

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 SECRETARY
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.	Feb 20	4:00 PM	Dr. Harry J. Kelly and his parents, from Family
Sun.	Feb 21	7:30 AM	Donald H. Letendre, from Family
		10:00 AM	Albert Menard (1st Anniversary) and Emilia Menard (6th Anniversary), from Family
Mon.	Feb 22	9:00 AM	(<i>The Chair of St. Peter the Apostle</i>)
Tues.	Feb 23	9:00 AM	(<i>St. Polycarp, Bishop and Martyr</i>)
Wed.	Feb 24	9:00 AM	(<i>Lenten Weekday</i>)
Thurs.	Feb 25	8:00 AM	Parishioners of Immaculate Conception
Sat.	Feb 27	4:00 PM	(<i>Saturday of the First Week of Lent</i>)
Sun.	Feb 28	7:30 AM	Jerry Duclos, 1st Anniversary, from Family
		10:00 AM	Jon Greene, 5th 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, February 24. In preparation for this class please read chapter 21. Masks are required and social distance will be practiced.

HOLY HOUR AND STATIONS OF THE CROSS ON FRIDAYS OF LENT

Because of the lesser amount of people who attend Holy Hour and Stations of the Cross in the Church during the Season of Lent as opposed to Sunday Mass, we will be able to hold in our Church these two wonderful devotions without concern for going over present gathering limits because of the pandemic. During each Friday of Lent a Holy Hour will be held from 5:30-6:30 p.m., followed by Stations of the Cross from 6:30-7:00 p.m. We invite any parishioner who wishes to attend. As with all Masses in our Church, social distance is to be practiced throughout the 1-1/2 hours these two devotions are held, unless those in attendance live in the same household. We ask all attendees to be ever vigilant in this regard. 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 on that day. 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 practice of works of mercy in our lives*.

LENTEN LUNCHES IN WORCESTER

St. Bernard Church of Our Lady of Providence Parish will offer a baked haddock lunch on Fridays during Lent for pick up only at 228 Lincoln St. by the gym entrance. The \$15 meal comes with rice pilaf and carrots and must be preordered by Wednesday before, online at olpworcester.org/lenten-fish or call the parish at 508-755-3820.

40 DAYS FOR LIFE ASSISTANCE

40 Days for Life began this year on Sunday, February 14 and runs throughout much of the Lenten season. This dedicated Pro-life group is looking for assistance from any parishioners who would be interested in spending time in prayer in front of Planned Parenthood on Pleasant St. during the daytime hours over the course of the 40 days. If you're interested in assisting, please speak with Fr. Riley. Thank you.

READINGS FOR NEXT SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 28, THE SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT

1st Reading: Genesis 22:1-2, 9a, 10-13, 15-18
 Psalm: 116
 2nd Reading: Romans 8:31b-34
 Gospel: Mark 9:2-10

DEACON FRANK MYSKA

Deacon, Frank, at this time, remains in St. Mary's Health Care Center in Worcester. Any parishioner who would like to send Deacon Frank an uplifting card wishing him good health and recovery, we're sure he would like to receive a few of them from the people of his Parish. For those who wish to do so, you can send it to Deacon Frank Myska, St. Mary Health Care Center, 39 Queen St., Worcester, MA 01610.

SPIRITUAL READING FOR LENT

At each entrance to the Church can be found various pamphlets for the good use of spiritual reading for the Season of Lent. These pamphlets provide with a holy thought/practice for each Lenten day, leading into Holy Week in late March/early April. Please avail yourself of taking one or two pieces, allowing each respective author to accompany us on our Lenten journey for 2021.

LENT BIBLE STUDY FOR YOUNG ADULTS

All young adults are invited to join us for a virtual Lenten Bible Study **every Tuesday evening of Lent at 8pm beginning on February 23**. The Bible study will involve Lectio Divina along with a discussion. Each session will be unique to that Sunday's gospel reading so individuals are welcome to attend all gatherings, some, or even just one or two. **Feel free to attend as often as you are able!** To sign up to receive the Zoom link, go to neworchester.org/lent-lectio-divina

DEACON INFORMATION SESSIONS

The Office of the Diaconate is seeking active men of faith in the Diocese of Worcester who may be discerning a vocation as a permanent deacon. Two online information sessions have been scheduled on **February 23 and March 4 at 7:00 pm** via Zoom. Each session should last from 1.5 to 2 hours. Men between the ages of 31 and 60, married or single, who are interested in learning more about the permanent diaconate and the process for become a deacon may pre-register for one of the Information Sessions at worcesterdiocese.org/register-for-information-session. An email with the link to the online session will be sent out prior to the scheduled date.

