

Immaculate Conception Parish



Please visit our website at
www.icworc.com and Facebook

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-1:30pm, T: 9:30am-1:30pm

W: 9:30am-1:30pm, F: 9:30am-1:30pm

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

ROBERT NOBERINI, PARISH OFFICE MANAGER

MATTHEW FOSTER, PASTORAL COUNCIL CHAIRMAN

LYNDA MONAHAN, SAFE ENVIRONMENT COORDINATOR

SUNDAY MASSES

SATURDAY VIGIL: 4:00 PM

SUNDAY: 7:30 AM, 10:00 AM

WEEKDAY MASSES

MONDAY, TUESDAY, WEDNESDAY 9:00 AM

THURSDAY 8:00 AM

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

Saturday 2:45 - 3:45 PM

(or by appointment)

NEW PARISHIONERS

Anyone is welcome to join the Parish Community.

Please contact the Rectory and introduce yourself.

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

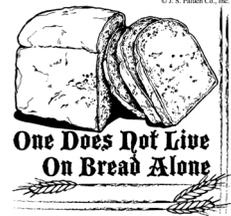
Father Walter can be called whenever someone can benefit from this sacrament of healing.

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).

MASS INTENTIONS

Sat.	Mar 09	4:00 PM	Albert Agurkis, from Family
Sun.	Mar 10	7:30 AM	James L. McDonald, Memorial Mass, from Tom Kelly
		10:00 AM	Robert F. Kelleher, 2nd Anniversary, from Family
Mon.	Mar 11	9:00 AM	
Tues.	Mar 12	9:00 AM	
Wed.	Mar 13	9:00 AM	Parishioners of Immaculate Conception
Thurs.	Mar 14	8:00 AM	
Sat.	Mar 16	4:00 PM	Joseph Al Goodrich and Ricky Goodrich, from Family and Friends
Sun.	Mar 17	7:30 AM	Jeannette T. Burns, Brian B. Colonies, and Chuck E. Burns, from Family
		10:00 AM	Marie Madaio, 4th Anniversary, from Family



THIS WEEK the text for The First Sunday of Lent may be found at #905 in the *Journeysongs* hymnal.

HOLY HOUR AND STATIONS OF THE CROSS

Our Parish has begun our Friday evening spiritual gathering in the Church for Holy Hour and Stations of the Cross throughout the holy season of Lent leading into Easter. Our Holy Hour will begin at 5:30 p.m., being an opportunity for parishioners to spend some quiet time in the Lord's presence during the exposition of the Eucharist. It's a time for silence, prayer, and reflection with Christ our Savior, allowing his presence to touch us with his Spirit as we journey through Lent. Beginning at 6:30 p.m. we will hold the Stations of the Cross, allowing ourselves to walk with the Lord on his journey to the Cross. This beautiful centuries-old Catholic tradition is steeped in the rich grace of being drawn into Jesus' Hour, the time when the King of the Universe felt most abandoned. The Stations finish each Friday at approximately 7:00 p.m. Consider joining us for one or both of these holy devotions throughout the Lenten season.

PRESENTATION AT ANNA MARIA ABOUT THE REALITIES AT THE MEXICAN BORDER

Fr. Steve Lundrigan, an adjunct faculty member of Anna Maria and pastor of Annunciation Parish, Gardner will present "Reality of life on both sides of the border: Responding in light of faith and reason" on Thursday, March 28 at 3 pm in Zecco Performing Arts Center. Fr. Steve will discuss his recent three-day visit to the Mexico Texas border. Another faculty member, Barbara Driscoll de Alvarado, who lived and worked in Mexico, will provide a brief historical/political context. The public is invited.

PARTNERS IN CHARITY WILL END MARCH 15th

The annual Partners in Charity campaign will finish in our Parish this Friday, March 15. I take this opportunity to thank all of our parishioners who have made a donation to this shortened campaign that addresses the many essential needs of our Diocese, from numerous works of mercy through Catholic Charities to vocations and the daily operations of our Diocese, and many other spiritual and basic needs in between. The total amount raised for our Parish this week is \$68,260.00 dollars, from 144 donors, which is 77% of our Parish goal of \$88,500. Last year our Parish had 184 donors, and I'm hoping and praying we come can close to or surpass that amount again in the next 2 weeks. If anyone is in need of assistance in making a donation, please speak to me for there are parishioners who will make a donation on behalf of others who may not be able to afford to do so. Thank you, Fr. Riley.

WORCESTER RAILERS HOCKEY TICKETS FREE

Free tickets are available through the courtesy of March of Dimes for the Worcester Railers hockey game on Saturday evening, March 30 at 7:05 p.m. at the DCU Center in Worcester. If you would like tickets (limit of 4 per person), please speak with Fr. Riley before or after Mass. It makes for a wonderful night out at no cost. Thank you.

