



St. Mary's Immaculate Conception Parish

NOVEMBER 24, 2019

Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe

7176 Esker Road, Custer, WI 54423

Phone: 715-592-4330

Website: www.stmaryscuster.com

Parish Mission Statement

St Mary's Parish is a practicing Catholic Community providing spiritual, social and educational opportunities for all God's people that we may deepen our love of God and one another through prayer and deed.

CLERGY

Parochial Administrator -
Fr. Alan Guanella (715) 592-4221
aguanella@gmail.com

*In case of **emergency only** please call
715-629-9952*

Senior Priest in Residence
Fr. Roy Witucki

PARISH STAFF

Secretary-Donna Wierzba
stmary@wi-net.com
Bookkeeper-Diane Wysocki
stmaryicfinance@gmail.com
CCD Coordinator-Jessica Bielen
jwier319@gmail.com
Custodian-Jeanne Hintz
Maintenance/Grounds keeping-
Kenny Rozek

Mass Intentions

SUNDAY, November 24,
10:00 a.m. +Felix Zwicki
by Larry & Eunice Zwicki

Tuesday, November 26, @ SH
8:15 am +John R. Kowalski
by John & Betty

Wednesday, November 27, @ SMIC
8:15 am +Hubert Mocadlo by Family



Thursday, November 28, @ SMIC

Happy Thanksgiving!

9:00 am +Sam Molski
by James M. Zblewski

Friday, November 29,
No Mass

Saturday, November 30, @ SH
8:15 am +Irene Gagas by Don
3:15 pm Confession
4:00 p.m. +Emil, Dorothy & Ed Flisakowski
by Family

SUNDAY, December 1, First Sunday of Advent
8:00 a.m. @ SH +Linda Konkol by Family
10:00 a.m. +Dave Mansavage
by Elsie & Family

@ SH 6:00 p.m. Eucharistic Adoration
& Evening Prayer

Give thanks to the Lord,
for He is good; His love endures forever.
- Psalm 118:1



Dear Friends in Christ,

Praised be Jesus Christ! Recently an article from 2017 has been floating around the Internet about Pope Francis' catechesis on the Mass. On November 15, 2017, Pope Francis addressed pilgrims during the Wednesday General Audience. He stated: "When we go to Mass, perhaps we arrive five minutes early and begin to chat with the person next to us. But this is not the moment for small talk; it is the moment of silence to prepare ourselves for the dialogue. It is the moment for recollection within the heart, to prepare ourselves for the encounter with Jesus. Silence is so important! ... We are not going to a spectacle, we are going to the encounter with the Lord, and silence prepares us and accompanies us. Pausing in silence with Jesus."

It's so easy to forget to pray when we arrive at Mass. We are blessed at our parish to have the Rosary prayed before Mass to help everyone prepare their hearts. I encourage everyone to arrive a bit before Mass in order to pray and prepare. While the Pope didn't mention the time *after* Mass, it's equally important to spend time after Mass in prayer giving thanks to God. I especially invite everyone to spend a few moments (or more!) in prayer after Mass thanking God for the Mass and for the gift to be able to receive Him in Holy Communion. I know it can be tempting to talk and chit-chat with those around after Mass. In order for those who want to pray longer to be able to pray, I ask everyone to try to keep conversations in the vestibules and entryways. I realize our church building isn't ideal for gathering and talking, but please do keep in mind those who want to spend time in prayer after Mass.

This Thursday our nation celebrates Thanksgiving. There will be Mass offered at 9:00am at Saint Mary's. The word *Eucharistia* in Greek (where we get our English term *Eucharist*) means "thanksgiving" and there is no better way to give thanks than attending Mass and thanking God for the blessings of the past year. I found the following prayer that would be fittingly prayed this Thanksgiving: "Most gracious God, by whose knowledge the depths are broken up, and the clouds drop down the dew; we yield thee unfeigned thanks and praise for the return of seedtime and harvest, for the increase of the ground and the gathering in of the fruits thereof, and for all the other blessings of thy merciful Providence bestowed upon this nation and people. And, we beseech thee, give us a just sense of these great mercies; such as may appear in our lives by a humble, holy, and obedient walking before thee all our days; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with thee and the Holy Spirit, be all glory and honor, would without end. Amen." *Happy Thanksgiving!*

