

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 27	4:00 PM	Ruth Shea, from Family
Sun.	Feb 28	7:30 AM	Jerry Duclos, 1st Anniversary, from Family
		10:00 AM	Jon Greene, 5th Anniversary, from Family
Mon.	Mar 1	9:00 AM	Todd Dickie, Month Mind, from Parish Family
Tues.	Mar 2	9:00 AM	Ralph Brosnahan, Month Mind, from Parish Family
Wed.	Mar 3	9:00 AM	Dr. Robert E. Maher, Month Mind, from Parish Family
Thurs.	Mar 4	8:00 AM	Parishioners of Immaculate Conception
Sat.	Mar 6	4:00 PM	<i>(Saturday of the Second Week of Lent)</i>
Sun.	Mar 7	7:30 AM	Fr. Henry A. Donoghue, from the Geheran Family
		10:00 AM	Marlene Dooley-Wajda, 10th Anniversary, from Family

TUESDAY EVENING LENTEN CONFESSIONS

Beginning this Tuesday evening, March 2, the Sacrament of Reconciliation will be offered in the Church for the remaining Tuesdays of Lent from 6:30-7:30 p.m. Confessions will be heard in the cry room in the front of the Church. Please consider taking advantage of God's Sacrament of mercy during this time of repentance and prayer.

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, March 3. In preparation for this class please read chapters 21 & 26. Masks are required and social distance will be practiced.

ON-LINE STUDY OF EVANGELIUM VITAE

The Respect Life Office of the Diocese of Worcester invites you to join "Live the Gospel of Life" a 6-week on-line study of St. John Paul II's landmark encyclical *Evangelium Vitae*. The sessions will be held via Zoom on six consecutive Wednesdays, **March 3 through April 7 from 2:30 – 3:30 p.m.** Participants will have the opportunity to study and prayerfully reflect more deeply on The Gospel of Life and its central themes and teachings. The study series is open to anyone interested. **You must pre-register in order to receive materials and the login link.** To register, send an email to: aledoux@worcesterdioocese.org with your name, parish, and email address; include the words "EV Study Registration" in the subject line. All are welcome!

ST. VINCENT DE PAUL MEETING

St. Vincent de Paul of Immaculate Conception is inviting you to join our "network of parish friends, inspired by Gospel values, growing in holiness and building a more just world through personal relationships with and service to people in need". If you are interested in learning more about what we do please join us **March 4, at 6:30pm** for a zoom meeting. Contact Lisa Dobson at 724-221-7109 or lisatdobson1999@gmail.com for more information.

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 **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 worcesterdioocese.org/register-for-information-session. An email with the link to the online session will be sent out prior to the scheduled date.

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.

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.

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**. 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

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 living out of our corporal works of mercy this Lent in more faithful and deeper ways.*

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.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT 2/21/2021

Sunday Ordinary (includes Online)	\$ 4,921.50
Ash Wednesday, Priests' Retirement Fund	\$ 3,274.00
Catholic Free Press	\$ 59.00
Winter Fuel Collection	\$ 270.00
Church in Latin America Collection	\$ 156.00
Spring Fuel Collection	\$ 75.00

READINGS FOR NEXT SUNDAY, MARCH 7, THE THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

1st Reading: Exodus 17:3-7
 Psalm: 95
 2nd Reading: Romans 5:1-2, 5-8
 Gospel: John 4:5-42

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION - Religious Education classes take place on Sunday, February 28th 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.

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.

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 \$450.00.

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 icwor.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.

From the Pastor continued from next column

faith allegiance lies, and where does it stand in terms of priority in our lives. Is a shift of path needed? Is our primary commitment centered in the Lord or a party of flawed humans like the Pharaoh family? Who is it that can save our lives? Who is it that has saved our lives? Is it Mr. Government who will send you a small check because of a pandemic, taking money from your grandchildren? Or is it the Lord Jesus Christ who suffered and died for us poor folks living in sin, calling us to life eternal? Moses made the right choice. He chose God, refusing to be part of Pharaoh's family. And the Egyptian he buried in the sand? He simply represents the condition of sin for all humanity, which Christ had nailed to the tree. The top reason to always choose him.

