December 18, 2016
Fourth Sunday of Advent
Isaiah 7:10-14
Romans 1:1-7
Matthew 1:18-24

Unreasonable Demands

There is a time in all our lives when we face something unthinkable and overwhelming. Instinctively we cry at the heavens, it’s not fair! How can you make such unreasonable demands? Ah, but think for a minute. Remember Sarah over 90 and pregnant, Noah’s ark in the desert, David facing a giant with a slingshot? What about Mary, a virgin and pregnant at the same time? Or God becoming human to die on the cross? Time and again we are faced with God’s willingness to do unexpected, unreasonable things in the lives of His children. Poor Joseph didn’t stand a chance either. Faced with marriage to an unfaithful, pregnant woman, he planned a private divorce to avoid scandal. But God’s ways are not man’s ways. He gave Joseph an “unreasonable” demand: marry her anyway and help her raise the Son of God. Think you could do it? Well, neither did Joseph probably, but he had the same miraculous gift we all do. When we step out in faith to meet God’s unreasonable demands, God also provides unending grace and power to see us through.
Weekly Calendar

Monday, December 19

Tuesday, December 20
7:00 am: Mass: Ron Resong

Wednesday, December 21
Memorial of Saint Peter Canisius, priest and doctor of the Church
8:00 am: Mass: LaVerne Schmitt
3:50 pm: CCD K - 6
7:15 pm: CCD Gr. 7-12

Thursday, December 22
8:00 am: Mass: Dave Hoppa

Friday, December 23
Saint John of Kanty, priest
8:00 am: Mass: Wayne Conner & Marietta Plummer
2:00 pm: Nursing Home Mass

Saturday, December 24 – Christmas Eve
3:45 pm: Caroling
4:00 pm: Mass: Gina Marie Mayer

Sunday, December 25
Solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord
8:00 am: Mass: Clarence & Rosalie Becker
10:30 am: Mass: Parishioners

General Parish Information

Father Varkey Emergency Cell Phone: 715-937-3664
New parishioners: You are most welcome to join the family of St. Mary’s. Please contact the parish office.
Prayer Chain: Contact Jean Kuhn 937-1161
Meal Ministry: Please contact Mary Sladich 743-4466
Bereavement Ministry: Contact Annie Augustine 937-1432
Elizabeth Ministry: Contact Renee Schoen 743-4059
Marriage: Contact with the parish is required six months to a year before marriage. Preparation begins with the first contact.
Natural Family Planning: Please contact the Parish Office.
Baptisms: Baptisms are celebrated during the 10:30 am Mass on the fourth Sunday of each month. Baptisms following Mass can also be scheduled. Preparation classes are necessary. Please contact the office for further info.
Interfaith Caregivers Contact: 743-2885

Weekly Collection

December 8th, 2016
Immaculate Conception $ 562.00
Tithing 565.00
Offertory 82.00
Christmas Flowers 80.00
Christmas 100.00
Renovation Fund 100.00
Total $1,489.00
Uganda Student Sponsorship $ 200.00

Weekly Collection

December 11, 2016
Tithe $3156.32
Offertory 267.00
Student 8.40
Christmas 80.00
Christmas Flowers 689.00
Immaculate Conception 120.00
Total $4,320.72

Weekly Budget

Uganda Student Sponsorship $200.00
Religious Retirement 475.00

Liturgical Ministries

Saturday–Sunday, December 24-25

Lectors (A) (B)
Sat. 4:00 pm Larry Hoeser Betty Jo Smith
Sun. 8:00 am Sherry Hickey Wayne Thomas
Sun.10:30 am Bob Barth Phyllis Carney

Extraordinary Ministers
Sat. 4:00 pm Mary Sladich/Beverly Lavey/Mary K Mills
Sun. 8:00 am Wayne Thomas/Sherry Hickey/Kim Swita
Sun.10:30am Bob Barth

Cantors
Sat. 4:00 pm Choir
Sun. 8:00 am Choir
Sun.10:30am The Conner Family

Accompanists: 4 pm & 8 am Vicente - 10:30 am Samantha

Servers
Sat. 4:00 pm Christmas
Sun 8:00 am Christmas
Sun 10:30 am Christmas

Ushers for December
Sat 4:00 pm. Tim Brekke/Wayne Opelt/Richard & Bridget Reil
Sun. 8:00 am Walter Domaszek/Russell Pagenkopf/ Richie Kohnhofer/Raymond Pagenkopf, Sr.
Sun.10:30am Terry Byrne/ Joe Cullen/Allen & Anne Durst

Rosary Leaders
Sat. 4:00 pm No Rosary
Sun 8:00 am Wayne Thomas
Sun 10:30 am Phyllis Carney

Greeter Schedule – December
5:00 pm: Joanne Tibbett
8:00 am: Ritchie & Kathy Kohlnhofer
10:30 am: Beverly Bryan

Children’s Liturgy of the Word
Will Resume on January 8, 2017
Parish Announcements

This week’s prayer intention: That family and friends may travel safely as they gather during this Holy Season.

Father Varkey invites the congregation to join him for light refreshments and fellowship of the Blessed Season immediately following the 4 pm Christmas Eve Mass.

Nativity scene will be given through a free drawing.

Religious Retirement Collection: Located in the church pews are the envelopes for the collection this year. As in the past, return your envelope in the collection basket or to the parish office. Thank you for your generosity.

