

Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary
St. Mary's—Big River

Parish Handbook



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This booklet has been put together primarily to welcome new parishioners to our Faith Community and also to provide an explanation to all of our parishioners of the many opportunities available for growth and fellowship as a member of St. Mary's Parish. We are proud of our parish and we are happy to have you as a member of St. Mary's Faith Community. You are very important to us and we hope that you will feel very much a part of the family and spirit of St. Mary's.

The purpose of any Faith Community is to provide an opportunity for all of its members to grow in their knowledge and experience of the Lord Jesus and to do his work. This will happen when people pray and worship together; when they come to know each others name; when they work and play together; and when they are willing to support the dreams and goals of Jesus by their time, talent and treasure.

This booklet is intended to help you and the members of your family to accomplish that goal! It provides a brief description of some of the various programs available here at St. Mary's and who you can contact if you want to be a part of the program.

We would like to encourage you to participate actively in any of the programs of the parish for which you have a desire and/or a talent. Please feel free to contact the Parish Office or any member of the parish groups if you have any questions.

May St. Mary's Faith Community bring you and your family joy and peace and a sense of belonging as you experience the warmth and friendliness of the people. Let us journey together in the work of the Lord and may you come to know the Divine Master as the center and focal point of your whole life so that you can share that vision with all the members of our community.

Sincerely yours in Christ

Fr. Bill Matzek



We, the parishioners of The Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Mary's - Big River, continue the mission of Jesus by proclaiming the Gospel, celebrating the Sacraments, and serving others through love of Christ.

We are a rural parish, supporting an agricultural, diverse and growing community.

We welcome all to prayerful worship.

We pledge to remain faithful to Christ's teachings, to the magisterium of the Church and to our Holy Father the Pope. We thank those who have handed down their deep and tested faith, and we promise to continue this heritage by example to our young people.

We believe in the faith-filled life of the family and pledge our support to families.

We will assist in the education of our children in the faith and in fostering vocations.

We promise to work for the protection of all life; to support the poor and needy, and to continue our generous support of the missions.

We place ourselves under the care of the Blessed Virgin Mary, our patroness, through her prayers, and imitating her life of faith and humble obedience to God's will.

PARISH VISION STATEMENT:

Through our active involvement in liturgical celebrations and parish service, we will grow into a vibrant faith community, which welcomes and affirms all people.

We will assume individual responsibility for our parish's activities, welfare and spiritual growth, willingly giving back the talents, time and treasure that GOD has blessed us with.

We will proudly proclaim our Catholic identity and presence in the Big River and surrounding area while respecting and cooperating with Christians of other faith denominations.

Following Christ's example, as both servant and leader in the cause of the less fortunate, we will devote special energy to helping the needy and those seeking justice.

Above all, our vision is that our actions will give glory to God and through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary inspire others to Christian faith and ideals.

St. Mary's parish church stands atop a hill, which dominates the surrounding area, as a beacon of light for all those who come to offer their prayer and worship. It represents to all Christ the Light who dwells lovingly in the tabernacle for our salvation.

From Bishop Burke's letter to the parish at it's 125th anniversary, 1997.

HISTORY

In 1827 a syndicate largely composed of army officers, stationed at Fort Snelling, made a claim of several hundred acres of land at and near the junction of the St. Croix and Mississippi rivers. A small trading post was soon erected, and in 1849 a town was organized and named Elizabeth. The name was later changed to Prescott in honor of its original founder. In 1853 Pierce County became a separate county with the county seat at Prescott. In 1857 the town of Oak Grove was taken off from the town of Prescott.

In 1861 the Rev. James Stehle came to Big River, then Oak Grove, for the first time and had Divine Services in a home on the Feast of All Saints. He was the priest of Hudson, St. Croix County at the time. The congregation at Big River consisted of eleven German families and five single men. A little log church was completed in 1862 and the cemetery was located one half mile north of the church. Then in 1872 a frame building was started and was completed the following year at the present site.

The congregation grew and grew, and in 1892 the Bohemians left the parish of St. Mary's and built a little church at Cherma (named after their home in Bohemia), called St. Martin's in the town of River Falls. St. Martin's became a mission parish of St. Mary's and operated until its official closing in October, 1987.

