

# 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.	Dec 05	4:00 PM	Jeannette Lindsay, 12th Anniv., from the Ciccolini and Herrmann Family
Sun.	Dec 06	7:30 AM	
		10:00 AM	Christine Fitzpatrick, Month Mind, from her son Shawn McKinnon
Mon.	Dec 07	9:00 AM	Diocese of Worcester Priests, from Young Shin, <i>(St. Ambrose)</i>
		4:00 PM	Parishioners of Immaculate Conception
Tues.	Dec 08	9:00 AM	<i>(The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary)</i>
Wed.	Dec 09	9:00 AM	
Thurs.	Dec 10	8:00 AM	
Sat.	Dec 12	4:00 PM	William Rourke, Birthday Anniversary, from Dory, Emily, Justin, and Family
Sun.	Dec 13	7:30 AM	Paul Powers, from Family
		10:00 AM	Florence Goulet, 20th Anniversary, from Family

**SCRIPTURE STUDY ON WEDNESDAY EVENINGS**

Fr. Riley is holding a one-hour Scripture study class each Wednesday evening from 6:30-7:30 p.m. in the Church Basement. We will read, study, and discuss the Gospel of Matthew. The next class will be held on Wednesday, December 9. In preparation for the December 2 class please read chapters 5 & 6. Masks are required and social distance will be practiced.

**FEAST OF IMMACULATE CONCEPTION HOLY DAY MASSES**

This Tuesday, December 8, the Church celebrates the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of Mary, *a holy day of obligation*. We will have two Masses in celebration of this Feast: a Vigil mass on Monday, December 7 at 4:00 p.m. and Mass on Tuesday, December 8 at 9:00 a.m.

**TURKEY LURKEY 2020 REPLACED BY PARISH RAFFLE**

Tickets for our Parish Raffle, which replaces the annual Turkey-Lurkey will be sold through the end of Masses next Sunday unless they are sold out earlier. We have made available 200 tickets at \$50.00 each for the raffle. The drawing of winners will be held next Sunday, December 13 and winners will be notified. Tickets will be drawn by students of our Religious Education program. As of this writing, tickets remain available as we draw closer to the 200-ticket limit in sales. The first-place prize is \$3000.00, followed by one winner of \$1000.00, 2 winners of \$750.00, one winner of \$500.00, and a handful of non-monetary prizes, including an Irish Pillow, Pampered Chef products, and others. Any and all profits from the raffle will be forwarded to our Parish Activities Committee to support the ministries they perform in our Parish.

**VIRTUAL THEOLOGY ON TAP ADVENT/CHRISTMAS SERIES**

All young adults (ages 18-39) are invited to join us for a special virtual Theology on Tap series on the Joyful Mysteries of the Rosary! All sessions will take place via Zoom on Tuesdays during the Advent and Christmas seasons at 8pm.

**Session Dates/Times:** December 15th @8pm, *The Visitation*; December 22nd @8pm, *The Nativity*; December 29th @8pm, *The Presentation*; January 5th @8pm, *The Finding in the Temple*. Go to: [neworchester.org/virtual-theology-on-tap](http://neworchester.org/virtual-theology-on-tap) to sign up for the Zoom link

**EXODUS 90: YOUNG ADULT MEN'S PROGRAM**

Attention Young Adult Men (ages 18-39) We are offering Exodus 90 again this upcoming spring! Are you looking to revamp your prayer life, grow in self-discipline, and find community with other men striving to grow in a relationship with Jesus Christ? If so, then we invite you to join us for Exodus 90, a 90 day spiritual program focused on prayer, asceticism, and fraternity. If you are interested, we will have an informational meeting on **Thursday, Dec. 17 at 7:30 pm on Zoom**. The program itself will begin on January 4, 2021 and conclude on Easter Sunday (April 4, 2021). To get the Zoom link for the meeting and for complete details on the program, go to <https://neworchester.org/exodus-90>.