CONVERSATION WITH BISHOP MCMANUS ABOUT LENT

WCTR TV3 Ch. 193: Saturday, March 16 at 6 p.m.
 WCCA TV13 Ch. 194: Tuesday, March 19 at 8 p.m.

Watch online anytime at worcestardiocese.org

TUESDAY EVENING CONFESSIONS DURING LENT

Confessions will be available in the Church during the season of Lent on Tuesday evenings from 6:00-7:00 p.m.

RELIGIOUS QUOTE OF THE WEEK

JESUS RESTORES KINGDOMS SEIZED BY FRAUD: Lk 4:5-8; "Did you think to have him as your worshipper at whom all things tremble, while the seraphim and all the angelic powers sing hymns to his glory? It is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve.' It is fitting that he made mention of this commandment, striking as it were at his very heart. Before his advent, Satan deceived all under heaven and was himself worshipped everywhere. But the law of God, ejecting him from the dominion he had usurped by fraud, has commanded people to worship him only who by nature and in truth is God and to offer service to him alone."

St. Cyril of Alexandria (378-444)

RITE OF ELECTION CATECHUMENS

Today on the 1st Sunday of Lent, the annual Rite of Election is held at St. Paul's Cathedral for the celebration of the men, women, and children in our Diocese who will be baptized or fully received into the Church at the Easter Vigil. From our Parish we have 3 Catechumens who will be baptized, confirmed, and receive their First Eucharist at the Easter Vigil on April 19; Kevin Kamgahatchoua, Xavier Almendarez, and Cecelia Almendarez. Please keep these three catechumens in your prayers as they continue their journey into the Catholic Church, being visible witnesses of the Holy Spirit's presence and power in their lives.

HOPE FOR HOUSING FOOD CARDS

Please consider purchasing food cards for the purpose of helping to stop homelessness here in Central Massachusetts. 5% of each card purchased will be donated by the participating grocery chain, while the purchase receives the full value of the card that is purchased. The money raised from this ministry has helped to prevent hundreds of families from being homeless, a situation that no one in our country should have to experience. Last week at Immaculate Conception our parishioners purchased \$150.00 in cards. **Thank you** to those who continue to participate in this very worthy program.

LEGACY OF HOPE CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

The Diocesan Capital Campaign, *Legacy of Hope*, will officially begin in our Parish next weekend. The Campaign will be carried out over the course of the next 3-1/2 months, until the end of June. In that time, our Parish will hold three receptions; April 1st at 7:00 p.m., and April 8 at Noon and 7:00 p.m. Each reception will be held in the Church basement, and will present the opportunity for all parishioners to learn more about the purpose and importance of why this campaign is being conducted at this time, and ask any personal and relevant questions. Present for each of these receptions will be Fr. Riley, members of our Parish *Legacy of Hope* Committee, and representatives from the organization assisting our Diocese in this campaign. It is our hope that parishioners will be present for one of these 3 receptions that will provide better understanding about the upcoming campaign. We ask that you put aside one of the above dates for approximately one hour of time for either reception. Thank you.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION Religious Education classes take place on Sunday, March 10th at 8:45AM-9:45AM for children in grades Pre-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.

Student of the Week Our Student of the Week is Shayla Halloran! Shayla is a Confirmation student in our Religious Education Program. She was nominated by her teacher, Mr. Sycks. Shayla is a conscientious student who engages her peers in beautiful discussions about our faith. She is always one of the first students to volunteer to help when needed. Shayla has been leading the children of our parish in the Children's Liturgy and helps out in the first grade Religious Education class. She has lead discussions on our faith at a CYC retreat. Shayla practices her faith everyday by living a virtuous life that leads her into a deeper relationship with Jesus and His Church. Congratulations Shayla!

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 those who struggle with addiction, may they come to a better place in their personal lives and with their families.*

LENTEN RICE BOWL COLLECTION

Lenten Rice Bowls have been left at each entrance to the Church for the season of Lent. These bowls will be collected at the end of Lent and the proceeds forwarded to Catholic Relief Services for their ministry throughout the world.

SPIRITUAL READING FOR LENT

At each entrance to the Church our parishioners can find many choices for spiritual reading throughout the season of Lent. Reading the Lenten reflections of some of the great spiritual writers in our time and times past allows us a deeper religious experience during this time of grace. Please consider taking one or two pamphlets/books with you for the duration of these 40 days and allow the holy thoughts of these writers to touch us as we move forward toward the great celebration of Easter.

