

# Saint Francis Xavier Parish

Fourth Sunday of Advent

December 22, 2019



## St. Francis Xavier Church

151 Bridge St., Narrowsburg

### Masses

Saturday	4:30pm
Sunday	11:00am
Daily (Tuesday-Friday)	8:30am
Holydays of Obligation	As announced

### Confessions

Saturday	4:00pm
	Or by appointment

*Our Lady of the Lake Church  
is closed for the winter season*

**REV. DENNIS M. DINAN, PASTOR**

**ABBY RODDEN, PARISH SECRETARY**

**OFFICE HOURS: TUESDAY-FRIDAY 10:00AM-3:00PM  
OR BY APPOINTMENT**

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Dear Parish Family,

You may remember I spoke of two teenage girls I knew from a previous parish, both from model Catholic families, who became pregnant one year. The number has increased since then. As I write this, I do not have an exact count. Anyway, the circumstances were pretty much the same. These are girls who came to Mass each Sunday. As a result, everyone knew! Everyone could see! Everyone knew they were not married—in fact, they were still in high school or college. In some cases, the father did not want any part of this. Wasn't this a scandal?

These girls all knew that they were carrying children that God wanted for himself; otherwise, they would not have been conceived. The not-so-often accepted truth is: that God is involved in conception. It might not sound like the work of the Almighty, but God used these not-so-perfect circumstances to his own purposes. God saw these moments for conception as moments that never existed before and would never happen again. These were the only times in the history of the universe that these unique children could be created. The girls, like every woman, every month, would be fertile for only 24-hours. After that, each unique ovum in the reproductive systems of these girls, would die—their characteristics never to be repeated—now past the point of fertilization. So, God chose to create! The Virgin Mary was told by the angel, *"The holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you"* (Lk 1:35). Obviously a miracle! No man was involved! Yet, in the case of these young women, God also chose to send his Holy Spirit to accomplish his great work! He chose to conceive new children! Like Mary, but with a male partner, "This was the work of the Holy Spirit!" God chose to bring a few more immortal human beings into the world. These were persons with whom he wanted to share his eternal life—the life and happiness of Heaven.

We do not always like the way God works. His works, however, are perfect! His decrees are eternal! It does not really matter whether we can accept his decisions or not—God is in charge! His will is always done. We separate ourselves from him when we cannot accept his decrees. We blame him too! Yes, it can seem very unfair! His works many times can interfere with our lives. Worse still, they upset our plans! Still worse, many times we fail to acknowledge, in all of this, that these works of his, like above, are really God working with the domino effect of our actions—personal choices that we made. Fortunately, all of these girls could accept the consequences. Still, in any case, we can blame God. He chose to act!

Our Christmas Story, found in the gospels, is an old one, but still a modern one. It is the story of a pregnant teenage girl, who was about to scandalize members of her family, her fiancé, her town, the religious leaders of her community and probably many others. The reaction of her fiancé was almost predictable. He was about to "call off" the marriage. He wanted to distance himself from the whole thing. He knew the child was not his. At the same time, he also knew the impeccable character of his bride-to-be. She was a pure, chaste virgin. Hers was a God-centered life. This was the one he chose for his spouse! But, how could this be? With no clear answers, and obviously no explanation from her, separation was the only solution he could think of. He also did not want to expose her to the community. At the same time, he could not accept the situation now unfolding. Scandalous? So it would seem.

The girl, for her part, understood what the consequences were. She knew that what she had done might not find favor with anyone—except God! She knew she might even have to go it alone—except for God. She knew that life came only from God—that a child was conceived only with God's consent, desire, and action. The life she was carrying in her womb was

decided by God. She consented to his decision. He wanted this child to be born, regardless of circumstances—regardless of what people thought—regardless of the difficulties that might be looming in the distance! The girl did too.

Happily, for us, Mary, could boldly accept the outcome of this decision! She only desired to do God's will. She had consented to be used in any way that God would choose. Joseph too came around! God sent his angel to coach him—to tell him that it was through God's own direction that Mary was with child—that it was OK for him to take her for his wife.



And so, God makes good on his promise to rescue us from the disaster we created by sin—to give the world a Savior! He sets this in motion through Mary. Yes, it is not the way that you or I would choose to do it. Our generation cannot deal with messy circumstances like these. The number of abortions that occur are proof that we have difficulty with God's will—especially when he takes advantage of situations that we bring about by our actions, and creates children! But, we cannot accept the consequences of so many of our sinful actions. And that's exactly why we need a Savior. It's our actions that are out of line. God is just acting like God. He always has. He always will. We are acting as our sinful selves. We are in need of his mercy—which he showers on us in abundance.

