

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.	Mar 27	4:00 PM	Vincenza Pultorak, 5th Anniversary, from Husband John
Sun.	Mar 28	7:30 AM	Eleanor Groden, from Family
		10:00 AM	Marie E. Madaio, 6th Anniversary
Mon.	Mar 29	9:00 AM	Parishioners of Immaculate Conception
Tues.	Mar 30	9:00 AM	<i>(Tuesday of Holy Week)</i>
Wed.	Mar 31	9:00 AM	<i>(Wednesday of Holy Week)</i>
Thurs.	Apr 1	7:00 PM	<i>(Holy Thursday)</i>
Fri.	Apr 2	3:00 PM	<i>(Friday of the Passion of the Lord - Good Friday)</i>
Sat.	Apr 3	7:30 PM	For the Deceased Members of the Lapid Family, from Family
Sun.	Apr 4	7:30 AM	Mary E. Early, from Tom Kelly
		9:00 AM	
		10:30 AM	

TUESDAY EVENING LENTEN CONFESSIONS

The Sacrament of Reconciliation will be offered in the Church this Tuesday of Holy Week 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.

ATTENTION WORCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENT PARENTS

On **Tuesday, March 30 at 5:30 pm** the Teaching, Learning and Student Supports Standing Committee of the Worcester Public Schools is scheduled to hold a virtual meeting on several curriculum proposals that will include sex education for your children. While details on the current proposals are not fully available at this time, a curriculum proposed in 2019 included 6th grade students and was withdrawn because of inappropriateness and parent concerns. Information regarding on-line access to the meeting can be found by emailing the School Committee's Clerk's Office at Magric@worcesterschools.net or by calling 508-799-3032.

SCRIPTURE STUDY ON WEDNESDAY EVENINGS

Our last Bible study class for the Gospel of Matthew will be held on Wednesday, March 31 from 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 in the Church basement. In preparation for this last class, please read chapter 28. Masks are required and social distance will be practiced.

EASTER FLOWER ENVELOPES

Envelopes for Easter flowers have been placed at each entrance to the Church. Donations will help to offset the cost of the many beautiful flowers our Parish purchases for the Easter festivities and Easter season. These envelopes will be placed on our altar throughout the Easter season as we pray for the souls of our loved ones and friends. Thank you.

PARTNERS IN CHARITY

The Partners in Charity Campaign has begun in our Parish. Our Campaign Chairman, parishioner Bill Stanton, spoke briefly at each Mass last Sunday, and I wish to thank Bill for stepping forward again this year to assist in this most important annual campaign that supports so many ministries essential to the life and works of our Diocese. From treating and serving basic needs of the poor in our communities, to seminarians studying for priesthood, retired priests who have dedicated their life's work to our Diocese, and many more ministries. Envelopes and information for the 2021 campaign have been placed at each entrance to the Church for anyone who has not received this information through a Diocesan mailing. With many parishioners now donating online, for those who do so, you can go to worcesterdiocese.org and scroll to the bottom of the page where can be found the Partners in Charity emblem. Click on the emblem and follow the directions for donating. Our Parish goal remains the same as in past years; \$88,500, and I pray that each parishioner will consider this year donating on behalf of our Parish. Thank you, Fr. Riley.

SCHEDULE FOR HOLY WEEK MASSES AND SERVICES

Our schedule for the upcoming Holy week celebrations are as follows: Mass on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday at 9:00 a.m. There is no Thursday morning Mass on Holy Thursday. Mass of the Lord's Supper, Holy Thursday, will be held at 7:00 p.m. with adoration in our Church until 10:00 p.m. Stations of the Cross will be held at Noon on Good Friday. Our Good Friday Service will be held at 3:00 p.m. Our Easter Vigil Mass will begin at 7:30 p.m. And Easter Sunday Masses will be held at 7:30 a.m., 9:00 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.