Over the years St. Mary's was enlarged, remodeled and redecorated and has only improved with age. She sits on top of a hill between Prescott and Ellsworth, WI overlooking fields, hills and valleys, and has been called the "Little Cathedral". In 1997, celebrating the 125th anniversary of the church, visitors were impressed with the beautiful high altar, stain glass windows and statues. With the many new homes being built in the area, St. Mary's will undoubtedly continue to grow. One thing which will always remain the same though is the great faith of her people and their generosity and hard work to keep their parish in wonderful condition.

Diocese of LaCrosse

St. Mary's is part of the Diocese of La Crosse. Located in west central Wisconsin, the Diocese of La Crosse is home to more than 200,000 Catholics. The Diocese of La Crosse consists of 19 counties in West Central Wisconsin, and is about 15,000 square miles. The diocese is divided into 14 territories known as deaneries.

Durand Deanery

St. Mary's belongs to the Durand Deanery consisting of 14 Parishes situated in the Diocese of La Crosse.

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PARISH REGISTRATION

Anyone wishing to join St. Mary's Parish needs to meet with the pastor and complete a parish census form. At that time you will receive the Parish Handbook and St. Mary's Altar Rosary Society Handbook and other parish information and a packet of contribution envelopes. You will be invited to become as active in the parish as you can and encouraged to join in all parish activities.

When a young adult from our parish comes to the end of his or her high school years, we ask that he or she register as an adult of the parish. Only those high school graduates who contact the parish rectory will be considered as registered members once they graduate.

PARISH BULLETIN

Our parish bulletin contains information each week regarding scheduled Mass times, Mass intentions, and specific information on Religious Education, Parish meetings and other important announcements pertaining to the parish community. Items for the bulletin should be submitted to the pastor by Monday prior to the weekend the bulletin comes out.

If you were unable to attend St. Mary's weekend Mass and receive a bulletin, there are several copies stored in a box outside of the school building, located on the wall to the left of the front door. If there is someone who is home bound and would like to receive a bulletin, please let us know and we will gladly mail them a copy. You can also access the bulletin from the parish website or have it emailed to you.

PARISH WEBSITE

St. Mary's has it's own website at www.stmarysbigriver.com. Our home on the web features all the information about our parish, religious education and youth ministry schedules and activities, upcoming information, bulletins, monthly calendar, current happenings, photos and a host of timely information, including links to other Catholic web sites and to information about our Catholic faith life.



PARISH STEWARDSHIP & SACRIFICIAL GIVING

1. Parishioners are encouraged to be good stewards of the gifts that GOD has given us. Stewardship means using the gifts of time, talent, and treasure wisely, in a way that benefits others and as a gift back to GOD for all His goodness and generosity to us. Parishioners are asked to adopt an attitude of sacrificial giving in their contribution to the upkeep and management of the parish as well as giving of their time, talent and prayer. The four principles of Sacrificial Giving are:
2. Give back to GOD a share of what GOD has given to you.
3. Make that return a sacrifice, a gift that has some "bite" to it.
4. Use church envelopes regularly as "gift wrappers" for your gift.
5. Consider the biblical tithe, ten percent of gross income (i.e. 5% going to the parish and 5% to other needs which contribute to the works of charity). If someone cannot give at this level, trying to take a step toward that goal is commendable. They may also contribute their time and talent to the parish in other opportunities that are available throughout the year, which contribute to the good stewardship of our parish. Remember that God cannot be outdone in generosity.

Other opportunities are available throughout the year in which parishioners are asked to pray, volunteer their time and efforts, all contributing to the Stewardship of the Parish and of the Church.



FAITH FORMATION

The center of our faith formation is the Eucharist. It is when we join to celebrate the Eucharist that we are uniting ourselves through Christ, with Christ, and in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, to give glory and honor to GOD. If this is not central, everything else that we do falls short of who we are called to be. Keeping our liturgy as a priority will help us as a parish to understand that the other aspects of our parish life are extensions of our Sunday worship.

St. Mary's Parish does not have a Catholic school, but parents may enroll children in neighboring parish Catholic schools. St. Mary's will pay the out-of-parish portion of the tuition at neighboring Catholic schools, and we encourage this enrollment for our children in order that they experience a faith-filled environment in their daily academic lives. The prayer, sacraments, and scripture study they receive, as well as the overall spiritual aspect and academic excellence of a Catholic school, cannot be replaced in aiding parents in the religious education of their children.

