

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 10	4:00 PM	Robert Bacon, 3rd Anniversary, from Family
Sun.	Apr 11	7:30 AM	John E. Barna, 1st Anniversary, from Family
		10:00 AM	Richard "Okie" O'Connor, 4th Anniversary, from Rich Riley, Jr.
Mon.	Apr 12	9:00 AM	Parishioners of Immaculate Conception
Tues.	Apr 13	9:00 AM	(<i>St. Martin I, Pope and Martyr</i>)
Wed.	Apr 14	9:00 AM	(<i>Wednesday of the Second Week of Easter</i>)
Thurs.	Apr 15	8:00 AM	Blanche Holmberg, from Family
Sat.	Apr 17	4:00 PM	Joseph "Jo Jo" Jackson, from his mother Valerie Jackson and John Pultorak
Sun.	Apr 18	7:30 AM	Estelle M. Rathay, 1st Anniversary, from Family
		10:00 AM	Kelly Herlihy, from Family

CHURCH DECORATIONS THANK YOU

We extend a sincere thank you to the women in our Parish who decorated the sanctuary with flowers for the Easter Masses last weekend. As always, the altar, tabernacle, and ambo areas of the sanctuary look beautiful and a sight for religious eyes. Their hard work and dedication each year to using their skills and talents for such good purpose is deeply appreciated by all who come to our Church. May God continue to bless them in their ministry and in all ways.

CONFIRMATION CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to Michael and Maura Jacobs, husband and wife, who were both confirmed at the Easter Vigil last Saturday evening. It was a beautiful celebration with the newly decorated Church for Easter and two people who were excited about receiving the Sacrament after 6-months of preparation during this time of pandemic. They both were dedicated to "the cause," asking many questions and learning much about their faith along the way. May God bless them both as a married couple and as disciples of Christ. As Fr. Enoch preached so wonderfully that Easter Vigil evening, "Go out and tell the Good News." May this wonderful couple take up this mantle of Christ, who challenges all of us to be his disciples and share the Good News with all others.

FIRST COMMUNION CLASS

We ask all parishioners to pray for our wonderful First Communion class as they prepare to receive Jesus in the Eucharist for the first time on the morning of Saturday, May 1. They have been preparing for this exciting day through pandemic and all else by being present at religious education class each week. May God bless them in their continued preparation through the dedication of their teachers leading up to their special day in a few weeks.

CONFIRMATION CLASS

Please keep in your prayers our four Confirmation students who will be heading to St. Paul's Cathedral on Sunday, May 2 to receive from Bishop McManus the Sacrament of Confirmation. These four students have been preparing for reception of the Sacrament since last September. We look forward to a glorious celebration in a few weeks with our Bishop and other Parishes who will be represented that day, rejoicing with each of these students and their families.

DID YOU KNOW? TEACH KIDS TO PROTECT THEMSELVES AT HOME

We consider our homes to be safe places for our children. But being home alone can pose risks for children. Here are a few tips to teach kids that will help keep them safe when you are not with them at home: Never answer the door if alone. Do not invite anyone in the house without the permission of a parent or babysitter. Don't tell anyone on the phone that your parents are not home. Instead tell them that your parents can't come to the phone, and take a message. (Source: "Know the Rules...After-School Safety Tips for Children Who Are Home Alone," www.kidsafe.com) For more tips, please visit www.kidsafe.com. For particular help you may call Judith Audette Director of Office for Healing and Prevention at (508) 929-4363.

PARTNERS IN CHARITY

The Partners in Charity Campaign continues 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 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. *Thus far our Parish has raised \$47,620.00 from 72 donors representing 53% 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.

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 4/04/2021

Sunday Ordinary (includes Online)	\$ 4632.50
Easter Sunday (includes Online)	\$ 2131.00
Easter Flowers	\$ 390.00
Good Friday	\$ 671.00
Spring Fuel	\$ 120.00

READINGS FOR NEXT SUNDAY, APRIL 18, 3rd SUNDAY OF EASTER

1st Reading: Acts of the Apostles 3:13-15, 17-19
 Psalm: 4
 2nd Reading: 1 John 2:1-5a
 Gospel: Luke 24:35-48

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION - Religious Education classes take place on Sunday, April 11th 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.

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.

VACATION BIBLE CAMP - We are very excited to offer Vacation Bible Camp at Immaculate Conception! VBC will be the week of June 21st-25th from 9:30 A.M. - 12:30 P.M. and is FREE! Children 5-10 years old are welcome to join us for a fun week of many activities including Bible Stories, Games, Music, Crafts, Snacks and more! Contact Mary Sycks at mks723@msn.com for registration forms and more information.

