

THE CROSS OF JESUS IS NEAR

A priest I know was once falsely accused of a terrible crime. The claim was wild and easily disproved, but for awhile, it didn't matter. In the atmosphere shaped by the abuse crisis of the early 2000s, the public assumption was guilty until proven innocent. His name was dragged through the mud, and his ministry placed on hold.

I had the privilege—and the burden—of walking closely with him during that time.

He was angry. He was confused. He felt abandoned and deeply disoriented. The last thing on his mind was the words of Jesus in today's Gospel: "Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of evil against you falsely because of me...Rejoice and be glad" (Matthew 5:11-12). Rejoice? He felt anything but.

And yet...something holy slowly grew in him. Not overnight, and not without pain. But as the truth came to light and his name was cleared, I watched him become more Christlike—more patient, more compassionate, more detached from human approval.

Maybe you haven't faced something so dramatic. But where do you feel judged? Misrepresented? Overlooked? Maybe someone else got the credit or the promotion. Maybe someone you love isn't getting their due. In those moments, the Cross of Jesus is near. When we feel accused, that's when we ask Him for the grace not just to endure, but somehow, mysteriously, to rejoice and be glad. —Father John Muir

LITURGICAL MINISTERS FOR FEBRUARY 7 & 8, 2026

Sat. Feb. 7 @ 4:30PM @ St. Nicholas

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

Sun. Feb. 8 @ 8:00AM @ St. Gertrude

Reader: Janice Korsmeyer
Music: Nick Worman & Randy Eckstein
Sacristan: Carole Sauls
Euch. Min.: Gail Ohren, Brenda Knackstedt & Karen Knackstedt
Ushers: Kevin Schwarz & Terry Dickman
Servers: Elizabeth Schwarz & Nevin Straube

Sun. Feb. 8 @ 10:00AM @ IC

Reader: Tim Schuette
Music: Joy Winkeler
Servers: Emma Winte & Jack Williamson
Euch. Min.: Mary Korte, Amy Gilomen & John Dea

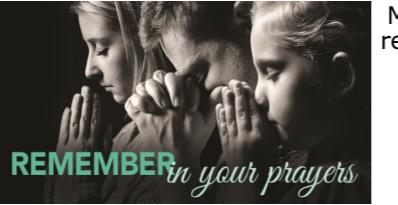
St. Blaise Blessing of the Throat—Perhaps it's an example of divine providence that the feast of St. Blaise falls on Feb. 3—right in the middle of cold and flu season!

This fourth-century Armenian saint was a bishop and martyr and is venerated as the patron of those who suffer from illnesses of the throat.

On his feast day, Catholics traditionally receive a blessing of the throat. This blessing is administered by a priest, deacon or a lay minister who follows the rites and prayers designated for a layperson. During the blessing, the minister takes two candles that were blessed on the feast of the Presentation and makes a cross in front of the throat, saying "Through the intercession of Saint Blaise, bishop and martyr, may God deliver you from every disease of the throat and from every other illness."

A priest or deacon will then make the sign of the cross.

Fr. Cal will be blessing throats after each Mass this weekend.



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 Alberternst, Pat Beard, Ana Cantrell, Steve Crawford, Don Dapkus, Teresa Dickman, Garland Edwards, Jean Fields, Gunner Sadler, Abby Schrage, Bill Schroeder, Marie Weis, Ginny Werner, Dean Wernle.

FOR OUR PARISHIONERS IN NURSING HOMES:

Delmar Knebel, Barbara Weiss, Margie Zulienre and special people in our families.

FOR THOSE CURRENTLY SERVING IN THE MILITARY:

Adam Canfield, Tim Doll, Ensign Eli Jones, 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.

IC 2nd Grade PSR Class Congratulations to

Branch Kapp and Nolan Korte who received their 1st Reconciliation on

Wednesday at Immaculate Conception. Cayden Hannan (far left) supported his classmates and will be received into the Catholic Church and baptized at the Easter Vigil.