Religious Education: K-12.

The Religious Education Program at St. Mary's provides religious catechesis along with individual and group activities that help students form Christian attitudes about themselves and others. Grades K-10 meet on Wednesdays for weekly sessions. A continuing faith formation program is offered for grades 11-12. The program aims to provide a foundation on which religious education can be built. Our goal is to help students develop a lifelong relationship with God.

The major responsibility for religious training belongs to parents. Parents are asked to support our efforts by home studying with their children. Attending Mass regularly as a family, living your faith, and saying prayers together as a family will instill in your child a love of God and the Church.



Program Objectives

- To help students discover about themselves and others the many gifts, talents and abilities that God has provided.
- To help students increase their knowledge of Catholic doctrine, the Sacraments, Sacred Scripture, and prayer
- To help students increase their knowledge and participation in the Catholic Church's liturgical seasons of Advent, Christmas, Lent, and Easter.

The Ministry of Catechist

Catechesis means "echoing God's Word." It is an education in the Christian faith of children, young people, and adults. Specifically, it is handing on the faith to our parish youth in our religious education program. A catechist offers their talent and gifts enthusiastically in response to the call of God. They share their faith life with the students. It involves commitment to our Catholic faith and tradition by being a good example for our youth including but not limited to the following:

- Weekly participation in the Sunday Eucharist
- An ongoing sharing in the life of the parish and larger church
- Practicing the teachings of our Catholic tradition
- A commitment to personal growth as a catechist and as a Christian.

If you would like to be a catechist or aide in our religious education program, please contact the Religious Education Office on Wednesdays at 425-7830 or call the parish office 425-5806.

Youth Ministry

The youth Ministry program provides many opportunities for our young people to grow in their faith. These include monthly activities such as, diocesan youth rallies, service projects, retreats and pro-life events. Each summer we encourage our teens to participate in faith building activities, including youth conferences and mission trips. The mission of youth ministry is to encourage our young people to love God and embrace the life of the church.

St. Mary's Men Group

St. Mary's Men's Group is a group that studies what the Catholic Church teaches. The focus of the meetings are to grow in the knowledge and understanding of our Faith. All men are welcome to attend any or all sessions. The group meets on the 1st and 3rd Mondays of the month in the school, unless otherwise noted. The meetings are from 7—8 pm. Some of the study & discussion topics include: The Seven Sacraments, True Freedom and Happiness, The Ten Commandments, Prayer and Christian Living, God and Us, Basic Catholic Beliefs, The Holy Trinity, The Church in the Plan of God, Life after Life, The Liturgy. The Bible and The *Compendium Catechism of the Catholic Church* are used as a resource for our study and discussion. The *Compendium* is a summary of the Catholic Catechism containing essential information of the Catholic Faith in easy to read and understandable language.

Faith Alive, Faith Sharing Program

The *Faith Alive*, Faith Sharing Program of the Diocese of La-Crosse consists of groups of 5-12 parishioners who will meet once a month for six months, beginning in November. The program encourages us to deepen our life faith, prayer, fellowship and love of neighbor. The group used different books and themes each year. They will read and reflect on themes from the Gospels, real life stories that vividly illustrate those themes, and brief passages from the *Catechism* and other inspiring sources. Discussion and prayer round out each meeting. The program invites participants to make a modest service commitment—on their own, or in a group— as an expression of their life in Christ.

PREPARATION AND CELEBRATION

Infant and Young Children's Baptism

Parents (and Godparents, if possible) are asked to participate in preparation sessions before this sacrament is celebrated. Above all, the preparation includes the role and responsibility for parents in asking to have a child baptized. Part of the responsibility is that parents will conscientiously do their part to bring the children up in the practice of the Catholic faith.

The procedure for baptismal preparation is to first contact the pastor. He will meet with the parents and help them prepare for their child's baptism. The baptismal plans will be finalized with the pastor confirming the date and time. We encourage baptisms be celebrated during the Eucharistic liturgy but they may also be celebrated after the 9:30 Sunday Mass or at other times if needed. The suggested offering is \$20.00

Instructions in the Catholic Faith—R.C.I.A.

