

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 5th Week of Lent may be found at #915 in the *Journeysongs* hymnal.

RELIGIOUS QUOTE OF THE WEEK

THE BENEFITS OF A TROUBLED SPIRIT: Jn 11:33; “Becoming incensed usually spells trouble and confusion for the soul more than any other passion, yet there are times when it greatly benefits the soul. For when with inward calm we direct it against blasphemers or other sinners in order to induce them to mend their ways or at least feel some shame, we make our soul more gentle. In this way we put ourselves completely in harmony with the purposes of God’s justice and goodness. In addition, through becoming deeply angered by sin we often overcome weaknesses in our soul. Thus there is no doubt that if, when deeply depressed, we become indignant in spirit against the demon of corruption, this gives us the strength to despise even the presumptuousness of death. In order to make this clear, the Lord twice became indignant against death and troubled in spirit. And despite the fact that, untroubled, he could by a simple act of will do all that he wished, nonetheless when he restored Lazarus’ soul to his body he was indignant and troubled in spirit - which seems to me to show that becoming incensed in a controlled manner can be viewed as a weapon implanted in our nature by God when he creates us. If Eve had used this weapon against the serpent, she would not have been impelled by sensual desire. In my view, then, the person who in a spirit of devotion makes controlled use of the power of his anger will without doubt be judged more favorably than the one who ... has never become incensed. The latter seems to have an inexperienced driver in charge of his emotions, while the former, always ready for action, drives the horses of virtue through the midst of the demonic host, guiding the four-horsed chariot of self-control in the fear of God.”

Diadochus of Photice (c.400-c.486)

I. C. 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.

SQUIRRELS FOR CONFESSION? (New)

For those of us who have not been to Confession for years, you almost had a squirrel beat you to it. When sitting outside last week for “drive-by” Confessions, what stopped by were 3 vehicles (with individuals in them), one walk-up, and one squirrel. As I sat stoically in my outdoor chair trying to stay warm in the afternoon sun reading my Lenten book while waiting for any potential customers, a squirrel wandered quite close, obviously thinking I was a statue sitting in a chair. I’m sure the squirrel was thinking, “I’ve seen this trick before!” Noticing it out of the corner of my eye, he/she found out I wasn’t a statue when I made a quick move to scare it off. I promise I will not make any quick moves to scare you off if you decide to take advantage of the abundant graces and peace experienced in this most holy Sacrament.... unless you’re a squirrel.— Fr. Riley

FROM THE PASTOR

“Thus says the Lord God: O my people, I will open your graves and have you rise from them.” Such appropriate words from this week’s first reading found in the Old Testament Book of Ezekiel. Ezekiel was a prophetic, wise person, perfectly in tune with the Spirit of God when he wrote those words centuries before Jesus was born.

Grave robbing, when one think’s about, has to be one of the worst crimes imaginable. Consider the grave of a family member being dug up and opened by some crazy person looking for something valuable they may think is in the casket. I have a book in my Civil War collection titled *History of an Attempt To Steal the Body of Abraham Lincoln, Late President of the United States*. Believe it or not, there was the real attempt to steal the body of Honest Abe in the mid-1870’s, long after Lincoln had been laid to rest in Springfield, IL in 1865. The criminal must have figured he could make a few dollars off some bones and whatever else was left in the casket at that point. Either that, or have the government pay ransom for the return of Abe’s remains. I still need to read the book to find out all the accurate details of that pernicious act. But the attempt to steal the body of Mary Lincoln’s husband and Robert Lincoln’s father was real. I believe there was a story in Worcester not so long ago connected to this topic. Hope Cemetery was the unfortunate place if I remember correctly. Anyone who attempts to dig up and rob a grave, or steal a body secured in a casket deserves to be haunted by spirits for the rest of their lives until they seek forgiveness and perform reparation. And not the good spirits either. Something akin to what Jesus commanded out of all those hurting bodies in the first century would seem to be appropriate spiritual justice for grave-robbers.

Anyway, a grave robber opening a grave to steal a body for whatever reason is one thing. Ezekiel writing how God is going to open graves is a whole different story. To place this verse from Ezekiel into its historical context, this verse and what follows in chapter 37 of his book refers to the sacking of Jerusalem and destruction of the Temple by the Babylonians in the 6th century B.C. This is the event when the Israelites were taken into captivity as a nation by the Babylonians and carried off to a foreign country, much like returning to the slavery of Egypt. Being forced out of the land flowing with milk and honey, the Promised Land God gave to his people, and moved into captivity in a strange land that produced no milk or honey, was akin to being buried in a grave. The promise of God through Ezekiel is a promise of hope that one day in the future God will open the grave of Babylon and return his all chosen people to their special possession, with Jerusalem at the center. God is the type of “grave robber” who “steals from graves” all that is evil, bringing forth a greater prize of freedom and joy. This would be the exact opposite of why some crazy person wanted to steal the body of our 16th President.