Mass Intentions

No Mass

† All Souls

† All Souls

† Ruthann Daiber — Int. of Bill & Denise Trickey

† Sharon Cantrell — Int. of Lowell & Denise Wellen

† Ruth Schroeder — Int. of Barb Zaloga

† Jess & Clara Knebel — Int. of Scott & Jamie Wagner

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

† Christian Schwarz — Int. of St. Gertrude Altar Society

† Ed & Ann Plocher — Int. of Bill & Denise Trickey

† Cy & Dolores Weis — Int. of Joan Watson

Readings for the week of February 1, 2026

Sunday:

Zep 2:3; 3:12-13/Ps 146:6c-7, 8-9a, 9b-10/1 Cor 1:26-31/Mt 5:1-12a

Monday:

Mal 3:1-4/Ps 24:7, 8, 9, 10/Heb 2:14-18/Lk 2:22-40 or 2:22-32

Tuesday:

2 Sm 18:9-10, 14b, 24-25a, 30-19:3/Ps 86:1-2, 3-4, 5-6/Mk 5:21-43

Wednesday:

2 Sm 24:2, 9-17/Ps 32:1-2, 5, 6, 7/Mk 6:1-6

Thursday:

1 Kgs 2:1-4, 10-12/1 Chr 29:10, 11ab, 11d-12a, 12bcd/Mk 6:7-13

Friday:

Sir 47:2-11/Ps 18:31, 47 and 50, 51/Mk 6:14-29

Saturday:

1 Kgs 3:4-13/Ps 119:9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14/Mk 6:30-34

Next Sunday:

Is 58:7-10/Ps 112:4-5, 6-7, 8-9/1 Cor 2:1-5/Mt 5:13-16

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Matthew 5:3

The phrase "poor in spirit" can be confusing. Think of it in this sense—poor in spirit means depending on God's providence and not depending on our own self-reliance. Being detached from earthly things (power, money, and comfort) and being attached to heavenly things (charity, sacrifice, and mercy). Denying ourselves from satisfying our desires and helping others obtain their basic needs.

Blessed are the poor, the meek, the persecuted. These are radical words in a world that insists the opposite: blessed are the wealthy, blessed are the forceful, blessed are the comfortable. Do we have what it takes to be radical?

Study is a work of prayer. Visit Saint Meinrad

for the Graduate Theology Program Open

House, Feb 14-15. Tour campus, attend class,

pray at liturgy, and meet professors and

students. Learn more about our flexible and

affordable offerings and register at

saintmeinrad.edu/openhouse. All are welcome.

If you scan the QR code with your smartphone camera, it will take you to

www.saintmeinrad.edu/openhouse.



World Marriage Day – Date Night Ideas, Couples Connection Plan, & more! The observances of National Marriage Week (Feb. 7-14) and World Marriage Day (Sunday, Feb. 8) are an opportunity for you and your spouse to focus on building a culture of life & love that begins with supporting & promoting marriage and the family. Check out marriageweek.org/.

Observances for the week of February 1, 2026

Sunday: 4th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Monday: The Presentation of the Lord, World Day for Consecrated Life

Tuesday: St. Blaise, Bishop and Martyr; St. Ansgar, Bishop

Thursday: St. Agatha, Virgin and Martyr

Friday: St. Paul Miki and Companions, Martyrs

Next Sunday: 5th Sunday in Ordinary Time; World Marriage Day



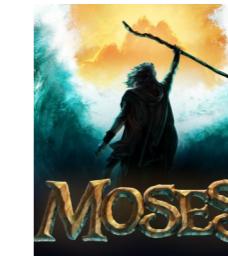
World Marriage Day

On Sunday, February 8, 2026, at Noon (12:00 pm), at the Cathedral Basilica of St. Louis, 4431 Lindell Blvd., St. Louis, MO, Fr. Chris Martin will celebrate Mass for World Marriage Day. A reception, sponsored by Worldwide Marriage Encounter, will follow in Boland Hall.

