

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. May 02	Harry Dapper, 2nd Anniversary, from Family
Sun. May 03	John G. Buczek, 4th Anniversary, from Family
Mon. May 04	Parishioners of Immaculate Conception
Tues. May 05	
Wed. May 06	Donald H. Letendre, from Family
Thurs. May 07	
Sat. May 09	Francis X. Mahoney, Jr., 5th Anniversary, from Family
Sun. May 10	Juniva Glavickas, 6th Anniversary, from Family, and Mary Karpowicz, from Family

THIS WEEK the text for the Fourth Sunday of Easter may be found at #927 in the *Journeysongs* hymnal.

PARTNERS IN CHARITY 2020

The annual Partners in Charity campaign continues in our Parish and remains in place throughout this time of separation. The goal for this year remains the same as past years, being \$88,500. Our Diocese has mailed envelopes to many parishioners who made contributions in past years. Feel free to use this envelope and send it to the Parish or directly into Partners in Charity. 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 \$61,435 from 33 donors, which is 69% 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

THE NEW DICTIONARY OF CATHOLIC SPIRITUALITY

SPIRITUAL FRIENDSHIP: "Within the Christian tradition the accent has fallen more on the notion of spiritual friendship, in which there is a reciprocal relationship of mutual sharing between two persons who seek the same spiritual ideals. The expression *spiritualis amicitia* is found already in a letter St. Boniface wrote to a group of nuns. Spiritual friendship is more common among members of the same sex, such as in monastic communities, but there are examples of such friendship between members of the opposite sex, for example St. Francis of Assisi and St. Clare. Sharing a common faith, the friends support one another in the search for God. Usually the notion of spiritual friendship involves little or no physical contact, and feelings of passion are translated to a spiritual level. In people who have an intense spiritual life, it ends in a communion of spirits and of hearts that often is consummated in the sharing of prayer. Such a spiritual communion is very open and does not disregard the weaknesses of the other; rather, it understands them, while pursuing its spiritual goal to live in patience and in imitation of Christ.

THE WORD OF THE LORD

Knowledge of the Bible in schools and universities... "One particular setting for an encounter between the word of God and culture is that of schools and universities. Pastors should be especially attentive to this milieu, promoting a deeper knowledge of the Bible and a grasp of its fruitful cultural implications also for the present day. Study centers supported by Catholic groups offer a distinct contribution through the promotion of culture and education - and this ought to be recognized. Nor must *religious education* be neglected, and religion teachers should be given careful training. Religious education is often the sole opportunity available for students to encounter the message of faith. In the teaching of religion, emphasis should be laid on knowledge of Sacred Scripture, as a means of overcoming prejudices old and new, and enabling its truth to be better known."

The Word of the Lord, Verbum Domini, Pope Benedict XVI, 2010

TRIP TO POLAND RESCHEDULED TO 2021

Our Parish trip to Poland has been rescheduled for next year. The new dates for the trip will be April 12-22, 2021. Having to make a decision on the trip at this time, we decided to move this wonderful trip to a much safer timeframe for all involved. More information will be forthcoming soon in the bulletin and on our Parish website. Thank you.

RELIGIOUS QUOTE OF THE WEEK

WHO IS THE ONE WHO ENTERS BY THE GATE? John 10:7; "Our Lord Jesus just said now that he was a shepherd. He also said that he was a gate ... He is the gate in the head and the shepherd in the body. You see, he says to Peter, whom he singles out to represent his (body the) church, "Peter, do you love me?" ... as though to say, What will you give me, what proof will you provide me with that you love me? ... If you love me, feed my sheep; enter in by the Door and do not go up another way ... who is the one who enters by the door? The one who enters by Christ. And who is that? The one who imitates Christ's passion, who understands Christ's humility, understands that while God has become man for us, he himself as a human being is not God, just a man (person). I mean to say, anyone who wishes to play God while he is just a man is not imitating the one who, while he was God, became a man." *St. Augustine (360-430)*

FIRST COMMUNION

This weekend would have been the time for the joyous celebration of First Communion for our second graders. Because the reception of this Sacrament is within the purview of the Parish, unlike the reception of Confirmation, which is dictated by the Diocese, we will hold this sacred event in our Church as soon as the situation permits. It will be a day of great joy, and we look forward to celebrating these children with family and friends.

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 who struggle financially because of the pandemic, that they will survive through the assistance and generosity of others.*

READINGS FOR NEXT SUNDAY, MAY 10th, THE FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

1st Reading: Acts 6:1-7
Psalm 33
2nd Reading: 1 Peter 2:4-9
Gospel: John 14:1-12

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT 04/26/2020

Sunday Ordinary	\$ 2,605.00
Donation	\$ 200.00
Easter	\$ 290.00
Online Donations 16-19 April 2020	\$ 1,070.00
Food Pantry Donation	\$ 110.00

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION Thank you to all the families that have returned the Diocese of Worcester Grade Level Inventory Test. We will continue to collect the tests through the month of May. If you did not receive your Religious Education packet please contact Mary Sycks at 508-868-8119.

Please watch your email on Saturday morning for the Children's Bulletin and the Readings for Sunday Mass.

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 continue to prepare for the sacrament.

