



Apple ran a commercial not long ago called "Behind the Mac —Greatness." It shows artists and creators, such as Kendrick Lamar, Billie Eilish, and Lady Gaga, working behind their MacBooks. The narration says, "There's a certain kind of person who doesn't wait for greatness. They make it." It's a compelling message. There's beauty in using our gifts with passion and purpose. But there lies a hidden weight in that idea: If you are what you make, what happens when you can't anymore? When the project fails, the passion fades, or the spotlight moves on, where is greatness then? Today's Gospel offers a differing vision of greatness. Jesus steps into the Jordan River. He hasn't preached, healed, or performed a single miracle. Then the heavens open, and the Father speaks: "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased." It's not a reward for success. It's not earned. Before He does anything "great", Jesus receives the greatness of His identity from the Father. And so do you. At your baptism, God said the same thing over you: "You are my beloved." That is your true identity, not constructed or earned but received. When we see ourselves and others this way, everything changes for the better. We discover a greatness that can never be taken away.

This week, reflect on your baptism: look up the date, thank God for it, pray for those baptized with you, or visit the church where it happened. Let your identity be rooted there. — Fr. John Muir

#### LITURGICAL MINISTERS FOR JAN. 17 & 18, 2026

##### Sat. Jan. 17 @ 4:30PM @ St. Nicholas

Reader: Marce Tebbe  
Music: Sally Rehberger, Barb Zaloga, & Colleen Lozier  
Euch. Min.: Brenda & Marce Tebbe  
Server: Pat Kalous

##### Sun. Jan. 18 @ 8:00AM @ St. Gertrude

Reader: Carole Sauls  
Music: Nick Worman & Randy Eckstein  
Sacristan: Gail Ohren  
Euch. Min.: Gail Ohren, Sue Messerli & Brenda Knackstedt  
Ushers: Randy & Dianne Leitschuh  
Servers: Elizabeth Schwarz & Morgan Dressler

##### Sun. Jan. 18 @ 10:00AM @ IC

Reader: Lynn Rieck  
Music: Roger Frey  
Servers: Parker Munie  
Euch. Min.: Munie Family  
Ushers: Roger Munie, Cory Munie, Larry Munie & Denis Munie  
Offertory: Carol Meffert, Jean Weber & Janet Eversgerd



#### FAITHFUL DEPARTED

Prayers are requested for the repose of the soul of **Ann (Korte) Plocher**, mother of **Gene (Jane) Plocher** and **Robert (Mitzi) Plocher**, and grandmother of **Scott (Brenda) Plocher**, **Karen Feldmann**, **Lisa Scholl** and **Kim (Zach) Lewis**

and for **Terry Weiss**, brother of **Donna (Jack) Munie** of our parish family. We extend our heartfelt sympathy to Ann's & Terry's family and friends.

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord...