Peace, Fr. Riley

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due. Despite this, Moses, guided by faith, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing instead to suffer with God's people rather than enjoying the fleeting pleasures of sin as part of the King of Egypt's family.

The day Moses defended his brother Hebrew against the Egyptian slave driver, his lot was cast for the rest of his life. And, without question, he made the right choice. His allegiance was now with the God of his people. It's not hard to see why God favored Moses in the years ahead as the leader of His people Israel, the one through whom God would show His power and signs. Moses could have had all the pleasures of life any person could ever want, if one chooses to live only for this time, as the pagan Egyptians did. Their gods were human power and strength. Does it surprise us that their "gods" would not answer the King some time later when God struck down the firstborn of the Egyptians, causing the King to beg his god to bring life back into his young son who was to take over the reins one day? False gods do not answer such pleading. They don't even exist. How can a non-existent nothing command breath into the body of a dead child? Well, Jesus will eventually settle that matter and give the world the answer that brings incredulous joy.

The story of Moses centers in the one choice that sets the path for the rest of our lives, *and staying on the path*. The path is not about killing someone who stands against us. The path is not concerned with avenging a brother or sister whom evil forces are beating up. No matter how much we think we owe another person, or party, or group, or dare I say, even a nation, the choice to be made – the Moses choice, if you will – is that of choosing the only Lord in existence. We live for the Lord first and before all else. By choosing God first always with our allegiance, we set ourselves up as people who will love greatly and humbly; our families, our friends, strangers whose names we don't know, our neighbor whom God sends our way. Moses chose to suffer with his people when he could have lived the Life of Riley. He chose God to be the first light in his life, not because he killed another, for this would be the most serious misrepresentation of God. His choice was centered in being loyal to his poor, suffering people, choosing to be a slave rather than the son of the Pharaoh's daughter and all the pleasures of sin that went with it.

The story of Moses today speaks loudly to all us Catholics tempted to choose our politics over and above our faith in Christ, where politics are the driving force in our lives. Choosing the "pleasures of sin" over the great holiness of being grounded in Christ. *Every Catholic must take time to reflect on this choice*. This is the time in which we live. Some people lose their minds, seeking to "kill an Egyptian," acting like our politics are the main event in our lives, the primary path to walk on. And it's not that politics are unimportant or without meaning. Our governing bodies are both important and have meaning. But to allow the King of Egypt, Mr. Pharaoh, or the Pharaoh's daughter to be the center of our lives when Christ is calling every moment to seek him first and above all, well, that's no place for any Catholic to reside. My spiritual advice is to move out of the palace, move into the poor, loving, Sacred Heart of Jesus, and allow our politics to stand behind his Sacred Heart as it must.

This Lent is the best of times to consider in prayer where our

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FROM THE PASTOR

It's one of the highlights of the Old Testament, the story of Moses' birth, growth, and allegiance. As the story unfolds in the Book of Exodus, Moses was born at a time when Pharaoh, the King of Egypt – the one who knew nothing about the Israelites past history in Egypt and didn't want to know – saw how numerous the Israelites were becoming throughout the land. As any paranoid, ill-mannered King would do, similar to Herod, he decided it was time to kill all the baby boys who were born, allowing the girls to live. His concern was that said slave boys would grow and become the adversaries of Egypt through the formation of an Israelite army, choosing sides with other Egyptian enemies, eventually overthrowing the power of Pharaoh and his future sons. Thus, Moses was destined to die the moment he was born.

However, some of those Israelite women were pretty sharp, including Moses' mother. After giving birth to Moses, she hid him in a basket, placed him in the Nile River, a weedy, reedy place where the current would not sweep him off to some other country, and did so in an area where she knew the Pharaoh's daughter would come to bathe. Upon seeing the basket, the Pharaoh's daughter had one of her subjects check it out. Upon finding a baby boy crying inside, she had her subject call one of the Hebrew women (Moses' mother) to nurse the boy. The Hebrew woman chosen joyfully nursed the boy.