BIBLE STUDY ON WEDNESDAY EVENINGS

Fr. Riley will hold a weekly evening Bible Study to be held in the Rectory from 6:30-7:30 p.m. The next Wednesday we will meet will be March 13. We will read, study, and comment on the Gospel of Luke for the duration of the Bible Study. Please bring your Bible, reading Chapter 10 of Luke's Gospel as preparation for the next class. All are invited to attend.

From the Pastor continued from the following page

First one, then a second, then a third. Bang, bang, bang. Just like that, Jesus is tempted 3 times by the devil who somehow "climbed" the mountain, an unwelcome guest in a holy place, doing his darkness to upset the holy plan of light to overturn Adam's debacle. As fast as the temptations come, they move on, shall we say, even faster. They will have no effect on Christ, who pushes away the evil temptations. They have no settling place in his life. He is perfection, the perfection of all graces and virtues, always making the loving, proper choice before the Father and Spirit. That's the good news.

The sad news? The temptations, although pushed aside by the Lord on the mountain, remain with us in the valley of our lives. The Devil now makes war on us. The temptations will not cease until Jesus returns, bringing all temptations to a permanent end, or, until we first return to Jesus, if you know what I mean. The further good news here? He gives us the grace, the mercy, the forgiveness, and the confidence to bring our lives to the holy point where he himself was on the mountain. This Lent, avail yourself of this mercy that is everlasting. It will make our places of solitude likewise places of Divine companionship, for we are never alone.

Peace, Fr. Riley

TUESDAY EVENING CONFESSIONS DURING LENT

Confessions will be available in the Church during the season of Lent on Tuesday evenings from 6:00-7:00 p.m.

ANNUAL VOCATION DISCERNMENT RETREAT

The annual Vocation Discernment Retreat for men high school age and older will be directed by Bishop McManus on Friday and Saturday, April 12 & 13, 6 pm to 6 pm at the Immaculate Conception Retreat Center in Putnam, CT. There is no cost for this retreat, and transportation is provided from Worcester. Go to www.worcestervocations.com for more information. Sign up by contacting Fr. Jim Mazzone at jmazzone@charter.net or 508-340-5788.

TRIP TO FATIMA AND LOURDES

See how the Lord loves us through his Blessed Mother! Join Fr. Jim Boland, parishioners and friends of St Patrick Parish on a pilgrimage visiting two of the most famous Marian Shrines in the world – Fatima and Lourdes, November 3rd through 12th, 2019. In addition to honoring our Blessed Mother and walking in the footsteps of the children of Fatima; St Francisco, St Jacinta and Sister Lucia; and St Bernadette of Lourdes we will also visit sites where St Teresa of Avila and St. Ignatius of Loyola lived. Prayerfully consider a journey with us. For more detailed information and sign-up form please visit our parish website for the trip here: <https://www.gate1travel.com/customgroups/PT1655066> or pick up a pilgrimage brochure at the entrance to the Church.

JUNE BUS TRIP TO NEWPORT

Bus Trip: June 6, 2019, Thursday. Newport Playhouse & Cabaret Restaurant to see hilarious performance of "Always a Bridesmaid." \$89 includes Newport's Ocean Drive, Show, Cabaret, Buffet Luncheon, Silver Fox Bus. 8:45 a.m. be at Church - 9 a.m. depart, return approx 6 p.m. Send \$89 check payable to FOX TOURS, with name, phone to Michelle Deignan, 227 Saint Nicholas Ave, Worcester MA 01606. Questions? call or text Michelle (508) 596-4778. DEADLINE to register is May 10.

IRISH DINNER AND PARISH ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE MEETING

There will be a meeting on Sunday, March 9, 2019 at 8:30 am in the coffee shop to go over the Irish Dinner (final setup) and all parishioners interested in volunteering to help make the Irish Dinner successful, are welcome to attend. (*Note: Setup at the Father Connor's will be 10am March 16th.*) **Parish Activities Committee will be selling tickets, March 9-10, before and after all Masses** for the Irish Dinner. No tickets will be sold at the door, **5:30pm, March 16th**. This year we plan on having Irish Music (John Riley) so please join us for a family night of fun, food, BYOB, 50/50, door prizes and music.