#### Mass Intentions

##### No Mass

† **Elinor Ripperda** — Int. of Lawrence Schwarz

† **JoAnn Lucas** — Int. of Scott & Ruth Owens

##### All Souls

† **Fr. Daren Zehnle** — Int. of Bill & Denise Trickey

† **Tom Regan** — Int. of Denny & Joan Gobble

#### For the People of St. Nicholas, St. Gertrude & Immaculate Conception

† **Jerry Hess** — Int. of Janice Korsmeyer & Family

**In Honor of Eleanor Munie's 100th Birthday** — Int. of the Munie Family

† **Henry Korte** — Int. of Craig & Kelly Korte

#### Readings for the week of January 11, 2026

##### Sunday:

Is 42:1-4, 6-7/Ps 29:1-2, 3-4, 3, 9-10/Acts 10:34-38/Mt 3:13-17

##### Monday:

1 Sm 1:1-8/Ps 116:12-13, 14-17, 18-19/Mk 1:14-20

##### Tuesday:

1 Sm 1:9-20/1 Sam 2:1, 4-5, 6-7, 8abcd/Mk 1:21-28

##### Wednesday:

1 Sm 3:1-10, 19-20/Ps 40:2 and 5, 7-8a, 8b-9, 10/Mk 1:29-39

##### Thursday:

1 Sm 4:1-11/Ps 44:10-11, 14-15, 24-25/Mk 1:40-45

##### Friday:

1 Sm 8:4-7, 10-22a/Ps 89:16-17, 18-19/Mk 2:1-12

##### Saturday:

1 Sm 9:1-4, 17-19; 10:1a/Ps 21:2-3, 4-5, 6-7/Mk 2:13-17

##### Next Sunday:

Is 49:3, 5-6/Ps 40:2 and 4, 7-8, 8-9, 10/1 Cor 1:1-3/Jn 1:29-34

"John tried to prevent him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, yet you are coming to me?" Matthew 3:14

The Catholic Catechism states that "Jesus' immersion in the water is a sign for all human beings of the need to die to themselves to do God's will." In other words, as baptized Catholics there is only one gift that we need to give to Jesus — the gift of ourselves. Surrender yourself to God, place your trust in Him and allow the Holy Spirit to work through you for the greater glory of God.

John could not believe that Jesus would seek baptism from him, a lowly mortal man. But our God is a humble God. He does not fear our weakness. He extends His hand, saying, "It is fitting." So take His hand. Begin the work He has set out for you.

#### Observances for the week of January 11, 2026

Sunday: The Baptism of the Lord

Tuesday: St. Hilary, Bishop and Doctor of the Church

Saturday: St. Anthony, Abbot

Next Sunday: 2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time

#### At St. Paul in Highland



#### Adult Catholic Refresher

A time for parents and parish adults to gain a deeper understanding of our Catholic Faith on select Wednesdays from 6:10pm-7pm in the St. Paul Room. Child care will be available for ages 2-8th grade if they are not in PSR/Edge.

- January 7th
- January 14th
- January 28th
- February 4th
- and more...

Each session discusses a different practice or teaching of the Catholic Church.

Attend the dates that are best for you!



St. Nicholas Blood Drive at St. Nicholas Parish Hall on Tuesday, January 27th 1:00 to 6:00PM Please visit RedCrossBlood.org and enter STNICHOLASCHURCH to schedule an appointment.

**VOCATION MINISTRY** PRAY FOR VOCATIONS: Jan. 11, 2026 For the Families, that through the grace of Baptism, many will hear and answer God's call to the priesthood and consecrated life.

For those discerning their vocation, that they may find confidence in God's call and respond with generous hearts.

For our parish, that we honor our baptismal call, fostering a culture where vocations to the priesthood, consecrated life, and holy marriage are recognized, encouraged, and celebrated.



The next St. Gertrude Council Meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 20th at 7PM

#### STG Collection 1/4/26

Envelopes/Loose	\$1,805.00
Solemnity of Mary	\$3,162.00
Christmas	\$10.00
First Offering	\$20.00
Sister Parish	\$25.00
Retired Religious	\$20.00
Catholic Times	\$55.00
Sister Parish	\$50.00
Eastern Europe	\$40.00
Latin America	\$40.00
Maintenance Fund	\$150.00
Budget Goal	\$1,257.00
Weekly Surplus/Deficit	\$694.00
Support Needed (budget)	\$33,939.00
Support Actual	\$37,614.72
Surplus/Deficit YTD	\$3,675.72

#### IC Collection 1/4/26

Envelopes/Loose	\$2,485.00
First Offering	\$72.00
Solemnity of Mary	\$744.00
Catholic Times	\$45.00
Sister Parish	\$50.00
Building Fund	\$135.00
Candles	\$94.00
Budget Goal	\$2,672.00
Weekly Surplus/Deficit	\$629.00
Support Needed (budget)	\$72,144.00
Support Actual	\$74,842.13
Surplus/Deficit YTD	\$2,698.13

The next United For Others (UFO) meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 13th at Grantfork UCC; 6:30PM. Come hungry for soups & dessert!

### Upcoming 12-Week Support and Healing Program for Separated and Divorced Catholics

Are you struggling with marital stress, separation, or divorce?

**Build a New Life Workshop** offers hope and guidance through a comprehensive, virtual 12-week support and healing program.

