

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
JENNEFER 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. | Jan 02 | 4:00 PM | Gertrude and Joseph Deignan, from Family |
| Sun. | Jan 03 | 7:30 AM | Algird A. Zenkus, 1st Anniversary, from Family |
| | | 10:00 AM | Christine Fitzpatrick, Memorial, from her son, Shawn McKinnon |
| Mon. | Jan 04 | 9:00 AM | Julia Toloczko, from Family (<i>St. Elizabeth Ann Seton</i>) |
| Tues. | Jan 05 | 9:00 AM | Rita L. Letendre, from Family (<i>St. John Neumann</i>) |
| Wed. | Jan 06 | 9:00 AM | Nora M. Dowd, from Family (<i>St. Andre Bessette</i>) |
| Thurs. | Jan 07 | 8:00 AM | Mary McAuliffe, Month Mind, from Parish Family (<i>St. Raymond of Penafort</i>) |
| Sat. | Jan 09 | 4:00 PM | Milagros Lapid and Josefina Lapid-Mandi, from the Lapid Family |
| Sun. | Jan 10 | 7:30 AM | |
| | | 10:00 AM | Norman Lovely, 7th Anniversary, from Wife |

RELIGIOUS QUOTE OF THE WEEK

THE INTENT TO DESTROY: Mt 2:7; “When Herod learned of the birth of our King, he resorted to crafty means to prevent his earthly kingdom from being endangered. He demanded that it be reported to him where the child was to be found. Pretending that he wished to worship him, he would have destroyed him if only he could find him. But of what avail is human malice against the divine plan? ‘There is no wisdom, no prudence, no plan against the Lord.’ The star appeared to guide the magi. They found the newborn king and offered him their gifts. They were warned in a dream not to return to Herod. And so Herod was unable to find Jesus, whom he was seeking. Herod symbolizes all those today who, falsely seeking after the Lord, never manage to find him.”

St. Gregory the Great (c540-604)

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 *our world to search for the Lord in the ways of peace and reconciliation.*

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.

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.

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|--|-------------|
| THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT 12/20/2020 | |
| Sunday Ordinary | \$ 5,322.50 |
| Retirement for Religious | \$ 405.00 |
| Feast of the Immaculate Conception | \$ 132.00 |
| Christmas Flowers | \$ 310.00 |
| Donation | \$ 400.00 |
| Fall Fuel | \$ 100.00 |

THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH

“...as the Lord has forgiven you, so you must forgive.” (Colossians 3:13) Forgiving is one of the hardest things for people to do. We can’t give what we don’t have. We need to receive God’s mercy and forgiveness first before we can give it to others. Go to the sacrament of Reconciliation and receive God’s mercy and forgiveness. Then, share give the gift of forgiveness with someone – a family member, a friend or a co-worker. Pick up the phone or text someone right now.

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.

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 \$520.00.

THE DAY IS NOW FAR SPENT

RUTHLESS ENEMIES: “The West has become increasingly detached from the source of life. How could anyone forget the teaching of the prophet Jeremiah, who put these words in God’s mouth: ‘four my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, Broken cisterns, that can hold no water.’ This break with God can only be fatal. How can westerners suppose that the spiritual, moral, and psychological consequences are not serious? Despite worrisome symptoms, they refuse to call themselves into question. Let us take the example of the arts, architecture, poetry, painting, or music. Can anyone feel to note the terrible regression? Beauty disappears from the horizon. Ugliness is set up as an unsurpassable norm.”

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

READINGS FOR NEXT SUNDAY, JANUARY 10, THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD

1st Reading: Isaiah 42:1-4, 6-7
 Psalm: 29
 2nd Reading: Acts 10:34-38
 Gospel: Mark 1:7-11

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION - Religious Education classes take place on Sunday, January 10th 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.

From the Pastor continued from the following page

That as the darkness covers the earth, and thick clouds cover the people, we reject such ways as a final statement on human life. They are not! We just celebrated for the umpteenth time the birth of “The Light of the World” (read John 9:5), the Word made flesh, making his dwelling among us. He came to us not to say “Hello, and I’ll see you at Fenway Park in April or May.” He came to save. He came because of his love for people. He arrived to let us know we are important to the living God. He came to tell us that *he is God*, and that upon us, he, the Lord, shines. I repeat myself when I say that the Christian has no business being dejected by the ways of this world to the point of feeling defeated. Such a space is not reserved for the Christian. We enjoy the many blessings along the way, care for one another (I pray) on this journey, and laugh much because a sense of humor travels a long distance when attached to the heart of our faith. “Upon you the Lord shines.” Please don’t toss these words onto the roadside. The Lord shines on you!