READINGS FOR NEXT SUNDAY, MARCH 17th, THE SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT

1st Reading: Genesis 15:5-12, 17-18

Psalm 27

2nd Reading: Philippians 3:17-4:1

Gospel: Luke 9:28b-36

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT 03/03/2019

Sunday Ordinary	\$ 4,799.00
Church in Latin America	\$ 194.00
Total Online Donations for February 2019	\$ 1,008.00

FROM THE PASTOR

So Jesus heads out to the desert for a time, expecting to spend much of it in prayer to his Father in heaven. When he finds a comfortable spot in between some rocks on the upper section of the mountain, knowing he has no place to rest his head, he squeezes in for a long stay of 40 days and 40 nights. A most uncomfortable bed for the foreseeable future. The number “40,” when placed aside the geography of the desert, symbolizes, of course, the wandering Jewish nation after their mighty and close escape from the slavery of Egypt. Jesus’ holy intention, of course, is to mirror the time spent for the Old Testament Hebrews in a place where all is dry, quiet, alone, spooky at times, and fully a place where getting close to the God of Life is most reachable. There are very good reasons why the Desert Fathers in the early Church are viewed by many as being the most intimate with God.

At the end of the day, 40 days is not a very long time to spend anywhere on earth, if one is to live for many years. Of course, some monotony can set in if we try to stay still for 40 days. Chomping at the bit will set in after a day or two, or even an hour or two. But Jesus doesn’t begin to chomp at the bit during his stay in the desert. His being driven out there by the Holy Spirit - one of his best Friends - is for the purpose of some quality time with the First and Third Persons on the Trinity; the same Spirit who will raise Lazarus back from the dead, and a Father who sustains his Son in all his holy words and mighty works.

As our Lord settles in for the long-haul of a short 40 days, it would be fair to say he expected to be alone. When in Israel last year, our tour group had a good view of the Mount of Temptation where Jesus spent his 40 days of fasting and prayer. When looking at the mountain from a short distance and reflecting on the time Jesus pitched his tent on that rocky edifice 2000 years ago, it wasn’t difficult to think that no one would be joining him for his 40-day adventure of holiness and solitude. The Apostles were not yet called. His family and friends had no idea where he was, sort of like the time Jesus was 12 years-old and “lost” in the Temple. And any strangers from Jericho who may have seen him walking into the desert toward a certain mountain may have been curious, and may have followed him a short distance to see where he was eventually going, but they didn’t trek up the mountainside with him. In fact, no one – except his most holy and blessed Mother (who didn’t know where he walked off to), was ready to follow this God-Man up *any* mountain, never mind the Mount of Temptation.

So up he goes, a climb that was slow and laborious. Did Jesus slip once or twice while climbing? Well, he was fully human, which makes that possibility possible. But once he arrived near the peak and settled in, there was no slipping either up or down. He was perfect. Perfect in prayer. Perfect in solitude. Perfect in thought, heart, and trust. He knew he wasn’t alone, a hard struggle for many folks today inside the loneliness of their own homes, as well as nursing homes and hospitals. No visitors. Very sad. But Jesus knew he had the close visitors of Father and Spirit, and any attending angels. Then someone showed up. The unexpected and unwelcome one. The one with the pitchfork.

I just wrote that Jesus never slipped once he arrived on top of the mountain. This would be tested in the hardest ways. Authority, power, prestige, make a name for yourself, ego, and all else that will tempt the human spirit and bring it to a state of degradation and waywardness. There he was, the unexpected and unwelcome visitor, the one who rejected the love of God forever, setting up his own little throne of aggressors against God, appearing at the wrong time as he always seems to, trying to invade the space of Jesus’ prayer and holy solitude, working his evil plots and wily ways, actually believing that the Lord of the Universe will give in to his temptations and subtle, evil invitations.

Continued on Previous Page

THIS WEEK AT IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

Sat.	Mar 09	2:45 PM 4:00 PM	Confession Mass
Sun.	Mar 10	7:30 AM 10:00 AM	Mass Mass
Mon.	Mar 11	8:30 AM 9:00 AM	Rosary Mass
Tues.	Mar 12	8:30 AM 9:00 AM	Rosary Mass
Wed.	Mar 13	8:30 AM 9:00 AM	Rosary Mass
Thurs.	Mar 14	7:30 AM 8:00 AM	Rosary Mass
Sat.	Mar 16	2:30 PM 2:45 PM 4:00 PM	Rosary Confession Mass
Sun.	Mar 17	7:30 AM 10:00 AM	Mass Mass

OPEN HOUSE

Notre Dame Academy's Open House for prospective students will be held on Monday, March 24 from 2-4 p.m. Students currently in fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth grade are encouraged to attend. Please visit their website www.nda.worc.org to pre-register. NDA is the only Catholic private and independent college preparatory school for young girls in grades 7-12 in Central Massachusetts.

TAX STATEMENTS FOR 2018

For those who wish to receive a tax statement for contributions to the Parish for 2018, please call the office during normal business hours, and Robert, our Office Manager, will mail a copy to your address, or have a copy ready for pickup. 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!**