In Christ,
Father Guanella

Immaculate Conception. *Since December 8th is the Second Sunday of Advent, the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary is transferred to Monday, December 9th. The obligation to attend Mass, however, does NOT transfer.*

Weekly Financial Support November 17, 2019

Total:	\$ 4825.00
Envelopes	\$ 4552.00
Offertory	\$ 253.00
Building Fund	\$ 20.00

GOD BLESS YOU ALL for the successful Bake Sale Collection of \$701.00 on Nov. 10th. Because of you we will be able to purchase a new red vestment for Father. If you wish to make a donation to this cause, please put it in an envelope marked Bake Sale and deposit in the church collection box.

During the month of November, we will be lighting a candle in memory of our deceased parish family members that passed away this year.....
Conroy Soik
Hubert Mocadlo
Regina Lemke
Ruth Werachowski
Sam Molski
Denny Stransky
*Eternal rest grant unto them,
O Lord, and let perpetual light
shine upon them. May they
rest in peace. Amen*

NOVEMBER BIRTHDAY'S
Wishing you Birthday Blessings!
27th-Marlene Schulist & Phyllis Klesmith



St. Mary's I. C. Parish
2019-20 DIOCESAN ANNUAL APPEAL
Our "THANKS" to those who have contributed.
If you haven't made a pledge to our Annual Appeal, please bring your pledge card to Mass next Sunday. Payment is not necessary at this time—only your pledge card. **Extra cards in the entrance of Church.**

PARISH GOAL:	\$ 18,785.00
PLEDGES RECEIVED:	\$ 14,775.00
Under Goal:	\$ 4,010.00



RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CLASS

Meet on Sundays, 8:30-10 a.m.

Coordinator of Religious Education
Jessica Bielen jwier319@gmail.com

Please remember in your prayers:

Mike Mrozek, Eileen Bronk, Bev Krusick, Myron Soik, Tom Schmenk, Clarence & Gladys Pampuch, Jeff Pliska, Bette Maslowski, Ken Wierzba, Flonnie Pliska, Gladys Lepak, Nora Miller, Brigid & Al Pellatt, Julia Chodzinski



HOOKED ON LOVE Candy canes are up and ready to be selected. The holiday season is a time of loving and giving. We are asking you to add one to your giving list. Take a moment to think about the struggling families with small babies in Portage County. Think of the joy baby supplies will give them. With Hooked on Love we try to make sharing your love easier.

At the entrances of the church are Christmas tree displays with color-coded candy canes. The color of the ribbon indicates the cost of the suggested item to give. **RED** (\$1-\$3), **WHITE** (\$5.00), and **GREEN** (\$10 or more) SCRIP grocery, gas or Target gifts certificates can be purchased. We accept any monetary donations, **(Mark it as Baby Supplies)** and drop it in the church collection. **NO formula or food items**, full listing of needed items on table in entrance. Needed before Dec. 15th.

Items will be donated to the Portage County Prenatal Care Coordination Program and First Choice Pregnancy Resource Center. **Please put your items in the pack n play at the entrance of church or box in the addition.**

WANTED NAMES OF PARISHIONERS THAT COULD USE

EXTRA Baby Supplies! If you know of **anyone** in the parish or area who could use a help with baby supplies contact Marie Helminiak (592-4971) before Dec. 15th Names kept confidential

Advent Confessions



Additional times for the Sacrament of Confession will be

offered during the Season of Advent **Saint Mary's I.C.** confessions will be heard **following Sunday Mass**, until all are heard.

Sacred Heart, Saturday confessions will be heard from **2:30pm until 3:45pm (beginning November 30).**

Please consider making a good confession in order to prepare for Christ's coming at Christmas.

