

Immaculate Conception Parish



Please visit our website at
www.icworc.com and Facebook
Email: icworc@live.com

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-2:30pm, T: 9:30am-2:30pm
W: 9:30am-2:30pm, F: 9:30am-2:30pm

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

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.

MASS INTENTIONS

All Masses at this time will be said privately by Fr. Riley. All Mass intentions will be fulfilled for their respective dates.

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

RELIGIOUS QUOTE OF THE WEEK

DO YOU TOO WANT TO BECOME HIS DISCIPLES? Jn 9:27; "Do you see how boldly the beggar speaks with the scribes and Pharisees? It shows how strong truth is and how weak falsehood is. Truth, though it grasps only ordinary people, makes them to appear glorious; falsehood, even when it is among the strong, shows them to be weak. What he says is like this: you do not pay attention to my words; therefore, I will no longer speak or answer you when you question me continually to no purpose. You do not want to hear in order to learn but so that you can lay insults over my words." *St. John Chrysostom (349-407)*

PARTNERS IN CHARITY 2020

The annual Partners in Charity campaign has begun in our Parish. Partners in Charity Parish Chairman Bill Stanton spoke at each of the Masses last week to highlight the purposes of this annual campaign and why it is important that we participate as a Parish. I personally thank Bill for stepping up again, as he has done the past two years, and lead this campaign on behalf of our Parish. His expertise and wisdom in these matters are much appreciated. The goal for this year remains the same as past years, being \$88,500. Our Diocese has sent out envelopes to many parishioners who made contributions in past years. Feel free to use this envelope and place it in our collection basket at your earliest convenience. We will also have envelopes placed at the end of each pew and entrances to the Church for those in need of one. A number of parishioners, however, now donate online. For those who wish to do so, go to the Diocese of Worcester Website at www.worcesterdiocese.org, go under the heading "HOME," and Partners in Charity will come up. Last year, our Parish finished with 182 donors over the course of the campaign, raising over \$118,000. Thus far this year from early donations, our Parish has raised \$47,390 from 26 donors, which is 54% of our Parish goal. Thank you to all who choose to participate in this essential diocesan campaign that is the lifeblood of the Diocese, addressing numerous social and operating concerns our Church attends to. – Fr. Riley

HART'S TURKEY FARM AND "A CHORUS LINE" JUL 9th

July 9 Bus Trip to Hart's Turkey Farm & the Lakes Region Summer Music Theatre's "A Chorus Line" in Meredith, NH. Depart from Immaculate Conception Church at 9 a.m. Return by 6:30 p.m. Choice of 3 entrees: Turkey, Sirloin of Beef, Baked Haddock. Includes all the fixings! Then we're off to the Chorus Line. The cost, including tips, is \$101 per person, check payable to FOX TOURS. Flyers are at church entrances. Give your check, registration, meal choice to Michelle Deignan or Deacon Kevin. Or mail to 227 Saint Nicholas Ave, Worcester, MA 01606. Call or text 508-596-4778 or email mmdeignan@charter.net.

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.

FROM THE PASTOR

To what shall we compare the coronavirus? This question works off the words of Jesus in the Gospels, "To what shall we compare this generation?" I played the flute for you and you did not dance. I sang dirges for you and you did not mourn. In other words, your reaction – or lack of reaction - to what you heard was off base and misguided. Even deaf. So, to what in our faith can we compare a disease that has caused millions of folks to act like it's the end of the world? While trying my best to not minimize the threat of any disease, the collective national reaction to this one has been on the upper levels of the atmosphere. For us middle-aged to elder folks, this level of reaction is all a first for us.

To what shall we compare the coronavirus in this generation where so many media voices are filled with paranoia and insensible comments and reactions? Where the possibility of the "end of the world" is around the corner in someone's sneeze or cough? Is Jesus setting us up for his return through a disease that began in China, made its way across Asia and Europe in airplanes, trains, and automobiles, further flying and sailing (not driving) across the Atlantic or Pacific to the good ol' U.S. of A. and Canada? I haven't heard anything about this disease in Mexico, Central, or South America. Have you?

Anyway, nothing surprises me anymore about how God operates. The God of creation is so unpredictable, it's beautiful and humorous. I suppose Jesus could use the mass hysteria of the coronavirus to return and save us from the sad American media and it's loud, intentional, incessant wailing and crying about this issue. Why not? The main point is that, once all the toilet paper in our country is purchased and hoarded, and we have nothing to assist us when we go to the bathroom, then Jesus may actually decide to return and save us. Little did I ever think the Lord would return because of the irrational presentations of American media outlets! I've always believed he would return to save us because of some worldwide bloodbath called World War III, or because, at one time, the Red Sox were never going to win the World Series again. "Maranatha!!! Come, Lord Jesus. Come!" "Come and save us, Lord, because we've used up all the world's toilet paper, bottled water, and milk, and the Red Sox are perpetual losers! There's no way we can survive any longer, most notably here in New England!"

Okay, with all the present-day reactions out of my system – for now – regarding the seriousness of the coronavirus and all other diseases, many which are much worse, such as heart disease, diabetes, Alzheimer's, strokes, and the tragedy of automobile accidents, we genuinely pray as a Church for anyone who has been effected by this virus. It is the elderly who are most susceptible to this new strain of virus, and it's the elderly who are some of the greatest people who ever lived in the history of the world. Personally, I love the elderly more than any other group of people on the planet. If you're over 70 years of age, consider yourself loved by Fr. Riley in ways where admiration and respect are automatically yours. The elderly are, in my humble estimation, the most beautiful people God has created. Even more beautiful than when you were five years old, which is very beautiful. We pray that this virus keeps a far distance from your bodies, especially the elderly dealing with other physical issues that involve the lungs or diabetes and such.