SCRIPTURE STUDY IN MAY AT IC

Fr. Riley and Frank McGuire will be hosting a Scripture Series on Tuesdays, May 4, 11, 18, and 25 from noon to 1:00 pm in the Church Basement. The topic is *St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians*. You are all invited to deepen your understanding of this most important letter of St. Paul. Because of the theme of unity among all Christians, Jews and Gentiles alike, most experts would agree that *Ephesians* is Paul's most ecumenical letter. Please feel free to bring your lunch. Beverages and dessert will be available. Masks are required and social distancing will be observed.

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 *skeptics and unbelievers of our Lord's resurrection that, like Thomas, they will come to believe in God's great gift of everlasting life to humanity.*

From the Pastor continued from the following page

lief in the risen Jesus chains him to the floor of the now Upper Room that has become a room of doubt, questioning, and large-scale confusion.

Honestly, Thomas the Apostle, personally called by Jesus to bring the Good News of salvation to the world, *does not belong in this room any longer*. The night they all left after the Lord ate his last meal and truly gave them himself in the form of bread and wine, that should have been the last night in the Upper Room. Their lease was up when they left for the Garden of Gethsemane. The arrest and subsequent crucifixion of their Lord and Master and the untold amount of fear it produced became a dangerous wind tunnel pushing them back to a place they needed to move on from. Which begs the question, what are the places we still need to move on from in our lives?

I can't speak for anyone else, but I'd like to think, using 21st century eyes, that I would have stood outside the bottom steps where the Upper Room was located back then and yelled with a megaphone, "Hey Thomas, why don't you permanently remove your Jewish carcass from up there and believe what your friends told you about the Crucified One! By the way, it smells pretty bad up there."

Truth be told, I love the main story of St. Thomas' life – this story in the Upper Room - because we learn so much about ourselves from it. I don't love the fact that the future St. Thomas, who would become a martyr for the Church of Jesus Christ, doubted that Jesus had been raised from the dead. Who can admire such uncalled for heartache and an unbelieving heart that pretty much says God would not keep the number one promise of raising his Son, a fact that our Lord Jesus clearly informed them about many times over that he *would be* raised? No person who loves God can admire such wasted mental energy. But through his steadfast doubt rather than steadfast faith and belief from what he was told by his friends, Thomas speaks to the part of us that yearns to see God in person. Not necessarily to place our hands in his side where the soldier's lance entered, causing

water and blood (Baptism & Eucharist) to flow forth. Although that would solidify our belief like it did for Thomas. But to simply want to see the most natural thing we will ever see; the face of God. Is there anything more natural for us? I can't think of anything that supersedes this vision and expected experience at the moment of our death.

Concerning the Upper Room and who should take up permanent residence there, we know first of all who should not walk up those steps and enter. This would be any person with faith in the great promise of Jesus having been raised from the dead. And by his being raised, so are we. We can visit the place to this day and see where Jesus gave us his Body & Blood as sustenance for our present journey. And, the Upper Room in the 21st century is not even necessarily for unbelievers. They can be converted much easier than others I'm thinking of. The Upper Room today is more for those *who intentionally try to cause fear to settle into the hearts of good people trying to live good lives without being told they need to believe this trash or that trash*. Trash, of course, being all that stands against the goodness of God. Those who aggressively push fear into the hearts of others, perpetrating a form of arrogant bullying, just like the religious leaders and other influential people who caused passersby to shout, "Crucify him!" Sadly, and I'm not alone, I can think of a few too many politicians residing down the road, and some national business people who share similar ways of spreading fear, where good people would be better served if they, the fear-spreaders, were locked in the Upper Room. And if they were, maybe Jesus would come through the walls and locked doors and scare them into a good dose of humility and true belief.

Wishful thinking on my part? Possibly. But nothing is impossible for God. In the meantime, we are called to live, not in fear like Thomas at this stage of his life, but rather in the confidence of the other Apostles, who saw Jesus alive after death, trusting their witness. "Be not afraid," he says. I believe Thomas is now on board.

Peace, Fr. Riley

FROM THE PASTOR

There are those hiding in the Upper Room that we wish were not. And, there are those not hiding in the upper room and wish they were.