Bishop Callahan's Advent Prayer Request

Prayer is a joyful method of keeping us aware of the promises of future and realized glory as we make our way through the weeks of Advent. Remember you are in my daily prayers. If you have a particular intention for which you would like me to pray at Christmas Mass, call 608-352-9565, or visit diolc.org/pray. Keep alert, maintain your vision in Christ. Blessed Advent to you all!



As often as you did it for one of my least brothers, You did it for me.

"St. Mary's I.C. Salvation Army Servers"

We will prepare and server dinner for people in need at The Salvation Army on the **First Monday** of every month. We need groups of 3-4 people to volunteer. Please consider donating your time for this wonderful cause.

NEED SERVERS FOR JANUARY

Information please contact Gina Kempf at 920-540-7804

Potluck Dinner



Our Annual Parish Potluck Dinner will be held on:

Saturday, December 7th

BBQs and beverages will be provided.

Please bring a dish or dessert to share.



The potluck will follow the **4 p.m. Saturday Mass**, which will be celebrated at St. Mary's I.C.

Please plan to attend to enjoy some time with your friends and neighbors.

This event is sponsored by St. Mary's Family Life Committee

BUY SCRIP December 8th & 22nd after Mass

For anyone who has never bought Scrip or just not familiar with it. Scrip is a gift card you buy and use like a pre-paid credit card at local businesses throughout the Stevens Point area. Our parish receives on an average of 3.9% from these businesses for using their cards.



The Holidays are just around the corner. Looking for that perfect gift? BUY SCRIP!!! We have gift cards for area stores and restaurants!

Scrip is sold on the first full and third weekend after Mass. Scrip is always available just a phone call away, Shelly 715-592-3775.

Thank you to everyone who purchases SCRIP

November Total sales= \$14,682.00 Total Profit= \$608.94

Liturgical Appointments

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 24

LECTOR Deb GREETERS O'Keefe family
USHERS Sabrina, Lonna, Ron
SERVERS Lenny, Roman, Nick, Braelyn
EUCCHARISTIC MINISTERS Randy, Carolyn, Kate
MONEY COUNTERS LeRoy, Pat, Tom
MUSICIANS Jacquie & Carolyn

SUNDAY, December 1

LECTOR Jim USHERS Mike & Nick
GREETERS Stremkowski/Raschka families
SERVERS Zach, Samantha, Caly, Nick
EUCCHARISTIC MINISTERS Lenny, Roman, Jane
MONEY COUNTERS Kirk, Jacquie, Lisa, Jeremy
MUSICIANS Jacquie & Carolyn

Novena to Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception (Feast: December 8)



**Women
On A Mission**

Our Mission is to provide an environment of learning, giving and loving to enhance the fellowship and growth of the women's faith community of St. Mary's

Anyone that has quart jars that are gathering dust, (these can be mayo jars etc--they don't need to be canning jars) please bring to church and put under the table in the entrance. We will be making soup in a jar **on MONDAY, DEC 2nd**. Please come and check us out, and bring a friend.



Patroness of the United States of America *Start on November 30 to December 8*

O Mary, Most Holy, conceived without sin and all pure before the sight of the Most High God, we beseech Thee to have mercy on us and on our nation.

Look with loving eyes upon the plight of your children who implore Your powerful protection. The wicked serpent continues to wage war against God, against You and against the Holy Catholic Church and every good thing in society. The devil lays snares of confusion and deceit to lead souls along the path of perdition. The culture of death continues to attack the sanctity of life, marriage and the family.

Yet, from the very instant of Your conception, You, our Blessed Mother, Our Queen and Our Advocate, crushed the head of the diabolical enemy. At this moment, receive this prayer that we present to You before the throne of God. May we never fall into the snares of the devil; may we always follow the path of virtue and true courage toward our true home in Heaven. May the Holy Catholic Church obtain victory over the forces of evil and may the peace of Christ come down upon our souls, our nation and all peoples.

Obtain for us, O Virgin Most Pure, the grace of angelic purity which was Your favorite virtue. Grant us purity of heart so that we will seek God alone in all things. Provide for us the grace of purity of intention so that every thought, every word and every action in our daily lives be directed to the greater glory of Your Divine Son.