FROM THE PASTOR

With hope and some good anticipation (I hope), we've reached the month of May. Has there ever been a May in our lives that we've looked forward to reaching more than May of 2020? The April we just left behind is one for the ages, but not in the best of ways. A most honest prayer to our Lord is that May 2020 will begin to see the re-opening of our Church, our nation, our economy, and all that is important by way of human communication. March & April 2020 were months of shutting down the beautiful ways of how we relate to one another. The reason was seemingly justified, although I'm hearing more and more from some quarters that the collective national reaction to the Coronavirus pandemic has been an overreach. An argument could be made by good lawyers both for and against that belief, as well as good non-lawyers who make good sense.

Either way, April 2020 is a month now behind us. Some of her effects will carry into the beautiful month of May, a month of Mary. With May being a month where the Blessed Mother captures our attention in particular ways; the May Crowning of our Marian statue on the grounds (which we miss and will hopefully perform when our 2nd graders receive their First Communion), always the Rosary, Mary's humility and sense of warmth that comes with the weather, and more....with May comes a better day, a warmer climate, an uplifting spirit (share your joy, not your misery), greener grass and the smell of fresh cut lawns, and that much closer to returning to ways that we previously took for granted for understandable reasons (this being the first worldwide pandemic for all of us), we continue to seek the intercession of our Blessed Mother pleading to her Son who will lead us to the light that never fades.

April, 2020 was not only a cruel month in countless ways; people losing jobs, businesses shutting down, social distancing (I will never consider this a genuine good, even when its necessary), empty Churches and empty arenas, the Red Sox not playing a single game (is this a good thing?), the cruelty continued with Mother Nature herself. The weather was cold and miserable for April, snowing at least twice after not snowing in February or March, one day toward the end of the month that felt like mid-January with high winds, a month where the grass on our property looked ugly for the first time I can remember. The dreariness of the month was overpowering and the stench it has left deserves a "good riddance." "Don't let the door hit you...., Mr. April. And take your high winds, your unwanted chill, and your hard, radical, government-imposed distance separating with you! I won't be calling you anytime soon!"

May, 2020 is a month to turn at least one big page in this Book of Horror titled *Coronavirus Pandemic*. I mentioned in my homily last week that anyone who seeks to break your heart regarding this present situation we find ourselves in, turn the station, turn the page, turn them off, and turn back to the joy of Christ being in control. The better, *permanent* day is coming. Yea, some things may differ in our way of relating, at least for the foreseeable future. But listening to the great man of WTAG, Jordan Levy, speaking words to the effect that life will be different for all of us, and seemingly meaning this in a defeatist sort of way, that's a station that needed to be changed. And not because I prefer not to hear such things said about my future, that somehow my life – and your life – is beyond returning to the

meaningful, social ways we enjoyed pre-pandemic. But what the good man of WTAG spoke misses the greater point that God is truly in control of the matter.

Seriously, this pandemic is horrible. But the horror of this worldwide pandemic can little be compared to the unspeakable and immeasurable horrors of the Second World War, which I'm certain Jordan would agree with. Granted, World War II was a long conflict that barely touched our shores, if at all. I believe a German submarine was off the coast of Cape Cod at one time. They stole some lobsters and went back home. But even from that horror of all human horrors where millions and millions of God's people went home eternally by way of starvation, bullets, or some form of the most inhumane cruelty, we turned the corner (in one real sense) and moved forward trying to establish a world where God's peace will reign and all people can live in security. We've fallen short of this goal, of course, and always will until Jesus returns. But the point being that we returned to a better, "normal" way of human relations. And we will do the same with this pandemic, *because God remains in control*. We need no more proof of this Divine fact than the truth that we are still here.

May is a month that includes many images and experiences that bring out the best in the spirit God has included in the makeup of the human person. We are not soulless beings. We search for and desire the beauty of what the Lord created at the beginning. We yearn to enjoy and at times be one with the creation that came forth from God's hand. We do not worship creation, better known as Pantheism (look it up). We worship God alone within the territory and boundaries of the beautiful planet He created for our temporary residence. One part of our makeup is that we are, yes, earthlings. Earth was made for us, and we were created for Earth, temporarily. This is our short home. By the time most of us reach 80-100 years of age, we run out of money to pay the rent here, if you know what I mean. Yet, we desire our experience on Earth to be as smooth as possible. The month of May brings forth a quantity of such visual and spiritual "smoothness."

My prayer and sincere hope is that at some point during this month, we as the Body of Christ will re-gather in the Church in word and sacrament, at least to some extent. If we are limited to 50 people for a short time, we will have as many Masses as needed to give the good people of Immaculate Conception the opportunity to return to Church.

This is one May we all look forward to. Mary, warmth, flowers, nature, looser bones and muscles, golf (I hope), and a gradual return of relating to one another in ways that God created us to relate, and not how a pandemic dictates how we relate. We will return to the place where fear will dissipate, as it should. Love is patient and kind, as St. Paul reminded the Corinthians. Perfect love casts out fear, as John's First Letter reminds us. May is the month where "the peak" subsides and the corner is turned. "Mary, Mother of Jesus and Mother of May, Seat of Wisdom, pray for us."

Peace, Fr. Riley