Moses grew up under the care of the Pharaoh's daughter, knowing this boy becoming a man she cared for was an Israelite. Is there anything softer than the heart of a woman that reaches beyond race, nationality, culture, and whatever else needs to be reached beyond? It's a beautiful thing to behold. Anyway, one day when Moses was about 20 or so, reaching the peak of his strength, he witnessed an Egyptian beating a slave Israelite for not working as hard and fast as the Egyptian slavedriver wanted him to work. Sounds like another day at UPS. Moses, not one to stand there and do nothing, went over and made a spot decision that this Egyptian was going to die for beating a fellow Israelite of his, defending the slave with his life. Needless to say, Moses won that boxing match, buried the Egyptian in the sand, and moved on as proud as a peacock for defending one of his own.

The next day rolls around, and Moses encountered two Israelites fighting each other. The great future leader of the Hebrews scolded the two Israelite brothers for fighting one another (sounds a bit like the Riley family), telling them to stop doing so. They said to Moses, "Well, are you going to kill us like you killed the Egyptian yesterday? Are you going to bury us in the sand too?" Understandably, Moses became fearful with the realization that everyone knew the story of what he did to the Egyptian. Bad/good news (depending on what side you belong) travels fast, so fast that the King of Egypt, Mr. Pharaoh, had a death warrant out for Moses. A price had been set for the life of Moses. As the story goes, Moses escaped from the clutches of Pharaoh, running off to another country where he found the love of his life, Zipporah, and eventually was sent back to Egypt by God after a certain divine experience that involved a certain burning bush. You know the story.

At the heart of this story is an important message for us during this season of Lent. It involves allegiance, commitment, favor, choosing sides, priority, and where we place our heart of hearts. Moses, whose life was saved by the Pharaoh's daughter, the one person who could have sent the baby boy upriver in his basket after noting he was a Hebrew boy, ending up only God knows where, if not at the bottom of the river. Moses could have chosen the side of the Egyptian who was beating the Israelite for not working hard enough or fast enough because of the life-saving efforts of the Pharaoh's daughter. Moses owed his life to her. He must have come to know the story of his birth and events shortly thereafter, and all that the Pharaoh's daughter did for him. *She saved his life.* She deserved an award! Give credit where credit is

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THIS WEEK AT IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

Sat.	Feb 27	2:45 PM 4:00 PM	Confession Mass
Sun.	Feb 28	7:30 AM 10:00 AM	Mass Mass
Mon.	Mar 1	8:30 AM 9:00 AM	Rosary Mass
Tues.	Mar 2	8:30 AM 9:00 AM	Rosary Mass
Wed.	Mar 3	8:30 AM 9:00 AM	Rosary Mass
Thurs.	Mar 4	7:30 AM 8:00 AM	Rosary Mass
Sat.	Mar 6	2:45 PM 4:00 PM	Confession Mass

CRS RICE BOWL

Boxes for the annual Catholic Relief Services Rice Bowl collection may be found at each entrance to the Church. These boxes will be collected at the end of Lent and be forwarded to Catholic Relief Services through our Diocese. The central mission of CRS is to serve the poor and hungry in our country and throughout the world, addressing particularly any areas that involve natural disasters. Thank you.

RELIGIOUS QUOTE OF THE WEEK

IT IS WELL THAT WE ARE HERE: Mk 9:5a; "In most holy contemplation we shall be ever filled with the sight of God shining gloriously around us as once it shown for the disciples at the divine transfiguration. And there we shall be, our minds away from passion and from earth, and we shall have a conceptual gift of light from him and, somehow, in a way we cannot know, we shall be united with him and, our understanding carried away, blessedly happy, we shall be struck by his blazing light. Marvelously, our minds will be like those in the heavens above."

**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!**