We pray also as a Church that our government leaders will put aside all animosity (for real) toward the other side, and come together in sensible, loving, compassionate, caring ways

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RELIGIOUS EDUCATION There will be no Religious Education at this time.**IMMACULATE CONCEPTION PARISH PILGRIMAGE TO POLAND 2020**

Our Parish is offering a pilgrimage to Poland in October 2020. Fr. Riley will be the spiritual guide for this wonderful trip that will take place from October 12-22. Places to be visited are Warsaw, Malbork Castle, the medieval town of Gdansk, the home of astronomer Nicolaus Copernicus, Our Lady of Czestochowa, the concentration camp at Auschwitz-Birkenau and the martyrdom of St. Maximilian Kolbe, Krakow, and the birthplace and of Pope St. John Paul II as well as the Museum of Cardinal Karol Wojtyla (John Paul II), and other sites. Consider joining our group for this tour of beautiful Poland and its rich religious and cultural history, with numerous historical sites. For more information on prices and the entire pilgrimage, brochures can be found at each entrance to our Church. There are 32 spaces available for this trip, of which 17 have been taken at this time. We hope you can join us.

HELPING OTHERS WITH ENGLISH

Literacy Volunteers of Greater Worcester has been providing English language skills since 1973. We offer free, flexible, confidential one-to-one tutoring for adults learning to speak English and basic literacy skills. With over 50 students waiting for a volunteer tutor, we are calling on you to dedicate just two hours a week to change someone's life. If you are over 18, have at least a high school diploma, and speak English proficiently, you can learn to tutor someone who is learning English. We provide, for free, 18-hours of training as well as ongoing support and workshops to help you become the best tutor you can be! For more info and to apply, please visit www.lvgw.org or call 508-754-8056.

From the Pastor continued from the following page

to develop other ways that will put our national collective mind at ease, representing the best of the human spirit. And, include the wisdom of the Holy Spirit in the process. If this generation wants answers to coronavirus, answers that make a dent in the process of eventually beating the virus like the Yankees used to beat the Red Sox, then the Spirit of God must be looked to, prayed to, and asked for assistance. We would be dumber than dumb – even as a government - to not include God's loving power and presence in times of crisis. I must say, I absolutely love the President's request for a National Day of Prayer last Sunday. It reminded me of Abraham Lincoln doing the same during the American Civil War.

May God bless those who, in the fields of medicine and other areas of labor, are searching for ways to confront coronavirus for the greater benefit of people they don't know. May the Lord lead the smart, intelligent, sensible, caring voices to win the day, such as Doctors and other medical personnel who know of what they speak. And, since Jesus is apparently not returning because of the hysterical side of this generation's reaction to this awful disease, reactions that include toilet paper, bottled water, milk, and cleaning products, we continue to cry out "Maranatha; Come, Lord Jesus" for the reason that we pray this every Sunday anyway in the words of the Our Father, "Thy Kingdom come," and in The Nicene Creed, "He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead." And to that I say, "Amen."

*Peace, Fr. Riley***PARISH CONTRIBUTION STATEMENTS FOR TAXES**

Any parishioner who wishes to have a statement of their 2019 contributions for tax purposes can call or stop by the rectory during business hours and request a copy, or email our Office Manager Robert Noberini at icworc@live.com. Thank you.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT 03/15/2020

Sunday Ordinary	\$ 3,845.00
Spring Fuel	\$ 907.00
Donation to The Food Pantry	\$ 100.00
Church in Latin America	\$ 72.00

READINGS FOR NEXT SUNDAY, MARCH 29th, THE FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT

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

WHERE HAVE ALL THE BANANAS GONE?

You may remember the popular song from 1962, "Where Have All the Flowers Gone?" by Peter, Paul, and Mary (not the Saints). The title has been transferred to "Where Have All the Bananas Gone?" I went out last Saturday morning to purchase my usual 3-4 bananas to slice into my daily oatmeal breakfast. I began at Shaw's about 9:00 a.m., and upon entering the store I noticed right away all the bananas were gone. I immediately turned and left the establishment. Since I was heading up Route 12 North for a few errands, after stopping at my bank at Leominster Credit Union, I figured I would stop at Stop & Shop just a bit further up the road. Well, I stopped, but I didn't shop. No bananas to be found. At this point I was a bit frustrated that bananas had become a culprit to Coronavirus, alongside toilet paper and Purell. Heading further north, I figured I would try ol' reliable S&S Farms. Some guy pulled into a spot just *after* me, practically ran out of his pickup truck, headed for where the bananas are stored, and lo and behold, there were some bananas! He clutched a large group of them like they were his firstborn child. Gladly, there were some bananas left after he held onto his purchase for dear life. So, I grabbed my bananas, as well as a large onion and 2 green peppers to make it look good. God bless S&S Farms. Instead of buying my usual 3-4 at a time, I decided to hoard at least 2 more by way of purchasing a 6-pack of bananas. First time in my life I purchased this many bananas. When I got to the counter to pay up, I said to the 20-something young guy accepting my cash, "I hope you have more bananas to put out." He said, "Everyone else is out of them. We're the only ones who have them. Crazy." I said, "I agree." Hysteria over the Coronavirus will cause people to act selfish, angry, filled with road rage, and very un-Christian. I would like to say, "If anyone needs 2 bananas or more, let me know. I'll pass them on to sooth my conscience for being so greedy." However, bananas don't last very long. The 6 bananas are long gone. Therefore, I offer you some toilet paper. By the way, if you're hoarding toilet paper during Lent, this season of fasting, minimizing, and becoming more Christ-like in the desert, how about performing a work of mercy, be pro-active, and find an individual, a family, or a group in need of your hoarded materials you couldn't possibly use over the next year. Happy Lent. – Fr. Riley