



This week we hear that John the Baptist is out in the wilderness eating "locusts and wild honey" (Mark 1:6). It's not just a strange historical detail. It's a symbolic expression of a healthy spiritual diet. The path to Christ includes both the hard and the beautiful, the gritty and the sweet. We have to learn to gulp the locusts and savor the honey. I remember working with a young couple preparing for marriage. They were sincere, but raw —barely beginning to discover faith. Part of me wanted to rush them ahead, to fill in all the gaps, to bombard them with scripture and church documents. I swallowed that instinct. It was like eating locusts. But I also recall them light up as they spoke about each other, about their first child, then their second. And they wanted to be close to God. Something innocent and beautiful was unfolding. That was the honey. I knew God was asking me to savor it. This Advent, maybe we're being invited to accept both locusts and honey. Maybe it's time to stop avoiding the difficult parts of faith — prayer that feels dry, the call to repentance, the patience with the troublesome. It's time to eat some locusts. But we also need to notice the small gifts God gives us: a peaceful moment, a good conversation, the joy of serving someone else, new life, good intentions of our friends. That's the honey. Savor it! John didn't avoid either. He took it all in. And so can we. What are your locusts? Your honey? It we let God feed us with both, we'll be ready — really ready — for the coming of Christ.

LITURGICAL MINISTERS FOR DEC. 13 & 14, 2025

Sat. Dec. 13 @ 4:30PM @ St. Nicholas
 Reader: Brenda Tebbe Music: Sally Rehberger
 Euch. Min.: Brenda & Marce Tebbe
 Server: Pat Kalous

Sun. Dec. 14 @ 8:00AM @ St. Gertrude
 Reader: Chad Korte Music: Nick Worman
 Sacristan: Gail Ohren
 Euch.Min.: Sue Messerli, Jane Deiters & Carole Sauls
 Ushers: Randy & Dianne Leitschuh
 Servers: Nevin Straube & Katie Schwarz

Sun. Dec. 14 @10:00AM @ IC
 Reader: Mary Bergman Music: Joy Winkeler
 Servers: Paige Knebel
 Euch. Min.: Erica Knebel, Cindy Knebel & Amy Gilomen

"Immaculate Mary, your praises we sing!"
 December 8th is one of our feasts celebrating Mary - the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception. From the beginnings of the Church, spiritual writers and theologians have acknowledged the innocence and holiness of Mary. St. Irenaeus called her the "new Eve." Both faced with the pure freedom to accept or reject God, Mary began with work of redemption with her yes to Christ! The Church began to celebrate the feast of Mary's conception in the early Middle Ages. In 1854, Pope Pius IX infallibly declared that Mary was free of original sin from the first moment of her conception. On this feast day, we celebrate the beauty and goodness of Our Lady!

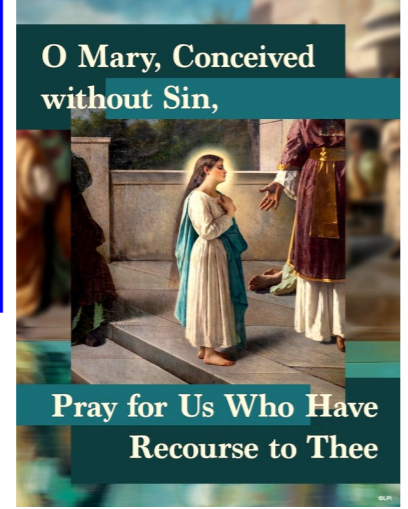
The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary December 8th mass schedule:
 8:00AM at St. Nicholas
 5:00PM at St. Gertrude
 7:00PM at Immaculate Conception
 This is a Holy Day of Obligation

Mon. (Dec. 8) 8:00am (St.N)
 Mon. (Dec. 8) 5:00pm (St.G)
 Mon. (Dec. 8) 7:00pm (IC)
 Tues. (Dec. 9) 8:00am (St.G)
 Wed. (Dec.10) 8:00am (IC)
 Thur. (Dec.11) 8:00am (St.N)
 Fri. (Dec.12) 8:00am (IC)
 Sat. (Dec.13) 4:30pm (St.N)
 Sun. (Dec.14) 8:00am (St.G)
 Sun. (Dec.14) 10:00am (IC)