CARE FOR YOUR MIND, BODY AND SOUL

You are invited to join the CARE team at St. Mary Parish, Uxbridge, for either an online gathering or in-person gathering of CARE for your Mind, Body and Soul. This session will consist of a faith presentation, including a video entitled, "How to Pray in Challenging Times," followed by sharing, prayer and discussion if you are comfortable. **Thursday, Feb. 25, 7 – 8:30 pm on Zoom; Saturday, Feb. 27, 10 – 11:30 am in the Parish Hall.** Registration is required and can be done through the parish website, email or by calling the office. For the in-person session, masks are required and social distancing will be observed. Visit stmaryuxbridge.org or email: diane.moriarty56@gmail.com or call 508-615-7154.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT 2/14/2021

Sunday Ordinary (includes Online) \$ 2,670.00

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION - Religious Education classes take place on Sunday, February 21st 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.

GUIDELINES FOR LENTEN FASTING AND ABSTINENCE

The Lenten fasting and abstinence guidelines for the Diocese of Worcester are as follows: abstinence from meat is to be observed by all Catholics fourteen (14) years of age and older on Ash Wednesday, Good Friday, and all Fridays of Lent. Fasting is to be observed by all Catholics who are eighteen (18) years of age but not yet fifty-nine (59) years of age on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. Those who are bound to fast may take only one full meal, while two smaller meals are permitted if necessary to maintain strength according to one's needs. Eating solid foods in between meals is not permitted. Catholics should not lightly excuse themselves from these prescribed Lenten penitential practices.

EMMANUEL RADIO: ARE YOU A ST. JOSEPH?

Can you live like St. Joseph for 100 Days??? Then join 1230AM & 970AM Emmanuel Radio's "Year of St. Joseph" 100 Men Challenge. Be one of our first 100 men to live like St. Joseph in prayer, action, and stewardship for 100 days. In this year of St. Joseph, answer your call to faith like St. Joseph did. For details/to join the challenge visit 1230radio.com or call (508) 767-1230

2021 TRIP TO POLAND SIGNUP NOW

Our Parish trip to Poland has been rescheduled for September. The new dates for the trip will be September 20-30, 2021. The cost of the trip is \$3389, and single supplement \$700. We will visit cities and sites such as Warsaw and its historic monuments, Malbork Castle, Gdansk, Torun and the house where Nicolaus Copernicus was born, Czestochowa, a tour of Auschwitz-Birkenau, Krakow and a visit to the 16th century Wawel Royal Castle, as well as the Jewish Quarter, the birthplace of St. John Paul II and the Museum of Cardinal Karol Wojtyla, and other cultural experiences of Poland. Consider joining us on this wonderful trip of religion, history, and culture to beautiful Poland. We have 32 seats reserved for this trip with 16 of them presently filled. Signup sheets can be printed off from our Parish website at icworc.com and sent to Fr. Riley at the Church. The last day for signup is June 1. Any questions please call Fr. Riley at 508-754-8419, or Callie Foster at 508-397-5883. Thank you.

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 \$90.00.

CONTRIBUTION STATEMENTS FOR 2020

Any parishioner who would like to receive a statement for your contributions for 2020 for tax purposes, please call the rectory during office hours as found on the front page of the bulletin, or email us at icworc@live.com and we will mail you a copy. Thank you.

From the Pastor continued from the following page

the first *covenantal relationship* in the lives of every Christian...."If you love father or mother more than you love me, you are not worthy of being mine" (Mt 10:37).

The covenant/contract issue stands before us this 1st Sunday of Lent in the first reading from Genesis. The good news is that God, with Noah, did not sign a contract. He signed – with Noah, prompted by God – a *covenant*. God promised Noah that he would never destroy the world again through floods, or anything else for that matter. A contract is not capable of holding together such a massive promise, while a covenant is. If there is any destroying of the world nowadays, it's the horror of nuclear devices created by man causing it. God promised to never create a "nuclear weapon" again after the first worldwide flood, and He has not. This was/is his promise to humanity. It still holds true.

Why did God bring forth this covenant with Noah? I offer a couple of reasons. First, as with all things God and us, he loves us unconditionally. Noah, a righteous man, was the renewal of Adam & Eve's sin. Noah was a new beginning to Adam's fault. God's unconditional love for us was not absent when the flood came, telling Noah beforehand to make a large ship and secure it so He could wipe out the sinful stains caused by the first couple. The time arrived for God's unconditional love for us to move full speed ahead, like a focused UPS driver the few weeks before Christmas. The covenant with Noah was God's way of telling the rest of time and humanity that the promise of lasting joy is the endgame. That Adam's debacle with his wife Eve would now be overcome by the Lord's sustaining love. For good. Just like the goal of marriage. Indissoluble.

And second, when God established the covenant with Noah, it was sealed between the two by the symbol of a bow in the sky. Symbols are incredibly important in Catholicism. We use them all the time and all over the place, and in special ways in the Sacraments. Our symbols – such as the sign of the cross – are meant to inch us closer and closer to Jesus in our relationship with him. *All the symbols we do and holy movements we make are part of the package that draws us closer to the Lord.* God's bow in the sky for Noah to see was the symbol that God used to seal the deal of what is called the Noahic Covenant, a lasting promise that He who had power – and still does – to destroy all His creation would not do so, so humanity can live without such fear. Again, what man does to man is another story.