Obtain for us a participation in Your spirit of prayer, in Your humility and in Your self-denial. May we truly live the Fatima message of prayer, penance and conversion. May we recover through penance that innocence lost by sin and become more faithful and more united to the Will of God.

O Dear Mother, grant us unlimited Hope amid the current situation in our nation. Grant us an increasing love of Truth amid the lies and confusion of our times. Obtain for us from Your Divine Son greater Faith and growing Charity toward God and toward others.

Through Your grace and assistance, may we seek in all things the glory of God, the salvation of souls, and what is best for our beloved nation.

Hear our pleas, O Mother of Mercy, and hasten the triumph of Your Immaculate Heart as you promised in Fatima 100 years ago. And may You, the Immaculate Conception, crush once and for all the head of the wicked serpent and his followers. **Amen**

To be recited for nine consecutive days.



Prayer Changes Things

Be Thankful!

Thanksgiving Day is a beautiful time to call to mind some of the blessings for which we are to be grateful. As we gather with loved ones, whom we may not have seen for an extended period, it is quite natural to reminisce about the past. In relating stories about such things as family gatherings, vacations, funny experiences when growing up, and other stirring memories, we want to be thankful to God for these many blessings in our lives.

It is important to remember that Thanksgiving is not the only day that we are to be grateful. We are encouraged in Scripture, "Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." (1 Thess 5:18) We are to be thankful even in difficulties, which can be tough, especially for people who are in constant pain, have recently lost a loved one, been diagnosed with cancer, lost a job, have children who left the practice of the Faith, or experience other struggles.

God must have a good reason for calling us to actually "give thanks in all circumstances." One thing that we all notice in the people around us is that those who cultivate the habit of thankfulness in their hearts, experience true Christian joy. And isn't this something that we desire?

One of my brothers related to me a situation in his life that follows this Biblical principle. At a certain point, my brother was going through a very difficult time in his life, in which he was experiencing

discouragement and sadness and he felt like he was sinking in a pit. He turned to prayer and this idea came to him—Go back over your life and make a list of anything for which you can be thankful. As he wrote down everything that he could think of, and then went back over it slowly, there was a shift in his attitude. He found himself being raised up out of the pit of discouragement, into a place where he started thinking; life is not so bad after all. And "this too shall pass." This simple exercise caused a change in which his spirit lifted, opening him to receive encouragement and interior joy through the grace of God.

St. Paul instructs us with this very idea: "Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable, if anything is excellent or praiseworthy, think about such things." (Phil 4:8) My brother did this very thing in a practical way.

There is an important distinction to be made: Thinking about or making a list of things for which we are thankful to God isn't some sort of self-help technique or "happy talk" or simply being a "Pollyanna" and acting like everything is wonderful, when in fact we are hurting terribly. As we follow the Scriptures, the Holy Spirit becomes involved in a powerful way, stirring us to move forward, moving us from discouragement and sadness to a realistic peace and joy and a place of inspiration, with a

renewed sense for doing good things for others.

During this season of Thanksgiving, let us become more aware, throughout each day, of the things for which we can be thankful, even in the midst of difficult circumstances. Make a mental note, or make an actual list if possible, and then turn to God and thank Him. Or make a resolution to thank God for 3 things every night.

We have every reason to be thankful. Jesus gave His life for us, experiencing the worst possible pain on the Cross, so that we can have eternal life with Him forever. And the Cross is in the shape of the letter "t" which reminds us of the word "thanksgiving."

Let us also consider being more thankful to others. The more we hear "thank you" come from our mouth, the more we notice what people are doing for us and it can help to shift an attitude of discouragement as well. This Thanksgiving, consider a person in your family you need to verbally thank for something specific; or thank a family member for who they are and what they mean to you. Growing in the habit of being thankful to God and others is well worth the effort.

Happy Thanksgiving!

By Ann Lankford, Office for
Catechesis & Evangelization



Diocese of La Crosse

DISCOVER

the Joy of Christ



How Do You Prepare Your Heart for Christmas?

