

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.	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	Nicholas Montecalvo, 6th Anniversary, from Family
		10:30 AM	Mary Hunter, from Family
Mon.	Apr 5	9:00 AM	Fr. Timothy O'Mara, Month Mind
Tues.	Apr 6	9:00 AM	Parishioners of Immaculate Conception
Wed.	Apr 7	9:00 AM	<i>(Wednesday in the Octave of Easter)</i>
Thurs.	Apr 8	8:00 AM	Dennis J. Finnegan, Month Mind, from Parish Family
Sat.	Apr 10	4:00 PM	Robert Bacon, 3rd Anniversary, from Family
Sun.	Apr 11	7:30 AM	<i>(Divine Mercy Sunday)</i>
		10:00 AM	Richard "Okie" O'Connor, 4th Anniversary, from Rich Riley, Jr.

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.

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.

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!

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.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT 3/28/2021

Sunday Ordinary (includes Online)	\$ 3,741.00
Easter Flowers	\$ 288.00
Spring Fuel	\$ 1,400.00
Catholic Relief Services	\$ 205.00

**READINGS FOR NEXT SUNDAY, APRIL 11,
2nd SUNDAY OF EASTER DIVINE MERCY**

1st Reading: Acts of the Apostles 4:32-35
 Psalm: 118
 2nd Reading: 1 John 5:1-6
 Gospel: John 20:19-31

EASTER LETTER FROM BISHOP MCMANUS

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Imagine the joy of Christ's grieving followers gathered in the Upper Room when on Easter the Risen Lord suddenly appeared and said, "Peace be with you." Their joy and peace at Christ's Victory must have been unbounded as they recognized Him in their presence.

But not all of Christ's followers shared that joy. Saint Thomas, who was absent, experienced not joy but doubt. Two other disciples after hearing of Christ's Resurrection, instead of immediately joining the others, departed Jerusalem and were downcast. Even when Jesus drew near and spoke to them of the Scriptures, they did not recognize Him. Only in the breaking of the bread (the Eucharist) did they recognize Him. Only then did they return to Jerusalem to join the disciples assembled in the Upper Room and share in the joy of Easter.

On this Easter Sunday, after a year of COVID isolation, when we seek peace and joy amidst doubts and losses we can profitably reflect on the importance of gathering at the Eucharist. As Jesus came to the disciples gathered together in Jerusalem so, too, He is most present to us, not in our individual reflections upon the Scriptures, but when the Scriptures and Eucharist are celebrated at Mass.

It has been a long year with necessary and prudent precautions keeping many of us from Sunday Mass. Given the extraordinary circumstances of the COVID pandemic, personal prayer, reading the Scriptures and watching the Mass live-streamed have been prudent choices for many. However, such choices are all inferior to being present at Sunday Mass and receiving the Holy Eucharist, which the Second Vatican Council proclaimed as the source and summit of the Church. Like St. Thomas and the disciples on the road to Emmaus, it is harder to recognize Jesus, ward off doubts and avoid being downcast by the trials and tragedies of life when we are not nourished by the Eucharist at Sunday Mass.

As signs of progress in the COVID pandemic begin to give way to hope for a return to a more normal life, and as vaccines become more widely available, it may be time to begin to consider prayerfully a return to Sunday Mass. Certainly, everyone needs to consult family and doctors and use prudence taking into account one's own circumstances and health. Our parishes will continue to require masks and social distancing and employ sanitary precautions. As society moves towards reopening, may the Holy Spirit guide you, along with prudent medical advice, in your consideration about coming back to Sunday Mass in the weeks and months ahead.

With every prayerful best wish for a joyous Easter, I remain

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Robert J. McManus
 Bishop of Worcester

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION - There are no Religious Education classes on Easter Sunday, April 4th. Classes will resume on Sunday, April 11th.

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.

PARTNERS IN CHARITY

The Partners in Charity Campaign has begun in our Parish. The many works of this campaign include treating and serving the basic needs of the poor in our communities; 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 worcesterdioecese.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. *Thus far our Parish has raised \$43,125.00 from 54 donors representing 49% of our Parish goal.* With last year's campaign affected by the pandemic and our numbers being way down, I pray that each parishioner/family will consider donating to the Partners in Charity this year on behalf of our Parish. Thank you, and a blessed Easter season to all our people. Fr. Riley.