The major symbols we use for Lent are ashes, fasting, prayer, abstinence, and almsgiving, but not limited to these. In one sense, technically, they would be considered "contracts," since for Lent they last 40 days. Some folks, however, have accepted them to the point of making them a "covenant" with the Lord, such as those who fast every Friday of the year like Catholics used to do and should do again. And do so "until death do they part." These "smaller" covenants are not small by any means when connected to our spiritual maturity and growth. If anything, they help lead us to the greatest covenant God has made with us, the one sealed in the blood of his Son. One of the beneficial truths we can embrace this Lent is to understand that our entire selves – body, mind, and spirit – is in a covenant relationship with our God, the one sealed in the Cross of his Son.

Peace, Fr. Riley

FROM THE PASTOR

When preparing couples for marriage, it is always essential to help them understand, if they don't already, the difference between a contract and a covenant. It's the difference between a "Hollywood marriage" and a Christian marriage. By Hollywood marriage I mean waking up one day, telling your spouse you don't love them anymore, and you pack up your bags and leave, never to be seen again. Of course, there are some good marriages in Hollywood to be sure. But unfortunately, the dominant theme seems to be the "wake-up and leave forever" model. Just ask Liz Taylor if you see her.

A contract is an agreement that ends, plain and simple. A contract ends when the work is finished. You hire someone to do some kitchen work for you, they put in a nice new stove, refrigerator, paint the walls, nail in some beautiful cabinets, put in a trash compactor that cleans itself, and voila, you're as happy – hopefully – as a pig in mud. They say to you, "I hope you like the work. Here's the invoice." After not having a heart attack over the bill, you say, "I like the work you did. I'll call you if I ever need you again. Thank you." You parts ways amicably, two sides filled with happiness and no regrets. This, of course, is the fulfillment of an ideal contract. Not all of them, we know, end this way. But you get the point about a contract having a beginning and end.

A covenant, on the other hand, doesn't end until death, and sometimes even longer. Christian marriage, a Sacrament that is supposed to be received by every baptized Catholic who gets married where a priest or deacon is the witness, and not performed by a civil official (there is much confusion about this today), is a covenant that ends at death. Yes, marriage ends when one spouse dies and stands before God. Instinctively, we still see couples as husband and wife if and when the husband or wife dies, calling them such even after death. But technically, sacraments and their effects - not relationships – end at death. But while they are living, married Christian couples live out a covenant; a relationship that goes far beyond the meaning and reality of a contract.

One of the parts of Christian marriage that could possibly scare a youngster nowadays is when I tell them they are committing themselves to this one person for the rest of their lives. This is when the level of spiritual maturity will come to the forefront for both the man and woman. It will show either an ugly face or a beautiful face. They will either embrace this great Christian marital truth of "for good, in sickness and health, good times and bad, until death do they part," or get scared by it, where their heart will shake in their boots.

Most couples who come to the Church for their wedding (again, all baptized Catholics have the responsibility to be married *in the Church* as long as they have not renounced their Catholic faith!), such couples as individuals are already in the mindset of having chosen their future spouse as the one person they look forward to being with until their death. Or better yet, God has chosen each of them for the other. *They are ready for a covenantal relationship.* But once in a while....the thought of having to spend the rest of their life with this other person causes a bit of hesitation in the step of their hearts, and some possible consternation, prior to the wedding day. If that's the case, such hesitation of heart, mind, and will must be worked out – at least for the most part- before the big date arrives. Otherwise, chances are good that bad things will result over the short or long term. Why? Because they were not spiritually ready for *covenant*. All in. Permanent. For good.

Fortunately and thankfully, we have many, many splendid examples of Christian marriage before us. I pray we all know some couples who have handled the responsibilities of *covenant* for decades on end, and have found lasting joy. For those who may not have for various reasons, please know that your covenant as a practicing Catholic is long established in your being faithful to Christ your Lord. Which, by the way, married or not, is to be

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THIS WEEK AT IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

Sat.	Feb 20	2:45 PM 4:00 PM	Confession Mass
Sun.	Feb 21	7:30 AM 10:00 AM	Mass Mass
Mon.	Feb 22	8:30 AM 9:00 AM	Rosary Mass
Tues.	Feb 23	8:30 AM 9:00 AM	Rosary Mass
Wed.	Feb 24	8:30 AM 9:00 AM	Rosary Mass
Thurs.	Feb 25	7:30 AM 8:00 AM	Rosary Mass
Sat.	Feb 27	2:45 PM 4:00 PM	Confession Mass
Sun.	Feb 28	7:30 AM 10:00 AM	Mass Mass

RELIGIOUS QUOTE OF THE WEEK

THE WILDERNESS SETTING: Mk 1:12; "You see how the Spirit led him, not into a city or public arena, but into the wilderness. In this place, the Spirit extended the devil an occasion to test him, not by hunger, but also by loneliness, for it is there most especially that the devil assails us, when he sees us left alone and by ourselves. In the same way did he also confront Eve in the beginning, having caught her alone and apart from her husband."

St. John Chrysostom (c.347-407)

**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!**