Those of high school age or above who are interested in the Catholic faith are invited to attend an initial inquiry session. There is no commitment required of inquirers. Those who wish to move beyond the inquiry stage begin a series of meetings where they learn and discern the teachings of the Catholic Faith. Contact the Pastor.

Children in grade school who may be interested in the Catholic faith would attend age-appropriate catechesis in the Religious Education classes. Furthermore, they would receive additional preparation dealing specifically with the Sacraments of Initiation.

First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion

Sacramental preparation is offered to children in the second grade who have reached the age of 7 and are preparing to

receive the Sacraments of Reconciliation and First Holy Communion. The catechesis is done both in the Religious Education program and at home by the parents. Special parent meetings are obligatory as a part of the preparation.

Parents are encouraged to be very actively involved with their child's preparation. They are asked to work on a series of lessons at home with their children through a sacramental textbook and parent's guide. They are encouraged to devote special time with their child on this preparation and most importantly to teach by their example in the frequent reception and celebration of Reconciliation and Holy Eucharist.

The Sacrament of Confirmation

The Confirmation program at St. Mary's begins during the high school years. The program includes the teaching of Sacred Scripture, the Creed, the Theological Virtues and the seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit. To better understand the living of Catholic virtue, video clips of saints are shown in order to see the saint living out virtue in a particular circumstance. Throughout the program, the students are always being helped to better understand the Sacrament of Confirmation: to become a disciple of Jesus Christ.

All the sessions of this program are based on Diocesan requirements and the application of the teaching to one's own life. Besides study, students are asked to attend retreats, participate in service hours and attend Holy Mass. We are assisted in this mission through the coming of the Holy Spirit in Confirmation, Who strengthens the supernatural Gifts received in Baptism, so that we can be faithful in daily prayer, living according to the Ten Commandments and the Beatitudes and be true witnesses to Christ.



Parents and sponsors are asked to help prepare the student for this sacrament by attending meetings/presentations and helping with assignments. Confirmation is celebrated with the Bishop normally in February.

The Sacrament of Marriage

Engaged couples planning to marry need to contact the pastor first in scheduling a date. A Marriage Manual will be given out detailing all information needed regarding the Sacrament of Marriage. According to the Church's Statewide Common Policy for Marriages, a minimum of six months preparation is required from your first contact with the priest until your marriage day. Marriages are celebrated for registered parishioners, and by way of exception and for appropriate pastoral reasons, for non-parishioners whose parents are members of the parish community. All details of the ceremony are to be worked out with the celebrant at least 3 weeks prior to the wedding. Weddings can be celebrated on any day except Holy Days, or Sundays, unless during the regular Sunday Mass, and are not recommended during Lent.

Sacraments of Healing & Reconciliation

The Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick

The Sacrament of Anointing gives spiritual health and strength and sometimes also bodily healing to persons who are in danger of death from illness, accident or the weakness of old age. The sacrament will be given to all who request by calling the pastor as soon as one of the above conditions presents itself. The sacrament is also offered during parish missions.

Confession/Reconciliation

The Sacrament of Reconciliation is offered one hour before weekend masses or anytime by appointment. There are also Reconciliation Services with Individual Confession offered at seasonal times throughout the year. Monthly confession is encouraged for all Catholics.

Devotions

The Rosary

The Rosary is usually prayed one half hour before each Mass for the following intentions:

- For our country and it's leaders that they will be open to and follow God's will.
- For an end to abortion and a return to the Sanctity of Life in our country and around the world.
- For our parish family, especially the sick and suffering.
- For all those serving in the military.
- For our Priests and Bishops and the Pope.
- For Peace in the World

Families volunteer to lead the rosary by contacting the parish secretary who will place them on the monthly liturgical schedule.

First Friday

First Friday of the Month devotions begin with Mass at 8:30 am followed by Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament until 10:00 am Benediction.



The MI Prayer Hour

(St. Maximilian's Militia Immaculata) prayer hour from 6:30—7:30 Thursday evenings, in the church. The Militia of the Immaculata is a worldwide evangelization movement founded by St. Maximilian Kolbe in 1917 that encourages total consecration to the Blessed Virgin Mary as a means of spiritual renewal for individuals and society. St. Maximilian knew the importance of MIs coming together in prayer. We join forces with others and pray to change the face of the earth.

