

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.

EASTER SUNDAY, THE RESURRECTION OF THE LORD

April 12, 2020

MASS INTENTIONS

Sat.	Apr 11	Whitney Foster, 6 month Anniversary, from Family
Sun.	Apr 12	Mary E. Early, from Family Dot Consolmagno, from Family
Mon.	Apr 13	Richard "Okie" O'Connor, 3rd Anniversary, from Family
Tues.	Apr 14	Parishioners of Immaculate Conception
Wed.	Apr 15	
Thurs.	Apr 16	Paul O'Brien, 4th Anniversary, from Family
Sat.	Apr 18	Ellen Geheran, from Husband
Sun.	Apr 19	Thomas S. Shivick, from Roland P. Malboeuf



THIS WEEK the text for Easter Sunday may be found at #922 in the *Journeysongs* hymnal.

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 30 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

RELIGIOUS QUOTE OF THE WEEK

MARY'S ARDOR OF FAITH: Jn 20:2; "Question: How is it start in John the disciples hearing Mary, and then coming to the sepulcher, believed. But in Luke it is said that "their words appeared in their site as an idle tale and they did not believe?" Answer: Mary, in John, told what she had seen to the chief apostles Peter and John alone, as declaring some secret. And they again, unknown to the other disciples, ran to the sepulcher, saw and believed. And there was nothing strange in the chief apostles having seen and believed while the rest to whom the woman reported, not having received with their own eyes, did not believe them. Indeed, when the Savior appeared to the assembled disciples themselves, according to John, those who saw him rejoiced. But Thomas, since he was not with them and did not see, was not persuaded. But if he disbelieved the apostles, one would scarcely blame the rest because, not having as yet beheld him, they disbelieved the women. The Scripture shows much examination and carefulness on the part of the disciples, not readily assenting to their words but at first suspending judgment until they recognize the truth fully and clearly.

READINGS FOR NEXT SUNDAY, APRIL 19th, THE SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER

1st Reading: Acts 2:42-27

Psalm 118

2nd Reading: 1 Peter 1:3-9

Gospel: John 20:19-31

EASTER LETTER FROM BISHOP MCMANUS

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

It has been called the "unseen enemy." The coronavirus has brought illness and death to the afflicted; fear, isolation and disruption to us all.

On Easter Sunday, Jesus' first followers saw the remedy for their fears. Days before, beginning with the arrest of Jesus in Gethsemane and His Crucifixion on Calvary, they had experienced fear and seen death. Indeed, the threat of death caused not only fear but isolation and disruption as they ran from Jesus in the garden and nearly all abandoned Him at the Cross.

But on Easter Sunday He was there again, in their midst, back from the dead, bringing them together and reassuring them with His words, "peace be with you." Today he says the same to us. He is present to us. We do not see Him with our eyes. But with faith we know Him to be among us, risen and triumphant. He is the unseen ally, always present, always able to help us against all enemies, seen and unseen.

The presence of the coronavirus has and will shape our lives for a time. Even more so, may the presence of the Risen Christ at all times shape our lives, our outlook and our confidence. Scientists work to develop a vaccine to prevent further infections of our bodies from viruses around us. We pray for those scientists and heed their sound advice. Jesus Christ is the complementary antidote for our souls to strengthen us spiritually against all the inevitable things in life that we face and fear - sickness, isolation, sin, uncertainty and even death.

While this is a very different Easter, in its essence it is the same. *How* we celebrate differs but *what* we celebrate and its meaning for us remain the same. May the Triumph of the Risen Christ give you and your loved one's peace, hope and confidence. I pray that God will protect you and your loved ones along with all who strive to maintain public health, order, and the necessities of life. May it be God's will that before this Easter Season is over, we will be through the worst of this pandemic so that we can gather again, stronger in faith, united in Christ, to give joyful thanks to God around the altar in the Eucharist.

With every prayerful best wish for a joyous Easter, I remain

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Robert J. McManus
Bishop of Worcester

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*.

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

Upon first reading, the reader can receive the impression that Mary is running away. In one true sense, she is. The great disciple of Jesus is running away from the tomb, running away from death, running away from all the fear the tomb stood for. Many times at cemeteries prior to reading the Prayers of Committal that closes the Funeral, I take a quick peak into the grave to see how far down this person's body will be laid to rest. My first thought to the person in the casket is, "Jesus will be back to raise your body." Tombs, mausoleums, and cemeteries are not meant to be places of fear. They're places where we await the resurrection of the body. This is why I believe that Mary Magdalene, when seeing the stone was removed from the tomb of Jesus and she ran away, she didn't run with fear. She ran away with a sense of uncertainty of the location of Jesus' body, but also with some a deeper sense of knowing that some event was happening that was beyond her understanding at the time.