**CHRISTMAS GIVING TREE FOR URBAN MISSIONARIES OF HOPE & PICKUP OF GIFTS**

For those who wish to purchase a gift on behalf of Urban Missionaries of Our Lady of Hope there are two options that may be used, both through use of your computer. Option 1: You can obtain a "virtual tag" for the gift that a mother has asked for one of her children by going to [www.urbanmissionaries.com](http://www.urbanmissionaries.com) and clicking on the tab "To join our virtual Christmas Giving Tree." You will receive your tag via email. If you purchase the gift and bring it home, please print off the email tag, attach it firmly to the gift and return it to our Parish by next Sunday, December 13. If you purchase the gift online, you may opt to ship the gift directly to Urban Missionaries of Our Lady of Hope, 242 Canterbury St. Worcester, MA 01603. All that is needed is to *put the tag ID number in the comment section of your order* so they will know who the gift belongs to. Option 2: Urban Missionaries can purchase the gift for you. Go to the "Go Fund Me" tab on their website, [www.urbanmissionaries.com](http://www.urbanmissionaries.com) and make a cash donation. They will use your donation to purchase a gift. Any parishioner who has questions about the process of purchasing a gift, please speak to Fr. Riley. Thank you for participating in this most worthy program under the present difficult circumstances.

**HOLY HOUR TO PRAY FOR PRIESTS**

On Friday, Dec. 11 from 7:00 - 8:00 pm a holy hour to pray for priests will take place at Immaculate Conception Church. This holy hour will consist of time for silent adoration, as well as a short reflection, the rosary, and benediction. Please join us to pray for our priests.

**ADVENT SPIRITUAL READING**

At each entrance to the Church can be found pamphlets for spiritual reading throughout the Season of Advent. Please feel free to take home one or two for meditation and reflection as we prepare for the coming of the Lord in Bethlehem.

**CHRISTMAS FLOWER ENVELOPES**

Envelopes for Christmas flowers have been placed at each entrance to the Church. These envelopes will be placed on our altar during the Christmas season in remembrance of loved ones. All donations help to offset the cost of the many beautiful flowers placed around the altar and throughout the sanctuary. Thank you.

**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 the ministerial success of the Urban Missionaries of Our Lady of Hope this year as they serve the needs of thousands of families and children this Christmas in the midst of a pandemic*.

**RELIGIOUS EDUCATION** - Religious Education classes take place on Sunday, December 6th at 8:45AM-9:45AM for children in grades K-6 and 11:15AM-12:15PM for students in grades 7-10 and Confirmation Class.

**Inclement weather policy** ~ For cancellations of Religious Education classes due to weather conditions please check the Immaculate Conception website or Facebook Page. You can also call the Office of Religious Education at 508-868-8119.

**RELIGIOUS QUOTE OF THE WEEK**

**NONE GREATER THAN JOHN:** Mk 1:7a; “Even though Elijah the Tishbite was taken up to heaven, he was not greater than John. Enoch too was translated but was not greater than John. Moses was the greatest of lawgivers and all the prophets were admirable, but none greater than John. It is not I who would dare to compare prophet with prophet, but their Master and ours who himself declared ‘Among those born of women there is none greater than John.’ Not ‘born of virgins,’ observe! but ‘born of women.’”

*From the Pastor continued from the following page*

A double cheeseburger for adults like you and me. The Baptist probably found a thousand ways to prepare a locust. If he lived near the Dead Sea, at least he had lots of salt to flavor his winged creatures and wild honey.

The story of Jesus begins, of course, with Blessed Mary visited by the angel Gabriel. Somewhere just outside the territory and confines of Nazareth began the story of everlasting salvation. Salvation that would bring people back together forever after death performed its dirty deed. But from Nazareth, the story of Jesus flies southeast in the same nation of what then was known as Palestine, landing in the hot desert on the lap of a guy who was totally in tune with God’s plan. From the green town of Nazareth to the brown dust of the southern Palestinian desert. And what cried forth from the brown, hot dust of the desert centuries ago? “Prepare the way of the Lord. Make straight in the wasteland a highway for our God.”

And so John did. From the wasteland desert, John made a highway that travelled to the Jordan River. The fresh water of the Jordan was a better type of water in which John could take a bath. He now felt spoiled after bathing for years in the salty Dead Sea with water that sticks to your skin, feeling like it never dries off. The Jordan River was fresh water that cleaned up John’s body like the Dead Sea could only wish to. But John is about more than taking a bath to clean the body. John’s primary concern when finally arriving at the Jordan, and what became the purpose of his life, was to clean with its fresh waters the human soul, and bring it in tune with God’s love and mercy. John personally laid a road from the wasteland desert of sin, to the green, lush land of godliness through the effects of baptism. As we spiritually prepare for another year of “the Word became flesh,” may we allow ourselves the opportunity to take note of this great New Testament figure of John the Baptist. John makes a path from the barrenness of the desert and the salty Dead Sea to another small body of water without salt called the Jordan. By doing so, John’s change of address from the brown to the green removes all that keeps us from being in right relationship with the Lord. Though obviously of great importance, John’s lesser, necessary baptism at the time, revealed through one’s good works, led to the greater Baptism of Spirit and fire that cleanses our souls in preparation of being one with Christ now and forever.

