

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

Sat. Apr 04	Robert Bacon, 2nd Anniversary, from Wife and Children
Sun. Apr 05	Vincenza Pultorak, 4th anniversary, from Husband, John.
Mon. Apr 06	Pete Klein, from a Friend
Tues. Apr 07	Parishioners of Immaculate Conception
Wed. Apr 08	Donald H. Letendre, from Family
Thurs. Apr 09	Rita L. Letendre, from Family
Sat. Apr 11	Whitney Foster, 6 month Anniversary, from Family
Sun. Apr 12	Mary E. Early, from Family Dot Consolmagno, from Family



THIS WEEK the text for The 5th Week of Lent may be found at #915 in the *Journeysongs* hymnal.

RELIGIOUS QUOTE OF THE WEEK

HOSANNA IN THE HIGHEST: Mt 21:9; "Is this the crowd who would applaud his crucifixion? How was their hatred earned from his grace? Even the words of their commendation pointed to the power of redemption. 'Hosanna' in Hebrew signifies the redemption of the house of David. They are calling upon the Son of David. They are celebrating the inheritance of the eternal kingdom. They are proclaiming blessing in the name of the Lord. Soon their shouting of 'Crucify him!' would be blasphemy. But at present, the deeds he was doing we're exhibiting the form of the future. It is granted that the crowd was doing these things with very confused emotions. The things that would follow would be different. Nevertheless they were, inadvertently and without willing it, pointing to heavenly things unfolding. In this way the whole city of Jerusalem was stirred."

Hilary of Poitiers (c310-c367)

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 *families to grow closer in God's love.*

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 \$48,215 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

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.

READINGS FOR NEXT SUNDAY, APRIL 12th, 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 03/22/2020

Sunday Ordinary	\$ 2,110.00
Spring Fuel	\$ 510.00
Total Online Donations for March 2020	\$ 1,383.00
Catholic Relief Services	\$ 286.00
Food Pantry	\$ 250.00

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION Religious Education packets were distributed to all Religious Education families. The packets contained Textbooks, home-study materials and the Diocese of Worcester Grade Level Inventory Test. Please return your child's completed Inventory Test to Mary Sycks by April 30th. If you did not receive your packet please contact Mary Sycks at 508-868-8119.

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.

FROM THE PASTOR

We're waiting for the peak to happen. The peak of a pandemic that seems to rise and rise, and when it reaches the top, no one yet knows. Many time estimates have been given by various occupations, from political leaders to those in the media, to next door neighbors yelling out their windows to keep "social distance," the hot new phrase of the year. The doctors seem to be the most cautious – and wisest - which is understandable since they understand this pandemic more than your average Tom, Dick, Harry, or Suzy. I do marvel at listening to most doctors on television speak about this health crisis, and observe their good sense. None of them will offer a solid timeline for when this disease will reach its peak and begin its descent down the mountain of humanity. We continue to pray consistently and determinedly as Church that God will be kind and gentle in his ways and lead us to a brighter day soon. He's in control, no doubt. But we still don't know how and when this story finishes. It's sort of like being an Israelite escaping out of Egypt, wandering in the desert for months and years (hopefully not), waiting and searching for a Promised Land to come. It truly is unprecedented, this present day. Where's the peak?

Palm Sunday is the first of two "peak days" in one week's time. It would be better than nice if the peak of Coronavirus were only one week away. Can a disease ride into a holy city on a donkey with palm branches raised and waved by admirers who recognize and proclaim the greatness of the rider? No, it cannot. There's nothing to admire about a disease that packs the punch of death for some of its inhalants. This crisis is so connected to eating fruit in a Garden long ago, and the ramifications that resulted from that one *really bad reach*. It was much worse than a baseball going through the legs of Bill Buckner (may he RIP) in 1986 that allowed the dreaded New York Mets to go on and win the World Series. Much worse.

