

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.	Dec 26	4:00 PM	Alicia and Henry Michalak, from Family
Sun.	Dec 27	7:30 AM	Edward Groden and Dorothy Groden, from Family
		10:00 AM	Helen Queenan, 2nd Anniversary, from Family and Richard Deignan, 4th Anniversary, from his wife, Helen
Mon.	Dec 28	9:00 AM	Joyce West, 1st Anniversary, from Family, <i>(The Holy Innocents)</i>
Tues.	Dec 29	9:00 AM	Timothy J. Dowd, from Family, <i>(St. Thomas Becket)</i>
Wed.	Dec 30	9:00 AM	Mary Theresa O'Brien, from Sheila Towne
Thurs.	Dec 31	8:00 AM	Parishioners of Immaculate Conception, <i>(St. Sylvester I)</i>
		4:00 PM	Richard Zereski, from Family
Fri.	Jan 01	9:00 AM	Donald H. Letendre, from Family
Sat.	Jan 02	4:00 PM	Gertrude and Joseph Deignan, from Family
Sun.	Jan 03	7:30 AM	Algrid A. Zenkus, 1st Anniversary, from Family
		10:00 AM	Christine Fitzpatrick, Memorial, from her son, Shawn McKinnon



RELIGIOUS QUOTE OF THE WEEK

CHRIST IS SALVATION: Lk 2:28-32; "Now, It is a custom in Scripture to call the Christ of God, salvation, as Simeon says: 'Now let your servant depart in peace, O Lord, because my eyes have seen your salvation.' Therefore let us subject ourselves to God, because from him is salvation. He explains what salvation is. It is not some mere active force, which provides us with a certain grace for deliverance from weakness and for the good health of our body. What then is salvation? 'For he is my God and my Savior: he is my protector, I shall be moved no more.' The Son, who is from God, is our God. He himself is also Savior of the human race, who supports our weakness, who corrects the disturbance that springs up in our souls from temptations."

St. Basil the Great (330-379)

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 spiritual and physical well-being of our families.*

ST VINCENT de PAUL GIFT BASKETS

Thank you to the women, men, and children of our Parish St. Vincent de Paul Society for their efforts and Christian generosity by way of purchasing and giving away 38 food baskets for families and individuals in need. The number is actually 76, with 38 baskets prepared and given away for both Thanksgiving and Christmas each. The number this group of parishioners serves seems to grow each year, responding to the numerous requests that come to their attention. May God continue to bless their good work of feeding the poor and needy while maintaining a spirit of joy and hope in the work they accomplish. They make our Parish proud. Thank you.

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, January 6. In preparation for this class please read chapters 6 & 7. Masks are required and social distance will be practiced.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT 12/13/2020

Sunday Ordinary	\$ 4,150.00
Retirement for Religious	\$ 463.00
Feast of the Immaculate Conception	\$ 531.00
Christmas Flowers	\$ 265.00
Online Donations 07-13 Dec 2020	\$ 540.00

FIRST RECONCILIATION

Congratulations to our 2nd graders who recently received their second Sacrament; the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The four students are: Gianna Riley, Gabrielle Schnare, Victoria White, and Flynn Carpenter. May God bless each of these beautiful children and their parents for bringing them to experience God's mercy. And thank you to the two teachers who prepared them for the Sacrament, Nicole Hermance and Joanna Jalbert.

A REMINDER...

With the virus remaining a grave concern at this time, we remind our people to remain at home if you are feeling under the weather in any respect. Even if you think it may simply be a common cold, it is best to stay away for the good of others who, though socially distanced, still remain in the general vicinity of other attendees. Please be vigilant regarding your own health, making the proper choice each Sunday. We thank all of our parishioners for this consideration and common sense approach to the virus.

PURIFIERS IN CHURCH

We have placed in the Church the purifiers our Parish has purchased because of the pandemic. At this time of the year, with doors and windows opened in smaller ways than they are in warmer times, the purifiers are turned on and working at full speed each weekend for the circulatory health benefits of all our people. The 2 purifiers placed on the respective side windows has the capacity to purify 5000 square feet each. Although quiet and seemingly not turned on, which we are thankful for, they are actually working at full speed. Also, with the ceiling fans turned on low, this helps the air from the purifiers to spread in the Church more than if the fans were off. To our knowledge, we have had no cases of the Coronavirus effecting any one who has attended our Church. The plan, of course, is to keep it this way.

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 \$100.00.

READINGS FOR NEXT SUNDAY, JANUARY 3rd, THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD

1st Reading: Isaiah 60:1-6
 Psalm: 72
 2nd Reading: Ephesians 3:2-3a, 5-6
 Gospel: Matthew 2:1-12

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION - There are no Religious Education Classes on Sunday, December 27th. Happy New Year! Classes resume on Sunday, January 3rd.

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.