**Start Date:** January 22



*Don't suffer alone.  
Start your healing journey today.*

**Learn more and register now:**

[Aboundingjoyministry.com/events](http://Aboundingjoyministry.com/events)  
or contact Carolyn at 608-547-9484



### Virtues, Explained!

Joy is the experience of achieving what we most desire — and what we most desire is love. God made us in love and for love, and so, in the same way that a flower seeks the sunlight, our souls seek the warmth of true, selfless love.

#### Virtues Explained!

##### Joy

Though it is often used as a synonym for happiness, joy has far more to do with the choices we make than the emotions we feel.

Joy is the experience of achieving what we most desire — and what we most desire is love. God made us in love and for love, and so, in the same way that a flower seeks the sunlight, our souls seek the warmth of true, selfless love. The virtue of joy, therefore, is a fruit of the virtue of love, or charity (CCC 1829).

"We are meant to have our human joys: the joy of living, the joy of love and friendship, the joy of work well done," said Saint Pope John Paul II. "We who are Christians have a further cause for joy: like Jesus, we know that we are loved by God our Father. This love transforms our lives and fills us with joy." ©LPI

### Blessing for Baptismal Grace

Dear God,  
Through Baptism, You called and claimed us as Your own, chosen and loved.  
Pour Your blessing upon us as we remember our Baptism.  
Plant Your identity in our hearts.  
Help us to live as Your beloved. Amen.



For anyone who may be interested, this grief program offers support, guidance, and a safe space to heal. If you or someone you know is navigating loss, this could be a meaningful resource. Everyone is invited to join for a safe, compassionate space where healing begins. Whether you're grieving the loss of a loved one or supporting someone who is, our GriefShare group offers comfort, understanding, and hope.

The group will meet on Mondays starting January 12, from 6-8 pm. The group will convene weekly on Monday evenings at EvUCC located at 2520 Poplar Street in Highland. This 13-week session - to register, please contact the church office at 618-654-7459. We kindly request a \$10 registration fee, if possible, to offset the cost of workbooks. We look forward to welcoming you.

### GriefShare SUPPORT GROUP

Consider joining us or passing along the information to someone you know who is grieving a loss.

**Mondays - Jan. 12 - April 6**

6:00 - 8:00 pm  
Evangelical United Church of Christ  
2520 Poplar Street, Highland

For more information call 618-654-7459



**Wyatt Clark**  
Propaedeutic  
Bishop Simon Bruté

**One thing I have learned about discernment is to stay close to the Sacraments especially the Eucharist and Confession as well as to set aside time to spend with Jesus in the Eucharist in adoration.**

### ILLINOIS PRO-LIFE MARCH

On Thursday, March 19, you are invited to join thousands of pro-life advocates, being a joyful witness to life and raising your voice for the voiceless at the Illinois Pro-Life Mass and March. The day begins with Mass at 10 a.m. at the Exposition Building on the grounds of the Illinois State Fairgrounds in Springfield, celebrated by Bishop Thomas John Paprocki and concelebrated by bishops and priests from across the state. You must register for the Mass by going to [dio.org](http://dio.org).

After the Mass, there is a rally at the capitol at 1 p.m. with guest speakers, and then a march around the capitol at 2 p.m. Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament will also be going on at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception from noon to 5 p.m. Confessions at the Cathedral will also be available from 1:30 - 5 p.m. Last year, about 2,000 people attended the Illinois Pro-Life March, the vast majority being students from Catholic grade schools, high schools, and Newman Centers. Priests, seminarians, religious, and the lay faithful from every corner of the diocese and the state also showed up in strong numbers.