And concerning “Nations shall walk by your light,” we obviously need, like any nation throughout the world, God’s favor to be upon us, and not God’s scowl or breathing fire dispatched from above. This is not a tricky thing to understand, although there are folks who enjoy making “favorable nation status” with God a tricky topic. Most always, there is deception involved when trickiness and confusion are present, and we know who resides at the heart of deception and confusion. For the United States of America to be a nation that walks by the light of the Divine, we must begin with respect for human life from start to finish. Start to finish is conception to natural death. This is the premier, preeminent topic of our time. Every age has their top-notch issue that will either create “favored nation status” with God, or, God forbid, evoke his Divine anger for disrespecting in the worst possible ways the greatest gift entrusted to us. For some reason, the tug-of-war over the understanding of when life begins remains, when the wonders of science will clearly show the child inside a mother’s womb to be, in fact, yes, a child. And, for some reason, the tug-of-war over when life ends remains, when we have the love, tools, medicine, and concern to assist a dying patient in great pain in ways that ease their pain and know they are loved to the end of their days. The “Nation that walks by your light,” God’s light and not the devil’s darkness, is the nation that holds dear His greatest of all gifts, not making up false arguments, excuses, or misplaced power that will rightfully call down God’s judgement.

As we move into the New Year with anticipation and hope that this heavy burden of a virus will be melted down, either through medicine or otherwise, we, as Christians, are blessed to look to God’s light that will bring us to the lasting place where pandemics and all the bad stuff cannot enter. Our view is above. Upon you the Lord shines. Look down when you’re walking so you don’t trip or fall on the ice. Otherwise, look up and welcome the Light Who seeks to reside within us.

As far as our nation walking by HIS light, that waits to be seen. My fingers and brain are ready to comment like St. Paul so that the good People of God will not be misled or fooled by evil ways pretending to be good. Time will tell in 2021.

Peace, Fr. Riley

RECONCILIATION AND PENANCE

“The mystery of *pietas*, on God’s part, is that mercy in which our Lord and Father - I repeat it again - is infinitely rich. As I said in my encyclical on the subject of divine mercy, it is a love more powerful than sin, stronger than death. When we realize that God’s love for us does not cease in the face of our sin or recoil before our offenses, but becomes even more attentive and generous; when we realize that this love went so far as to cause the passion and death of the Word made flesh who consented to redeem us at the price of his own blood, then we exclaim in gratitude: ‘Yes, the Lord is rich in mercy,’ and even: ‘The Lord is mercy.’ The mystery of *pietas* is the path opened by divine mercy to a reconciled life.”

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

RECENT BAPTISMS

Congratulations to the families of the recently baptized children in our Parish. The children and parents are: *Logan Michael Jacobs*, son of Michael and Maura Jacobs; *Landry Harrison Klug*, son of Daniel Klug and Shaina O’Neil; *Paige Alexandra Mann*, daughter of Thomas and Amy Mann; *Lincoln Fortunato Contino*, son of David and Nicole Contino; *Charlize Susan Cox*, daughter of Kevin and Meredith Cox, *Thomas Robert Freeman*, son of James and Jacquelyn Freeman, and *Marley Jeanne Belanger*, daughter of Thomas and Lauren Belanger. May God’s holy and eternal blessing be upon each of these beautiful children and the parents who will raise them in the practice of our faith.

REST IN PEACE

We pray for the families of those who lost loved ones over the past number of months, that the grace of the Holy Spirit will be with them in their time of loss and grief. We pray for the repose of the souls of *Robert J. McHugh III*, *Doris Herrmann*, *Ronald Alexandrovich*, *Mary McAuliffe*, and *Albert Tamalavitch*. May they rest in peace.