From the Pastor continued from the following page

only guy who, if he came to me for Confession and said, "You know, Father, I just stopped by to say hello. I can't think of any sins at this time," could be telling the truth. Because everyone else would be lying. Simeon was a man of supreme virtue. Hanging out in the Temple for years on end for the right reasons will do this to a person, and it's a beautiful thing. "Now Master, you may let your servant go in peace." He showed up!

And then there's the holy one Simeon passed every day as they nodded to each other, the Prophetess Anna. Anna, at 84 years of age, lived way beyond the average life expectancy of the time. When everyone around her was dying in their 30's, 40's, and 50's, this strong, healthy lady endured to an age when she would have been the great-great grandmother of all who went before her into the next world. Or, almost old enough to be Abraham's daughter. In between her daily fasting and prayer in the Temple, I can picture Anna being like Aunt Bee of Mayberry, RFD; she cared for the needs of anyone who entered God's holy space. Welcoming, courteous, cooking more food than was ever needed for a meal saying "Eat, eat."

In the midst of her hospitality, Anna, like Simeon, was planted in the Temple by God for a purpose. As the Gospel develops this week over 19 verses, we hear that one approval of Jesus as the expected One was not enough. Simeon can now go in peace, but God wants a second opinion. The second "opinion" of approval that the Plan is now in motion emanates from the holiness of Anna. Again, it's the holiness of the person that allows them to speak the things of God. Those who do evil, or are complicit in evil, or support evil in any way, are not spokesmen or spokeswomen for the Divine. Pretenders abound. Beware of them; in the Church, in politics, or wherever else.

Anna was blessed by the Divine to give a second notice of approval to God's Plan because of her faithfulness to Him. Her words to Mary, that "This child is destined for the fall and rise of many in Israel," could be spoken and believed only by one whose arms fully wrapped around God's shoulders and chest. And don't you think her surviving until 84 in a time when most people lived half that age, that Anna was so deserving of notarizing and certifying the Plan of God? I sure do. It's a wonderful example of how God so generously includes us in some major parts of salvation history. If only we remain patient like Anna and Simeon.

As we celebrate the Feast of the Holy Family this Sunday, we invitingly expand our thoughts of family beyond genes and blood. This is what Christians do. Our blood relatives have the potential to be nearest and dearest to us. Hopefully they are, knowing all families lack perfection. But there's the Temple family of Simeon and Anna, who spent years together in the holy presence of God. For us, this would be likened to Church family (Fr. Connors would be happy). Simeon and Anna were like brother and sister. I'm sure Anna had to wake up Simeon once or twice over the years, both spiritually and physically. This would apply to us also. I've been corrected many times since arriving at this address. The Lincoln Street in me hasn't fully evaporated yet. This is our Temple. The place where God is encountered. The place where family – blood or otherwise – join together in word and sacrament. The place where the Plan continues to unfold.

Peace, Fr. Riley

CHURCH DECORATIONS THANK YOU!

Many, many thanks to our Parish women's group who decorated the Church for Christmas day Masses and the Season of Christmas. The beautiful decorations add so much to the celebration of the feast of our Lord's birth and into the New Year.

HOLY DAY MASSES FOR MARY, MOTHER OF GOD JANUARY 1st

Each year on January 1 the Church celebrates the Solemnity of Mary, the Mother of God, a holy day of obligation. Our schedule for this feast will consist of a Vigil Mass on Thursday, December 31 at 4:00 p.m., and Friday, January 1 at 9:00 a.m.

PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES

Minutes from our recent Parish Council Meeting on December 13 can be found on the Parish website. For any questions, concerns, or comments regarding the minutes, please speak with Fr. Riley.

RECONCILIATION AND PENANCE

The Loss of the Sense of Sin: "Even in the field of the thought and life of the church certain trends inevitably favor the decline of the sense of sin. For example, some are inclined to replace exaggerated attitudes of the past with other exaggerations: From seeing sin everywhere they pass to not recognizing it anywhere; from too much emphasis on the fear of eternal punishment they pass to preaching a love of God that excludes any punishment deserved by sin; from severity and trying to correct erroneous consciences they pass to a kind of respect for conscience which excludes the duty of telling the truth. And should it not be added that the confusion caused in the consciences of many of the faithful by differences of opinions and teachings in theology, preaching, catechesis and spiritual direction on serious and delicate questions of Christian morals ends by diminishing the true sense of sin almost to the point of eliminating it altogether? Nor can certain deficiencies in the practice of sacramental penance be overlooked. These include the tendency to obscure the ecclesial significance of sin and of conversion and to reduce them to merely personal matters; or vice versa, the tendency to nullify the personal value of good and evil and to consider only their community dimension. There also exists the danger, never totally eliminated, of routine ritualism that deprives the sacrament of its full significance and formative effectiveness."