EASTER SUNDAY MASSES DIFFERENT SCHEDULE AND SIGN UP

Because of the pandemic and the ongoing going concern for social distancing in the Church, combined with Easter Sunday traditionally being a day when more attendees are in Church than we find on other Sundays, there arises the need for a change in the Mass schedule for Easter Sunday, as well as the need for our parishioners and all attendees to sign up for a certain Mass so that our numbers do not reach the danger point of infringing on the social distancing aspect of attending Mass. Therefore, our schedule will be the following: Easter Vigil Mass on Saturday, April 3 will begin at 7:30 p.m. Easter Sunday Masses, April 4, will be at 7:30 a.m., 9:00 a.m. & 10:30 a.m. Signup will be necessary for the 3 Masses on Easter Sunday morning only. *Signup will not be necessary for the Easter Vigil Mass on Saturday evening at 7:30*, since fewer people normally attend that Mass. Signing up for your respective Mass on Easter Sunday morning will begin on Monday, March 8. The place for signup will be our Parish Website; icworc.com. Like Christmas Masses last year, tickets will be needed for entrance into the Church for each of the 3 Easter Sunday morning Masses. You will be able to print off your ticket at the time you sign up for the Mass you wish to attend. The number of attendees for each Mass will be capped at 120. For anyone who does not have a computer and plans on attending Mass on Easter Sunday morning, please speak with Fr. Riley and he will sign you up. We apologize for any inconvenience in this matter, but it is for the safety, well-being, and comfortability of all who attend Mass on Easter Sunday morning. Any questions, feel free to call the rectory or speak with Fr. Riley at any time.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT 3/21/2021

Sunday Ordinary (includes Online)	\$ 3114.50
Spring Fuel	\$ 932.00
Catholic Relief Services	\$ 290.00
Easter Flowers	\$ 60.00

READINGS FOR NEXT SUNDAY, APRIL 4, EASTER SUNDAY

1st Reading: Acts of the Apostles 10:34a, 37-43
 Psalm: 118
 2nd Reading: Colossians 3:1-4
 Gospel: John 20:1-9

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION - Religious Education classes take place on Sunday, March 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.

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION ANNUAL EASTER EGG HUNT - Please join us on Easter Sunday at 10:00AM for the annual Easter Egg Hunt. The egg hunt will take place on the church grounds. Bring your own basket!

PRAYER CARDS FOR CONFIRMATION CANDIDATES - Please visit our display of the Confirmation Candidates located near the entrance of the church. Please take a prayer card from the display and keep all of the candidates in your prayers as they begin at this time a more focused study and deeper meaning of their Catholic faith. As they prepare for their reception of the sacrament of Confirmation on Sunday, May 2nd at St. Paul's Cathedral, may we rejoice in their dedication, devotion, and hard work as they prepare to receive the fullness of the Holy Spirit in their lives.

FIRST COMMUNION PRAYER CARDS - A number of children in our parish will share in an event of great joy for them and the entire Catholic Community. On Saturday, May 1st, they will receive Jesus in the Eucharist for the first time. They and their families have been preparing for this sacrament for some time now, learning what the gift of Eucharist is about and what it means to share that gift with others. Please visit our display of the First Communion Class located near the entrance of the church. Please take a prayer card from the display and keep all of the children in your prayers as they take the final steps in preparing for the sacrament of First Holy Communion.

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 *a smooth transition for all Worcester public schools as students and teachers come back together.*

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 for this trip with only 10 seats available. 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.

POLAND TRIP INFORMATION NIGHT

Our Parish will hold an information night for the upcoming September trip to Poland. The information evening will take place on Tuesday, April 6 at 6:30 p.m. in the Church Basement. This is an excellent opportunity for anyone with an interest in joining us, as well as those who have signed up, to find out more information on this exciting trip and to ask questions. Some changes have been made to the original plans regarding price and flights that make the travel more accommodating for all. We hope to see you on April 6.

From the Pastor continued from the following column

Easter Vigil is a Mass with unique parts to it.

The "high holy days" of this coming week invite all Catholics to consider participating in these once-a-year celebrations that allow us to walk with the Lord in his passion, death, and resurrection. I pray we all care enough to consider the option of participating through our presence and attention. "This is the day the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it."