† Mass Intentions †
 † **Walt Spihlman** — Int. of Ginny Werner
 † **Shirley Schwarz** — Int. of Delmar & Marlene Korsmeyer
 † **Msgr. David Peters** — Int. of Bill & Denise Trickey
 † **All Souls**
 † **Richard & Marilyn Aldrich** — Int. of Bill & Denise Trickey
For the People of St. Nicholas, St. Gertrude & Immaculate Conception
 † **Sharon Cantrell** — Int. of Lowell & Denise Wellen
 † **Corky & John "Butch" Hutchinson** — Int. of the Hutchinson Family
 † **Clarence Korte** — Int. of Dianne & Randy Leitschuh
 † **Joetta Korte** — Int. of Jeannie Korte & Family
 † **Loretta Knebel** —Int. of Delmar Knebel & Family



Members of our parish families who are recovering in the hospital & at home, for their strength and patience each day, and for all those who ask for our prayers for health or other issues.
 John Alberst, Pat Beard, Ana Cantrell, Steve Crawford, Don Dapkus, Dave Deiters, Teresa Dickman, Joan Dickshot, Jean Fields, Scott Frank, Gabriel Frey, Jerry Fyke, Ed Gagen, Karen Grabowski, P.J. Hereford, James Hodge, Gene Jolliff, Pat Kalous, Val King, Barrett Korte, Denny Korte, Randy Korte, Ruth Korte, Steve Korte, David Kuehn, Sue Luber, Christopher Marti, Taylor Marti, Barry May, Alex McCall, Eleanor Munie, Cody Neal, Jeannie Oestringer, Suzanne Steinbring, Marcia Rowe, Gunner Sadler, Abby Schrage, Bill Schroeder, Marie Weis, Ginny Werner, Dean Wernle.
FOR OUR PARISHIONERS IN NURSING HOMES:
 Delmar Knebel, Ann Plocher, Barbara Weiss, Margie Zurliene and special people in our families.
FOR THOSE CURRENTLY SERVING IN THE MILITARY:
 Adam Canfield, Tim Doll, Chad Knebel, Michael Knebel, Dustin Korte, Solon McGill, Lt. Abigail Mesaros, Jerritt Mettler, Jimmy O'Boyle, Sgt. Joseph Patterson, Rickie Schuster, Joseph Schatte, Greg Spina, T.J. Waddington, Sgt. Tyler Wegman, Sgt. Zach Weiss.
If you would like to have someone added or removed from the prayer list please call the parish office.



BORN INTO Eternal Life
FAITHFUL DEPARTED
 Prayers are requested for the repose of the soul of **Bertha Voss**, mother of **Colleen (Jim) Lozier**, and for **Ruthann Daiber**, sister-in-law of **George (Margaret) Daiber** of our parish family. We extend our heartfelt sympathy to Bertha's & Ruthann's family and friends.
 Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord...



Readings for the week of December 7, 2025
Sunday:
 Is 11:1-10/Ps 72:1-2, 7-8, 12-13, 17 (see 7)/ Rom 15:4-9/Mt 3:1-12
Monday:
 Gn 3:9-15, 20/Ps 98:1, 2-3ab, 3cd-4/ Eph 1:3-6, 11-12/Lk 1:26-38
Tuesday:
 Is 40:1-11/Ps 96:1-2, 3 and 10ac, 11-12, 13/ Mt 18:12-14
Wednesday:
 Is 40:25-31/Ps 103:1-2, 3-4, 8 and 10/ Mt 11:28-30
Thursday:
 Is 41:13-20/Ps 145:1 and 9, 10-11, 12-13ab/ Mt 11:11-15
Friday:
 Zec 2:14-17 or Rv 11:19a; 12:1-6a, 10ab/ Jdt 13:18bcde, 19/Lk 1:26-38 or Lk 1:39-47
Saturday:
 Sir 48:1-4, 9-11/Ps 80:2ac and 3b, 15-16, 18-19/Mt 17:9a, 10-13
Next Sunday:
 Is 35:1-6a, 10/Ps 146:6-7, 8-9, 9-10 (see Is 35:4)/Jas 5:7-10/Mt 11:2-11

"Therefore, every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire." Matthew 3:10
 Do you bear good fruit for Jesus? Do you spend time in prayer or do you waste it with mindless activity? Do you use your talent to help others or are you too busy? Do you use your treasure to support the Church or do you buy more things that go unused. Our time, talent, and treasure are gifts from God. What we do with these gifts is our gift back to Him. What gifts are you planning to give to the Lord during this upcoming Christmas season?