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 \$20.00. 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 *a smooth transition for the homeless in our community to find affordable and decent housing.*

From the Pastor continued from the following page

our faith lives? When God is close and we just know it, we would have no problem dying and going to heaven on the spot. When we feel the Lord is distant or dead, like Mary Magdalene, we become angrier than a hungry bear who cannot reach the honey jar.

Well, her loitering paid off. Instead of being arrested for hanging around the cemetery too long after Peter and John returned to their hiding place after witnessing the tomb's emptiness, Mary's attraction to Jesus Christ her Lord and Savior was rewarded in the most personal way. In her despondency she hears a voice speak to her. "Woman, why are you weeping?" Maybe it was Peter or John playing a trick on her? They were known for their practical jokes. No, the voice didn't sound familiar to her. She thought it was the gardener. Some guy she never met before. Her eyes were so watered with tears that she couldn't clearly see the person who addressed her in that moment. "If you've taken his body, let me know where you laid him so I can come and care for him." It couldn't get much worse for St. Double M. His body gone; a stranger before her; "I know one thing; I'm not making this guy a peanut butter & jelly sandwich. He can make his own, unless he tells me where he moved the Lord's body to. Then I'll make him two."

"Mary." The word stung like a nest of swarming bees. In one word Jesus makes himself known to the one person who stayed behind. She didn't know him in "Woman, why are you weeping." But she knew him in "Mary." Her heart fluttered like never before. Could this really be? Is this all a bad, cruel joke? Did someone put their Jesus Halloween costume on and steal Rich Little's voice to imitate to perfection the voice of Jesus? You

know, that guy who used to imitate Richard M. Nixon to a tee! What sort of gardener plays such a vicious trick? But God doesn't do that to us. And he didn't do it to Mary. For anyone who thinks God is a trickster, well, all I can say is your wrong. When it comes to life, death, and eternal life, no games are played. The topic is way too serious. All laughter will return in heaven. One spiritual lesson on Easter Sunday and hearing John's Gospel proclaimed is the great teaching of hanging in there. Perseverance. Waiting it out. Loitering. Staying close in proximity. Don't return to the Upper Room and go into hiding. When Jesus said Mary's name that first Easter morning, and she responded with incredulous joy, not believing her Lord was actually alive after his death, the Lord in essence spoke the name of every one of us. Mary stood in for all humanity that early morning and responded like each of us will when we die from this world and stand before Him, and come to understand through absence of all doubt that our Lord Jesus is alive forever and ever. It's like visiting someone who is arriving at the end of their days on earth and you have the chance to say to them, "How blessed you are. You get to look into the eyes of Jesus soon. After receiving him in the Eucharist all these years and decades, you get to see the real deal. You get to hear him in person, like Mary, say your name for being so faithful a disciple of his. How truly blessed you are."

My brothers and sisters in the Lord, Jesus is raised from the tomb that could not hold him. He has smashed the gates of death. What more can we ask for, besides a peanut butter & jelly sandwich? Happy Easter.

Peace, Fr. Riley

FROM THE PASTOR

Patiently waiting for only God knows what. Despondency will create within us a boatload of confusion. There are thousands of reasons in today's world to become despondent. The death of a loved one; the loss of a job; financial worries; broken relationships (boy, those really hurt to the point of unforgettable); broken this, broken that; the Red Sox stinking it up again this year (hopefully not worth becoming despondent over). In a broken world, despondency is similar to President Herbert Hoover's famous quip from the early 1930's, "Prosperity is just around the corner." And what happened? The Great Depression destroyed all and any prosperity. The Great Depression was a behemoth that overwhelmed the prosperity idea. It's no wonder that guy never got reelected.

Despondency is on the bottom of our list of emotions when wanting to make it to the next day. It locks our hearts and minds into a narrow stretch of vision, playing games with us, seeking to bring out the worst possible circumstances for any person. But make it to the next day we must. Even the Great Depression came to an end, after almost a decade, although ruining many lives along its very long path. Like this present pandemic, there's always light at the end of whatever tunnel of despondency a person may find themselves in. We need to wait it out at times, which can be the hardest thing to do when in a state of heartache.