From *Reconciliatio et Paenitentia*, Pope St. John Paul II

THE NEW DICTIONARY OF CATHOLIC SPIRITUALITY

MARRIAGE: Solitude; "Biblically, marriage is shown as being a mirror image, a symbol, of the relationship between God and humanity. A similar spiritual theme, which applies to the relationship both with God and with the spouse in marriage, is that of maintaining individuality in the context of relationality. In marriage as in the spiritual life in general, individual personhood is not to be sacrificed for the sake of the relationship. Quite the opposite is appropriate: Married persons invest their individuality in the sharing or social structure, and further, they experience a fuller measure of individual personhood as they share. Implied here is relational and personal health. By this is meant the existence of self-possession or autonomy as a condition for the establishment of the relation structure. Healthy individuals make healthy relationships. And spiritual development occurs best when the individual possesses and takes responsibility for, first of all, his or her own spiritual life. A person does not depend on others to provide what he or she can provide. The idea of 'giving oneself to the other' has value only when there is an adequate self to offer."

FROM THE PASTOR

They waited an awful long time. Years had passed before the event finally happened. Patience for the two of them was far beyond the borders of being a virtue. It would have been really, really easy to give up hope. It would have been easier for them to die of old age. As they sat there waiting for someone to show up, they likely did lots of reading. Only the good stuff, of course, that would fill them with the things of God. Fortunately, there were no TV's or transistor radios to pass the time. The goodness with the absence of technology is that it kept away all the fake news and talk shows. The two of them were beyond arguing about such foolish things anyway. In fact, they never argued about *anything*. They were so tuned in to God on station 100.7 AM (Another Miracle), they had time only to await and fulfill the Plan. Not a secret plan by any means. A public Plan that would end in crucifixion, resurrection, ascension, and eternal salvation. A Good Plan with Good News. And the two of them were at the heart of the Plan in the early stages.

Simeon and Anna were not husband and wife. Anna lost her husband years before. Even though they loved one another in the presence of Holiness in the Temple, theirs was a love of the purest sort. Imagine how many times they passed each other in the Temple over the years? Did they nod to each other? Did they whisper a "hello" back and forth within the silence of the holy site? Did they wink at each other when crossing paths? Did they have nicknames for each other after spending so much time together? After all, when we spend much time with another, the funny names will begin to appear. Maybe they were both Red Sox fans? Certainly, they both were fans of the coming Messiah. But as they awaited the Day of the Lord as a baby, we know for sure that their holiness and dedication to the holy cause was the driving force behind their steadfast presence and endurance as they awaited the Final Purpose of their lives.

Simeon was toward the end of his days. For years he had witnessed thousands of boys brought into the Temple for presentation and circumcision by their parents. Dedication to the Law revealed by God through Moses was routine business for Simeon. He must have held thousands of baby boys wondering if this could be the one. Time and time again, he was blessed to hold each child with joy. But there was something inside of him that felt a slight sense of disappointment that, as good as these little guys were, they were not The One. As the years passed by, it would have been only natural for Simeon to think that the Plan in which he played a central role might pass him by. That he might get run over by a camel on his way home from the Temple one night, ending his days on earth. Fortunately for Simeon, the camels steered clear of the holy man with dinner on his mind at the end of each day. And, after years of patiently waiting, the child showed up with his parents.

We don't know how Simeon knew it was the One he waited for so long. Scripture doesn't inform us explicitly as to how he understood that the child brought before him that day was the Christ child. We revert here to the holiness of the man, and the spiritual substance of which he was made of by this point in his life. As he approached the end of his days, after years and years of being faithful to the God of Israel, we can logically assume that Simeon, having the Holy Spirit upon him, was, like John the Baptist later on, in perfect sync with the Divine, allowing him, beyond words, to recognize the One whom he awaited. After thousands of boys presented, Simeon possessed total insight that this youngster was The Gift. We can call it spiritual insight, or spiritual intuition. But Simeon, I believe, goes beyond this level of knowing the Plan, recognizing its culmination before him. Living holiness each day builds up beyond our wildest expectations certain knowledge and insight about God we would otherwise not know. Simeon could have been the

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THIS WEEK AT IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

Sat.	Dec 26	2:45 PM 4:00 PM	Confession Mass
Sun.	Dec 27	7:30 AM 10:00 AM	Mass Mass
Mon.	Dec 28	8:30 AM 9:00 AM	Rosary Mass
Tues.	Dec 29	8:30 AM 9:00 AM	Rosary Mass
Wed.	Dec 30	8:30 AM 9:00 AM	Rosary Mass
Thurs.	Dec 31	8:00 AM 4:00 PM	Mass Vigil Mass
Fri.	Jan 01	9:00 AM	Mass
Sat.	Jan 02	2:45 PM 4:00 PM	Confession Mass
Sun.	Jan 03	7:30 AM 10:00 AM	Mass Mass



Feast of the Holy Innocents, Dec 28th, 2020

**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!**