Peace, Fr. Riley

From the Pastor continued from the following page

on have unique parts that happen once a year. Holy Thursday evening, the Mass of the Lord's Supper, begins like any other Mass we would attend. But what we do not witness or partake of at other times of the year are the washing of the feet, as well as a procession of the Eucharist at the end of Mass that circles the inside of the Church, ending at the tabernacle and reposing the Lord Jesus. This is followed by adoration of the Holy Eucharist in the Church until 10:00 in the evening, when the altar is stripped and all statues and crosses are covered. All symbolism that reminds of what follows at the end of Jesus' life.

Good Friday is the only day of the year when Mass is not celebrated in the Church. The Good Friday celebration is technically called a service. It is not a Mass because there are no prayers of consecration at the altar. The altar remains bare from late Holy Thursday evening through the Easter Vigil Mass on Holy Saturday, but is momentarily clothed, if you will, for the distribution of Communion during the Good Friday service, and removed again after Communion is over. When we receive Communion on Good Friday, we use the hosts consecrated at the Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday. This year, as in past years, we hold the Good Friday service at 3:00, the hour we believe Jesus's spirit left his holy body, sent off, if you will, to free the righteous souls in "hell." In this case, "hell" being the place where the righteous souls have patiently waited for Christ to come and bring them home. He goes to call them forth for what God has prepared from the beginning; life eternal. And, any unrighteous souls are sent off to the worst form of hell, being eternal separation from God. The Good Friday Service at 3:00 is preceded by the Stations of the Cross at Noon, the hour we believe when Jesus was carrying his Cross on his way to Golgotha. In this moving, powerful, holy tradition we follow the Lord as he walks to his death for the salvation of the world, stopping to pray at each of the 14 stations that detail his "walk of fame."

In the silence of Holy Saturday, we prepare for the festivities of the Easter Vigil: the lighting of the new Paschal Candle that will be used at Baptisms and Funerals over the next year, signifying, among other things, that Christ is the Light of the World. That Christ is *our* Light. Also, the extended number of readings at the Easter Vigil Mass emphasize the central importance of the word of God at the Easter Vigil liturgy as we recall the start of creation, recreation in Noah after Adam's fall, Abraham the father of us all, and the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt and how God brought them from slavery of Egypt to the freedom of the Promised Land, symbolizing how the Lord's resurrection does the same for our bodies and souls. Many years at the Easter Vigil there are one or more persons receiving one or more of the Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism/Confirmation/Holy Eucharist), of which we have two people (husband & wife) receiving Confirmation/Holy Eucharist. Both of them are already baptized. So, as you can see and read, the *(Continued on previous column)*

FROM THE PASTOR

The Irish of America just recently celebrated what is affectionately known as the “High Holy Day,” the feast of St. Patrick. Many of the Irish would be pleased if St. Patrick’s twin would make a return pilgrimage to the old sod, bringing with him a good dose of Catholicism that has been watered down over the pond. With abortion now being legal in the native place of Riley’s O’Sullivan’s, Kelley’s, and McIntyre’s, the Catholic grip of our long-lost homeland is becoming more like “the world” and less like “the Lord.” Our Lady of Knoch, pray for us.

While St. Patrick’s Day, March 17, is a high holy day for the Irish folks around the world, Palm Sunday begins what we know as the “High Holy Week.” It begins with triumph, adoration, glory, and raising up a man who enters the ancient city on a meek and humble donkey. If Mercedes was in business back then, and they offered him a free ride through the old streets of Jerusalem, Jesus would most likely have been gracious and said, “No thanks. I’ll take the mule.” Mercedes would have been insulted to no end.