The story of Advent is a story of repentance. John the Baptist held up a mirror to the chosen people. He urged them to look at what they saw there. This Advent, will we look in the mirror? Will we choose repentance?

The next IC Council Meeting will be held on Tuesday, December 16th at 7:00PM

HAPPY BIRTHDAY
 God created you on a special day. Your birthday is special and so are you. We would like to pray in a special way for all those born during the month of December. May God bless you abundantly especially on your birthday.
 Instead of listing individual names of those celebrating a birthday, and in an effort to celebrate all with birthdays, we would like to instead say, "Happy Birthday to all who are celebrating a birthday this month!"

Please Note:
 In case of bad weather the Church cancellations will be broadcast on KMOV Channel 4 & KSDK Channel 5
 When school is cancelled for EITHER Bond County or Highland, PSR will automatically be cancelled.
 When the schools are closed for bad weather during the week there will be no 8AM Mass that morning.



"Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight His paths." Mark 1:3

STN Collection	11/29/25
Envelopes/Loose	\$610.00
Solemnity of Mary	\$5.00
IC Collection	\$5.00
Christmas	\$5.00
Military Collection	\$10.00
Sister Parish	\$65.00
Justice & Hope	\$20.00
Children's Home	\$5.00
Christmas Flowers	\$65.00
Budget Goal	\$1,257.00
Weekly Surplus/Deficit	\$-632.00
Support Needed (budget)	\$27,654.00
Support Actual	\$26,322.06
Surplus/Deficit YTD	\$-1,331.94

Please remember that all donated items for the St. Gertrude Adopt-A-Family program need to be returned by Sunday, December 7. If you'd like to help wrap the gifts, please join us in the St. Gertrude Parish Hall on Wednesday, December 10 at 6:30 p.m.

STG Collection	11/30/25
Envelopes/Loose	\$1,010.00
Sister Parish	\$65.00
Christmas Flowers	\$40.00
Candles	\$37.00
Budget Goal	\$1,505.00
Weekly Surplus/Deficit	\$-495.00
Support Needed (budget)	\$33,110.00
Support Actual	\$26,506.00
Surplus/Deficit YTD	\$-6,604.00

Observances for the week of December 7, 2025
Sunday: 2nd Sunday of Advent
Monday: The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary
Tuesday: St. Juan Diego Cuauhtlatoatzin
Wednesday: Our Lady of Loreto
Thursday: St. Damasus I, Pope
Friday: Our Lady of Guadalupe
Saturday: St. Lucy, Virgin and Martyr
Next Sunday: 3rd Sunday of Advent



The PAPAYA Youth Group will be collecting money for a Christmas family (or families) in need. Donations will be collected after each Mass at IC & STN thru December 7th. Thank you for your generous support!!



Advent Reconciliation
Advent Penance Services in Our Area
 St. Cecilia/St. Mary Edw @ St. Cecilia – Wednesday December 10 @ 6:30PM
 St. Paul Highland – Wednesday, December 10, 6:30 PM
 St. Paul Highland – Thursday December 11, 10:00 AM
St. Gertrude Grantfork – Wednesday December 17 7:00PM
 Tri City @ St. Elizabeth Granite – Wednesday December 17 6:00PM
 St. Boniface – Sunday, Dec. 14, 2:30 PM



IC Collection	11/30/25
Envelopes/Loose	\$1,313.00
IC Collection	\$10.00
Sister Parish	\$95.00
Justice & Hope	\$213.00
Children's Home	\$12.50
Retired Religious	\$8.50
Building Fund	\$35.00
Cemetery	\$15.00
Christmas Flowers	\$95.00
Budget Goal	\$2,672.00
Weekly Surplus/Deficit	\$-1,349.00
Support Needed (budget)	\$58,784.00
Support Actual	\$49,860.28
Surplus/Deficit YTD	\$-8,923.72

Clinton Co. Showcase Presents



525 N. 2nd St.; Breese, IL
618-526-2866 Showtimes:
12/5 and 12/6 at 8PM
12/7 at 2PM
12/12 & 12/13 at 8PM
12/14 at 2PM

Waiting in Joyful Hope...