Talk about God's ways! His design called for an ovum to come from Mary's womb to be fertilized, just like any woman. This particular ovum would have all the genetic material that God wanted the body of his Son to have. Somehow, God used all of those in Mary's lineage to pass down these genetics from one generation to the next. We don't have her genealogy, but as an example, look at those that Saints Matthew and Luke gave us for Joseph. They are not all exemplary people, but God drew straight lines with all these crooked instruments and accomplished his will. Even more frightening, is that he left all of this within a given 24-hour window-of-time for this young teen-age virgin to decide. Yes, the ovum would not live very long once it left her ovaries. Some of this time she would be sleeping and doing other things. God left all of Salvation History hang on this one ovum—and this one decision. No other ovum would do. This was the one chosen for his Son.

Some question why we honor Mary as we do. When it comes down to it, it doesn't take a genius to be able to figure this out. Mary said "yes" to God's plan. He could have done it any other way he chose, but he didn't—he chose this way. And, it demanded a completely human response. Mary was willing to respond. She did not count the cost of discipleship. All that counted was her discipleship.

We do not only honor Mary, we hold her up as an example for anyone who says they want to do God's will. Mary not only allowed God to give the world a Savior; Mary allowed God to do whatever he wanted. Her "yes" was only one "yes" in a long series of "yes's." *"The Word, became flesh and made his dwelling among us, and we have seen his Glory: The Glory of an only Son coming from the Father, filled with enduring love"* (Jn 1:14). But none of this happened without Mary. She gave birth to the Son of the Eternal Father. We thank God for sending us a Savior. We thank God for Mary; she is the Mother of our Savior—the Mother of God.

Merry Christmas, Father



This year's Christmas Mass Intentions will be celebrated together.

Please look for the Christmas Mass Intention envelopes, Christmas Flower envelopes, and Christmas Gift envelopes at the back of the church.



*Prepared to Come and Adore Him?*

Christmas Vigil Mass- 4:00pm

Christmas Day Mass- 10:00am

Masses will be held at St. Francis Xavier Church

Volunteers are needed to help prepare the Church for Christmas after the 11:00am Mass on Sunday, December 22<sup>nd</sup>

*Please consider giving a gift to our parish for Christmas this year. We are in need of funds to cover heating costs for the season.*

*Thank you!*



*We would like to wish a very Merry Christmas to all of our parish family!*

# Mass Intentions

## Saturday, December 21<sup>st</sup>

SFX 4:30pm - Available or Our Parish Family

## Sunday, December 22<sup>nd</sup>

**(NO MASS at OLL)**

SFX 8:30am - Available or Our Parish Family

SFX 11:00am - Emerson "Bucky" Misner

Requested by The Rodden Family

## Monday, December 23<sup>rd</sup>

NO MASS

## Tuesday, December 24<sup>th</sup>

**Christmas Vigil**

SFX 4:00pm -Our Christmas Mass and Flower Intentions

## Wednesday, December 25<sup>th</sup>

**Christmas**

SFX 10:00am - Our Christmas Mass and Flower Intentions

## Thursday, December 26<sup>th</sup>

NO MASS

## Friday, December 27<sup>th</sup>

SFX 8:30am - Available or Our Parish Family

## Saturday, December 28<sup>th</sup>

SFX 4:30pm - Available or Our Parish Family

## Sunday, December 29<sup>th</sup>

**(NO MASS at OLL)**

SFX 8:30am - Available or Our Parish Family

SFX 11:00am - Available or Our Parish Family

# Collection

December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2019

## First Collection

St. Francis Xavier \$1,299.00

## Second Collection (Capital Imp.)

St. Francis Xavier \$480.00

## Christmas Flowers

St. Francis Xavier \$45.00

## Christmas Offering

St. Francis Xavier \$75.00

**Total**  
**\$1,899.00**  
*Thank you!*

**Our Lady of the Lake Church  
 is CLOSED  
 for the winter months.**



## Readings



Isaiah 7:10-14

Romans 1:1-7

Matthew 1:18-24

## Please Pray for our Parish Family

**For the Sick:** Christina Hubert, Lydia Newton, Jane Cutita, Bonnie Feeler, Judy Tufo, Connie Moser, Elizabeth Stoddard, Pam Kocher, Vincent Gentile, Peter O'Leary Jr., Jessica Hartley, Dorothy Schlegel, Henrietta Pierce, Ella Dorothy Neidert, Ed Coates, Howard Van Jones, Dolores Nelson, Emerson "Bucky" Misner

**For the Deceased:** Mary Weiden, Muriel Maers, Stan Rembish, Eugene Harrison, Terry McCarthy, John Werner, Lillian Yacino, James Lingle, Patricia Lyons, Peggy Lee Romano, Emory Robert Kaub, Muriel F. Edwards, Andrew Casimir, Barbara Walter, John Hartley, Eileen Dempsey, Christopher Kells, Rita & Arthur Holmes, Kathleen Jamieson, Stanley Javitz

**For those Serving in the Military:** Justin Warnick, Joseph A. Choffo IV, Carmen Hamstrom, Joseph R. Gonzalez