**"How glorious our Faith is! Instead of restricting hearts, as the world fancies, it uplifts them and enlarges their capacity to love."**

DEBRA HERBECK  
St. Thérèse of Lisieux

[DynamicCatholic.com](http://DynamicCatholic.com)

### THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD JANUARY 10 & 11, 2026



**Saint Nicholas - Pocahontas**



**Immaculate Conception—Pierron**



**Saint Gertrude—Grantfork**

+BISHOP  
THOMAS JOHN PAPROCKI  
DIOCESE OF SPRINGFIELD  
IN ILLINOIS



REV. CALLISTUS OSIAGA  
PASTOR

SONYA CURRY  
SECRETARY

**Mailing Address:**  
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Pierron, IL 62273

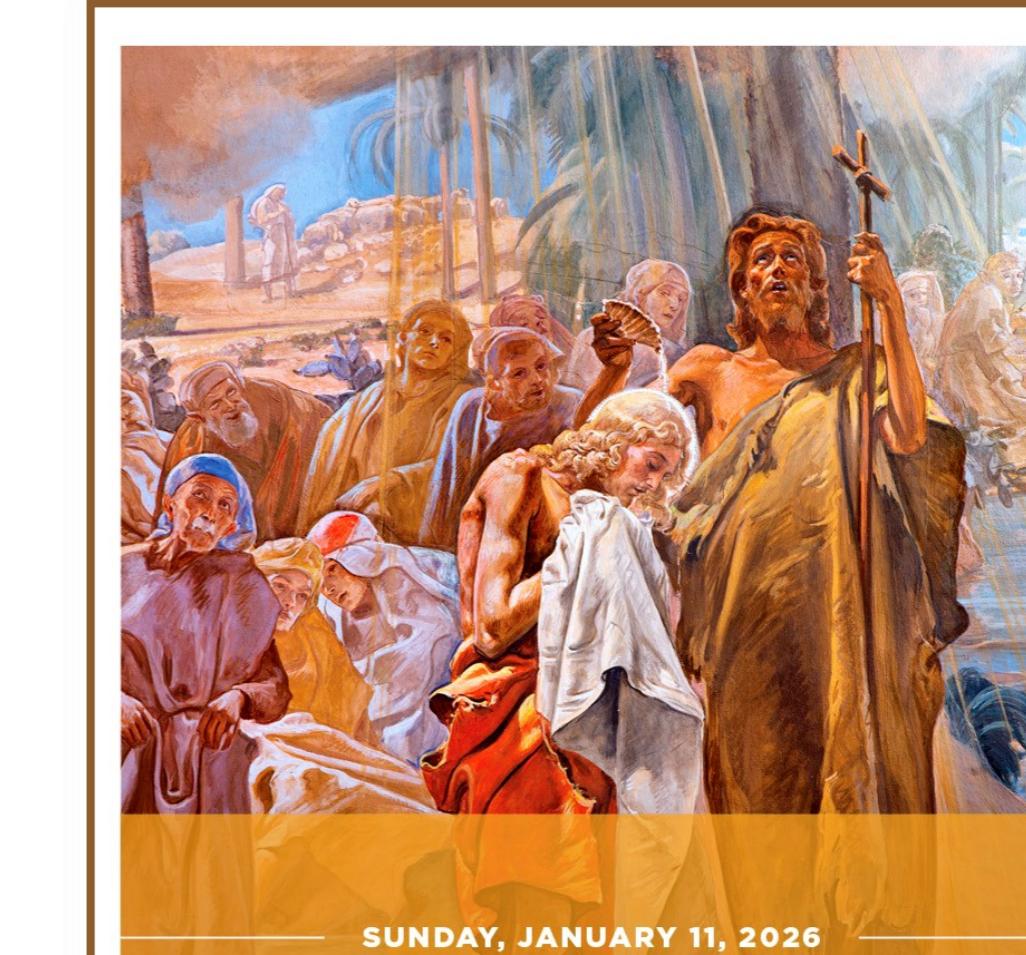
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**Website:**  
[www.icstnstaq.org](http://www.icstnstaq.org)  
**Office:** 618-669-2391  
**Rectory:** 618-654-2789

**Office Address:**  
401 E State Street,  
Pocahontas  
**Office Hours:**  
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



**SUNDAY, JANUARY 11, 2026**

### THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD

A voice came from the heavens, saying, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased." - Mt 3:17

Excerpts from the Lectionary for Mass ©2001, 1998, 1970 CCD.

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