Advent devotionals are available at the back of each church.

Take one and let it help you seek the Lord and his kingdom this Advent.



The Grantfork Historical Society is hosting the Wreaths Across America wreath laying event on Saturday, December 13th at the GRANTFORK UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST CEMETERY at 11:00 am. Everyone is welcome to attend. To donate a wreath, contact Wendy at 618-675-3472 or 618-444-2520. Wreaths are \$17.00.



Devotions Explained! St. Nicholas

St. Nicholas was a fourth-century Christian bishop who lived in modern-day Turkey. There is minimal historical scholarship dating to the period of his life, but stories and traditions that developed after his death emphasize his profound spirit of generosity, especially towards the poor. One particularly famous oral tradition tells that St. Nicholas saves three young women from a life of destitution and ruin by secretly giving them a dowry so they could marry. His popularity increased in the centuries following his death, and by the medieval period he was a beloved model of Christian charity invoked in a particular way during the seasons of Advent and Christmas. On his feast day, Dec. 6, children often wake up to find small gifts or treats in their shoes or Christmas stockings, a tradition which has variations across different ethnic groups. In the United States, St. Nicholas gift-giving practices are especially popular in places where large numbers of German and Dutch immigrants settled. ©LPI

Devotions, Explained!

St. Nicholas is sometimes merged with the modern figure of Santa Claus in the collective imagination. But St. Nicholas was a real-life bishop, a follower of Jesus whose example of Christian self-giving endures hundreds of years after his death.

Prayer for Advent - Peace

Come, Lord Jesus! Bring your peace to our world. Inspire reconciliation, heal divisions, bind wounds, rewrite scripts. You are the Prince of Peace, bring that light into every space. Amen.

Meet Our Seminarians



Sean Sullivan
Discipleship II
St. Meinrad Seminary

One thing I have learned so far in discernment is seeing God in the ordinary day to day by recognizing him in the present and inviting him into everything I do.

BELL RINGERS NEEDED!
VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED THE 1ST, 2ND, & 3RD WEEKENDS OF DECEMBER
Walmart & TruBuy
Scan the QR Code to sign up today!

The Highland HACSM Food Pantry coordinates the Salvation Army Bell Ringers at Wal-Mart & Tru-Buy. You can use the attached QR code to sign up. Anyone can register for a one hour slot to volunteer. The HACSM Food Pantry keeps 80% of all funds deposited into the kettles during the Bell Ringing Campaign. If you have any questions, please contact the office at 654-9295 or call Diane Williams at 618-781-3109.

Men's Discernment Retreat

Join other Catholic men for a 3-day retreat at this beautiful, lakeside retreat center, to discern...

Dates: Dec.21-23, 2025
Time: 3pm arrival on the 21st, 7pm departure on the 23rd

Location: Villa Maria Retreat Center
1903 E Lake Shore Dr, Springfield, IL 62712

Who: For men 18-35 yrs.

Meals: All meals provided
Cost: Free

Makes a perfect Christmas gift!!

Celebrate the canonization of St. Pier Giorgio Frassati and St. Carlo Acutis and support diocesan vocations!

T-shirts celebrating these two young saints are available for order and 100% of profits will support vocations to the priesthood in our diocese!

Art by Fr. Daniel McGrath!
100% Cotton Navy T-shirts available in youth XS—adult 5XL
Fundraiser hosted by Sacred Heart Church in Virden, IL
To order: scan the QR code or go to sacredheartvirden.com



“This Christmas, let us ask Mary, Mother of Jesus and our Mother, to help us see in our neighbor the face of Jesus, God made man.”

POPE FRANCIS

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT DECEMBER 6 & 7, 2025



Saint Nicholas - Pocahontas



Immaculate Conception—Pierron



Saint Gertrude—Grantfork

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2025
2ND SUNDAY OF ADVENT
John wore clothing made of camel's hair and had a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey. - Mt 3:4
Excerpts from the Lectionary for Mass ©2001, 1998, 1970 CCD. ©LPI

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Mon.—Thurs. 9am to 4pm
Fridays 9am to 1pm

Mass Times
Immaculate Conception
Wed. & Fri. —8:00am
Sunday —10:00am

Saint Nicholas
Thursday — 8:00am
Saturday — 4:30pm

Saint Gertrude
Tuesday — 8:00am
Sunday — 8:00am