One week or so after the Lord's resurrection, having been seen by Mary Magdalene, the Apostles - minus Thomas - and probably others, such as the Lord's most holy Mother, we find those personally called by Jesus to bring his message to the ends of the earth still hiding out like a pack of wolves waiting to pounce on its prey. Except here, they lack the nerves of a pack of wolves, for they themselves have become the prey of the authorities. They cannot escape Dodge fast enough. "What's the quickest route and what's the quietest time to head back to Galilee from Jerusalem? When is the best time they are not watching the house like some FBI agents ready to arrest a well-known drug dealer? Is this our reward for following Jesus?"

Fear is cause for many odd choices by us human creatures. A man would even dress like a woman if by doing so it would save his life or save him from being arrested by the so-called good guys. Both Abraham Lincoln and Jefferson Davis were accused of doing so at one time. The authorities at the time of Jesus claimed the "good guy" status, especially after they helped to put him to death, although Jesus needed no help for the part of his life that he had total control over: "No one takes it from me, but I lay it down on my own" (John 10:18). They beat their breasts like King Kong, believing they won a victory over the "God-zilla" from Nazareth by way of Bethlehem. Their own fear caused them to participate in the biggest crime ever. But alas, we thankfully and wonderfully have a God who says while he's dying, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." We not only have the best God ever, but the only God ever.

So there they were, remaining in the Upper Room for quite a lengthy time. To them, it must have felt like hanging out in a dirty bus station at midnight, watching old, smelly cheeseburger wrappers go flying by. The trash was building up in the Upper Room. Seriously now, eleven guys eating food for over one week since the Last Supper in the same place with no trash receptacles? Reminds one of a keg party at a local college dorm off campus and what the house looks like the next morning. But while the trash may have been piling up inside the upper place, all was right with the world from God's angle. He raised his Son from the dead, thus, the trash of death had been defeated by the purity and cleanliness of the obedient servant Jesus.

The issue we have this week is Thomas, and how this really nice guy of an Apostle with a heavy heart could not get past wanting to remain in the Upper Room aside of going out to do some food shopping for the rest of them. It almost sounds like Thomas was planning on remaining there, forever. He wanted to die there. Have the authorities remove his dead body one day from underneath all the trash that was building up each day, if they could even find him. They would need a sniffing dog. It almost sounds like Thomas was ready to put a down payment on the Upper Room like it was some sort of classy suite on a Florida beach. "I will not believe you all saw Jesus alive until I can place my hand in his side. And I know that will be never. So, I plan on staying here for the long haul. Therefore, call the lawyers and have them draw up a purchase and sales agreement. Anyone with me on this?" Fortunately, no.

The same room where Jesus gave them his Body & Blood; the same room where the Master washed the feet of his disciples, giving them the perfect example of Christian discipleship and service, has now turned into a room where fear is the dominant emotion, and suspicion of friends drives relationships that are meant to be lived in love for one another. The other Apostles are now past treating one another like they could be the enemy, or even a double agent in a James Bond flick. But not Thomas. His lack of be-

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THIS WEEK AT IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

Sat.	Apr 10	2:45 PM 4:00 PM	Confession Mass
Sun.	Apr 11	7:30 AM 10:00 AM	Mass Mass
Mon.	Apr 12	8:30 AM 9:00 AM	Rosary Mass
Tues.	Apr 13	8:30 AM 9:00 AM	Rosary Mass
Wed.	Apr 14	8:30 AM 9:00 AM	Rosary Mass
Thurs.	Apr 15	7:30 AM 8:00 AM	Rosary Mass
Sat.	Apr 17	2:45 PM 4:00 PM	Confession Mass
Sun.	Apr 18	7:30 AM 10:00 AM	Mass Mass

RELIGIOUS QUOTE OF THE WEEK

THOMAS BELIEVES THE DEATH BUT NOT THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS: John 20:25; "Thomas was charged with being a real curiosity seeker because he thought the resurrection was impossible. Thus, he not only said 'unless I see' but also 'unless I touch,' lest somehow what he saw turned out to be an illusion. Therefore, when Thomas had heard from the disciples that Christ had been injured by a spear, Thomas believed them, even though he had not seen it. However, he did not believe their report of the resurrection, as if it were beyond reason. He did not say this so much out of unbelief but out of grief, because he himself had not been deemed worthy of seeing the risen Christ. It fit God's purpose that Thomas did not believe, so that we all might know through him that the body that had been crucified had been raised. Since Thomas wanted to see the wounds all around Christ's flesh, as well as his flesh itself, to see if he had risen, Thomas was searching for him."

Ammonius (175-242)

**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!**