As I like to say, Advent has a good-sized portion of Lent in its season, both of them purple in color. Most notably the portion that calls us to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation in preparation of Jesus’ birth. Hear the one voice crying out in the wilderness, calling us from the desert of sin to the growth of green nature. Leave the Dead Sea behind this Advent and take John’s path to the Jordan River. The path John created remains to this day and always.

*Peace, Fr. Riley*

**CHRISTMAS MASSES FOR 2020 AND TICKETS REQUIRED**

This year our Parish will have four (4) Masses for Christmas instead of the normal two Masses. The reason, of course, is the limited number of seats available for each Mass resulting from the social distance requirements caused by the pandemic. Our Mass schedule will be Christmas Eve at 3:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m., and Christmas Day at 8:00 a.m. & 10:00 a.m. Our Parish will create a signup & ticket system for each of the four Masses. All who attend will need to present a ticket at the door to ushers who will collect them, who will check off names from the signup sheet as you enter. Ushers will also assist in seating congregants to ensure there are no issues with space availability in the Church for each Mass. *There can be no standing in the back of the Church for any Mass. Every attendee has to be seated per request of our Diocese.* The signup & ticket system will be placed onto our Parish website by Friday, November 27, allowing our parishioners ample time to sign up prior to others from outside the Parish. Any elderly folks who do not have a computer *must speak to Fr. Riley or call the rectory ASAP to ensure your name is placed on the list of attendees for the Mass you would like to attend.* As of now, we are maximizing our congregation number to 125 people for each Christmas Mass. With 4 Masses, this will allow for all our parishioners, their family members, and others from outside to be able to attend Christmas Mass under present circumstances. Please be open to the possibility of adjusting to the Mass you wish to attend because of limited seating. For those who normally attend on Christmas Eve, you may have to attend on Christmas Day because of limited space. This system is only for Christmas Masses. All other Sunday and Holy Day Masses will not need this system in place since our Church has the capacity to handle social distance requirements based on the number of people who normally attend. Any questions, please speak with Fr. Riley. Thank you for your patience and gentleness in this matter.

**VIRTUAL TRIVIA AND THEOLOGY DECEMBER 6TH**

All high school youth are invited to participate in the next virtual *Trivia and Theology* night, **Sunday, December 6th from 7-8pm** on Zoom for a game of Christmas themed trivia (top score gets a \$20 Dunkin gift card!) followed by an apologetics talk and discussion. The topic will be: ***Is the Bible True?*** To receive the Zoom link, sign up on the Diocesan Youth Ministry website or go to: [neworchester.org/trivia-and-theology](http://neworchester.org/trivia-and-theology). You will be asked for your name and email and a parent's name and email. The link will be sent out a few days before the event starts.

**READINGS FOR NEXT SUNDAY, DECEMBER 13th, THE THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

1st Reading: Isaiah 61:1-2a, 10-11  
 Psalm: Luke:1:46-48, 49-50, 53-54  
 2nd Reading: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24  
 Gospel: John 1:6-8, 19-28

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT 11/22/2020**

Sunday Ordinary	\$ 2,394.00
Fall Fuel Collection	\$ 195.00
Campaign for Human Development	\$ 191.00

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT 11/29/2020**

Sunday Ordinary	\$ 5,761.00
Online Donations 16-29 Nov 2020	\$ 1,392.50
Fall Fuel Collection	\$ 455.00
Campaign for Human Development	\$ 270.00
Thanksgiving Day	\$ 232.00
Christmas Flowers	\$ 20.00

## **FROM THE PASTOR**

When in Israel a few years back, one of the many tourist spots we visited was the Dead Sea some miles east-southeast of Jerusalem. When one leaves a busy city like Jerusalem, a city our Lord wept over for not recognizing his visitation, traveling in a bus to the more desolate geography in this small nation, the gradual changeover becomes more and more apparent each mile. Along the way to the Dead Sea the tourist will view some unusual settings. First, as you travel further outside the holy city, you recognize a large number of nomads living in their small "tent cities." These are not homeless people as we think of them in America. America has a few "tent cities" within large cities, such as San Francisco, where the homeless live because they have no actual home. Nomads in Israel live halfway toward the desert – or closer- with no territory or boundaries, no borders or fences, but are not homeless. Their tents are their actual permanent homes with no address. Mail and UPS deliveries are not made to these folks. They've lived and survived on such "property" for years, and have done so for many centuries.