2017 Church Calendars are available in the carport vestibule and next to the bulletins.

2017 Church Envelopes are available in the narthex.

Diocesan Annual Appeal 2016-2017

Please return your pledge and payment to the parish office or place in the collection.

2016-2017 Target: $38,978
Pledges Received: $32,179
83% of Goal

Thank you in advance for your generosity.
For more information… http://diolc.org/stewardship

Prayer for Vocations: The Diocese of La Crosse Vocation Office has generously provided beautiful table tents for parishioners in the Diocese of La Crosse which contain the Prayer for Vocations and Meal Prayer. Please take one from the carport vestibule and continue to pray as a family on a daily basis.

Christmas Mass Times 2016

Christmas Eve: 4 pm  
(Caroling begins at 3:45 pm)
Christmas Day: 8 am and 10:30 am

Father Varkey invites the congregation to join him for light refreshments and fellowship of the Blessed Season immediately following the 4 pm Christmas Eve Mass.

Sign Up!!!

New Parish Directory in 2017: The dates for the pictures to be taken for the directory are January 10-14 and January 17-21, 2017. Signup for photo times continues in the Narthex. To sign up online during the weekdays a link is available on the Parish Website stmaryneillsville.weebly.com. Plan to have your picture in the directory. The directory will also have a full roster so if your phone number or address has changed, please let us know at the parish office 715-743-3840 or via email stmaryneillsville@tds.net.

End of Calendar Year Charitable Contributions: As the end of the calendar year approaches just a reminder to remit your donations for the parish by Friday, December 30 and any Diocesan payments by December 23, 2016 so they will have time to be processed properly for your tax record.

PCCW Fair Trade Sale-Thank you for your Christmas generosity to our Catholic Relief Services Fair Trade sales. Over $1,500 in items were sold, the money going to support Third World artisans and craftspeople. With such a successful sale, the PCCW will definitely consider it again for next year. ~Judy Conner, PCCW

Mark Your Calendars for the Parish Leadership Party, January 7, 2017 - 7 pm

The Pastoral Council is strongly advising all people to park in the main church parking lot during the winter months (November through April). Clearing of the snow from the back parking lot and the sidewalks to the north of the church may not be complete prior to Mass. For you and your family’s safety, please park in the main parking lot. Thank you for your cooperation.
Confraternity of Christian Doctrine

CCD Assignments

Teaching the faith begins in the home

Grade 1 – Mrs. Cindy: Please write out on the Red Paper Wonderful things you do for Jesus this week. Remember to collect box tops for our class.

Grade 2 – Mrs. Carney: Chapter 11. Read pages 55 through 59 in your textbook. Learn the answers to questions 27 through 30. Complete pages 41 through 44 in your workbook. Look up the “Words to Know” in the back of your book. Where was Jesus born? Who announced Jesus’ birth? Practice Act of Contrition to know it by Christmas.

Grade 3 - Mrs. Schmitt: Complete assignment Sheet.

Youth news-

Youth Rally-Students ages 6th grade -11th grade are invited to attend the Deanery Rally in Abbotsford on March 25th. Please mark your calendars, more information coming soon!

Steubenville- This summer another Youth Conference will take place in St Paul on July 28-30. Cost will be $250 to attend. Please consider this opportunity to grow in Faith and to meet other faithful young people from around the Midwest! Registration will begin soon.

Schoenstatt Girls Youth Club- There is still time for all young ladies ages 9-13 to join the Schoenstatt Girls Youth Club. It is a group focused on living a life of holiness and virtue, following the example of Our Lady, the Virgin Mary. It meets once a month after school on the first Monday. Next meeting is January 9th. Cost is $15 for materials. Please call Amy Schneider if you are interested at 715-937-8397

Sponsoring students at Our Lady of Guadalupe School: The 2017 school year for the students at the Our Lady of Guadalupe School in Uganda begins in January. The cost for an entire year is still $100. This covers a uniform, school lunches, and tuition. If you would be willing to help out please contact Martha at the parish office. Funding really helps the student, their families, and the school as it continues to grow. God bless all of you for your generous sponsorships in the past.

Small Group Caroling- a group of families from the parish will be caroling Friday December 23rd. Please join in spreading Christmas Cheer and Joy. Meet at the church at 6pm. There will be light refreshments afterward in the Church Hall. Please contact Amy Schneider 715-937-8397 to let her know you will join them or to request a caroling visit.

Catholics Come Home - This is a website not only dedicated to evangelizing but also to Catholics who have drifted away from the faith. There are also good videos on this site aimed at the truths about the Catholic Church. If you know someone who would benefit from this information, or if you want to learn more about the beauty of the Catholic Church, go to our church web site: http://stmaryneillsville.weebly.com.

Blest Art- We will be hosing Blest Art January 7th and 8th. This is an organization that works to protect Christians living in the Holy Land. They make their living and provide for their families by carving wood art products. Please stop by the display and consider making a purchase to help these families.

Ninth Annual Trivia Night Saturday, January 28, 2017 7 pm to 9 pm

All proceeds from event will sponsor the ongoing relationship with Uganda Africa.

Area Events

Neillsville Blood Drive American Legion Post 73 Monday, December 19, 2016 11:30 am to 5:30 pm

For an appointment call Mary at 715-937-0444.