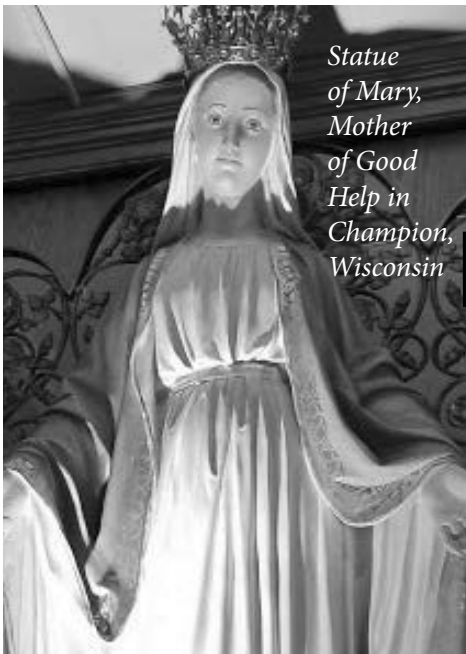


Relationship with GOD

More than Just SUNDAY

The Miracle of a New Parish



*Statue
of Mary,
Mother
of Good
Help in
Champion,
Wisconsin*

The story of how we now have a new parish for Hmong Catholics is quite amazing. Mary Mother of Good Help Parish was established in Wausau on May 8, 2018 with Fr. Al Burkhardt serving as its first pastor. This parish has evolved from a long and interesting history of Hmong presence within the Diocese.

The Hmong have resettled in the United States since the fall of Saigon in 1975. Many Hmong people helped the United States during the Vietnam War, and so when the U.S. withdrew the Hmong had to flee for their lives from the Communists. Families lived in the jungles, surviving on bananas and leaves for up to two years. Many crossed the Mekong River to live in refugee camps.

With sponsorship, the Hmong were welcomed into the Diocese of La Crosse in three primary cities: Wausau, La Crosse, and Eau Claire. It was an extremely difficult adjustment to move to southwestern Wisconsin with only the clothes on their backs and no understanding of the English language.

The Diocese of La Crosse has sought to minister to the unique needs of the Hmong Community throughout the years. They have been served by many priests, such as Fr. Robert MacKillop, Fr. Steve Brice and Msgr. Joseph Hirsch.

In 1987, Bishop John Paul wrote a letter "On the Christian Welcome of the Hmong Population among the Faithful of the Diocese of La Crosse." He acknowledged the need to reach out in evangelization to the Hmong population. He noted that the process of evangelization requires some special recognition. He wrote, "Although many of the Hmong were evangelized and received the Sacraments of Initiation before arriving in the Diocese, their faith is still young and, therefore, needs regular and sound nourishment. ...we tend to forget that the Hmong population in our country has had the benefit of a steady program of evangelization for only the past thirty years. Likewise, they do not come from a country with a Christian tradition."

These words from Bishop Paul's pastoral letter are prophetic and still hold true as the Catholic Church reaches out in evangelization to the Hmong population. While steady progress has occurred over the past 30 years since Bishop Paul wrote his pastoral letter, the progress is slowed without an intentional, consistent opportunity wherein the Hmong population can learn the Faith.

Recent questions within the Hmong community provided the occasion for some of its leaders to meet with Bishop Callahan and discuss their needs. Through these conversations, the Bishop heard the great desire of the Hmong Community to learn the Faith and to have the spiritual leadership to provide for their needs. At his initiative, Bishop Callahan invited the Hmong Community to become a parish. This parish, once established, would become central to serving the

needs of evangelization and growth in the Catholic Faith.

The Hmong community of Wausau received this invitation with great joy. Over several months, the community entered into dialogue regarding their ability and willingness to undertake the work of becoming a parish. The lively conversation delved into the many factors which needed attention in order to answer whether this was possible. Arriving at a decision, the Hmong Community petitioned the Bishop to request that they become a new parish within the Diocese of La Crosse.

The Hmong Community chose the name "Mary Mother of Good Help Parish" for several reasons. Near Green Bay, a shrine exists to Our Lady of Good Help. This shrine reflects two stories. While a devastating fire destroyed Pestigo, the residents fled to the church and prayed for safety from the fire. Their prayers were answered and the fire did not destroy the chapel or its other buildings. People in flight were saved through Our Lady's intercession.



A child receiving the
Sacrament of Baptism

At this same shrine, Sr. Adele received visions from Our Lady. In these apparitions, our Lady told her to “Gather the children in this wild country and teach them what they should know for salvation. Teach them their catechism, how to sign themselves with the Sign of the Cross, and how to approach the Sacraments; that is what I wish you to do. Go and fear nothing. I will help you.”

These two stories are similar to the experience of the Hmong people. They had to flee a country due to the persecution which they endured. Now, they are seeking to learn the basics of the Catholic Faith. And they are asking Mary to help them in their journey. Choosing this name for the parish reflects the desire of Hmong Catholics to seek Mary’s protection and guidance as they gather and seek to be taught the catechism, the Sign of the Cross, and how to approach the Sacraments. They believe that the Blessed Mother is inviting them to fear nothing and to trust she will help them.

The people of the Diocese of La Crosse are invited to join in a special Mass with Bishop Callahan on October 14 at 3:00 p.m. at Holy Name of Jesus Parish in Wausau, WI. This Mass will celebrate the establishment of the new parish and provide an opportunity for many of the faithful of the Diocese to pray with them.



Christmas Show

In preparation for this day, Mary Mother of Good Help Parish is seeking a building to lease in which the Sacraments will be celebrated. They are working to provide for the many items necessary to make possible the celebration of the Sacraments, taking on the costs connected with this process.

As this parish gets underway, people within the Diocese have expressed a desire to help the Hmong Catholic community, asking what they can do to help. Mindful of this, Mary Mother of Good Help Parish offers a “wish list” to the churches of the Diocese. If any of these items are available in your parish

and no longer used - but are in good condition - donations are welcome! If an individual, group or organization would like to make a monetary donation to assist in the development of the parish, please send these offerings to:

Ann Lankford

Director of Office for Catechesis
and Evangelization

P.O. Box 4004 | La Crosse, WI 54602-4004

Above all, please pray for this new parish. Setting fear aside, pray that Our Lady of Good Help will intercede and provide for this new parish. May this new Catholic parish flourish under her patronage!

WISH LIST

- Incensor and Boat
- Stand for the Incensor
- Paschal Candle stand
- Vigil light stand
- 1 set of vestments
- Albs/cinctures for Servers
- Altar
- Altar Cloths
- Stations of the Cross
- Holy pictures
- Statue of the Blessed Mother
- 1 Ciborium

Or monetary gifts to assist with the purchase of these and other items would be greatly appreciated.



DIOCESE OF LA CROSSE, WI



Reception after three Catholic Weddings!