas Pageant and Vacation Bible Camp and is a great big sister. Congratulations Katelyn!

Immaculate Conception Annual Easter Egg Hunt Please join us on Easter Sunday following the 10:00AM Mass for the annual Easter Egg Hunt. The egg hunt will take place on the church grounds. Bring your own basket.

Prayer Cards for Confirmation Candidates Please visit our display of the Confirmation Candidates located near the entrance of the church. Please take a prayer card from the display and keep all of the candidates in your prayers as they begin at this time a more focused study and deeper meaning of their Catholic faith. As they prepare for their reception of the sacrament of Confirmation on Sunday, April 8th at St. Paul's Cathedral, may we rejoice in their dedication, devotion, and hard work as they prepare to receive the fullness of the Holy Spirit in their lives.

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 \$360.00 in cards. **Thank you** to those who continue to participate in this very worthy program.

WORDS OF POPE FRANCIS FROM *The Joy of Love*

PASSING ON THE FAITH: "The work of handing on the faith to children, in the sense of facilitating its expression and growth, helps the whole family in its evangelizing mission. It naturally begins to spread the faith to all around them even outside of the family circle. Children who grew up in missionary families often become missionaries themselves: growing up in warm and friendly families, they learn to relate to the world in this way, without giving up their faith or their convictions. We know that Jesus himself ate and drank with sinners, conversed with a Samaritan woman, received Nicodemus by night, allowed his feet to be anointed by a prostitute, and did not hesitate to lay his hands on those who were sick. The same was true of his apostles, who did not look down on others, or cluster together in small or elite groups, cut off from the life of their people. Although the authorities harassed them, they nonetheless enjoyed the favor 'of all the people.'" Par. 289

PARISH COUNCIL NOTES

Notes from the Parish Council meeting last Sunday can be found on our Parish website. Any questions, comments, or concerns regarding the notes may be directed to Fr Riley in person or through the Parish email.

From the Pastor continued from the following page

The two who contacted me knew this, but were confused about the possibility of something being revealed that should not have been. Maybe ABC News thought they had something on the Catholic Church, or maybe not. But in the end they were used by the Pitchfork-Holder to do his bidding, causing confusion among Christian souls, doubting as to whether the seal of confession was still in place. The answer? "Yes, it is, and will always be in place until Jesus returns."

My priestly advice is that you should always question any statement or report that contradicts any aspect of our faith, from the seal of confession on down. We have an obligation to believe our Church, and not the news media who often get it wrong, intentional or not. God bless the priest in Erie, PA for handling a difficult situation with wisdom, smarts, coolness, and grace. And pray for your Pastor that he never gets placed into the same situation. Happy Palm Sunday!

Peace, Fr. Riley

SACRAMENT OF CONFESSION THIS HOLY TUESDAY

The Sacrament of Reconciliation will be made available in the Church from 6:30-7:30 p.m. this Holy Tuesday, March 27.

PARTNERS IN CHARITY FOR 2018

Our Parish has now begun the Partners in Charity campaign for 2018. For 2018, our Parish goal remains at \$88,500, the same as last year. Ways to donate 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, our Partners in Charity Chairman, or Fr. Riley. Thus far, our Parish has had 83 donors totaling \$55,015 dollars, reaching 62% 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

IRISH DINNER THANK YOU

We had a packed house for our annual Irish Dinner last Saturday evening at the Fr. Connors Center. Our first thanks are extended to Christine Huffman and Deacon Kevin Deignan for their hard daylong work at cooking a delicious dinner, and those who served it. Thank you to all who helped to set up the hall in the morning and take down the tables and chairs after the dinner was finished. Thank you to all members of the Parish Activities Committee for their dedication and service at making sure it was good night for everyone. And thank you to John Riley for providing Irish entertainment for all who were present. Until next year, keep the wind at your back ladies and lassies.

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.