All married couples are invited to attend and celebrate the gift of marriage. World Marriage Day honors husband and wife as the foundation of the family—the basic unit of society.

Marriage on Tap STL

Join us on Thursday, March 5, 2026, at 6:00 PM for an evening of dinner and marriage enrichment at Syberg's on Dorsett in Maryland Heights, Missouri. Our guest speakers will be Sue & Tony Morris, their presentation is entitled, "On a Journey Together - Aren't We All?" The evening is sponsored by Worldwide Marriage Encounter. Dinner is \$66 per couple/\$33 per person. Cash bar will be available. Advanced registration is required and must be postmarked by February 27th & received by March 2, 2026. For more information, check out Marriage on Tap STL on Facebook or email us at marriageontapstl@gmail.com.



All Are Invited

Bring your family and friends on February 15th to the St. Gertrude Hall for a showing of Moses from the Sight & Sound Theatres in Branson, MO. The wooden doors will open at 2:45PM. The show will be from 3:00—5:30PM with a brief intermission providing light refreshments. You are welcome to bring your comfortable chair with you or a pad for the metal chairs in the hall. Entry Fee: Please bring a nonperishable item or monetary donation for the food pantry.

Hosted by the St. Gertrude Youth of our parish (4th Grade and up).

VOCATION MINISTRY
PRAY FOR VOCATIONS: Feb. 1, 2026
For the Church, that Simeon and Anna's faithful witness may illuminate the path of those discerning religious vocations.

For those discerning consecrated life, that they may hear Christ's divine prompting and embrace this vocation with joy and devotion.

For our parish, that we may honor and support religious priests, brothers and sisters, nuns, monks, and all who live consecrated vocations.

STN Collection	1/24/26	STG Collection	1/25/26	IC Collection	1/25/26
Envelopes/Loose	\$1,063.00	Envelopes/Loose	\$200.00	Envelopes/Loose	\$350.00
Sister Parish	\$60.00	Budget Goal	\$1,257.00	Sister Parish	\$20.00
		Weekly Surplus/Deficit	\$-194.00	Budget Goal	\$2,672.00
		Support Needed (budget)	\$37,710.00	Weekly Surplus/Deficit	\$-2,322.00
		Support Actual	\$41,522.72	Support Needed (budget)	\$80,160.00
		Surplus/Deficit YTD	\$3,812.72	Support Actual	\$80,480.93
				Surplus/Deficit YTD	\$320.93

40 DAYS FOR LIFE®



You are invited to join over 1 million volunteers in 855 cities across 61 nations for a peaceful, life-saving campaign to end abortion.



PRAYER & FASTING
Wednesday, February 18 - Sunday, March 29
During these 40 days, all are invited to spend time during their normal day fasting and praying for an end to abortion.



PEACEFUL VIGIL
Adopt a Day or Fill the Gap
In addition, each Christian church or group is invited to select 1 day for its members to take turns praying at their local abortion facility.

Sign up to pray: www.40daysgc.com

Share, like & follow us: [Granite City 40 Days for Life](#)