A true disciple of Jesus Christ does not live in fear when they witness an empty tomb. There's a religious part of us that knows something beyond our imagining has occurred. Or will occur. Looking into the grave of a person about to be buried is cause for a disciple to say softly within, "*Where, O Death, is your victory? Where O Death, is your sting? The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*" It's more likely Mary Magdalene ran away from Jesus' tomb with those words in her heart, even though St. Paul had not yet written them. She ran not away from an empty tomb in great fear, but Mary ran toward the first proclamation of Jesus' tomb being empty and death being defeated.

So we're given this image on Easter Sunday of running away from a tomb. Running to tell others that a body is missing. But is that the full intent? Just to inform the others that the Lord's body has been taken, and we don't know where they laid him? After three years of public ministry and so many words that touched on his death and being raised: "*The Son of Man must suffer greatly and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed and on the third day be raised*" (Lk 9:22), would it be so easy to forget those words so soon after they come to fruition? Mary, I believe, was attuned to the public words of Jesus more than the Apostles themselves. She heard everything he said, she hung on to his every word, and placed his words securely within her heart, locking them away, never to be stolen by the Purveyor of Death, the Devil. So, when she ran from the tomb that first Easter morning, it's more sensible to think that Mary ran with a tinge of joy, with a leap of brightness, running at the speed of hope, and not simply wondering where they placed his body.

I recently read from one of the great spiritual writers in the Church that it's good to think about our death every day. and I must admit, not a day goes by where the thought does not sink into my brain. And when it does, I know the thought is from God. To reflect on death every day is not to be morbid, negative, or insane. Reflecting on our own impending death one day is a big part of the process of preparing for it in ways of peace and confidence. The Resurrection of Jesus was an event of total con-

-fidence that God would deliver on his end of the bargain. Jesus spoke about his upcoming death well before it arrived. And when he did, how did the Apostles react? They lost their minds! They were shaken from their boots (or sandals). They did body flips in the wrong direction. They set up human barriers so that Jesus would not be able to enter Jerusalem and celebrate the Passover. Peter said, "No way you're going!" Jesus' response? "Get behind me, Satan." When the Lord spoke about his future death, the Twelve acted like little boys who just had their favorite baseball glove stolen. They stubbornly sat in the corner and cried, not tears of sorrow, but tears of defiance. It's good to reflect, in like manner of Jesus, on our death each death. Why? Because, above all, when approached, not in morbidity but in belief and faith, we're telling the world – and our families – that the greatness of our lives awaits beyond that date. For Christians, the date of our death is not a date of doom. It is a date to meet God in all his glory, and our loved ones who already know his glory forever.

Mary ran to tell the Apostles of an empty tomb. This awesome image of her running away from a death chamber in a cemetery was not her run away from Jesus' death and missing body. It was a run toward the fulfillment of his promise of being raised on the third day. So many folks fear the thought of death, thus avoid at all costs thinking and speaking of it. The world thinks such things to be strange, odd, not normal, weird, or even psychotic. I disagree with those faithless inventions concerning death. Jesus met it head on, both physically and verbally, having no fear sharing it with his closest associates. In fact, preparing them for what comes after. He did so, again, because of the full confidence he invites us into that trusts in God's power and love. A power that never touches abandonment, but one that personally carries us to his glory.

The image of Mary Magdalene running from the tomb of Jesus in haste is the most perfect reaction and response she could have done. She didn't sit there and cry that someone stole her baseball glove. Her instincts and reaction hit the jackpot. It began the process of sharing life after death, one that hasn't stopped since Mary's race to the Upper Room. Whether she was conscious of the truth of Jesus' disappearance, or it was hidden in her subconscious as she ran, Mary's run represents the early lights going off in her head regarding resurrection and eternal life. Mary's race from the tomb is a fitting spiritual reflection for us as we consider our own death one day. The One who was missing before her eyesight in Joseph of Arimathea's tomb (Jesus rented space only for three days) promises to "race us" away from our place of internment when he returns in all his glory.

In this time of absence from the Church, an unforgettable Easter we will carry with us for the rest of our lives, please know that today we celebrate the Mother of all absences. In this time of long separation as a Catholic family on the holiest day of the year, we pray for each other in humble and solemn ways, trusting that God is in control of life and death, and that death has no sting or victory before his majesty. The victory belongs to Christ the Lord. And the victory of rejoining and regathering our community is awaited with patience and eagerness.

Peace, Fr. Riley