A big part of the message with the arrival of Jesus into the holy city are the virtues of humility and simplicity. Whereas a Scribe or Pharisee in the same situation would have used the Mercedes, and then kept it for themselves after the ride was over, the Lord’s entrance into the city he wept over remained rather unimpressive. The only impressive part of the entrance was the fact that so many folks, who had been arriving from all parts of Palestine for the Passover Feast, regaled the Lord as he made his entrance. Impressive for someone who did not wear long, vibrant, colorful tassels, the shoes of a worldly King, or any sort of suit one would purchase at Brooks Brothers. Not to dismiss the joy of these good things, but it’s not hard for us to picture Christ as someone who makes a grand entrance into Jerusalem wearing clothes and looking more like a beggar than a king. His interest in the prosperity gospel was nonexistent.

And why not? Jesus is a beggar, in one sense. He enters Jerusalem to beg for the souls of every person he meets, wanting more than anything to bring each of us beyond death’s door and into the perpetual light of his Father’s home. His love is of the unconditional sort, even praying at the end of this high holy week, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” His love is so strong and deep that he even makes excuses for those who are responsible for “hanging him on a tree.” He sees the bigger picture always, whereas as we tend to see what’s going on before us when we’re not too busy playing with the phone/texting machine. The Lord’s vision is that of a beggar who begs, pleads, and gets on his knees to wake us up to the fact that salvation is the number one topic in the world, *at all times*. Salvation is never replaced from it being number one in the rankings by things and situations in the world of people. As Casey Kasem would say today, “And our number one song, at the top of the charts, for the 2000th year and running, is *Salvation*, sung by the familiar voice of Jesus of Nazareth.”

As our Lord begins this high holy week on the highest of notes (ask Bridget what that note would be, for I confess I do not know), we’re all familiar with the story of Holy Week and how it takes a bad turn for the Lord rather quickly. While Judas is told by Jesus to “do what you have to do quickly,” and Peter, in the hardest terms, and with a few curses later on, digs in his feet and says he will never deny his Lord, both events happening later in the week on that fateful Holy Thursday/Good Friday evening, the downhill ride for Jesus quickly looks like he’s riding down George St. in Worcester. Without brakes. Oh boy! Only a person who has lost all sense of danger can enjoy such a ride for a few short seconds, because what’s at the end is a bang, crash, bam, and crucifixion. And, let’s not forget resurrection.

As Catholics, what religious responsibilities do we have before us to ensure this Holy Week be a lasting, productive one for our bodies and souls? Certainly, the first responsibility being the awareness that wherever we can participate in the solemn celebrations this week, we should move ourselves to do so. The liturgies/services during Holy Week from Thursday *(Continued on Previous Page)*

THIS WEEK AT IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

Sat.	Mar 27	2:45 PM 4:00 PM	Confession Mass
Sun.	Mar 28	7:30 AM 10:00 AM	Mass Mass
Mon.	Mar 29	8:30 AM 9:00 AM	Rosary Mass
Tues.	Mar 30	8:30 AM 9:00 AM	Rosary Mass
Wed.	Mar 31	8:30 AM 9:00 AM	Rosary Mass
Thurs.	Apr 1	7:00 PM <i>8:00 PM - 10:00 PM Adoration</i>	Mass
Fri.	Apr 2	12:00 PM 3:00 PM	<i>Stations of the Cross</i> Good Friday Service
Sat.	Apr 3	7:30 PM	Mass - Easter Vigil
Sun.	Apr 4	7:30 AM 9:00 AM 10:30 AM	Mass Mass Mass

OUR LADY'S GARDEN FLOWER DONATIONS

Our Lady's Garden will be accepting donations of annual flower flats (4-6 plants in a flat) before all Masses on the weekend of April 24/25. Samples of annual flowers are petunia, pansy, snapdragon, marigold, zinnia. Any color! Any annual! All will be planted on Mon/Tues after 9 a.m. Masses. Questions? Call or text Michelle Deignan at 508-596-4778. Thank you!

HOPE FOR HOUSING FOOD CARDS

Please consider supporting through our Parish the purchase of food cards for Hope for Housing, whose primary mission is to assist families from becoming homeless in our community. Available are cards for Shaw's, Stop & Shop, Big Y, CVS, Panera Bread, and Dunkin Donuts. This past week card sales amounted to \$445.00. Thank you.

**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!**