THE NEW DICTIONARY OF CATHOLIC SPIRITUALITY

MARRIAGE: Solitude; “Other principles flow from this insistence on solitude as foundational. First, each marriage partner must respect the distinctive features of the other’s personal and spiritual life (the distinction here between ‘personal’ and ‘spiritual’ life is for the purpose of understanding and discussion only; in actuality, the two aspects of the self are inseparable). This respect has both a passive and an active dimension. Passively, it means that one does not interfere with, criticize, question, or stand in the way of the unique spirituality of the other. This has obvious implications for so-called interfaith or ecumenical marriages. The active side of respect includes an openness or willingness to learn from the spiritual orientation of the other. Assumed is this: if one genuinely loves the other for the sake of the other (a way of describing altruistic love), then one will also find opportunities for one’s own growth within the other. We have much to teach each other of the richness of life, and those who may have the most to share are those deeply involved in each other’s personal life-journeys. Marriage partners, therefore, are in a unique and privileged position to learn about life, about self, and about God from and through each other. In religious language, it can be said that no one will learn about important features of God and the spiritual life through one’s spouse. Marital partners can become instruments of God’s revelation.”

FROM THE PASTOR

“See, darkness covers the earth, and thick clouds over the peoples.”

These words of Isaiah in this week’s first reading for the first Sunday of the New Year of 2021, a year we’ve all been anxiously awaiting for obvious reasons, they describe to a tee the year just passed, 2020. The darkness of a pandemic covered the earth (and still does) with thick clouds over the peoples of most every nation in the world. Few nations have escaped the virus, placing most all of us in the same bucket of slime, if you will. In my 60-plus years of life, I never heard so many people say they couldn’t wait for a certain year to finish. The numbers on the calendar could not change fast enough. Even as the numbers have changed and we’re a few days into the New Year, the same societal issues are present, as well as the same virus indiscriminately going after whomever it feels like going after.

If I created a list of what – and who - to beware of for 2021, the top ten would be a doozy. From politics to moral issues that directly connect to our faith, to financial woes resulting from leaders closing down businesses of people who have worked hard their entire life, to our youth and children remaining out of school, away from friends and classrooms....the list is long. The expectation that the numbers of a year will somehow result in a “better year” than the previous one is no guarantee. Sorry to burst anyone’s bubble on this topic. The only number that changes a pandemic is the number of people who don’t catch it, or the number who effectively receive vaccination against it. This is what we pray and hope will happen this coming year. That as time marches on, we learn how better to handle the virus in ways that will keep all people safe. If everyone could own their own golf course like Tiger Woods, this would go far toward keeping everyone safe, being outdoors and able to maintain the distance our fearful leaders demand we keep.

For 2021, I make no promises I will scale back any critique of our fearful – not fearless - leaders who work at state houses, city halls, and white houses. Whatever arises that speaks to their promoting darkness covering the earth, it will be exposed either in this column or in a homily. I suspect this will be happening a bit more often than I wish. But this is nothing new. Since the first century, Christian leaders – the ones with fortitude – have done this, beginning with Sts. Peter and Paul. When St. Paul wrote so boldly in his 1st century letters that “Jesus is Lord,” he was actually making a political statement against the Emperor with those holy words. He saw that the dude in Rome was considered by all a “son of god,” – a pagan god, but nonetheless a god. All except for Christians. The bigshots in Rome knew they ruled the world with an iron fist, in like manner of a handful of present U.S. Governors, and that their position came automatically with divine status. But when St. Paul came to fully know without question who the real Lord was when traveling on the road to Damascus one morning as he salivated over persecuting Christians, and years later put down “Jesus is Lord” on papyrus for all to see and read, he in effect said that Caesar in Rome was not Lord, but Jesus is. Since that time, the Church has held the responsibility from God above to call out who and what is of God, and who and what are not. All I can say is we need shepherds in the Church to be more like St. Paul, because there exists a present swarm of egomaniacal leaders acting like Caesar in Rome. I guess we can consider this my first political critique of 2021.

On the other side of the darkness covering the earth is what Isaiah notes as the reading continues, that “Upon you the Lord shines,” and ‘Nations shall walk by your light.’ This has been the story of the Christian living in the world, at least the Christian who professes their faith in serious tones. No lukewarmness is allowed for the faith of a serious Christian.

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THIS WEEK AT IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

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|--------|--------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Sat. | Jan 02 | 2:45 PM 4:00 PM | Confession Mass |
| Sun. | Jan 03 | 7:30 AM 10:00 AM | Mass Mass |
| Mon. | Jan 04 | 8:30 AM 9:00 AM | Rosary Mass |
| Tues. | Jan 05 | 8:30 AM 9:00 AM | Rosary Mass |
| Wed. | Jan 06 | 8:30 AM 9:00 AM | Rosary Mass |
| Thurs. | Jan 07 | 7:30 AM 8:00 AM | Rosary Mass |
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**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!**