So, to bring this idea of grave-robbing into our present day situation with a certain contagious virus, we, like the Israelites in 6th century B.C., pray for God to “steal” this evil from our midst as many of us remain secluded and trapped in the clutches of this form of Babylon. None of us would say it’s a good place to be. Is there good that God will bring out of this form of Babylon? Undoubtedly. God *always* brings good out of evil. His love and power far surpasses that of any spiritual or physical virus. But at the same time, we hold in our Christian hearts and prayerful hands to do what the Israelites did for 70 years; pray for the Lord’s mercy to touch the hearts of those affected by the virus;

Continued on next Page

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION Because of the Coronavirus concerns and to adhere to Governor Baker’s statement that there be no gatherings of 25 people or more at this time all Religious Education classes have been canceled for the remainder of the 2019-2020 Catechetical Year. As always, the health and well-being of our families is of the utmost importance and we will continue to implement proactive measures to reduce the risk of transmitting the virus throughout the community. Religious Education packets were distributed last weekend. If you did not receive your packet please contact Mary Sycks at 508-868-8119.

THANK YOU! We would like to thank the following parishioners for volunteering their time to teach Religious Education at Immaculate Conception. Marissa Phaneuf, Anita Callahan, Karen O'Brien, Regan Flanagan, Joanna Jalbert, Nicole Hermance, Lee Morin, Jack Jalbert, Will DeHoratius, Kaitlyn Anderson, Ken Borowy, Kathy Haggan, Jessica and Paul Johnson, Ed DeHoratius & Stephen Sycks. Your generosity with your time and devotion to the children of our Parish is a wonderful demonstration of God’s love.

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 19th 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.

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 \$47,915 from 25 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

From the Pastor continued from the previous page

He will assist with grace those who attend to the sick; He will lead researchers and others in the field of medicine to eventually find a cure; and, He will return us to the places we love, appreciate, and cherish. We all have a “promised land” where we can be touched by the Lord in intimate ways. My two places are called Immaculate Conception Church and Gettysburg, where Mr. Lincoln gave a memorable address. If I had these two places for the remainder of my life, Babylon would remain far away.

“Thus says the Lord God: O my people, I will open your graves and have you rise from them, and bring you back to the land of Israel.” We pray for that day to arrive sooner rather than later, when we return to “Israel.”

“Lord God, open the grave of this virus, remove its presence, and clear the road that leads to your gift of joy. It’s a march we patiently wait to tread with our families and friends. We fully trust you will open our personal graves one day and have us rise from them the same way you rose from Joseph’s grave the dead body of your Son on the first Easter morning. You will “steal” from the Evil One what does not belong to him, but what belongs in the presence of angels and saints. You are the God of life, all-powerful and loving. Lead us to the other side of this virus, and may the entire world see you as the One who does great things in our midst. Amen.”

Peace, Fr. Riley

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE ADVANTAGES OF THE ROSARY?

- 1) If, every day of your life, you say the Rosary devoutly, and all that implies, you will never lose your soul.
- 2) If you wish for peace in your heart and in your family and an abundance of heavenly gifts on your household, then assemble your family each night and say the Rosary.
- 3) If you are anxious to convert a soul to the fullness of God's love in life, teach that person to say the Rosary. That person will either stop saying the Rosary, or he will receive the gift of faith.
- 4) If a sufficient army of us said the Rosary every day, the Blessed Mother would now, as in the past, obtain from her Divine Son the stilling of the present Tempests, the defeat of the enemies of human civilization, and the real peace in the hearts of tired and straying men.
- 5) If the cooling of your charity has made you unhappy on the inside and critical of others, then the Rosary, through your meditation on our Lord's great love for you on the Cross and your Mother's affection for you on Calvary, will rekindle your love of God and of neighbor and restore store you to a peace that surpasses all understanding.

Do not think that in honoring Our Lady with the Rosary you are neglecting Our Lord. Did you even know anyone who ignored you by being kind to your mother?

Archbishop Fulton Sheen from *The Cries of Jesus from the Cross*

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. 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 those struggling with a lack of the basic goods to survive, that the love and generosity of others will assist them in their great need.*

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT 03/22/2020	
Sunday Ordinary	\$ 548.00
Spring Fuel	\$ 70.00

READINGS FOR NEXT SUNDAY, APRIL 5th, SUNDAY OF THE PASSION OF OUR LORD

Gospel: Matthew 21:1-11
 1st Reading: Isaiah 50:4-7
 Psalm 22
 2nd Reading: Philippians 2:6-11
 Reading of the Passion: Matthew 26:14-27:66

BEREAVEMENT SEMINAR *The Journey of Grief*

Miles Funeral Home will be hosting a Bereavement Seminar called *This Journey of Grief, Finding Your Way and Healing Your Spirit* at the Holden Senior Center, 1130 Main St., Holden on Saturday, April 25, 2020 from 1:00 to 2:30 p.m.