Also, the traveler may witness on the road to the Dead Sea the place where many Palestinians reside. Their "villages" are very obvious and recognizable. As a traveler, you cannot fail to miss the difference between the average Israeli neighborhood and where Palestinians live. They are not homes as we picture a home (similar to nomads). Palestinians in Israel, for the most part, live in close knit shanties within a set geographical territory they hardly ever leave. They do not wander into areas dominated by a Jewish population. A traveler could get the impression as you pass by in the bus that they live in a prison-like neighborhood, separated from the Jewish population by way of walls and whatever barrier can be created. It's an odd sight.

As one travels closer to the desert in Israel, most all population disappears the closer you are to the heart of the heat. Even nomads won't live in the middle of a desert. The color green is gone, any fruit trees noticed along the way vanish like smoke, and the feel of pure heat and absence of most living things is apparent. You notice that most all human and plant life comes to a standstill in the desert. There are a few plants that survive in such climate. They love the daily heat as much as the human snowbirds who travel to Florida for the winter. But the dominant color in the Israeli desert – and most deserts - is brown. And no, there are no brown UPS trucks out there. The desert of Israel is dirt, dust, choking heat, and as barren as barren can be. Then, after traveling for a stretch, you come upon the oasis known as the Dead Sea, the lowest point on earth. Seeing a sea in the idleness of the desert is weird. Then seeing people swimming – or floating – in it is even stranger.

Maybe this is the sea where John the Baptist would take a bath once a month? Maybe this was the actual oasis on which John would float for an afternoon, reflect on the Kingdom of God and his role in it, preparing himself over a lifetime to baptize the multitudes? Even with the Dead Sea shining forth in the desert of Israel/Jordan, a sea filled with so much salt that a tourist swimmer cannot go under the water but rather floats on top of it, the desert of Israel remains a barren place. Without the Dead Sea and its great salt collection, enough salt to flavor all of America's food, hardly any human being would visit this area. Except for John the Baptist.

The desert was John's home. He became familiar with the desert as well as a nomad became familiar with their tent village. John likely knew things about the desert that no other person could capture. As they say, experience is the best teacher, and John's experience in the desert for what seems like years on end was experience others could not top. How could they when there were no cities or towns out there? Eating locusts and wild honey was, for John, a filet mignon for the meat lover. Grasshoppers for John the Baptist were like the kids' value meal at McDonald's for a child.

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**THIS WEEK AT IMMACULATE CONCEPTION**

Sat.	Dec 05	2:45 PM 4:00 PM	Confession Mass
Sun.	Dec 06	7:30 AM 10:00 AM	Mass Mass
Mon.	Dec 07	8:30 AM 9:00 AM 4:00 PM	Rosary Mass Vigil Mass
Tues.	Dec 08	8:30 AM 9:00 AM	Rosary Mass
Wed.	Dec 09	8:30 AM 9:00 AM	Rosary Mass
Thurs.	Dec 10	7:30 AM 8:00 AM	Rosary Mass
Fri.	Dec 11	7:00 PM	Holy Hour
Sat.	Dec 12	2:45 PM 4:00 PM	Confession Mass
Sun.	Dec 13	7:30 AM 10:00 AM	Mass Mass

**HOPE FOR HOUSING FOOD CARDS**

Because of the situation with the present pandemic, there will be times when no one will be available after Mass to sell food cards for Hope for Housing. In this situation, please speak with Fr. Riley before or after Mass so he can sell what you would like to purchase. This ministry is much too important for our Parish and local community to place aside as it assists families who are struggling to find and maintain proper housing. Purchasing cards makes it easy for us who shop at any of the stores represented, while supporting a most important form of Christian ministry. Thank you for your understanding and continued support for Hope for Housing in and through our Parish. This past week card sales amounted to \$40.00.

**YES, WE WOULD LIKE TO REGISTER  
AT IMMACULATE CONCEPTION!!**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City  
& Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Envelopes yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

Number of People in Household \_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE, TEAR THIS OFF AND PLACE IN THE  
COLLECTION BASKET! THANK YOU!**