St. Mary Magdalene was a disciple, friend, and caretaker of Jesus. If the Lord wanted a really good peanut butter & jelly sandwich, Mary Magdalene was there to make it for him (I believe I read that in an apocryphal gospel that didn't make it into the Good Book). His days were long in the field hospitals of Palestine. Serving and curing the sick, whole towns at his front door, feeding the thousands upon thousands with small amounts of fish and loaves, walking over to Bethany to call forth his friend Lazarus from the grave. Jesus expended lots and lots of energy much of the time, not having time to even make a peanut butter & jelly sandwich. Thank you, Mary Magdalene. Thank you for feeding the Lord who fed thousands. Even though he told his disciples that his food was to do the will of his Father in heaven, which, of course, is true, he still wanted a great tasting, long-lasting sandwich to fill up his human nature in the middle of the day for lunch, or two of them for dinner.

But besides being the Lord's disciple, friend, and caretaker, along with many other women, Mary Magdalene was a loiterer. She was a Jesus-loiterer. She loved to hang around wherever Jesus was. She would have followed him to the ends of the earth, even if Jesus hopped on a boat to another shore or swam across the Mediterranean Sea to say hello to Caesar in Rome. I bet when Jesus walked on the water that time, scaring the living daylights out of his disciples, causing them to shout "It is a ghost!" and then proceeded to the other side, I bet St. Mary Magdalene was one of the first, if not the first, to arrive in the land of the Gerasenes on the opposite shore of the Sea of Galilee. She needed to be near him. His attractiveness was immense. His voice authoritative, in the best of ways. His presence would, as we like to say, light up a room. And she couldn't get enough of her Lord after she turned from her former sinful way of life to the joy of her remaining life of deep, profound holiness.

So there she was, even in his death, needing to be near him, even though he was locked in a tomb with a large boulder for a door. Or so Mary thought about his being dead, along with everyone else he knew. Except maybe his Blessed Mother who must have known the Plan from above. She's the only one the Trinity let in on the big secret. While Mary of Nazareth patiently waited for her Son to be raised from the tomb, trusting he would come along at some point after three days, Mary Magdalene loitered outside his tomb in the worst possible state of despondency. What she had in her favor was proximity. How does proximity speak to

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THIS WEEK AT IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

Sat.	Apr 3	7:30 PM	Mass - Easter Vigil
Sun.	Apr 4	7:30 AM	Mass
		9:00 AM	Mass
		10:30 AM	Mass
Mon.	Apr 5	8:30 AM	Rosary
		9:00 AM	Mass
Tues.	Apr 6	8:30 AM	Rosary
		9:00 AM	Mass
Wed.	Apr 7	8:30 AM	Rosary
		9:00 AM	Mass
Thurs.	Apr 8	7:30 AM	Rosary
		8:00 AM	Mass
Sat.	Apr 10	2:45 PM	Confession
		4:00 PM	Mass
Sun.	Apr 11	7:30 AM	Mass

EMMANUEL RADIO: 100 MEN CHALLENGE

1230AM/970AM/101.1FM Emmanuel Radio is halfway to our "Year of St. Joseph" 100 men goal. Accept the challenge to live like St. Joseph for 100 days in prayer and action. To join go to 1230radio.com or call (508) 767-1230.

RELIGIOUS QUOTE OF THE WEEK

PROOF NO THEFT OCCURRED: John 20:5-7; "The cloths lying within seem to me at once to furnish also a proof that the body had not been taken away by people, as Mary supposed. For no one taking away the body would leave the linens, no would the thief ever have stayed until he had undone the linens and so be caught. And at the same time they establish the resurrection of the body from the dead. For God, who transforms the bodies of our humiliation so as to be conformed to the body of Christ's glory, changed the body as an organ of the power that dwelt in it, changing it into something more divine. But he left the linen cloth's as superfluous and foreign to the nature of the body."

Eusebius of Caesarea (c.260-c.339)

**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!**