The MI at St. Mary's began on Sep. 9, 2004. We meet every Thursday at 6:30 pm in the church for an hour of prayer before the Blessed Sacrament. We renew our consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary and listen to spiritual writings of St. Maximilian Kolby and other saints and pray for our priests & religious, our parish and families, the sick & suffering, our country and the world. We consecrate ourselves to the Sacred Heart of Jesus through the Immaculate Heart of Mary and try to live out our consecration. Everyone is welcome.

Consecration to the Sacred Heart

Family Consecrations to the Sacred Heart are ongoing. Contact the Pastor to arrange a time for him to come to your home for the blessing and consecration of your home and family.

Use of time and talent is one of the ways to support your parish. St. Mary's is always in need of volunteers to serve in the following capacities:

Cantor/Musician: Good congregational singing is the goal of our parish. To help us achieve this goal we need musicians to lead and support the community.

Song leading is one part of a cantor's job, but the role of the psalmist is the most important element of the cantor's functions. A cantor should have a pleasant voice, an interest in liturgy, a willingness to learn the psalms and acclamations, the ability to teach new music, and a commitment to practice prior to leading the assembly. Cantors are scheduled to serve every four or five weeks, depending on the number of volunteers.

At various times during the liturgical year, our parish will call for volunteers for choral singing. This short-term commitment will involve weekly practices from three to ten weeks.

St. Mary's is always seeking talented instrumentalists (organ, piano, violin, flute, trumpet, guitar, etc.) who are willing to study, learn, and practice liturgical music and participate in special liturgical occasions.

Altar Servers: Boys wishing to serve as Altar Servers begin their training after receiving First Communion. A training session is held once a year on a Saturday and at other times during the year as needed. New servers begin as cross bearers and eventually take on the full duties of an altar server. They are scheduled to serve on either Saturday or Sunday Mass, once a month or more, depending on the number of servers. The date and time for training sessions are posted in the bulletin.

Lectors: Those who wish to serve the parish as Lector or Reader are asked to contact the Pastor. Training will be offered and literature on the ministry is given out. Volunteers are scheduled to serve at either Saturday or Sunday Mass once a month.

Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist: Volunteers who are in good standing in the parish, who are examples of Christian living in faith and conduct; who strive to grow in holiness through this sacrament of unity and love, and who hold a deep reverence for the Body and Blood of Christ in the Eucharist, may contact the pastor in order to serve as an extraordinary Minister of the Eucharist. Training and literature of the ministry is given out, and volunteers are scheduled to serve at either Saturday or Sunday Mass once a month or more if the number of volunteers decrease. A monthly schedule is inserted in the bulletin at the beginning of each month and the following weekend schedule is printed in the bulletin.

Ushers: Four ushers are needed for each weekend Mass to welcome parishioners and visitors, distribute missalettes before Mass, help people find a seat if needed, take up the collection, and hand out bulletins after Mass. If there are no gift bearers assigned the ushers also carry up the gifts. Sunday ushers are scheduled to count the collection.

Family Gift Bearers: Families who wish to carry up the gifts for either Saturday or Sunday Mass may add their names to the liturgy schedule by calling the parish secretary. A monthly schedule is inserted in the bulletin at the beginning of each month and the following weekend schedule is printed in the bulletin.

Catechists: Catechists and aides are needed for Wednesday afternoon and evening Religious Education Classes. (See *The Ministry of Catechist* on page 9). Contact the Religious Education Director to volunteer.



St. Mary's Parish Pastoral Council

The Parish Pastoral Council assists the pastor by giving advice in the four pastoral areas of parish life (i.e. Family Life, Sacred Worship, Education, Justice and Peace.) Each member of the Parish Pastoral Council serves on one of the four committees. According to the diocesan guidelines, the Parish Pastoral Council advises the pastor in matters that pertain to the pastoral care of the parish community. Consists of 12 members, 8 are elected and 4 appointed. Members serve a 2-year term and can be renewed twice.

St. Mary's Parish Finance Council

The Finance Council assists the pastor with the temporal administration of the parish. Each member of the finance council serves on one of the three committees (Budget, Building and Grounds, Cemetery). The Council members examine the finances, issues of long-range and strategic planning, fundraisers, etc. The Finance Council also sets and approves the budget that becomes operative for the parish and advises the pastor in matters pertaining to the maintenance and operation of the parish.

