

# Immaculate Conception Parish



Please visit our website at  
[www.icworc.com](http://www.icworc.com) and Facebook  
Email: [icworc@live.com](mailto: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 16	
Sun. May 17	Patricia Holloway, 4th Anniversary, and Robert Holloway, from Family
Mon. May 18	Ellen Geheran, from Husband, ( <i>St. John I</i> )
Tues. May 19	Franklin Daigneau, from Rich Riley
Wed. May 20	Parishioners of Immaculate Conception, ( <i>St. Bernadine of Siena</i> )
Thurs. May 21	( <i>St. Christopher Magallanes and Companions</i> )
Sat. May 23	John Dowd, Sr., 6th Anniversary, from Family
Sun. May 24	

**THIS WEEK** the text for the Sixth Sunday of Easter may be found at #933 in the *Journeysongs* hymnal.

**THE NEW DICTIONARY OF CATHOLIC SPIRITUALITY**

**REFLECTION:** “*Reflection*, meaning literally ‘to bend back,’ refers generically to the act of reconsidering what one knows and loves, and most basically to the underlying processes out of which these movements spring. While its most technically developed analysis is given in the philosophical disciplines, the concept has its deepest grounding in the dynamics of the spiritual life and has been regarded as an indispensable ingredient of any inner journey... In our time, Thomas Merton pulled a number of ... threads through the Christian spiritual tradition. He observed how the attainment of authentic personhood requires that special kind of reflection called contemplation, which alone can loosen the chains of social conformism. Only through such activity can the disciple hope to break through the pretenses of the flimsy ‘smoke-self’ constructed by the false ego and draw up the genuine inner person ‘like a jewel from the bottom of the sea.’”

**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 in any way from the effects of the Coronavirus, and for our leaders to make wise, prudent decisions for all involved and effected.*

**RELIGIOUS QUOTE OF THE WEEK**

**LOVE OF GOD LEAVES LOVE OF THE WORLD BEHIND:** John 14:21; “Do you see how Jesus has hidden his manifestation in the commandments? Of all the commandments, therefore, the most comprehensive is to love God and our neighbor. This love is made firm through abstaining from material things and through stillness of thoughts. Knowing this, the Lord enjoins us “not to be anxious about tomorrow,” and rightly so. Or if someone has not freed himself from material things and from concern about them, how can he be freed from evil thoughts? And if he is beset by evil thoughts, how can he see the reality of the sin concealed behind them? This sin wraps the soul in darkness and obscurity and increases its hold on us through our evil thoughts and actions. The devil initiates the whole process by testing a person with a provocation that the person is not compelled to accept. But the one urged on by self-indulgence and self-esteem begins to entertain this provocation with enjoyment. Even if their discrimination tells them to reject it, yet in practice they take pleasure in it and accept it. If someone has not perceived this general process of sinning, when will he pray about it and be cleansed from it? And if he has not been cleansed, how will he find purity of nature? And if he has not found this, how will he behold the inner dwelling place of Christ? For we are a dwelling place of God, according to the words of prophet, evangelist and apostle.”  
*Mark the Hermit (4<sup>th</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> century)*

**ASCENSION THURSDAY**

Under normal circumstances, this coming Thursday our Church would be celebrating the Holy Day Ascension Thursday, the day our Lord ascended to his rightful place at the right hand of the Father. We will still be celebrating, but at the time of this writing, we’re uncertain as to whether we can gather in Church. Likely, numbers will still be at 10 for the maximum amount of gathering. If that remains the situation, then Fr. Enoch and I will have Mass privately and offer the Mass for Parishioners of Immaculate Conception. Please continue to pray for the reopening of Churches, an essential if there ever was one. – Fr. Riley

**THE DAY IS NOW FAR SPENT**

**HATRED, RIDICULE, AND CYNICISM:** “In the twenty-first century, totalitarianism has a more pernicious face. Its name is the idolatry of complete and absolute freedom, which is manifested in its most aggressive forms of gender ideology and trans-humanism. Nazism, Fascism, and Communism have terrible successors. We are talking about new ideologies that deny human dignity and promote abortion and euthanasia, but also about Islamist fanaticism, which kills to establish a reign of terror. Some clues allow us to discern the same demonic origins of these movements. We see in them one and the same hatred of men, one and the same destructive pride. Considering the current historical context, it is urgent for the Church, through the voice of her leaders, to make known to everyone, definitively, the Creator’s will concerning man, the family, marriage, the sacredness of and respect for the human person. How many persons of goodwill would join in with such a splendid act of courage by the Church!

Cardinal Robert Sarah, from the book *The Day Is Now Far Spent*

**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](http://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 \$67,910 from 73 donors, which is 77% 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

**READINGS FOR NEXT SUNDAY, MAY 24th, THE SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER**

1st Reading: Acts 1:12-14  
Psalm 27  
2nd Reading: 1 Peter 4:13-16  
Gospel: John 17:1-11a

**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 the first reading we have to ponder this week from the Acts of the Apostles, it would be proper timing to touch on the Sacraments of Confirmation and First Eucharist. In the reading, the geographical setting has Philip the Apostle going down to Samaria proclaiming the Good News of Jesus' resurrection to the Samaritans, to both good Samaritans and bad ones. As Philip proclaimed Christ to his hearers, in true Christ-like fashion, his preaching was accompanied by miraculous signs: demons called out of the possessed; the paralyzed and crippled cured of ailments, and whatever other physical horrors presented themselves to this Apostle of Christ. As the reading states, "There was great joy in that city." Just as there will be great joy in Worcester and other cities and towns when this pandemic calms down.