READINGS FOR NEXT SUNDAY, APRIL 1st, EASTER SUNDAY

1st Reading: Acts 10:34a, 37-43

Psalm: 118

2nd Reading: Colossians 3:1-4

Gospel: John 20:1-9

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT: 3/18/18

| | |
|------------------------|-------------|
| Sunday Ordinary Income | \$ 2,690.00 |
| Spring Fuel | \$ 240.00 |
| Candles | \$ 10.00 |

FROM THE PASTOR

A friend from western Pennsylvania called a few weeks back to tell me the story of a priest she knows who had a tete-a-tete with a guy who stopped by his Church in Erie. The guy needed to speak to a priest, so the priest welcomed him onto his rectory, they sat down, began talking, and lo and behold, the next thing the priest knows is that he has a murderer in his presence. The guy came by to speak with the priest to “confess” what he had done, except, the conversation wasn’t held within the bounds of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. It was clearly understood by my friend when she explained the situation to me over the phone that the priest had acted properly, and that the conversation between the priest and the murderer was not a Confession in the Sacramental use of the word. The priest encouraged the guy to turn himself into the police, the priest himself calling the police to let them know he was at the Church.

Interestingly, to say the least, the police asked the priest if the guy had a weapon on him. The priest asked him, and was told yes, he had a gun in his coat pocket, the coat being in a separate place at that time, not being worn. The priest, when the phone conversation with the police was finished, went to the guy’s coat, took the gun, and placed it behind him to secure the weapon in case there were ideas of it being used on him. I would call this a very good move.

Fast forward one week from my phone conversation with my friend... I received a text from a local friend who said he just saw on ABC News it was reported that the priest who spoke with the murderer revealed to the police what was spoken within the Sacrament of Confession, which was patently false. This is what happens when you have people, Catholic or non-Catholic, reporting on an issue where their understanding of the issue is obviously limited and erroneous. They got it terribly wrong, causing confusion about the accuracy of what really happened. Remember what I said a few weeks back in a homily about who was the source of all confusion? The Pitchfork-Holder. I’m fully convinced the Devil uses segments of our media every day like they were his best friend. I’ve seen and heard too much to believe otherwise.

I told my friend who sent the text that the conversation between the priest and the murderer was not a Confession in the sacramental sense. Yes, the guy “confessed” to the priest he had murdered someone as their conversation progressed, but the conversation was not within the bounds of Sacramental Reconciliation. Thus, the priest had every obligation at that point to, one, do his best to convince the guy to turn himself in. And two, if he didn’t do it on his own, to report the guy to the authorities. But the way ABC reported the story - and it makes wonder if this was intentional on their part, or was it a true lack of knowledge – they reported the story in a way that made it look like the priest revealed something to others that he heard in the Sacrament of Confession, which wasn’t the case.

Next morning after the text, a parishioner said the same to me after Mass, having seen the same story reported on the news. This parishioner was under the impression that the priest broke the seal of confession and reported to the police an incident he was required under all circumstances to remain silent about. I explained how the story was reported inaccurately, and that their conversation was not within the bounds of the Sacrament. Confusion, again.

I’m impressed with the concern of the two people who communicated with me about this story on the national news, and I’m sure there were others just as confused. They know that everything revealed in the Sacrament of Reconciliation is to remain silent under all circumstances, no exceptions. Zero! The seal of Confession is total, complete, and can never, under any way, be compromised.

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THIS WEEK AT IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

| | | | |
|--------|--------|-------------------------------|---|
| Sat. | Mar 24 | 2:45 PM 4:00 PM | Confession Mass |
| Sun. | Mar 25 | 7:30 AM 10:00 AM | Mass Mass |
| Mon. | Mar 26 | 8:30 AM 9:00 AM | Rosary Mass |
| Tues. | Mar 27 | 8:30 AM 9:00 AM 6:30 PM | Rosary Mass <i>Confession</i> |
| Wed. | Mar 28 | 8:30 AM 9:00 AM | Rosary Mass |
| Thurs. | Mar 29 | 7:00 PM 8:00 PM - 11:00 PM | Mass <i>Adoration</i> |
| Fri. | Mar 30 | 12:00 PM 3:00 PM | <i>Stations of the Cross</i> Good Friday Service |
| Sat. | Mar 31 | 7:15 PM | Mass |
| Sun. | Apr 01 | 7:30 AM 10:00 AM | Mass Mass |

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 ic-worc@live.com, or stopping by the rectory during business hours.

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.

**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!**