The Peace and Justice Committee

The Justice & Peace Committee assists the Parish Pastoral Council in fostering pastoral concern and action for justice in the world, especially in all areas of parish life. Its concerns include: promotion of the respect for all human life, the pastoral care of the afflicted, the needy, and the imprisoned, the pastoral care of migrants and refugees, just structures in the parish, stewardship, and the greater understanding of the Church's teaching on social justice. **The Pro-Life Committee** is a subcommittee of Peace and Justice and it hosts several fundraisers throughout the year for pro-life causes as well as distributing information to the parish.



The Sacred Worship Committee

The Sacred Worship Committee assist the Parish Pastoral Council in fostering, first and foremost, the liturgical life of the parish as celebrated in the sacraments and other rites of the Church, with special attention to the sick and isolated in the parish. Also of concern to this committee are the devotional aspects of the parish's life of prayer.

The Education Committee

The Education Committee assists the Parish Pastoral Council in fostering the educational aspect of the pastoral mission of the parish, which includes evangelization, adult education, Catechetics, missionary activity, and ecumenism.

The Family Life Committee

The Family Life Committee assists the Parish Pastoral Council in fostering Christian family life in the parish. Among its concerns are: the central place of the family in all parish pastoral activities, parish hospitality and social activities, youth ministry, vocations to the priesthood and the consecrated life, pre-marriage preparation, marriage enrichment, natural family planning, and the pastoral care of single adult Catholics, divorced Catholics, divorced and remarried Catholics and widows and widowers. **The Altar Rosary Society** is the women's group of the parish and has a separate hand book of information.

Stewardship Committee

St. Mary's Stewardship Committee was originally formed to organize, advertise and oversee the We Belong to Christ Campaign for the parish and consisted of three chairmen and the pastor. It soon developed into a larger committee who's responsibility it is to oversee the Stewardship of the whole parish. This group is now committed to increasing the Stewardship life of the parish in all three areas of Time, Talent and Treasure. We welcome any new ideas or suggestions and continue to give thanks to God for all the blessings He has bestowed on our parish.

St. Mary's Education Endowment Fund

Any and all donations made to the endowment fund are appreciated. This fund has been established to support our Religious Education Program and other educational components of our parish life.

St. Mary's Improvement Fund

The Improvement Fund has been established in order to set up a reserve for any major improvements made toward the buildings or grounds of the parish. The money is on deposit at the diocese and earns interest there. There is a designated envelope provided in the annual envelope packet for gifts to the Improvement Fund. Any and all donations are needed and appreciated.

St. Mary's and St. Martin's Cemetery Funds

Each year at Memorial Day and All Souls Day an envelope is provided for donations to the Perpetual Care funds of our two parish cemeteries - St. Mary's and St. Martin's, Cherma. The money collected from this appeal is invested with the Diocese in the Perpetual Care Fund of each cemetery. Each quarter we receive an interest check from the funds, which is put in the maintenance checking account for the cemeteries. It is from this maintenance account that the payment is made for the care, mowing and maintenance of each cemetery.



St. Mary's Seminary Fund

Each year we deposit 1% of the adult envelope contributions into the Seminary Fund. This money is kept in an account at the diocese and is to be used to assist any young man from the parish who answers the call to become a priest.

Friendship Fund

We have established this Fund in order to help those who come to the rectory in urgent need of assistance. This is a "Works of Charity" account and is funded by contributions from parishioners, a second collection taken on the first Sunday of the month - four times a year, and by contributions for use of the school hall, etc.

Special Collections

Our parish contributes to some special collections throughout the year: Mission Co-op Collection (a missionary is invited from the Diocese to come and share their ministry with us for a weekend), Mission Sunday, Religious Retirement and Diocesan Council of Catholic Women collections from the diocese.

Diocesan Annual Appeal

Sharing Our Gifts. The Diocesan Annual Appeal is the major source of funding for the ministries, programs and services of the Diocese of La Crosse. Thanks to the generosity of the people in our parish and parishes throughout the Diocese, the Appeal provides for the needs of the Diocese, for raising additional funds for parishes and meeting our Christian responsibility to reach out to many in need.