Taking time during Advent to prepare ourselves spiritually can result in a truly meaningful Christmas Day and Christmas Season - the celebration of the birth of the most important Person in all of history: Jesus Christ. What are the traditional customs of our Catholic Faith that provide us with important ways to prepare our hearts to welcome the Christ Child?

Advent, which means *coming*, is the four weeks leading up to Christmas. This time is to be different than our ordinary routine. Yet it is not meant to be a time of celebration, as that really begins on Christmas Eve. The time of Advent is to be spent preparing our hearts spiritually for the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ, who came to save us from sin and eternal death. However, this focus of spiritual preparation and joyful anticipation can be difficult to maintain in the hectic hustle and bustle of the materialistic side of this sacred season.

An important point for Advent is to keep everything simple. That is, do not try to do too much shopping or baking, but take time for quiet prayer and for simply being with family members. Most of us don't need more gifts, but rather more time with each other. It is an opportunity to gather the family and prepare together by remembering the darkness that pervaded the time of the people of God as they awaited the birth of the Savior.

The Advent wreath, with its rich symbolism, helps us to stay focused on this time of preparation. A wreath can be assembled by simply using evergreen limbs from a tree in the yard and four candles. The wreath made of evergreens - which retain their green, vibrant life throughout the year - signifies continuous life. The circle of the wreath, which has no beginning or end, symbolizes the eternity of God, the immortality of the soul, and the everlasting life found in Christ Who was victorious over sin and death through His own passion, death, and Resurrection.

The four candles represent the four weeks of Advent. A tradition is that each week represents one thousand years, the 4,000 years from Adam and Eve until the Birth of the Savior. The light of the candles shines in the darkness, which is most evident during this time of the year which is darker due to shorter daylight hours. We use candles in the Advent wreath and put lights on a Christmas tree and possibly on and around our homes, signifying the coming of Christ Who is the Light of the world. After all, Christ is "the Light that came into the world" to dispel the darkness of sin and to radiate the truth and love of God (See John 3:19-21).

The Advent wreath contains three purple candles and one rose candle. The purple candles in particular symbolize the prayer,

penance, and preparatory sacrifices and good works undertaken at this time. The rose candle is lit on the third Sunday, the day of rejoicing, because the faithful have arrived at the midpoint of Advent, when their preparation is now half over and they are close to Christmas. The progressive lighting of the candles symbolizes the expectation and hope surrounding our Lord's first coming into the world and the anticipation of His second coming to judge the living and the dead. In family practice, the Advent wreath is most appropriately lit at dinner time after the blessing of the food.

It is also important to set aside specific times of quiet prayer during Advent. It can be especially fruitful to read beforehand the Bible passages for the upcoming Sunday Mass, which focus on the coming of Christ, pondering the words and allowing the Holy Spirit to make a connection between the reading and your own life.

The words of Advent hymns provide the story of the first Christmas and stir our hearts with their beautiful melodies. Some of the best-known Advent hymns are O Come, O Come Emmanuel; O Come, Divine Messiah; On Jordan's Bank; Lo, How a Rose Ere Blooming and Creator of the Stars of Night. The words can be downloaded from the internet and used for a time of peaceful meditation.

Confession

Receiving the Sacrament of Confession during Advent frees us from the effects of sin, such as selfishness, anger, lack of forgiveness, guilt, bitterness. As our hearts are purified, there is more room for Christ to bring us His joy.

Acts of Charity also need to be part of our preparations for Christmas. We can give to our favorite charity; pray for the persecuted Christians in the Middle East and even donate so that they will have housing in time for winter; visit an elderly neighbor or someone in assisted living; send a Christmas card to a friend or neighbor who is sick; give extra time and show kindness to the person that we find hardest to love; donate unused clothing and toys and above all spend more time with family.

The preparation of our heart for Christmas will make the coming of Emmanuel - God with us - mean so much more. Receiving the Christ Child in Holy Communion will be the highlight of our Christmas Day.



DIocese of LA CROSSE, WI