The first peak day we celebrate this week – albeit not in the same place we love to come to – begins a weeklong roller coaster ride for Jesus. Instead of a disease riding a donkey into the holy city of Jerusalem, we have the "Disease Killer" riding the tame animal. This Rider called out demons, healed the sick, made the blind see, the deaf hear and the dumb speak, the one who cured the lame and paralyzed, too many to count in one person's life, now rides into the city of the Temple amidst cheers, palm-waving, Hosannas, Amens, Alleluia's, and Glory-Be's. One would think the Red Sox finally won the Big Dance, the reaction is so overwhelming. "Come in, Lord. Come into our city that God gave to us. We know what we've seen and heard, what you've done and taught. We know, Lord, the goodness you bring to our hearts and souls, even though some leaders fail to recognize your Divine presence. We know and believe that God is working through you in ways that cause us to say, 'We've never heard anyone speak like this before.' Or, 'God has visited his people.'" Words not spoken since the time of Moses.

The first peak on the Mountain of Accomplishment has been reached. We're waiting to reach that first peak soon in a different way that needs no explanation. But Jesus has arrived. You would think the pony he's riding was 20 feet tall. But that's not how God comes to us. The animal is on street level, in a way that the Son of God can see his people eye-to-eye. His charging

horse is a meek old mule, with cute ears and a snorting honk that sounds as sweet as Beethoven. No stubbornness like other mules. He's a street-level donkey. Not Donkey-Kong, bouncing all over the place on a game screen. There are no games here on this victorious ride. This is serious business, this first ride to the peak of admiration and adulation.

The first peak, we know from the truth of Holy Scripture, leads to the bottom of the roller coaster. Denial, betrayal, abandonment, crucifixion, death, burial in a cave. A done deal. It's amazing how life can change so quickly! Boy, that's a truth we all relate to presently. Worcester, a city of young college men and women, has become a desolate city with no young college men and women floating around. "Go home in March, and stay home, and be with those you know and love. See you in September." Worcester, a city of many small successful businesses where ingenuity and hard work pay off, ordered to close if the word "essential" does not apply to your ingenuity and hard work.

Well, you know what's essential? What's essential is that Jesus reaches the second peak! Maybe you've climbed a mountain for the first time and thought you felt close to the top. You were yearning for the top. The uphill battle was getting long, and you just want to reach the summit and plant a flag. This was how I felt the first time I climbed Signal Knob Trail on Mt. Massanutten in Strasburg, Va., a climb of 4-1/2 miles and 2 hours over countless jagged rocks sticking up from the ground. Blisters galore! Toward what seemed like the end of the climb I could see the sky getting brighter through the branches and trees that grew less in number. Looking down is looking *way down*. Then you approach a sign that says, "1 mile to the summit." Really? You're kidding, right? Do we continue on to the next peak, the *real* peak, or, do we give up, turn around, and waste 1 hour and 40 minutes of climbing? All I can tell you is that the view was worth continuing.

Well, we've come this far with this dreaded virus that has claimed many victims worldwide. Let's keep on keeping on what we need to do to reach the real top before starting the easier walk of descent, like the Son of Man descending into the womb of a Virgin. The summit is closer. It may be grayish in color, not having a solid peak, like Signal Knob. But we'll know when the second peak has come.

In the meantime, let's not forget the second peak of Jesus our Lord and Savior. His first peak is today, Palm Sunday, followed by the extreme roller coaster ride of loneliness and the world's power thrown against him. There's a part of me that wished Jesus had called on the 12 legions of angels while being arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane. That phone call to the skies would have taken care of all the bad stuff about to happen. It was not meant to be. The Cross must come. We carry ours right now. The second peak is necessary because the first one is only a glimpse of the top. You're almost home, but you're not home. Jesus will arrive home. In a tomb. Then, as Paul Harvey would say, you know "the rest of the story." We pray for "the rest of the story" that God will bring about. Stay safe, love your God and neighbor, and seek His mercy each day. He's quite generous in this area.

Peace, Fr. Riley