Contact us directly: 636-206-6220 or vigil@40daysgc.com

KC Drive-Thru Chicken Dinner & Ladies Auxiliary Quilt Raffle

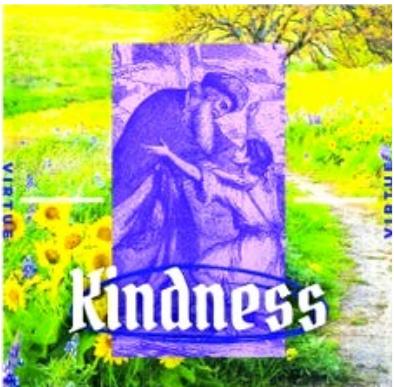
Four Pieces \$14.00

Sunday, February 1st, 11 AM - 3 PM

**Includes: Breast, Wing, Leg & Thigh
Mashed Potatoes & Gravy,
Green Beans, & Cole Slaw**

Cash, Credit, & Debit Cards Accepted

**Knights of Columbus, Council 1580
12454 IL Route 143, Highland, IL 62249
618-654-9049**



Virtues Explained! Kindness

In the modern lexicon, the quality of "kindness" is often equated with politeness — but real, virtuous kindness is so much more. Virtuous kindness is a way of seeing others through the eyes of God. God is not polite — God is kind, and His kindness is abundantly evident in all of creation. It was suspicion of this divine kindness that precipitated the fall of Adam and Eve (CCC 214), and it was this unfailing kindness that facilitated our own adoption as God's children, conformed to the image of His son (CCC 257). Also known as benevolence or beneficence and derived from the theological virtue of charity, kindness is a fruit of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22) and is a central theme in the famous parable of the Good Samaritan. In practicing kindness and seeking the good of another without prejudice or condition, the Samaritan reflects God's own plan of loving kindness for us.

Virtues, Explained!

Also known as benevolence or beneficence and derived from the theological virtue of charity, kindness is a way of seeing others through the eyes of God, who has adopted us as His own.

Bless Us, Lord

Jesus, You are good and gracious, every moment of every day. You invite us to be meek, merciful, clean of heart, peacemakers. Give us the grace to seek these virtues, and to seek you. May your blessing accompany us on our way. Amen.



From February 18 to March 29, we are uniting with many others for another major simultaneous pro-life mobilization — the 40 Days for Life campaign. The mission of 40 Days for Life is to bring together the Body of Christ in a spirit of unity during a focused 40 day campaign of prayer, fasting and peaceful activism, with the purpose of repentance, to seek God's favor to turn hearts and minds from a culture of death to a culture of life, thus bringing an end to abortion. We (Immaculate Conception, St. Gertrude and St. Nicholas parishes) chose to Adopt a Day in the 40 Days for Life Granite City campaign to end the demand for abortion. We were assigned Sunday, February 22nd as our adopted day, and we need prayer warriors join us in this important mission. We need prayer warriors to pray at the facility in Granite City, and we need some to pray from work, home, etc. too! 40 Days for Life works because prayer works! If you would like to pray for an hour or two on February 22, 2026, please contact Denise Trickey at 314-495-9080. Thank you for standing up for life!

PEACEFUL VIGIL
Adopt a Day or Fill the Gap
In addition, each Christian church or group is invited to select 1 day for its members to take turns praying at their local abortion facility.

Sign up to pray: www.40daysgc.com

Share, like & follow us: [Granite City 40 Days for Life](#)

Contact us directly: 636-206-6220 or vigil@40daysgc.com

We are once again doing a "Just Jeans Drive for the Homeless" during the month of February. We ask that you please donate new or gently used adult jeans during the month of February. We will have boxes, to place the jeans in, at the following churches, Immaculate Conception, St. Gertrude, St. Nicholas and St. Paul, we will also have boxes at the KC Hall in Highland and the Highland Police Station. At the end of February, the jeans will be delivered to St. Vincent de Paul Parish in St. Louis. Should you have any questions, please reach out to Bill or Denise Trickey at 314-495-9080. Your support is greatly appreciated!

Meet Our Seminarians



Thomas Marten
Configuration II
Kenrick-Glennon Seminary

One thing I have learned in discernment is that I have found that you must jump in with trust when the Lord speaks to you. He asks me to lay down my self-reliance and take up sonship.

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. 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.

"You can't give what you don't have. If you don't have the life and love of the Lord flourishing in your own soul, you will not be able to share them with others. And if you do, then you'll be like a flowing fountain of grace—everyone you meet will receive a blessing from God through you."

PATRICK MADRID
On A Mission

DynamicCatholic.com

FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME JAN. 31 & FEB. 1, 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:
PO Box 410
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icpierron@parish.dio.org
Website:
www.icstnsg.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, FEBRUARY 1, 2026

4TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

"Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of evil against you falsely because of me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven." - Mt 5:10-12a

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

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