Hearing that great things were happening in Samaria after Philip's arrival, it was time to call in the "big guns." Peter and John went down to Samaria, and upon checking out the scene, they came to realize that Baptism was the one sacrament the Samaritans had received from Philip. Thus, Peter and John "laid hands on them," calling down the power of the Spirit upon these new believers in Christ. What Peter and John did for the Samaritans was to Confirm them in the Spirit. The people of Samaria received the fullness of the Spirit in the laying on of hands by the first "Bishops" in the Christian Church. Why Philip himself didn't perform this sacramental act, instead waiting for Peter and John to arrive, is a question to be asked when we get past the Pearly Gates one day.

Thus, with the act of being Confirmed at the heart of this week's first reading, combined with the present fact that our Confirmation Class of 6 students is waiting to be Confirmed, studying since September, it's a fitting time to touch on the waiting part of receiving the Sacrament. Mrs. Sycks, our Religious Education Administrator, has done her usual fine job of placing photos and prayer cards at the inside entrance to the Church on the rectory side, photos of those who were supposed to receive Confirmation this past April 19 at St. Paul Cathedral. Some of the cards have been taken by the handful of folks who stopped by to pray in the Church for a few moments or longer, which is a good thing, because the 11<sup>th</sup>-graders need our prayers. They must feel like they're in limbo, not knowing when they will receive the fullness of the Spirit in Confirmation.

Therefore, I ask all who read this article to keep the future Confirmands in your daily prayers, that they sustain a desire to receive the Sacrament at some point this year, likely in a larger ceremony and place that will bring many parishes together for one Confirmation gathering. If that happens, similar to what Bishop Reilly did back in 2000 when he held a grandiose Confirmation ceremony at the DCU Center with thousands in attendance, the Spirit of God will be flying around the hall in ways that will touch the hearts of those receiving the Sacrament as well as those in attendance. In the meantime, however, it is necessary that we pray for those who were preparing for Confirmation in our Parish and other Parishes where their ceremony was postponed.

It's not an easy position for our Confirmands to be in, playing

a waiting game to receive the fullness of the Holy Spirit. They will be a class not forgotten soon because of the circumstances that have dictated how their reception of the Sacrament has come about. We pray that they remain steadfast in their faith as they remain separated from the Church in this time, arrive at an understanding of how God is working in their lives in the midst of a pandemic, and that they continue to hunger for and remain open to the Sacrament for which they were preparing to receive. Some future blessings are worth waiting for, even the unexpected ones

While on the topic of receiving a Sacrament, the opportunity presents itself to touch on our awesome First Communion Class of 2<sup>nd</sup> - graders. The little folks who received their First Reconciliation back in December with the anticipation of receiving the Body and Blood of Jesus on May 2 are anxiously waiting to consume the Bread of Life. The planning and ceremony for our First Communion class is, unlike Confirmation that is performed by the Bishop, a Sacrament that we can move ahead with as soon as the opportunity permits, which we will do. As soon as gathering numbers goes up to 50 in our state, which will hopefully be sometime in June, we will move ahead with First Communion. It would have to be a celebration where number of attendees are limited, but the greater importance is the children finally receiving the Eucharistic Lord that day, and every subsequent Sunday over the summer and into the rest of their lives. I ask that parents of First Communion candidates be ready for a date that may possibly be planned quickly for their child's reception of the Eucharist. I prefer the children not wait until September, but hopefully our First Communion Mass will happen in June or early July at the latest.

In this month of May 2020, a month in the Church that ordinarily zooms in on the life of Mary, the Mother of God, it's good for us to look forward to upcoming sacramental events that have been postponed over the past month because of the Coronavirus, and ask Our Blessed Lady to pray for our youth and children who seek the deeper presence of Christ and the Spirit in Confirmation and Holy Eucharist. It's been a very odd ending to our Religious Education year, which normally closes with the celebration of First Communion and the crowning of Our Lady's statue on the Parish grounds. After Mrs. Sycks asked me if we should order flowers for the crowning of the Marian statue, my answer was not at this time. We will hold our "May Procession" leading to Blessed Mary's statue in June or July, on the day we can finally have our First Communion Mass. That special day will finish outdoors (pray for sun) at the statue where our children will lead us, and, either myself or another adult will crown Mary on that day, hoping we don't fall off the ladder. I cannot think of a better way to "officially" finish our interrupted Religious Education year, with 2<sup>nd</sup>-graders soon to be 3<sup>rd</sup>-graders receiving the Lord, ending with crowning The Lady who is The Immaculate Conception.

*Peace, Fr. Riley*

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT 05/10/2020**

Sunday Ordinary	\$ 3,232.00
Ascension Thursday	\$ 40.00
Online Donations 04-10 May 2020	\$ 1,220.00