Church Bulletin Boards: There are two bulletin boards in the entry of church. One is for community events and the other for St. Mary's Parish events. Please contact the Pastor if you wish to post a notice on the bulletin board.

Liturgies - When attending the liturgies, parishioners and visitors are asked to maintain a quiet and reverent manner in the church. People come early to pray before Mass and remain after for quiet meditation, and we ask that this not be disturbed.

Funerals - In the event of a funeral, please contact the pastor and make arrangements for the date and time. The pastor will contact the president of the Altar Rosary Society if a luncheon is needed. The school hall is available for a luncheon after the funeral liturgy. The group from St. Mary's Altar Rosary Society, with whom the family is affiliated, will prepare hot dishes, jellos and bars and serve the luncheon. The family is responsible for the main meal and can obtain help from the Altar Rosary Society president in purchasing the rest of the food. In accord with diocesan policy, a gift of \$50 is given toward the "Friendship Fund" account for Works of Charity. If an organist and cantor are hired, each is given a monetary gift for their services. These arrangements are made with the organist prior to the funeral.

School Hall - When requesting the use of the school hall, scheduling is to be done through the Pastor. A monetary donation to the "Friendship Fund" account is requested for non-parishioners, according to the Altar Rosary Society recom-



mendations and a Certificate of Insurance, verifying homeowner liability insurance, needs to be requested from your insurance carrier and a copy placed on file with the parish.

Baptisms/Wedding Donations. When baptisms or weddings occur at St. Mary's, a customary donation is offered for the use of the facilities, etc. The donation is placed in the "Friendship Fund" account. While the donation is an offering and not a contracted fee, the ordinary donation that is suggested is as follows: Baptisms \$10, Weddings \$75. If you want to give a gift to the celebrant – any gift would be appreciated. Please ask for the Wedding Handbook for more information.

Parish Participation - New parishioners are asked to prayerfully consider the areas of service that they may participate in when registering as new members. The parish is only as good as it's members, and each member is a very needed asset to the whole parish family. Every member's time, talent, and treasure are vital to the parish.

Injuries - If anyone injures themselves on the parish premises, they are asked to inform the pastor. We need to report all injuries, etc. to the diocesan office.

Offering Envelopes and Contribution Statements - Envelope packets are mailed out quarterly. New members are given envelopes when registering. Please fill out and use the

envelopes for your weekly offering to aid in recording contributions. An annual contribution statement is mailed out each year in January.

Keys - If a parish member requests and receives permission to have a key for an event, the key should be returned to the rectory as soon as possible after the event has taken place.

Hospitalized and homebound - We appreciate being notified of any parishioner who has been hospitalized or residing in a nursing care facility. If a parishioner is homebound or in need of a visit please call the rectory to make this information known. Holy Communion is taken to the homebound during the week of the First Friday of the month.

Leaving the parish - We sometimes hear "through the grapevine" of parishioners who have moved away or are now attending a different parish. If you are a registered member of the parish but then leave the parish or area, please let us know.





Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary

St. Mary's—Big River

W10137 570th Avenue

River Falls, WI 54022

Web Page: <http://home.catholicweb.com/stmarysbigriver>

Contact Information and Schedule

PARISH OFFICE 425-5806

Pastor,

Fr. William Matzek 425-5806

Email.....wmatzek@dishup.us

Deacon,

Dn. Dan Gannon 651-500-4380

Email.....gannon.dan@gmail.com

School Hall Office 425-7830

Email stmarys@dishup.us

Religious Education Director,

Cindi Beurskens 273-4534

Email.....edibleacres@wildblue.net

Secretary,

Pat Bjork 273-3577

Email.....bjork@dishup.us

Music Coordinator,

Connie Cobian 425-6098

Maintenance,

Don Engel 425-9410

Cemetery,

Don Engel, 425-9410

John Matzek 792-2582

Prayer Chain 273-3577

Email.....bjork@dishup.us

Mass Schedule

Weekend

Saturday: 6:00 pm

Sunday: 9:30 am

Weekday

Monday-Friday 8:30 am

First Friday 8:30 am

First Friday Adoration

9—10:00 am

Holy Days

8:30 am & 7:00 pm

Confession

1 hour before weekend Masses or
anytime by appointment.

MI Prayer Hour

Thursdays from 6:30-7:30 pm
in the Church. Everyone welcome

